

# *Fantastically French!*

## Design and Architecture in 16th- to 18th-Century Prints

### **3: Fontainebleau's Frames**

The most famous room at the majestic palace of Fontainebleau is the Gallery of Francis I. It features frescoes set into stucco frames so elaborate that they almost overwhelm the paintings within. Léonard Thiry cleverly recycled the designs of Fontainebleau's famous frames and used them to surround his narrative scenes for this print series depicting the Greek myth of Jason and the Golden Fleece, which was engraved by René Boyvin. Looking closely at these two frames, we notice masks, reclining nudes, cherubs, and garlands of vegetation. These motifs are characteristic of Fontainebleau's blend of artifice, eroticism, classicism, and abundance. The components are arranged around a strapwork cartouche, a type of framework that became a pervasive ornamental element across Europe into the 17th century, thanks in large part to Fontainebleau prints.