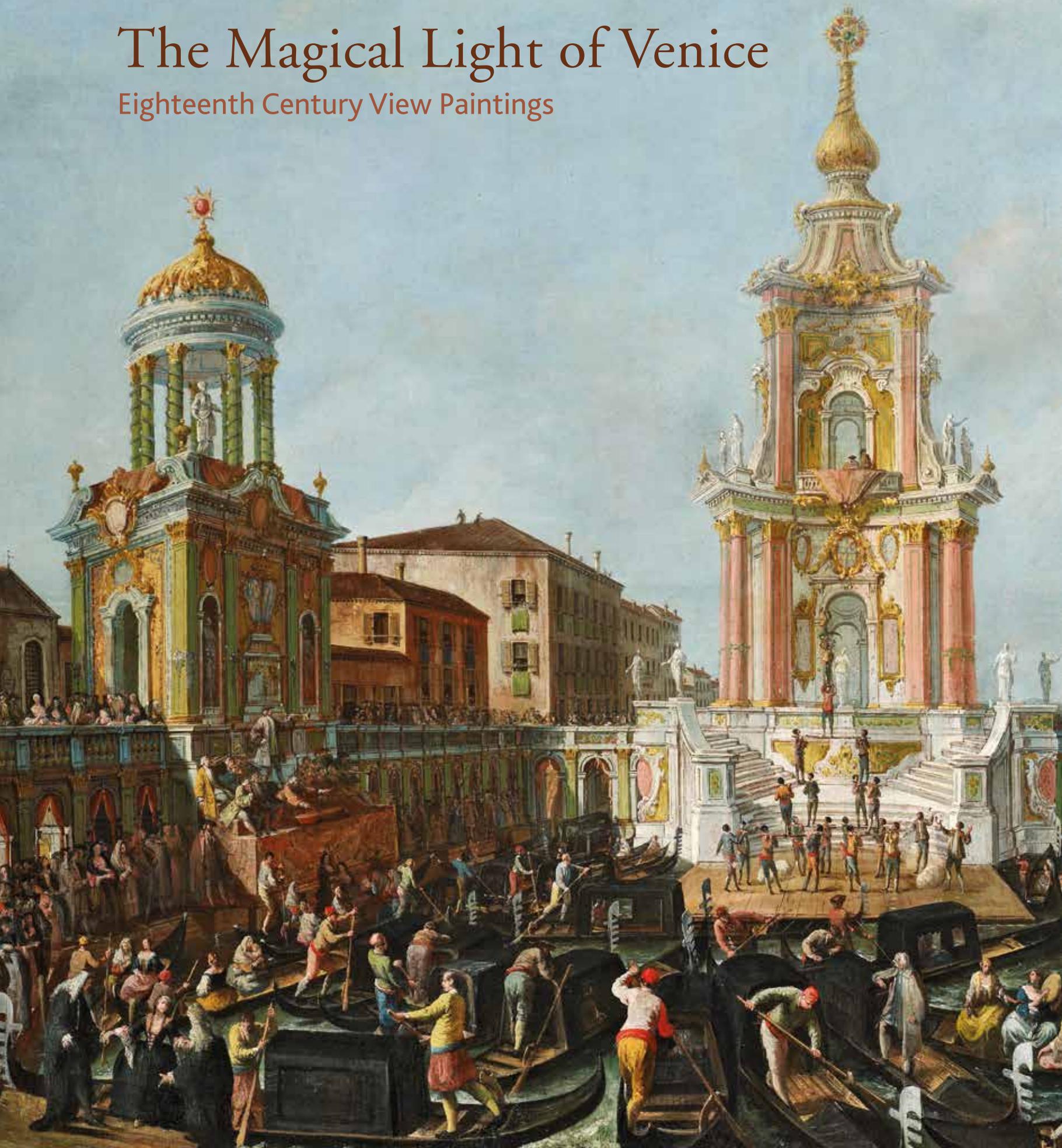


The Magical Light of Venice

Eighteenth Century View Paintings



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CESARE LAMPRONTI
fine old masters since 1914

The Magical Light of Venice

Eighteenth Century View Paintings

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On the cover:

Giovanni Battista Cimaroli, *The Celebrations for the Marriage of the Dauphin of France with the Infanta Maria Teresa of Spain at the French Embassy in Venice in 1745*, detail.

This exhibition brings together a fine selection of Venetian cityscapes, romantic canals and quality of light which have never been represented with greater sensitivity or technical brilliance than during the wondrous years of the eighteenth century.

The masters of *vedutismo* – Canaletto, Marieschi, Bellotto and Guardi – are all included here, represented by key works that capture the essence and sheer splendour of Venice. The desire to record one's surroundings drove the demand for the *vedute*, offering contemporary viewers a vivid insight into the period's taste, culture and economy. The diffusion of prototypes via prints, particularly those of Antonio Visentini, namely his series of engraved plates, the *Prospectus Magni Canalis Venetiarum* (1735-1742), inspired by the work of Canaletto, dramatically influenced the development of the genre, and has, since then, generated much debate concerning the twin-notions of originality and replication in art.

However, rather than slavishly imitating the art of the past, artists such as Cimaroli and Domenichini became well-known for producing highly personalised reimaginings of

earlier models through their liveliness of vision and masterful execution.

Later nineteenth-century painters such as Bison and Zanin reveal the profound influence that Canaletto and his rivals had upon future generations of artists. The culture of reciprocity between the Italian Peninsula and England during the Grand Siècle, epitomised by the relationship between Canaletto and Joseph Consul Smith, is a key aspect of the history of *vedutismo*, and this culture of international artistic exchange continues to resonate to this very day. Many viewers will be familiar with such views of Venice through excursions to the National Gallery or the Royal Collection at Windsor Castle and, of course, from visiting the city itself, in person.

We hope, therefore, that this exhibition and catalogue will be of special interest to London audiences and beyond, who we invite to enjoy the evocative and resplendent qualities of Venice, La Serenissima.

Cesare Lampronti

JOSEPH HEINTZ THE YOUNGER

(Augusta c. 1600 – 1678 Venice)

Venice, The Bull Hunt in Campo San Polo

Oil on canvas, 61 x 91.5 cm

PROVENANCE

Private Collection, United Kingdom.

Joseph Heintz the Younger, son of the painter and etcher Joseph Heintz the Elder (Basle 1564 – 1609 Prague) served his apprenticeship as a painter under his stepfather Matthäus Gundelach in Augsburg between 1617-21. Sometime before travelling to Italy, the Younger Heintz may have also attended the workshop of Matthias Kager (1621), a miniaturist and former pupil of Hans Rottenhammer in Venice. By 1625 he was already active in Italy, particularly in Venice and Rome, where he worked on a number of paintings which can be considered “capricciosissimi” for their association of monsters to classical or mythological heroes.

In 1632 he was in Venice, as demonstrated by the votive altarpiece he painted for the Church of San Fantino. Between 1634 and 1639 he was registered in the “fraglia dei pittori” (the Guild of Saint Luke), while later on, between 1648 and 1649 he painted the *Entrance of Patriarch Federico Corner in San Pietro di Castello* and the *Bull hunting in Campo San Polo*, which is under discussion here, and *The Breeze on the Boat* (Museo Correr, Venice). On 30th November, 1655, the painter was called along with Nicolas Régnier to evaluate the collection of Giovanni Pietro Tiraboschi. In 1663, the Count Czernin, plenipotentiary of Emperor Leopold I, commissioned to him some works.

The unaffected and dazzling eclecticism of Heintz the Younger, a sign of the diversity of his tirelessly-pursued interests, makes it almost impossible to place the artist’s output in chronological order. His ability and willingness to follow various vogues between the years 1648 and 1655 meant that some of his paintings were still tied to Mannerism as shown in the *Transference of Loreto*, while others were inspired by the farcical impetus of Jacques Callot, just as in the present painting in the Lampronti collection. Heintz was able to apply his own style where appropriate, switching from the furious density of narrative typical of Callot’s style and evident in Heintz’ depictions of the Venetian festivities, to more atmospheric still-lives such as *The Seller of Fish*, previously in a Roman collection, which are comparable to those of the Neapolitan painters Recco and Ruoppolo. He can therefore rightfully be called a “painter of multiple brushes”.

In the fourth and fifth decades of the 1600s, Heintz the Younger established himself in Venice as a painter of *stregozzi*, created as pastiches of details literally taken from well-known northern and Italian engravings. This composition type was greatly appreciated by Venetian patrons who had recently rediscovered the works of Bosch. Differently from the late fifteenth-century Flemish artist, Heintz abandoned any moralistic intent to recast Bosch’s monsters into facetious creatures inspired by the tone of Callot’s works. He was the first and only artist to pursue this successful genre in the Venetian region.

Time after time the artist includes his little monsters, the real main protagonists of this artistic genre, regardless of the dedication of the painting to Pluto, Orpheus, or Medea. Drawn from prints by Pieter Brughel the Elder and especially from Jacques Callot’s work, in *The Temptations of Saint Anthony* deformed beings such as *Barbariccia*, a knight riding a dragon, or a *strigozzo* (witch-like monster) with a lobster, inhabit compositions suspended between the grotesque and the fanciful.

The setting for this splendid and lively bull-hunting scene here represented connects it with this venetian milieu, as it portrays the Church of San Polo and focuses on the Gothic-Moorish *façade* of Palazzo Garzoni, which was demolished in the early nineteenth century. The painting represents one of the most popular and gory Venetian festival traditions that were held at Carnival. It consisted in a tame bullfight where the bull - although oxen were often used instead of a bull - had to defend itself from the attacks of specially trained dogs. Usually, the dog tried to grasp onto the bull’s ear from the side, biting impetuously. Sometimes the bull escaped from the circle of shooters surrounding it, charging towards the crowd, spreading panic among the bystanders and hilarity among the observers seated on balconies or behind windows. In the Lampronti painting, the chaos of the violent game does not affect a group of gymnasts competing in a game known as the Strength of Hercules, a competition which typically took place during Carnival between the two Venetian fractions of the Castellani and Nicolotti. The aim of the challenge consisted in constructing a human pyramid with assistance of wooden beams.



BERNARDO CANAL

(Venice 1664 – 1744)

Venice, Cannaregio with the Ponte dei Tre Archi and Palazzo Valier

Oil on canvas, 73.5 x 112.5 cm

LITERATURE

V. Rossi, A. Hilliam, *The Splendours of Venice: View Paintings from the Eighteenth Century*, Rome 2014, pp. 26-27.

First described as ‘pitor’ in a document dating back to 1696, Bernardo Canal worked as both a painter and stage designer. Little information survives regarding the early years of his activity, however we know that from 1716 to 1718 he collaborated with his brother Cristoforo and his son Antonio – who would become known as Canaletto – in the designing of stage sets for the Venetian theatres of San Cassiano and Sant’Angelo. In 1719 Bernardo travelled to Rome, where he had been commissioned to paint the sets for the Teatro Argentina. His son Antonio, then in his early twenties, would accompany him to Rome.

The majority of Canal’s dated *vedute* were executed between the late 1730s and 1740s. This evidence has led art historian Filippo Pedrocchi to suggest that the painter decided to devote himself to view painting only in his artistic maturity, possibly as a result of the increasing success of his son’s compositions of that genre. The corpus of Bernardo’s view paintings was first analysed by Giuseppe Fiocco in the 1947 catalogue for the exhibition *Pittura Veneta*, in which two representations of Piazza San Marco by the artist from the Salom collection at Segromigno Monte – including *Venice, Piazza San Marco towards the church of San Gem-*

iniano, signed and dated ‘Bernardo Canal Fecit 1735’ – were displayed. The paintings discussed by Fiocco form a stylistically homogeneous group, which the present picture bears a close resemblance to. The composition’s view-point, located little above the canal’s water level, is typical of Canal’s style. Equally characteristic of the artist’s vocabulary is the light that crisply defines each building’s surface and creates vivid reflections in the lagoon. The sky above is defined by a palette of intense light blues and whites, which gently contrast with the ochre colours of the buildings.

In the present work, the artist depicts a relatively rare *veduta* in the Venetian 18th Century repertoire. An engraving, published by Domenico Lovisa in 1717 in his *Il Gran Teatro di Venezia* shows various compositional similarities and could have possibly served as reference for this historically interesting view. Whereas the Ponte dei Tre Archi Bridge, built in 1688 following a project by the architect Andrea Tirali, still exists, the Palazzo Valier, a remarkable 14th Century building with a *façade* embellished by fourteen windows divided by columns, was damaged by a fire and subsequently demolished between 1789 and 1805.



GIOVANNI RICHTER
(Stockholm 1665 – 1745 Venice)

Venice, view of the Piazzetta

Oil on canvas, 94 x 127 cm

PROVENANCE

Palazzo Corner Spinelli, Venice.

Born in Stockholm in 1665, Richter left his homeland when he was approximately thirty years of age to move to Venice, where he remained until his death. It is presumed that his artistic training in Sweden was completed in close proximity to his father, a goldsmith, or his brother, a miniaturist. His first individual commission, however, is believed to have been for the painterly decorative campaign conducted in the royal castle of Drottningholm. His Venetian sojourn is believed by scholars to have occurred between the full maturity of the Friulian Luca Carlevarijs and that of the rising star, Canaletto, with whom Richter was able to gain employment in various projects commissioned by local and foreign buyers passing through Venice. Indeed, the urban Venetian views, a genre that Richter specialised in, began to generate much interest at the time, particularly among non-Italian patrons.

Richter's views were often inspired by the works of Carlevarijs and, as a consequence, they were frequently attributed to the latter as demonstrated by the emblematic case of the Wadsworth Atheneum painting in Hartford, a work depicting the *Votive Bridge for the celebration of the Madonna of Health*. Pedrocchi reminds us that Richter's name appears quoted in the inventory of drawings compiled by Florentine collector Francesco Gaburri, and is registered as a student of Carlevarijs himself. Furthermore, the artist was also in close contact with Antonio Balestra,

who we know wrote a letter to Gaburri himself in 1717 to recommend that he purchase some of Richter's works, which he described as being "made with all his love...". This statement professes a particular approval towards the artists' accomplishments and sheds light upon Richter's production of paintings featuring religious subjects, which to this day remain relatively obscure and understudied.

Although the painter conceptualises and conceives the view as a means of evoking an infamous place, Richter's views are also characterised by the fact that he reveals a particular interest in everyday reality, in the vivid scenes embedded in an architectural setting of a fairy-tale-like atmosphere, from which one can also delineate stylistic influences from Michele Marieschi.

The splendid view of St. Mark's Square presented here is a unique example of Richter's style. In this painting the *palette* is clear and elegant, and the expressive dots characterized by their natural and long silhouette reflect the style of Antonio Pellegrini. Moreover, the scenic accentuation of the architectural structures, depicted with the utmost attention to detail, the tendency of a vertical compositional development, as well as the originality of the perspective, which unnaturally enlarges the scenographic stage, are all fundamentally characteristic of the artist's pictorial technique.



GIOVANNI BATTISTA CIMAROLI

(Salò 1687 – 1771 Venice)

The Celebrations for the Marriage of the Dauphin of France with the Infanta Maria Teresa of Spain at the French Embassy in Venice in 1745

Oil on canvas, 97.9 x 133.9 cm

PROVENANCE

Comte Pierre-François de Montaigu, Venice and Paris; and by descent.

LITERATURE

The Splendours of Venice. View Paintings from the Eighteenth Century, exh. cat., Lampronti Gallery, Rome 2014, cat. n. 13 pp. 32-33; *Sérénissime! Venise en fête, de Tiepolo à Guardi*, exh. cat., ed. by R. Herda-Mousseaux, Paris, Musée Cognacq-Jay, Paris 2017, cat. 18, p. 87-89.

COMPARATIVE LITERATURE

L. Cust, 'A fête at Venice in 1747, attributed to Antonio Canale', *The Burlington Magazine*, XXIV, June 1914, pp. 174-75; W.G. Constable, *Giovanni Antonio Canal, Canaletto*, 1962, II, p. 346, no. 357; F. Spadotto, *Giovan Battista Cimaroli*, Rovigo 2011.

EXHIBITIONS

Sérénissime! Venise en fête, de Tiepolo à Guardi, Parigi, Musée Cognacq-Jay, 25 February - 25 June 2017.

On 23 February 1745 the marriage between Louis, Dauphin of France, and his cousin Maria Theresa Raphaella, daughter of King Philip V of Spain, was celebrated in Versailles. The union was cherished all throughout Europe and homage was paid to the royal couple with celebrations held in almost every capital. In Venice, the French Ambassador to the Republic, Comte Pierre-François de Montaigu,¹ organised a glorious fête at Cannaregio, by the French Embassy, which is skilfully portrayed by Cimaroli in the present painting.

The seat of the French Embassy was the 17th Century Palazzo Surian, seen here on the right, its *façade* looking over the Cannaregio canal. Just behind the palace is the Ponte delle Guglie, which served as support for the main body of the grand temporary structure built to host the celebrations. Predominantly made of wood, the latter was modelled like the central section of a baroque building, with stairs leading up to a portal, flanked by two sets of columns and topped by the insignia of the French monarchy, and two further storeys, one with a balconade decorated by statues, the other ending in a golden spire embellished by a jewel-like circle. At the feet of the main structure, one finds acrobats performing daring exercises, while the orchestra plays from a pavillion located opposite Palazzo Surian. A loggia runs across both sides of the canal, encircling the fête as if it were taking place in the courtyard of a palace. Onlookers dressed in vivacious robes attend the celebrations from the loggia's balcony and from under its arches. Gondolas assemble in the foreground, drawing the viewer into the composition, while a young painter, brush and palette in hand, observes the scene from a window of the house on the right. The Comte of Mointagu follows the fête with his family from the balcony of Palazzo Surian's *piano nobile*. The spectacular celebrations were intended as a display of the excellent relations between the French monarchy and the Republic of the Serenissima. Festivities for the Dauphin's marriage had also been held in Rome, opposite the family palace of his betrothed in Piazza Farnese, under the patronage of

Monsignor Claude-François Rogier de Beaufort-Montboisier de Canillac, *chargé d'affaires* of the French Embassy in Rome and auditor of the Sacred Rota.

The present composition remained in the Montaigu family for centuries, which suggests that the ambassador had commissioned it as a private commemoration of this special occasion. Another version of the composition was first published by Lionel Cust² and exhibited in Florence in 1922. Tentatively attributed to Canaletto, it was then correctly ascribed to the master's school by Constable.³ In both instances, the subject was wrongly identified as the fête on the occasion of the Dauphin's second marriage, to Maria-Josepha of Saxony, which had taken place on 2 December 1747, when Montaigu was no longer in Venice. In the present picture, an inscription added at a later date to the upper section, removed after cleaning, specified that the scene portrayed the Dauphin's first marriage: 'VUE DE LA FÊTE QUI FU DONNÉE À VENISE LE MAY.1745. A L'OCCASION DU MARIAGE DE M^C DAUPHINE AVEC L'INFANTE. MARIE. THÉRESE D:ESPAGNE PAR S:E.M^R. LE COMTE DA MONTAIGU / AMBASSADEUR DE S: M.T.C. AUPRÈS DE LA SEREN: M^E RÉPUBLIQUE'.

It has been suggested that the Comte de Montaigu commissioned the plan of the temporary structure in Cannaregio from the Venetian architect Antonio Visentini, who would have known the analogous constructions often used for celebrations in Rome thanks to the highly commissioned and widely circulated engravings commemorating these events. No record survives regarding the commission of the present picture, yet its style and attention to topographical detail point towards the circle of Canaletto. Giovanni Battista Cimaroli, a native of Salò on Lake Garda, had moved to Venice around 1713, where he collaborated with Canaletto. His works were highly popular among foreign visitors to the city, as they were characterised by a descriptive quality that vivaciously evoked the colours and atmosphere of the Serenissima and its surroundings.

The relationship between Visentini, Canaletto and Cimaroli is well known, documented by the various paintings by the latter that are after Visentini's engravings.⁴ Of course, the large majority of Visentini's engravings are in turn after paintings by Canaletto, published in his 1735 volume, *Prospectus Magni Canalis Venetianum*. It therefore follows that the *vedute* by Cimaroli often have early attributions to Canaletto, due to the near-identical compositions and similar techniques of the two painters. However, the early attribution to Canaletto of the present work is based solely on the handling and the Venetian subject matter, for the celebrations at the French Embassy in 1745 were never depicted by the more famous *vedutista*. Indeed, upon close examination, the lighter palette, the important role given to the *staffage* and the delight in depicting the joyful chaos of celebration, all reveal themselves as characteristic attributes in the *oeuvre* of Giovan Battista. These elements all come into play in the marvellous *Bull fight of 1740 in Piazza San Marco* in a private collection,⁵ where sways of figures crowd the piazza, taking full possession of the viewer's attention, much like in the present image.

1. Comte Pierre-François de Montaigu was appointed ambassador to Venice in 1743, but soon returned to France in 1746.

2. L. Cust, 1914, pp. 174-75.

3. W.G. Constable, 1962, II, p. 346, no. 357.

4. F. Spadotto, 2011, cat. 72, pp. 224-225; cat. 77, pp. 234-235; cat. 78, pp. 236-7.

5. Illustrated in F. Spadotto, 2011 figs. 81-82.



JACOPO FABRIS

(Venice 1689 – 1761 Charlottenborg)

The entrance of Grand Canal with the Piazzetta and the Libreria Marciana on the right, the Dogana and the Church of Santa Maria della Salute on the left

Oil on canvas, 103 x 127.8 cm

COMPARATIVE LITERATURE

A. Morassi, 'Anticipazione per il vedutista Jacopo Fabris', *Arte veneta*, XX, 1966, pp. 279-281; M. Mosco, 'Minori del Settecento veneto, Jacopo Fabris', *Arte illustrata*, VII, 1974, pp. 82-97; J. G. Links, *Canaletto and his patrons*, London 1977; 'Scenes and machines from the 18th century: The stagecraft of J. F. and Cityoen (sic) Boullé', *Performing arts resource*, XI, New York 1986, pp. XI-XIV, 2-51; F. Pedrocchi, *Il Settecento a Venezia. I vedutisti*, Milan 2001, pp. 178-180.

The present painting is a significant addition to the *oeuvre* of Jacopo Fabris, whose painterly production is closely linked to his undertakings as a set designer, a creative interconnection which led him to execute numerous perspective views inspired mostly by Roman and Venetian topography to which he would integrate imaginary elements.

Born in Venice in 1689 to Domenico and Benedetta Guarini, it is believed that Fabris trained as an artist in Venice and Rome although information on his artistic instruction is scarce. The artist had great international success, and his works can be found in important English, Italian and Danish collections.¹ Some of his mural works can also be found to this day in various locations, for example, in the Moltke palace once belonging to Christian VII, in the Lerche Palace in Copenhagen (currently the Ministry of Defence) located in Amalienborg, and lastly in the large garden room in the Fredensborg castle (once the breakfast room). In this particular location, there are ten large mural paintings and three smaller panels for the doors, all depicting fantastical *vedute* featuring ruins populated by lively figures.²

A landmark for the reconstruction of the corpus of Roman images produced by Fabris is the mural *Roman capriccio with the arch of the Argentari*, signed 'Ja. Fabris pin', published by Mosca and Pallottini. There is a lack of information regarding the artist's relationship with the theatre prior to 1719 when he was nominated as a painter at the Karlsruhe court of Karl Willhelm von Baden-Durlach and was called to execute decorations and screen sets. In February 1721 he left the position and was called to the Gansemarkt theatre of Hamburg at the court of Benedict Ahlefeldt in 1724. The Hamburg Opera had a mod-

est stage set, but with the arrival of Fabris, it began to present new operas, for example, pastoral, intermezzi and solemn shows. Together with two French set designers, the artist produced scenes with magnificent gardens, rooms, military camps, along with landscapes depicting ruins and buildings. It is thought that Fabris probably left the Hamburg theatre in 1730, coincidentally the same year in which his brief sojourn to London took place. In 1750, the artist moved to Berlin under the patronage of Frederick the Great, a lover of Italian opera, who, in 1741, had commissioned the architect G.W. von Knobelsdorff to construct a theatre on the Unter den Linden. In 1746 he moved to Denmark, where he would stay until his death in 1761.

Both the present view and its pendant, *The Molo with the Palazzo Ducale seen from the Bacino di San Marco*, were inspired by engravings produced in 1736 by Louis Philippe Boitard (1694-1794), based on Canaletto's compositions. The work in the Lampronti collection is also linked to the print *View of Palazzo del Doge* (37.8x50 cm, signed «L.P.Boitard Sculp»), now at the Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo.

Compared to the printed prototypes, the canvas displays a closer framing of the scene, focusing on the everyday life on the Molo. The care displayed in the depiction of gestures and clothes, as well as the detailed description of architectural elements are recurrent features in Fabris's *oeuvre*, which tends to combine theatrical compositions and animated urban scenes.

1. See Mosco, 1974.

2. See J. Steenberg, *Fredensborg Slot (The Fredensborg Castel)*, Copenhagen 1969.



JACOPO FABRIS

(Venice 1689 – 1761 Charlottenborg)

View of the Grand Canal from the Piazzetta with the Punta della Dogana and the Church of Santa Maria della Salute

Oil on canvas, 71 x 110 cm

COMPARATIVE LITERATURE

A. Morassi, 'Anticipazione per il vedutista Jacopo Fabris', *Arte veneta*, XX, 1966, pp. 279-281; M. Mosco, 'Minori del Settecento veneto, Jacopo Fabris', *Arte illustrata*, VII, 1974, pp. 82-97; J. G. Links, *Canaletto and his patrons*, London 1977; 'Scenes and machines from the 18th century: The stagecraft of J. F. and Cityoen (sic) Boullé', *Performing arts resource*, XI, New York 1986, pp. XI-XIV, 2-51; F. Pedrocco, *Il Settecento a Venezia. I vedutisti*, Milan 2001, pp. 178-180.

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designers, the artist produced scenes with magnificent gardens, rooms, military camps, along with landscapes depicting ruins and buildings. It is thought that Fabris probably left the Hamburg theatre in 1730, coincidentally the same year in which his brief sojourn to London took place. In 1750, the artist moved to Berlin under the patronage of Frederick the Great, a lover of Italian opera, who, in 1741, had commissioned the architect G.W. von Knobelsdorff to construct a theatre on the Unter den Linden. In 1746 he moved to Denmark, where he would stay until his death in 1761.

The *View of the Grand Canal from the Piazzetta with Punta della Dogana and the church of Santa Maria della Salute* is a vivacious composition. In a clear crystalline daylight, lively groups of people conversing animate the *Piazzetta* in front of the canal. The waters of the canal are of an exceptionally intense green, a colour so potent it is reflected in the brown tones that illustrate the shadows of the architectural structures. The harmony and compositional balance of the colours create an atmosphere of serenity that emerges seamlessly from the painting.

There is an engraving by Luca Carlevarijs, entitled *View of Piazzetta della Zecca*,³ which Jacopo Fabris was probably inspired by the depiction of this specific cityscape. Fabris's ability to create his images from engraving patterns leads to a shift in attention from scenic compositions to the details of pretty, small-scale but well-defined gestures and dresses. When one combines these elements together with the solid rendering of architectural forms, it becomes clear that these are the most notable and pertinent components of his pictorial production.

There are several renderings of this specific view, though it becomes clear that a few minor details differentiate them. For example, a version presenting distinctly cooler colour tones and further pronounced features has made its appearance at an auction held by Dorotheum (the painting measures 95.5 cm x 128 cm).⁴ Also, another similar depiction is reproduced in the black and white images of the Zeri Photo Library as part of the Philadelphia Museum of Art collection (51.4 x 76.2 cm).



Engraving by Luca Carlevarijs, *View of Piazzetta della Zecca*

1. See Mosco, 1974.

2. See J. Steenberg, *Fredensborg Slot (The Fredensborg Castel)*, Copenhagen 1969.

3. The engraving was part of the *Le Fabriche e Vedute di Venetia del 1703* (D. Succi, *La Serenissima nello specchio di Rame. Splendore di una civiltà figurativa del Settecento. L'opera completa dei grandi maestri veneti*, Castelfranco Veneto 2013, I, p. 43, n. 51). Carlevarijs realized five different versions of them, dated between 1710 and 1727.

4. Auction October 2016, lot. n. 359.



GIOVANNI ANTONIO CANAL, called CANALETTO

(Venice 1697 – 1768)

A Capriccio of the Prisons of San Marco

Oil on canvas, 105.5 x 127.5 cm

PROVENANCE

Venice, Palazzo Mangilli-Valmarana, commissioned by Joseph Consul Smith (c. 1674-1770); London, King George III, 1762; Dr. Grant David Yeats (1773-1836); London, sale, Christie's, April 8, 1815, lot 95; London, sale, Christie's, January 13, 1816, lot 57; London, the Earl of Annaly; Liverpool, John H. Paris, 15 & 17 Leece Street, early 20th Century; Ireland, C.B. Ponsonby; New York, Koetser-Lilienfeld Galleries, 1948; Comte de Messay London, Edward Speelman; London, Partridge Gallery, 1957; New York, Schaeffer Galleries, until 1964; Hans S. Schaeffer.

LITERATURE

J. Smith, Manuscript Catalogue of his Paintings bought by George III (Windsor), among nos. 85-97; 'Note apart', no. 9 'The Publick Prison at St. Mark's'; W.G. Constable, *Canaletto*, Oxford, 1962, I, pl. 68; II, p. 356, no. 374; M. Levey, *The Later Italian Pictures in the Collection of Her Majesty the Queen*, London, 1964, p. 35, fig. XII; T.J. McCormick, 'The Canaletto Exhibition in Canada', *The Burlington Magazine*, CVII, No. 742, January 1965, p. 29, fig. 34; L. Puppi, *L'opera completa del Canaletto*, Milan, 1968, no. 227, reproduced; F. Vivian, *Il Console Smith mercante e collezionista*, Vicenza, 1971, p. 197; W.G. Constable, *Canaletto*, 2nd ed. revised by J.G. Links, Oxford, 1976, I, pl. 68; II, pp. 382, no. 374, 433, under no. 451, and 439, under no. 460; W.L. Barcham, *The Imaginary View Scenes of Antonio Canaletto*, New York/London, 1977, pp. 157-8 and 161, fig. 153; O. Millar, catalogue of the exhibition *Canaletto. Paintings & Drawings*, The Queen's Gallery, London, 1980-1, p. 68, note 1; J.G. Links, *Canaletto. The Complete Paintings*, London, 1981, no. 186, reproduced; A. Corboz, *Canaletto. Una Venezia immaginaria*, Milan, 1985, I, p. 333, fig. 399; II, p. 604, no. P 123, reproduced; W.G. Constable, *Canaletto*, 2nd ed. revised by J.G. Links issued with supplement and additional plates, Oxford, 1989, I, pp. LV-LVI, pl. 68; II, pp. 382, no. 374, 433, under no. 451, 439, under no. 460, and 737; M. Levey, *The Later Italian Pictures in the Collection of Her Majesty the Queen*, 2nd ed., Cambridge, 1991, p. 43, under no. 408, fig. 13; *The Splendours of Venice. View paintings from the Eighteenth Century*, exh. cat. ed by V. Rossi and A. Hilliam, Lampronti Gallery London, 1 - 24 December 2014, Rome 2014, cat. 1 pp. 6-9.

EXHIBITIONS

Louisville, Kentucky, The J.B. Speed Art Museum, *Eighteenth Century Venetian Painting*, 1948; Toronto, Art Gallery of Toronto, October 17 – November 15, 1964; Ottawa, National Gallery of Canada, *Canaletto*, December 4, 1964 – January 10, 1965; Montreal, Museum of Fine Arts, *Canaletto*, January 29 – February 28, 1965.

Listed by W.G. Constable in 1962 as depicting the 'Villa Pisani, Stra (?)', the correct subject of this painting was first identified by Mr Richard J. Zimmerman of New York (letter to W.G. Constable of March 27, 1962). The Public Prisons of San Marco are one of the most prominent buildings on the Venetian Molo, and stand adjacent to the Doge's Palace, to which they are joined by the Bridge of Sighs. As Lord Byron's poem, *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, recounts, "I stood in Venice, on the Bridge of Sighs; / A palace and a prison on each hand; / I saw from out the wave of her structure's rise / As from the stroke of the enchanter's wand".

The Prisons were designed around 1580 by Antonio da Ponte, who was also responsible for the Rialto Bridge (1588-90), and were completed shortly after his death in 1597. Built of Istrian stone, they contained the quarters for the Signori di Notte, the nocturnal security police, as well as a separate wing for women, cells for the victims of the Inquisition, an infirmary and a chapel. Among the earliest purpose-built prisons in Europe, they remained in use until 1919. Casanova famously escaped from them in 1756. Here they are transposed to the Venetian mainland and are reborn as the wing of a villa with such success that their true identity long went unrecognised.

This painting has the most distinguished provenance a painting by Canaletto can have, as it was painted for the artist's great patron and agent Joseph Consul Smith and subsequently passed, along with much of his collection, into that of King George III in 1762. It originally formed part of a series of thirteen canvases of similar size, presumably intended as overdoors to decorate the Palazzo Mangilli-Valmarana, Smith's house on the Grand Canal just above the Rialto Bridge.

Five of these are signed and dated 1744 (in June of which year Smith was appointed British Consul) and it must be presumed that all were executed at, or around, that date. With the exception of a representation of how Palladio's design for the Rialto Bridge might have looked if it had been executed,¹ all are fairly faithful renderings of prominent Venetian buildings or monuments, the character of each having been changed to a greater or lesser degree by the introduction of extraneous or imaginary elements.²

Smith, who was largely responsible for the painter's career from the early 1720s onwards, had kept many of Canaletto's finest productions for himself and already owned an unrivalled collection of Venetian views by the artist, and as such, he must have relished the novel element of invention that the series introduced. Venetians and Venetian residents, who enjoyed the great views of Venice on a daily basis, naturally tended to take more interest in *capricci*, because of their required use of imagination.

Canaletto's series was to be joined in Smith's collection two years later by a second series of eleven *capricci* of English, mainly Palladian, buildings in imaginary settings painted by Antonio Visentini and Francesco Zuccarelli, several of which are dated 1746. Although this suggests that the idea may have originated with Smith, after two decades of painting views of Venice Canaletto showed a clear desire for new challenges, and this commission took him back to the world of the imagination that he had left in the early 1720s.

In 1762 Smith sold the finest works of his collection, including all his paintings and drawings by Canaletto as well as such masterpieces by other artists as Vermeer's *Lady at the Virginals*, to King George III of England. Almost all of it remains in the Royal Collection, with very few exceptions. These include, however, this painting and three other components of the same series, as well as three components of the Visentini-Zuccarelli series, which were de-accessioned for reasons unknown by the early nineteenth century. This painting was offered in 1815 and sold in 1816 from the collection of Dr. Yeats, a Florida-born physician who had lived in England or Ireland since the 1780s and had settled in London in 1814. Furthermore, two other absent canvases by Canaletto have re-emerged. The one depicting San Francesco della Vigna³ was sold at Christie's, London, in 1838, and is now in a Milanese private collection, while the one depicting with the Redentore⁴ first reappeared at Sotheby's, London, July 6, 1988 (lot 53).

The only component of the series that has not been identified with certainty is the painting described as 'The Loggetta by Sansovino'. It should be considered, however, whether this could possibly be the *capriccio* of the loggia between the Piazza San Marco and the Calle dell'Ascensione, as suggested when it first reappeared with Colnaghi, London, in 1978.⁵ Due to its appropriate width, it was subsequently offered at Sotheby's, London, July 3, 1985 (lot 23) and is now located in an English private collection.⁶

Constable's statement (1962 and 1964) that this painting is signed 'A.C.' on the capital of the left-most arch of the prison is incorrect. The design on the capital is, in fact, a row of four coats-of-arms (three of them illegible). The statement is, however, repeated by Mc-



Cormick⁷ and Puppi⁸ and in later editions of Constable's catalogue. In general, Canaletto very rarely signed his paintings but did effectively go through a phase of signing them in the first half of the 1740s, possibly in response to the emergence of his nephew Bernardo Bellotto, a significant artist in his own right who often used the name Canaletto. While several components of this series of overdoors are signed, currently there is no reason to believe that the artist himself was attempting to distinguish the signed ones from those that he left unsigned.

Charles Beddington

1. See W.G. Constable under no. 457.
2. See W.G. Constable under nos. 451-6, 462 and 476.
3. See W.G. Constable under no. 460.
4. See W.G. Constable under no. 465; J.G. Links, *A Supplement to W.G. Constable's Canaletto*, London, 1998, p. 43, no. 459**, pl. 237.
5. *Pictures from the Grand Tour*, exh. cat. ed. J.B. Shaw (London 1978) no. 29.
6. J.G. Links, 1998, p. 43, no. 453*, pl. 237.
7. T.J. McCormick, 1965, p. 29.
8. L. Puppi, 1968, p. 58.



GIOVANNI ANTONIO CANAL, called CANALETTO and studio

(Venice 1697 – 1768)

Venice, San Pietro di Castello

Oil on canvas, 68 x 114 cm

PROVENANCE

Private collection, United Kingdom.

EXPERTISE

Charles Beddington, 2013.

LITERATURE

The Splendours of Venice. View paintings from the Eighteenth Century, exh. cat. ed by V. Rossi and A. Hilliam, Lampronti Gallery, London 1-24 December 2014, Rome 2014, cat 2, pp. 10-11.

This newly discovered *veduta* by the undisputed master of the genre, Giovanni Antonio Canal, known as Canaletto, with the collaboration of his studio, dates to 1738-9 and depicts the elegant *façade* of the Basilica of San Pietro di Castello in Venice. It was executed at the height of Canaletto's career, a time that inevitably coincided with the apex of Venetian view painting in its entirety. In pristine condition, the canvas is painted in the crystalline and translucent tones that marked Canaletto's style for a short period between circa 1738 and 1742.

Illuminated from the left by a warm light, the present composition is populated by an array of gondolas, hay-barges and boats sailing along the calm waters of the lagoon, whose ripples are described by the gentle white highlights characteristic of Canaletto's hand. The figures, delineated by fluid brushstrokes, animate the scene with their red, yellow and blue robes, while the white Istrian stones of the church *façade* and the surrounding buildings are depicted with painstaking attention to detail and surface texture.

The church's *façade*, carefully illustrated in the present picture, dates to the late 16th century and was inspired by a design by Andrea Palladio. Indeed, strong similarities can be noted between San Pietro di Castello and the celebrated Palladian church of the Redentore, also in Venice. To the right of San Pietro di Castello are the Palace of the Patriarch, the 15th Century bell tower, which lost its dome due to a lightning strike in 1822, and the Ponte San Pietro. Evidence of Christian worship on the site of present-day San Pietro di Castello can be traced back as far as the 7th century, when the Venetian lagoon was under the rule of the Byzantine Empire. In 1451, the church acquired an important status as the Cathedral of Venice, making it the seat of the bishop of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese, known as the Patriarch of Venice. Located in the *sestiere* di Castello in the eastern part of Venice, the church was the official centre of the city's religious life until 1807, when St Mark's Basilica, previously the Chapel of the Doge, became the cathedral.

It is probable that the composition was executed using the *camera obscura*, an instrument that projected a faint image of a view onto canvas or paper that could then be traced. Canaletto made frequent use of this device, but would adapt his scenes in order to disguise his use of a

mechanical tool. In this instance, the viewpoint set from above cleverly disguises his use of the instrument.

The present painting is one of four known versions of this composition. A drawing of San Pietro di Castello by Canaletto is now in the Royal Collection at Windsor Castle (inv. no. RL 7485). A canvas now in the National Gallery, London (inv. no. NG1059), was attributed by W.G. Constable and J.G. Links to the master and his studio, while a version in the collection of a Mrs B.M. Lindsay-Flynn, London, was defined by scholars as a studio piece. Another painting of the same subject, of larger scale (86 x 124 cm.), was sold at Semenzato, Venice, in 1987 and was considered by Links as autograph (written note, Constable and Links archive).¹

By the early 1730s, Canaletto was unrivalled in his field and continued to dominate the genre of *Vedutismo* until the end of the decade and beyond. Commissions from English noblemen marked his career during this period, largely through his agent Joseph Smith (later consul between 1744-60). Although no secure history of ownership for the present painting was known until the beginning of the twentieth century, when it was bought by a distinguished English collector, it is likely that it too was either acquired in Venice through Smith by an English grand tourist or, as was also common, commissioned directly from England.

This painting belongs to the finest period of Canaletto's production and dates from a time described by Charles Beddington as "the apex of the history of Venetian view painting". Although Canaletto had enjoyed a serene and unrivalled journey to the top of his field during the early to mid-1730s, his success would, by the end of the decade, be interrupted by the emergence of several rivals. Aside from his nephew, Bernardo Bellotto, Canaletto found competition in a variety of younger artists, including Antonio Joli, Giovanni Battista Cimaroli and, most closely to him, Michele Marieschi. The latter brought to Venetian view painting a quicker, livelier technique that directly challenged the perfect precision of Canaletto, as can be seen in the view of Ca' Pesaro in the present exhibition.

1. W.G. Constable - J. G. Links, *Canaletto*, Oxford 1976, p. 345-46, n. 315.



ANTONIO JOLI

(Modena 1700 – 1770 Naples)

Venice, a view of St. Mark's Basin with the Church of St. Giorgio Maggiore and the Giudecca

Oil on canvas, cm 56 x 97

EXPERTISE

G. Briganti, October 1990.

PROVENANCE

Sotheby's, London, sale 16 April 1980, lot. 18; Galleria Salamon, Milan, 1990.

LITERATURE

R. Middione, *Antonio Joli*, Soncino 1995, p. 66, tav. 11; M. Manzelli *Antonio Joli. Opera pittorica*, Venice 1999, p. 102, V.12, fig. 74; R. Toledano, *Antonio Joli: Modena 1770-1777 Napoli*, Turin 2006, p. 202.

Antonio Joli trained in his native city of Modena, in the workshop of Raffaello Rinaldi, known as *Il Menia*, where he specialised in perspectival views. At the age of twenty, Joli travelled to Rome in order to train under the direction of the celebrated masters Giovanni Paolo Panini and Codazzi, to whom he owed his international renowned style that would later become highly sought after.

Upon his return to Modena in 1725, after a brief *sojourn* in Perugia working on the interior decoration of Palazzo Donnini and Palazzo Crispoldi, the artist decided to move to Venice in 1732. There, he immersed himself in the world of stage design, and began to specialise in scenography – a successful activity which would accompany him throughout his career.

During the following decade, he visited the major European courts extensively, both in England and Germany as well as in Spain. These experiences were fundamental to his career, not only in terms of expanding his personal network but also for maturing into his own style. It is indeed during these years that his *vedute* increasingly featured the wide-angle perspective, a technique clearly inspired by the artistic out-

put of Vanvitelli and Canaletto.

From thereafter, his reputation as an acclaimed painter of *vedute* led him to become the most sought-after artist by foreign, aristocratic grand tourists in Italy, particularly amongst the English elite, such as, Sir William Hamilton and Lord Montague Brudenell, who were indeed among his most active patrons. Finally, in 1762 he decided to reside in Naples, where he became scenographer of the renowned Teatro San Carlo, and spent the rest of his life there.

The present *View of the Bacino of San Marco* dates back to his Venetian period (1732-1742) and represents the entire cityscape illuminated by the warm, Mediterranean sun and its billowing clouds, which add a dramatic effect to the scene. The composition recalls a similar one realised by Marieschi in 1735, previously in the prestigious Carlyle collection, though an even wider perspectival angle is applied to include the churches of Zitelle and Redentore. Towards the centre of the canvas, it is possible to identify the walls and squared towers, which distinctively adorned the *façade* of Palazzo Dandolo delle Torri but were demolished at the turn of the XIX Century.



MICHELE MARIESCHI

(Venice 1710 – 1743)

*The Grand Canal with Ca' Pesaro
and Palazzo Foscarini-Giovannelli,
from the Campiello of Palazzo Gussoni*

Oil on canvas, 58 x 86 cm

PROVENANCE

Private collection, United Kingdom.

EXPERTISE

Ralph Toledano, verbal communication; Dario Succi, verbal communication.

LITERATURE

V. Rossi and A. Hilliam, *The Splendours of Venice. View Paintings from the Eighteenth Century*, exh. cat. Lampronti Gallery, 1-12 December 2014, p. 12, cat. n. 3.

COMPARATIVE LITERATURE

D. Succi, in *Marieschi tra Canaletto e Guardi*, exh. cat., Turin, 1989, nn. 17-18; R. Toledano, *Michele Marieschi. L'opera completa*, Milan 1995, p. 102, n. V.32; F. Montecuccoli degli Erri - F. Pedrocco, *Michele Marieschi. La vita, l'ambiente, l'opera*, Milan 1999, nn. 88-89.

In this elegant and highly characteristic *veduta*, Marieschi depicts a section of the Grand Canal looking northwest from the *campiello* to the side of Palazzo Gussoni. On the left-hand side of the canvas is the Ca' Pesaro, designed for the influential Pesaro family by the renowned architect, Baldassare Longhena (1598-1682), and completed by Gian Antonio Gaspari in 1710. In 1898 the palace was bequeathed to the city by the owner at the time, Duchess Felicità Bevilacqua La Masa, and today it houses the International Museum of Modern Art and the Museum of Oriental Art. To the left of Ca' Pesaro is the seventeenth-century Palazzo Foscarini Giovannelli, its *façade* once decorated with frescoes. Further along the waterfront, part of the Church of San Stae can be seen, its white marble *façade* by Domenico Rossi (1709) standing out against the other buildings. Past the church is Palazzo Priuli Bon, originally built in the Fourteenth Century, immediately next to it stands Palazzo Giustinian, later Contarini, which was destroyed by a fire in the Eighteenth Century. In the distance, the pinnacles of Ca' Tron are just discernible against the white clouds.

This unusual, oblique composition was used on several occasions by the painter, whereby the flat surface of the water is juxtaposed with the vertical bulk of the buildings to create multiple vanishing points, enhancing the shimmering ripples on the Canal and the lively everyday scene on the embankment. Rather than being the most significant element of the composition, the ornate white *façade* of Ca' Pesaro is surpassed by the human presence in the foreground: an elegant group of noblemen gathers in conversation whilst waiting for a *gondola* to take them elsewhere; a pair of laundresses approach the water in dialogue; on the other side of the steps, another nobleman instructs a man where to place a basket containing produce; a woman peeks out a window, probably called by the knock of the figure at her door. It is a subtle but intensely poignant representation of mid-seventeenth-century Venetian life, which Marieschi executes in the style of Francesco Simonini (1686-

1753), to whom many figures in the artist's paintings are attributed.

An autographed version of the same composition, with slight differences, is in the Alte Pinakothek, Munich, paired with a view of the Piazzetta di San Basso.¹ Toledano dates the Munich pictures to 1737-38, whereas Succi favours a slightly earlier date of 1736-37 for the pair.² The authorship of the present work, which is slightly larger than the Munich picture, has been confirmed by both Toledano and Succi, who also suggest a similar dating. The expressive brushstrokes that delineate the figures, the thick texture of the clouds and the bright palette that animates the entire composition leave no doubt as to the work's attribution. Far from being a mere repetition of a well-known masterpiece, the painting possesses highly unique qualities, such as the idiosyncratic figures and the vessel passing in front of Ca' Pesaro, with its weathered sails and the pile of rags on deck, elements that differentiate the picture from its less-animated counterpart in Munich.

By the time that this picture was executed, Marieschi's reputation as a gifted view painter had spread throughout Venice, transforming him into one of Canaletto's greatest rivals. Following his apprenticeship in the studio of the history painter Gaspare Diziani (1689-1767), Marieschi established himself as an independent artist and received commissions for *vedute* from Johann Matthias, Graf von der Schulenburg (1661-1747) in 1736 and for the palace of Sanssouci, Potsdam in 1738. In 1741, he completed a set of twenty-one etchings of his views entitled *Magnificentiores Selectioresque Urbis Venetiarum Prospectus*, which were widely circulated and reproduced by later artists. Fortunately for Canaletto, although not for his posterity, Marieschi's short but prolific career was brought to an end by his untimely death in 1743 at the age of thirty-three.³

1. R. Toledano, 1995, p. 102, no. V.32.

2. D. Succi, 1989, p. 97.

3. F. Montecuccoli degli Erri - F. Pedrocco, 1999, pp. 24-37.



MICHELE MARIESCHI

(Venice 1710 – 1743)

Venice, the entrance to the Grand Canal with the Dogana on the left and the church of Santa Maria della Salute on the right

Oil on canvas, 96 x 154.5 cm

PROVENANCE

An English aristocratic collection, from which the fine Chippendale frame also derives.

EXPERTISE

Ralph Toledano, 21 May 2012.

LITERATURE

V. Rossi and A. Hilliam, *The Splendours of Venice. View Paintings from the Eighteenth Century*, exh. cat. Lampronti Gallery, 1-12 Dicembre 2014, pp. 18-19, cat. n. 6; *Gevaar & Schoonheid: Turner en de traditie van het sublime* exh. cat. eds., M. Vonk, J. Weener, Exhibition held at Rijksmuseum Twenthe, Netherlands, 5 September 2015 – 3, January 2016, (Waanders Uitgevers, 2015), ill. 109, p. 127.

COMPARATIVE LITERATURE

R. Toledano, *Michele Marieschi*, Milan 1995, p. 88, no V.24, p. 85, no. 19 a-c; D. Succi, *Michiel Marieschi: catalogo ragionato dell'opera incisa*, Bergamo 1987, cat. 16, pp. 76-77.

Born in Venice, Marieschi trained under the history painter and scenographer Gaspare Diziani (1689-1767). Interestingly, Marieschi's first recorded commission in 1731, was for the backdrop of the Carnival celebrations in Venice's Piazzetta. After working at the court of Saxony for a time, the artist was back in Venice by 1735. Here, his early production consisted mainly of *capricci* that blend medieval and Classical ruins in a serene Venetian landscape, characterised by a soft handling of the brush and a clear palette. Between 1736 and 1741 Marieschi was registered with the Venetian painters' guild, called the *Fraglia de' Pittori*, and it is in this period that the artist established himself as a painter of 'beautiful views of the Grand Canal, and of churches and palaces'.¹

The present painting is a partial view of the entrance to the Grand Canal – the sight that greeted all visitors approaching Venice from the sea – depicted from the northern bank of the canal. On the distant left hand-side of the composition is the Isola della Giudecca with the Church of the Redentore, commissioned by the Venetian Senate in 1575-77 and constructed by the celebrated architect Andrea Palladio (1508-1580) following a terrible plague. Further to the right is Punta della Dogana – the historic headquarters of the Venetian Republic's customs – a 17th Century building that terminates, on the eastern side, with a tower surmounted by the so-called *Palla d'Oro*, a sphere of gilt bronze supported by two mythological figures. The imposing church on the right is Santa Maria della Salute, recognisable thanks to its spectacular dome, which was erected as a votive offering after the city was hit by another deadly epidemic in 1630.

Marieschi's *vedute* of Venice are clearly indebted to Canaletto's detailed topographical views, yet they are characterised by a more spirited and atmospheric handling of the brush and a more vivid palette. It is interesting to note that the present composition is a combination of two other works by Marieschi: the view of the Dogana with the Redentore in the background now in the Sarah Blaffer Foundation, Houston, and the engraving of the Salute with the abbey of San Gregorio published in the artist's 1741 set of engravings entitled *Magnificentiores Selectio-*

resque Urbis Venetiarum Prospectus. The right side of this depiction is almost identical to the Houston composition, where the Abbey of St. Gregory is depicted on the far side. However, the greater distance from the Church of the Salute allows for a greater emphasis on the narrative of the gondoliers and their passengers, which animate the foreground of the canvas much like the print, which is now held at the Correr di Venezia. Of Marieschi's various versions of the subject,² all of which place the Church of the Salute roughly at the centre of the composition bar the Houston picture, the present painting offers a greater sense of the scale of the lagoon, and the life-like relationship between the sky, the water, the architecture and human activity.

Pervaded by a sense of joyous theatricality, Marieschi's views such as the present one strongly appealed to visitors on their Grand Tour and, due to this work's distinctive composition, Ralph Toledano has suggested it originated in a specific commission by a foreign patron, who wished to possess a particular memento of Venice. Toledano has also emphasised that the handling of the present work is typical of Marieschi, particularly in the skilled lucidity of the rippling water that reflects the buildings and the subtle rendering of the *façade* of the Church of the Salute, the Fondamenta, the Sagrato and the edge of the Abbey. Marieschi's touch is free and whimsical, sculpting painterly forms in grey, white and beige tones. The *macchiette* (the small figures that animate the scene) possess the characteristic rapid brushstrokes and fantasy of the artist, with the central figure of the gentleman in the red jacket surrounded by sailors and gondoliers being of particular qualitative technique.

The classicism and originality of the present composition has led Toledano to suggest dating this work to the last period in the brief career of Marieschi, a moment in which the artist had superseded his youthful baroque phase. This would locate the present work in the 1740s, after the publication of the volume of prints.

1. See P. A. Orlandi and P. Guarienti, *Abeceario Pittorico*, Venice 1753.

2. See Toledano, 1995, pp. 81-88, nn. V.18 a-e.



MICHELE MARIESCHI

(Venice 1710 – 1743)

*The Grand Canal at the confluence
with Rio di Cannaregio*

Oil on canvas, 62 x 97 cm

PROVENANCE

Private Collection, United Kingdom.

LITERATURE

R. Toledano, *Michele Marieschi: l'opera completa*, Milan 1988, p. 105, V 28,5.

COMPARATIVE LITERATURE

F. Montecuccoli degli Erri, F. Pedrocco, *Michele Marieschi. La vita, l'ambiente, l'opera*, Milan 1999, p. 181, cat. 21, cat. 185, p. 485.

The view depicts the entrance to the Cannaregio river and the Labia palace located on the same *fondamenta*, evoking, with an audacious and bold wide-angle perspective, the right bank of the Grand Canal, or more precisely, the end of the Riva di Biasio. The view derives from two fundamental sources: firstly, a well-known engraving by Michele Marieschi published in 1741; and secondly, an earlier view painted by Marieschi himself which is now conserved in the Gemäldegalerie, Berlin (GK No. 5680) and replicated in other signed versions from 1742, now located in the private collection of the Count of Malmesbury.¹

It is worth noting from the numerous articles written about the works the great fortuity of this original perspective design, which is marvelously scenic in its pictorial framing. It is likely that Marieschi was inspired by the Canaletto painting engraved by Visentini kept in Windsor in the Royal English collections² (I, X).

When examining this view one can notice how on the corner of the foundations facing the Palazzo Labia, the artist has depicted two

works by the sculptor Giovanni Marchiori, specifically the balustrade and statue of San Giovanni Nepomuceno, a martyr drowned in the Moldava. This is an element unfound in most other versions of the view or its related engravings, with the exception of the version belonging to the Count of Malmesbury.

These alternative versions were produced in May 1742 at the behest of Maria Labia, whose name is written on the pedestal alongside that of her servant, Antonio Gratolo. This detail is decisive for dating the work, which must be placed after 1742, in the last years of Marieschi's work before his death in 1743. It can be suggested that the version belonging to the Lampronti collection, with its vibrant materiality and wonderful vivacity, is reminiscent of Gian Antonio Guardi.

1. See F. Montecuccoli degli Erri – F. Pedrocco, 1999, pp. 408-9, n. 177; pp. 415-16, n. 185.

2. W. G. Constable, *Giovanni Antonio Canal, 1697-1768*, Oxford 1976, n. 251, *Grand Canal: San Geremia and the entrance to Cannaregio*.



FRANCESCO GUARDI

(Venice 1712 – 1793)

A Capriccio with Figures and a Bridge above a Canal

Oil on canvas, 31.6 x 52 cm

PROVENANCE

A private Pisan collection; Bellesi collection, Florence; Private collection, London.

LITERATURE

A. Morassi, *Antonio e Francesco Guardi*, Venice 1973, I, cat. no. 855, II, fig. 775; L. Rossi Bortolotto, *L'opera completa di Francesco Guardi*, Milan 1974, p. 134, no. 756; A. Morassi, *Guardi: I disegni*, Venice 1993, cat. no. 602, fig. 592.

A fine example of Guardi's activity as a painter of *capricci rustici*, a term devised by the scholar Antonio Morassi to define a genre that the artist embraced during his maturity, the present canvas plays on the light grey-blue tonalities of the sky and the earthen colours of the architecture, interrupted by dashes of white or red to define the individual figures. Guardi adopts light brushstrokes to convey a sense of the lagoon's misty atmosphere.

Distancing himself from the meticulous topographical views of Canaletto and Bellotto, Guardi sought to portray the poetic essence of his subjects with more impressionistic brushstrokes and a greater feel for the texture of the painted surface. In the present work, the figures are animated by the painter's vibrant touch and the architecture is defined by *chiaroscuro* gradations that endow them with a sense of depth and immediacy typical of the artist. The composition is cut diagonally, with houses and a church on the riverside to the right and a bridge in the background.

Like most of Guardi's works, the present canvas cannot be precisely dated, but its visual conceptualisation is comparable to a *capriccio* in the Uffizi, which could be a slightly earlier work.¹ However, the

composition is based on a signed, pen and ink drawing formerly in the collection of Paul Wallraf and published by Morassi,² described by the scholar himself as a '*bel foglio dell'epoca tarda*'. While the drawing demonstrates that Guardi had carefully planned out the composition for the present picture prior to execution, the various differences found in the finished work reveal that the artist further developed his ideas in the midst of the creative process. For example, the mother and son holding hands and the figure walking in the opposite direction, struggling with what appears to be a heavy load of laundry, are absent in the preparatory study. Conversely, he pinpointed the exact location and gestures of the other figures in the picture, such as the stooped, red-caped figure walking towards the bridge and the three figures on the bridge, all of which are present in both drawing and painting. The near-identical compositions suggest, therefore, that the Wallraf drawing is indeed preparatory for the present picture, which supports an association in date with Guardi's artistic maturity.

1. See Morassi, 1984, I, p. 468, no. 853; II, fig. 773.

2. *Op. cit.*



FRANCESCO GUARDI

(Venice 1712 – 1793)

Venice, a view of the Piazzetta looking south with the Palazzo Ducale

Oil on canvas, 47 x 65 cm

Signed 'F.CO GUARDI', lower left, beneath the standard-bearer

PROVENANCE

Eugène Fischhof collection, Paris; E. Arnholt, Berlin; H.G. Sohl collection, Düsseldorf.

LITERATURE

A. Morassi, *Guardi: Antonio e Francesco Guardi*, Venice, 1973, I, cat. no. 380; II, fig. 403; L. R. Bortolatto, *L'opera complete di Francesco Guardi*, Milan 1974, cat. no. 187; *The Splendours of Venice. View Paintings from the Eighteenth Century*, exh. cat. (London 2014), ed. by A. Hilliam, V. Rossi, Rome 2014, cat. n. 19, pp. 44-45.

COMPARATIVE LITERATURE

D. Succi, *Canaletto & Visentini, Venezia & Londra*, exhibition catalogue, Venice, Ca' Pesaro, October 18, 1986 - January 6, 1987, p. 200, cat. no. 21.

Antonio Morassi dates this splendid view, signed by Francesco Guardi, to around 1755-60, shortly after the execution of the painting depicting the same subject located in the Academy of Fine Arts, Vienna.¹ The present cityscape takes a more distanced viewpoint than the Vienna illustration, where the measurements are almost squared, allowing for a highly detailed and panoramic rendition of the Piazzetta. While several figural groups are identical in both pictures, such as the three senators that gather in the centre-right foreground, the work of art presented here places a greater emphasis on the human element, as an official reading a decree unites the *staffage* in the same activity. The finer execution of this painting and the fact that it is signed supports Morassi's proposition that it postdates the Vienna view. Indeed, the image arguably represents a more refined essay on the subject of the Piazzetta.

The composition is closely related to an engraving by Visentini after Canaletto in the Royal Library at Windsor Castle dating to the early 1740s, a second reproduction of which is in the Gabinetto Disegni e Stampe, Museo Correr, Venice.² In both views, the Piazzetta looks south towards the Molo, where the dome and campanile of San Giorgio Maggiore, a sixteenth-century Benedictine Church designed by Palladio, can be located in the distance to the left. The columns of St Mark and St Theodore can be seen on the periphery of the Molo. Further beyond, the Bacino di San Marco is depicted teeming with vessels.

The focal aspect of this partial view of the Piazzetta is the majestic west *façade* of the Palazzo Ducale, which is bathed in a warm afternoon light irradiating from the right. Below, in the square, gentlemen, senators and commoners congregate to listen to a decree being read by an official that stands upon the *Piera* (or *Pietra*) del Bando, a fragment of ancient porphyry column looted from Genoa during a thirteenth-century battle. To the far left of the canvas, on the steps to the southern end of the Basilica

di San Marco, sits a solitary standard bearer. Directly under the figure on top of the step is the painter's signature. In this composition, Guardi has captured certain anecdotal details, such as the street seller with his basket of goods seated upon the balustrade of Sansovino's Loggetta, the three pairs of playful dogs in the piazza and the figures leaning over the terrace of the Palazzo Ducale.

Interestingly, the painting now in Vienna was conceived as part of a set, from which three others were produced and still exist (*The Piazzetta towards the Library*, *The Piazza San Marco looking towards San Gemini-ano* and *The Molo with the Ponte della Paglia looking towards the Riva degli Schiavoni*)³ all deriving from Canaletto's prototypes.⁴ It was not unusual for Guardi to have executed particularly successful compositions on more than one occasion, as is the case with the present work. This theory is further borne out by the more confident handling of paint in the present version, where rapid, loaded brushstrokes effortlessly distinguish details, such as the brightly coloured hats of the figures that populate the piazza and the shimmering effect of the Palazzo Ducale in the late-afternoon sun. Furthermore, the warm palette and the topographical accuracy of the painting are fully indicative of Guardi's work during the latter part of the 1750s. Indeed, the frenetic, irregular brushwork characteristic of the 1770s and 1780s are entirely absent from our picture, which displays an expressive yet highly meticulous handling.

1. A. Morassi, 1973, vol. I, cat. no. 379, vol II, fig. 402.

2. Reproduced in D. Succi, *Canaletto & Visentini, Venezia & Londra*, exhibition catalogue, Venice, Ca' Pesaro, October 18, 1986 - January 6, 1987, p. 200, cat. no. 21.

3. A. Morassi, 1973, vol. I, cat. nos. 384, 343, 413, reproduced vol. II, figs. 405, 370, and 433 respectively.

4. Succi, *op. cit.*, pp. 198-9, cat. nos. 18, 20, and 19, all reproduced.



FRANCESCO GUARDI

(Venice 1712 – 1793)

*Venice, The Grand Canal with Rialto Bridge, the
Fondaco dei Tedeschi and the Palazzo dei Camerlenghi*

Oil on canvas, 63,5 x 74,5 cm

LITERATURE

The painting will be published soon in the monograph by Dario Succi dedicated to Francesco Guardi.

The present painting offers an unpublished illustration of the most picturesque and sought-after subjects in the genre of the Venetian cityscapes, namely a northern view of the Rialto bridge partially hidden by the magnitude of the polygon shaped Camerlenghi palace. To the right of the canvas cast under a shadow, one can observe the arches of what is commonly referred to as the ‘Old Factory’. Built in 1520-22, the ‘Old Factory’ was the location of the city’s main market, where anything from spices to jewels would have been sold. Beneath the arches and behind the shops, bankers would set up tables for transactions, using the two floors above as offices and storage facilities.

On the opposite side of the canvas, the viewer can witness how the intricate *façade* of the Fondaco dei Tedeschi is depicted magnificently by the artist through his application of a strong chromatic and luminous outline. The establishment itself was once the headquarters of the German merchants in Venice – *fondaco* means warehouse; *dei Tedeschi* translates as ‘of the Germans’ – which would remain a thriving center

of commerce until the 19th century. Its *façade* was famously frescoed by Giorgione and Titian in 1508. Unfortunately, the exposure to the humid Venetian climate damaged these frescoes, causing the surviving fragments to be kept in the Ca’ d’Oro.

The subject was first depicted in cityscapes by Canaletto and was later used by Francesco Guardi with variations in visual perspective, the composition scale and in the accentuated foreshortening of the buildings depicted. None of the versions currently listed by Antonio Morassi¹ follow the exact model of this specific canvas.

The work has been successfully attributed to Francesco Guardi by Dario Succi, who will include the painting presented here in his soon-to-be published monograph on the painter. The painting, according to Succi, dates back to 1756-1757.

1. See *I Dipinti*, Milan 1993, I, pp. 412-14, n.549-558; II, figs. 523-532.



APOLLONIO DOMENICHINI (MASTER OF THE LANGMATT
FOUNDATION VIEWS)

(Venice 1715 – c. 1770)

*View of the Grand Canal from the Rialto Bridge
towards Palazzo Foscari*

Oil on canvas, 57.1 x 85.2 cm

LITERATURE

The Splendours of Venice. View Paintings from the Eighteenth Century, exh. cat., Lampronti Gallery, Rome 2014, cat. n. 15, pp. 36-37.

The elegant linear touch, the lively scattered staffage and the bright morning palette of the present painting confirm its attribution to Apollonio Domenichini, formerly known as the Master of the Langmatt Foundation Views after the group of thirteen *vedute* held in this Swiss collection. The view depicts a stretch of the Grand Canal, looking southwest from the left side of the Rialto bridge, as it curves out of sight into the distance, with gondolas and other vessels populating it, shops lining the pier and figures, both in the water and on the shore, going about their everyday business. Indeed, Domenichini has taken great delight in portraying the paraphernalia of daily life. Washing hangs from balconies and at pier level, as the Venetian locals take advantage of the warm, dry weather, a myriad of chimney tops crown the palazzos, some releasing smoke and wooden roof-top verandas for relaxing upon and private gondolas parked outside the palazzos are all indications of the private and practical needs of the local residents.

In the foreground to the left, the sunlit Campo San Bartolomeo is animated by brightly coloured *staffage*. The lateral steps approaching the Rialto bridge at the far bottom left indicate the cityscape's view point. The ground level of the immediate building in the *campo* is lined with shops, which have not yet opened for the day's business. A small wooden hut is stationed on the pier, possibly for the sale of lottery tickets. Further on the left are Palazzo Dolfin Marnin and Palazzo Bembo lining the Riva del Ferro, followed by the Ponte della Pescaria, the Riva di Carbon and the imposing sixteenth-century structure of

Palazzo Grimani. In the far distance one can witness the *façade* of Ca' Foscari depicted just as the Canal makes a sharp right. On the right side of the Canal is the Fondamenta del Vin with its shops at pier level. The rest of the right bank is largely hidden from view by the slight curve of the Canal.

The same view was portrayed by Canaletto in a painting now located in the Queen's collection at Windsor castle, one of a series of twelve views of the Grand Canal with the same dimensions, which form the basis of the fourteen engraved plates in Visentini's *Prospectus Magni Canalis Venetiarum* (Venice, 1753).¹ It is highly likely that Domenichini would have had access to this set of engravings when producing the present painting, although the artist has somewhat modified the disposition of the *staffage* and the vessels, as well as the colour palette and the general casting of shadows. The Grand Canal in our painting is largely traffic-free, allowing Domenichini to paint the pastel reflections in the waters of the palazzos lining the left bank, while Canaletto's Grand Canal is more densely populated with vessels. Furthermore, the left bank of Domenichini's view is bathed in morning sunlight, whereas in the prototype it appears in shadow. It is also important to note how our artist has replaced the soft cloudy mist in Canaletto's picture with a dramatic, vertical cumulonimbus, which elongates the sky and serves as an elegant backdrop to the scene.

1. W. G. Constable - J.G. Links, *Canaletto*, 1989, I, n. 219, pl. 46, II, pp. 291-292, n. 219.



BERNARDO BELLOTTO

(Venice 1722 – 1780 Warsaw)

The Entrance to the Grand Canal looking West

Oil on canvas, 80 x 120 cm

PROVENANCE

Sacerdoty Gallery, Milan; Private Collection, United Kingdom.

EXPERTISE

R. Pallucchini, written communication.

Bernardo Bellotto received his early training in the workshop of his uncle, the illustrious ‘Canaletto’ from around 1735. It was his ability to emulate the style of his master at a particularly early stage of his career that revealed his exceptional artistic potential. Through sophisticated modifications of Canaletto’s technique, the young Bellotto acquired his own style by skillfully modeling the chiaroscuro effects and demonstrating a great deal of architectural precision. At the same time, however, it was his style that set him apart from the former, most notably in his *capricci*, where he demonstrated an experienced handling of architectural forms in a convincing setting modeled by light and shadow and animated by figures.

By acquiring a deep understanding of Canaletto’s technique, Bellotto learned how to articulate deep shadows and glimmers of light on the *façades* and lateral elevations of buildings, how to precisely replicate architectural motifs, and how to achieve a convincing representation of luminosity and mutability in depictions of water. Bellotto also followed his mentor’s construction methods by using a ruler and incision marks in his paintworks. He dedicated ample space to the representation of the sky and clouds, as we can see for example in the *Entrance to the Grand Canal looking West*, where luminescent variations are rendered with precision. The young artist created solid forms, clearly defined in a muted brightness without contrasts: a world free of stress, peaceful and appeased in its immobility, epitomised by the tall, empty sky. As Longhi wrote: “the prodigious handwriting of Bellotto, almost a Morse alphabet of lines, dots, dashes of every kind and colour, reveals the secret passage from the optical to the narrative which is almost comparable to some famous eighteenth-century Russian works”.

The present view demonstrates the artist’s confidence in replicating complex perspectival structures, as well as his striking capacity to conjure atmospheres that differ considerably from his prototypes.

The scene derives from a composition by Canaletto and is now in the Queen’s collection at Windsor Castle.¹ This painting was part of a series of twelve views commissioned by Joseph Consul Smith, which were the basis of the fourteen engraved plates in Antonio Visentini’s *Prospectus Magni Canalis Venetiarum* (Venice, 1735). Canaletto’s painting was dated between 1729-1730 circa.

For the *Entrance to the Grand Canal looking West*, the artist benefited from the pictorial techniques Canaletto applied in his original composition, handpicking various details to replicate and inventing the rest of the painting’s composition himself. To the left is the Dogana and Santa Maria della Salute, one of the largest Basilicas in Venice, designed by Baldassare Longhena and built as a monument of gratitude for the cessation of the plague of 1630-31. Further beyond one finds the tall tower of Palazzo Venier dalla Torreselle, built in the fifteenth century and demolished in the nineteenth century. Again in the far distance, one can witness the Church of the Carità with its distinctive campanile, which now hosts the Accademia Gallery. To the right of foreground is Palazzo Tiepolo, and beyond this structure, the artist has placed a line of sixteenth-century palazzos. Near the Dogana quay, a galley with oars and sails part set adds character to the scene.

The style, choice of colour palette and full-bodied brush strokes in addition to the depiction of the sky are all characteristic features of the young Bellotto. There are some significant changes when compared to the original composition created by Canaletto, which include the introduction of the second vessel in the foreground and two new figures in the centre boat. It can be suggested that these modifications contribute to the overall liveliness of the composition.

1. W.G. Constable-J.G Links, 1976, I, pl. 36, n. 161, II, pp. 262-3 (for *Entrance to the Grand Canal looking West*), I, pl. 49, n. 236, II, 301-2 (for *The Rialto Bridge from the North*).



BERNARDO BELLOTTO

(Venice 1720 – 1780 Warsaw)

The Rialto bridge seen from the South

Oil on canvas 60.5 x 77.5 cm

PROVENANCE

Private Collection.

EXPERTISE

Dario Succi, December 2015.

The painting depicting the view of the Rialto bridge as seen from the southern viewpoint, reproduced in the image here, is a magnificent work by Bernardo Bellotto (Venice 1722 - 1780 Warsaw). The artist is considered the protagonist of the XVIII century Venetian landscape painting, along with Luca Carlevarijs, Antonio Canal known as Canaletto and Francesco Guardi.

The panoramic view includes the Vin river to the left, the Palazzo Dolfin Manin on the right, the buildings overlooking the Ferro river, while the San Bartolomeo church bell tower emerges from the rooftops. In the background we can see the Rialto bridge and a slight corner of the Camerlenghi Palace facing on the opposite side the Fondaco dei Tedeschi. The Grand Canal, surrounded by buildings reflected in the emerald green river, is animated by countless gondolas and boats of various types. On the left, a *burchiello*, an elegant river boat, that was used to transport gentlemen from Venice to Padoa along the Brenta river, emerges from the shadow.

This painting is particularly important as a documentation of Bellotto's style and technique in the year 1740 when, as a young artist, he worked in his uncle's workshop as an apprentice and collaborator, already displaying exceptional pictorial skills. His collaboration with his uncle ended in 1743.

When studying Bellotto's work, it becomes apparent that the theme of Venetian *vedute* executed by the artist in his early years represents one of the most interesting topics in XVIII century Venetian art history. I myself had the opportunity to execute an in-depth research on the subject, as, for instance in the essay 'The young Bellotto' in the Padoa exhibition catalogue *Luca Carlevarijs and the XVIIIth century Venetian veduta* (1994, pp. 51-58.), as well as in both catalogues that I curated *Bernardo Bellotto, called Canaletto* (Milan 1999, Marsilio ed.) and *Bernardo Bellotto, the Canaletto of European courts* (Conegliano 2011, Marsilio ed.).

My careful investigation of Bellotto's Venetian period along with an accurate analysis of the painting under examination here, allowed me to create a chronological timeline of the phase when his striking career led him, in his early twenties, to work for the major European courts (Turin, Vienna, Dresden, Warsaw).

The present *veduta* was executed during the initial period of his artistic production when he was working in the workshop of Canaletto, and it is marked by a pictorial expression that both reflects his uncle's luminous style while also distinguishing itself for being less accurate in its

details. Additionally, his style reveals a gradual shift from Canaletto's golden light, towards a subtle effect of crystalline and transparent cold tones, with an increasing emphasis on a chiaroscuro contrast.

Of particular interest is the comparison of this painting with the two *vedutas* from Earl of Malmesbury's prestigious collection, that illustrate *The Rialto bridge with Palazzo Camerlenghi* and *The beginning of the Grand Canal*, which I published in the above-mentioned catalogues.¹ In both works the main features that characterize his style come to light. A marked graphic trait seems to strengthen the framework of the buildings while particular emphasis is given to the black of the gondolas and of the other boats which seem to be suffused by their own dense shadow within the expanse of water, its characteristic rippling effect rendered through the artist's well known quick brush strokes.

This painting, in its stylistic and chromatic analogies with the two important *vedute*, could have possibly been executed around 1739-1740. The canvas we are examining here, is based on the Canaletto prototype now at the Musée Jacquemart-André in Paris,² reproduced in an engraving by Antonio Visentini and also as part of a series of 38 *vedutas* titled *Urbis Venetiarum Prospectus Celebriores*, published in 1742.³ However, the Bellotto painting distinguishes itself for illustrating a closer perspective of the Rialto bridge, while omitting on the right the bridge on the San Salvatore river and part of the Palazzo Dolfin-Manin, as well as the first two buildings on the opposite Vin river. We can also see some differences in the representation of the figures and the boats. A perspective plan analogous to the one employed in the painting by Canaletto was used by Bellotto in a drawing that was rejected from his atelier, now in the collection of the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam, Rijksprintkabinett, inv. n.53:216.⁴

In this *veduta* of the Rialto bridge, submerged by a luminosity inclined towards cold tonalities, we can see scathing diagonal lines and the unmistakable elongated and square *macchiette* in the portrayal of the sky, which constitute the stylistic and technical attributes representative of the authentic works by Bellotto (and by Canaletto).

Dario Succi

1. Succi, 1999, pp. 31, 32; 2011, p. 22.

2. Constable, Links, *Canaletto*, ed. 1989, n.228 [a] 1.

3. D. Succi, *La Serenissima nello specchio di Rame*, Castelfranco Veneto 2013, vol. I, p. 204, n. 24.

4. Kozakiewicz, *Bernardo Bellotto*, 1972, cat. n. 15.



BERNARDO BELLOTTO

(Venice 1722 – 1780 Warsaw)

Venice, the Grand Canal from Ca' da Mosto looking towards the Rialto Bridge

Oil on canvas, 62.5 x 97.8 cm

PROVENANCE

Rudolf Chillingworth; His sale, Lucerne, Galerie Fischer, 5 September 1922, lot 113 (as Canaletto), where purchased for the present collection.

EXPERTISE

B. A. Kowalczyk, September 2016.

LITERATURE

M. Bleyel, *Bernardo Bellotto gennant Canaletto*, Darmstadt 1981, n. 4 (preparatory drawing); D. Succi, *Bernardo Bellotto nell'atelier di Canaletto e la sua produzione giovanile a Castle Howard nello Yorkshire*, in *Bernardo Bellotto detto Canaletto*, exh. cat., Milano, Barchessa di Villa Morosini, 1999, p. 59, reproduced fig. 42, pp. 62 and 73, n. 62.

Bernardo Bellotto received his early training in the workshop of his uncle, the illustrious 'Canaletto' from around 1735. It was his ability to emulate the style of his master at a particularly early stage of his career that revealed his exceptional artistic potential. Through sophisticated modifications of Canaletto's technique, the young Bellotto acquired his own style by skillfully modeling the chiaroscuro effects and demonstrating a great deal of architectural precision. At the same time, however, it was his style that set him apart from the former, most notably in his *capricci*, where he demonstrated an experienced handling of architectural forms in a convincing setting modeled by light and shadow and animated by figures. By acquiring a deep understanding of Canaletto's technique, Bellotto learned how to articulate deep shadows and glimmers of light on the *façades* and lateral elevations of buildings, how to precisely replicate architectural motifs, and how to achieve a convincing representation of luminosity and mutability in depictions of water. Bellotto also followed his mentor's construction methods by using a ruler and incision marks in his paintworks. He dedicated ample space to the representation of the sky and clouds, as we can see for example in the *Entrance to the Grand Canal looking West*, where luminescent variations are rendered with precision. The young artist created solid forms, clearly defined in a muted bright-



Bernardo Bellotto

Venice, the Grand Canal from Ca' da Mosto looking towards the Rialto Bridge (1735- 1738)

Quill and brown ink over pencil, 24.8 x 38.8 cm, Darmstadt (Fritzsche VZ 12; Kozakiewicz Z 202).

ness without contrasts: a world free of stress, peaceful and appeared in its immobility, epitomised by the tall, empty sky. As Longhi wrote: "the prodigious handwriting of Bellotto, almost a Morse alphabet of lines, dots, dashes of every kind and colour, reveals the secret passage from the optical to the narrative which is almost comparable to some famous eighteenth-century Russian works".

The composition of the present painting derives from an original work by Canaletto (c. 1735), today in the Wrightsman collection in New York. The version exhibited here, in its distinctively darker tonality and characteristic calligraphic handling of the canal, reveals the hand of the young Bellotto. The latter evidently had free access to his uncle's drawings, and in fact a number of his early works were close adaptations of existing works by Canaletto, leading many scholars to mistakenly attribute his works to Canaletto.

Concerning the *View of the Grand Canal from Ca' da Mosto looking towards the Rialto bridge*, there survives a preparatory drawing by Bellotto, stored at Darmstadt, which dates to the years 1735-1738, also close the dating of Canaletto's painting in Wrightsman collection (c. 1735); both of which the young artist clearly took inspiration from. There is knowledge amongst scholars in academia of a second version of the present view,¹ already in the London collection of Henry Oppenheimer, which has the dimensions of 59 x 91 cm, and that had previously been attributed to Canaletto. This mentioned work seems to have belonged to a group of paintings sold by the merchant Donaldson in the late nineteenth century, previously belonging to Castle Howard, a famous country house in Yorkshire built in the early eighteenth century by George Howard, the third Earl of Carlisle. Moreover, Castle Howard boasts a significant collection of *vedute* including works by Canaletto, Bellotto and Marieschi.

The version exhibited here, which went on sale in Lucerne in 1922, shows very few amendments in comparison to the preparatory drawing although its point of view is slightly shifted to the right, and one can witness two more arches of Fabbriche Nuove on the right. The work is dated to 1739-40, while the version of Castle Howard is dated around 1743-45, and is stylistically homogenous with other works of Bellotto constituting part of the prestigious collection.

On the far left, one can see the Ca' da Mosto one of the oldest palaces in Venice located in the district of Cannaregio, which from the sixteenth to the eighteenth century functioned as the Albergo del Leon Bianco, the most famous hotel in Venice, frequented by prestigious guests such as the Emperor Joseph II and the Grand Duke of Russia and his wife. Just beyond this building is the Palazzo Dolfin Manin, followed by the Fondaco dei Tedeschi which can be seen from the bottom right of the Rialto Bridge. On the far right, there are the Fabbriche Nuove, structures built by Sansovino where the ground floors were once occupied by various shops owners, while the upper floors housed offices for the merchant administration. Later on, the Fabbriche Vecchie were built between 1520 and 1522 by the architect Antonio Abboni, also known as 'Scarpagnino', after a terrible fire in 1513 destroyed most of the buildings that stood around the market. The buildings once housed the administrative courts that oversaw trade, navigation and supplies. Today the Fabbriche Vecchie host the Court of Venice.

Further onwards, one finds the Palace of Camerlenghi, known today as the Court of Auditors. The Grand Canal is animated by lively caricatures of gondoliers, grouped mostly outside of the hotel, while other gondolas cleverly lead the viewer's gaze to the Rialto Bridge.

1. S. Kozakiewicz, *Bernardo Bellotto*, Milano 1972, no. 16.



FRANCESCO ALBOTTO

(Venice 1721 – 1757)

a. *Venice, the Molo with Palazzo Ducale*

b. *Venice, the Grand Canal seen from the Chiesa degli Scalzi towards Santa Croce*

A pair, oil on canvas, 61 x 97.5 cm each

EXPERTISE

Filippo Pedrocco, 18 June 2012.

LITERATURE

L. Salerno, *I pittori di vedute in Italia*, cat. 61, fig. 61.2, pp. 210-211.

COMPARATIVE LITERATURE

P. J. Mariette, 'Abecedario de P. J. Mariette et autres notes inédites de cet amateur sur les arts et les artistes (ante 1774)', *Archives de l'Art Français*, Paris 1854, III, p. 264; W. G. Constable, *Canaletto: Giovanni Antonio Canal, 1697-1768*, Oxford 1962, nos. 101-07; R. Pallucchini, 'Francesco Albotto, erede di Michele Marieschi', *Arte Veneta*, XXVI, 1972, p. 222; M. Manzelli, 'Ulteriori notizie su Francesco Albotto, erede di Michele Marieschi', *Arte Veneta*, XXXVIII, 1984, pp. 210-11; M. Manzelli, 'Proposta per l'identificazione di Michele Marieschi e del suo alter-ego Francesco Albotto', *Arte Veneta*, 41, 1987, pp. 111-22; D. Succi, in *Marieschi tra Canaletto e Guardi*, exh. cat., Turin 1989, pp. 26-28 and pp. 165-82; R. Toledano, *Michele Marieschi. L'opera completa*, 2nd ed., Milan 1995, pp. 26-35 and pp. 40-44, nos. V.1.a-V.1.g; F. Montecuccoli degli Erri – F. Pedrocco, *Michele Marieschi. La vita, l'ambiente, l'opera*, Milan 1999, pp. 86-137; M. Manzelli, *Michele Marieschi e il suo alter-ego Francesco Albotto*, 2nd ed., Venice 2002, pp. 46-5.

Born in Venice, Albotto trained under the established painter of *vedute* Michele Marieschi, and upon the latter's death in 1743 took over his workshop and married his widow. To this day, only one signed work by Albotto survives¹ and in the past his compositions have often been misattributed to his master. Indeed, Albotto was a faithful pupil, to the extent that he was known to his contemporaries as "il secondo Marieschi" ("the second Marieschi").² Rediscovered thanks to the work of Rodolfo Pallucchini and, subsequently, Ralph Toledano, Dario Succi and Mario Manzelli, Albotto's corpus of paintings has increasingly been researched, yielding a clearer definition of the artist's own hand and style.

The present canvases were originally conceived as a pair, as testified by their identical format, harmonious palette and use of light. In the former, Albotto depicted a view very dear to the tradition of Venetian *vedutismo*. The Piazzetta, seen from the Bacino di San Marco, was the sight that greeted every visitor entering the city from the lagoon and had been frequently painted by Luca Carlevarijs, Gaspar van Wittel and Canaletto.³ On the far left, Jacopo Sansovino's Zecca, the old government mint, stands beside the Biblioteca Marciana, also designed by him and constructed in 1537. Behind them is the Campanile, whereas to the right there are the two columns of Saint Mark and Saint Theodore, along with a glimpse of Saint Mark's Clocktower and Basilica. Closing the composition on the right are the southern *façade* of Palazzo Ducale and the Ponte della Paglia, leading to the Prigioni, the Venetian state's prisons.

In the view of the Grand Canal Albotto chose a more unusual subject. In the foreground, on the right, is the Church of Santa Maria di Nazareth, known as the Scalzi, which was designed by Baldassarre Longhena. Past the Scalzi, Albotto depicted the Church of Santa Lucia, a 12th Century parochial church that was dedicated to Saint Lucy in 1279, as the saint's

remains were kept there. The church was demolished in 1861 as part of the plans to build the city's train station, which to this day bears the church's name. On the other side of the canal Albotto painted the Church of San Simeone Piccolo, its classical portico abutting on the waterfront and its dome standing out above the Venetian roofs. Beyond it, along the Fondamenta di Santa Croce, is the Monastery of Santa Croce, which was founded in the 8th Century and gave its name to the local *sestriere* ("district"). This church was also torn down in the 19th Century, to create the Papadopoli gardens that still exist today.

Albotto's illustration of the section of the Grand Canal here described constitutes a crucial testimony to its appearance in the 18th Century, a configuration that was radically altered less than a hundred years later. In addition to this, the canvas depicting the Piazzetta offers another insight into the city's past, as Saint Mark's Clocktower appears as it was before 1755, when its side wings were raised following a plan by the architect Giorgio Massari. Notably, this detail offers a *terminus ante quem* for Albotto's execution of the canvases.

Heir to Canaletto and Marieschi's tradition, Albotto simultaneously drew closely on their compositions and established his own painterly vocabulary. Eschewing Marieschi's subtly loaded brush in favor of a more crisp surface texture, Albotto paints with firm touches that immortalize the scene and convey a sense of stillness and tranquility. This tendency is also reflected in his figures, which are sparse and mostly located in boats and gondolas, rather than busily walking along Venetian squares and alleyways.

1. Now private collection, see *Canaletto, Venezia e i suoi splendori*, exh. cat., 2008, p. 179.

2. See P.J. Mariette, 1854, III, p. 264.

3. See Constable, 1962, nos. 101-07.



a



b

FRANCESCO TIRONI

(c. 1745 – 1797)

a. *View of the Church of Santa Maria della Salute towards St. Mark's Basin*

b. *View of the Rialto Bridge with the Palazzo dei Camerlenghi*

A pair, oil on canvas, 52 x 69 cm each

PROVENANCE

Palazzo Corner Spinelli, Venice

COMPARATIVE LITERATURE

D. Succi, *F. Tironi. Ultimo vedutista del Settecento veneziano*, Mariano del Friuli 2004, pp. 36-38, 44-45, fig. 24 p. 53; D. Succi, *Il fiore di Venezia. Dipinti dal Seicento all'Ottocento in collezioni private*, Gorizia 2014, p. 249, fig. 178.

Of Friulan origins, the artist Francesco Tironi had embarked on ecclesiastical life of priesthood, a well-established attribute we know from his obituary. He died the same year as the fall of Venice, a singular coincidence which has made it possible to believe that the artist was the last exponent of view painting and its glorious history during the Serenissima Republic.

The lack of research on Tironi as a painter has led, unfortunately, to a scarcely defined pictorial corpus to the extent that his name has been purposefully obscured in the past because of uncertain artistic origins related to individual view paintings.

Documentation about the Friulian artist is rare and derives almost entirely from the writings of Venetian canonist Giannantonio Moschini (1773-1840) in his literary work *Of Venetian literature from the eighteenth century to our days* (Venice 1806, volume III, 78). After mentioning the works of Modenese Francesco Battaglioli, Moschini writes: "Here I will add that we must mourn the death of our Francesco Tironi, who died too early, because the Ports of Venice and the islands drawn by him and engraved by our Antonio Santi [sic] make us realize how much more was to come". Later, in his memoir *Of Engraving in Venice before 1840*, Moschini remembers how Antonio Sandi had aspired to transpose the tonal importance of Francesco Tironi's beautifully animated designs in his engravings.

Interestingly, sources from the 18th century define Tironi exclusively as

a designer. Indeed, his pictorial activity is mentioned for the first time by F. De Boni in his *Artist Biography* (Venice 1840, p. 1014), where the artist is referred to as the "Venetian prospective painter".

Furthermore, Tironi's style is defined by an eclectic taste, where elements of pictorial expression deriving from both Canaletto and Francesco Guardi are fused with originality, as can be seen in the two views presented here by the Lampronti Collection. The great compositional skill of Canalettian origin merges with a dynamic scenic background where multiple boats congregate in the water. Generally, the colours of the buildings are of a golden brown tone, while the water is depicted in an intense green, almost brown hue so as to create an interplay of reflexions which animates the numerous boats afloat.

In *View of the Church of Santa Maria della Salute*, the setting diagonally marks the magnificent hill of Santa Maria della Salute and the adjacent convent of San Gregorio. This spectacular scenographic composition is followed by the moving lyricism of the buildings of the Punta della Dogana placed within the backdrop of the Riva degli Schiavoni. A similar version, published by Dario Succi (cm 58 x 75), dates back to 1780, a date which also seems well-suited for the Lampronti version.

There is a slightly larger version of the luminous *View of the Rialto Bridge with the Camerlenghi Palace* published by Succi (57 x 74 cm), which the scholar dated to 1770.



a



b

WILLIAM JAMES

(Active in England between 1746-1771)

The Molo with the Piazzetta and the Ducal Palace from St. Mark's Basin

Oil on canvas, 63.5 x 47 cm

PROVENANCE

Private collection, United Kingdom

LITERATURE

The Splendours of Venice. View Paintings from the Eighteenth Century, exhibition catalogue (London 2014), ed. by V. Rossi and A. Hilliam, Rome 2014, pp. 40-41.

According to Edward Edwards's *Anecdotes of a Painter* (1808), William James was a 'pupil or assistant' of Canaletto during his English sojourn between 1746 and 1756.¹ Edwards tells us that he 'painted land-scapes, chiefly views in the neighbourhood of London'. Circulation on the international market of numerous *vedute* with their original frames, which include plaques inscribed with the artist's name, attest to James's rich production of topographical pictures. Many of these are taken from the repertoire of Canaletto, leading in recent years to the inclusion of the artist as an honorary member of the Venetian school of *Vedutisti*.²

Information regarding James's life and career is scarce. According to his nineteenth-century biographer, 'he for several years resided in Maiden-lane, Covent-garden, and his works were shown at his shop-window'.³ We know that James later moved to the Golden Head in May's Buildings, St Martin's Lane, an area frequented by artists and craftsmen during his time. He exhibited at the Society of Artists of Great Britain from 1761 to 1768 and at the Royal Academy from 1769 to 1771. Most of his exhibited pictures were views of London, apart from a series of Egyptian temples, which he exhibited at the Royal Academy between 1768 and 1770. Edwards argues that 'as these were subjects which he had never seen, they could only be considered as copies'.

It is precisely James's activity as a copyist that makes him an intriguing case study. The present painting replicates a section of Canaletto's celebrated *Bucintoro Returning to the Molo on Ascension Day* in the collection of Her Majesty the Queen at Windsor Castle, which was engraved by Visentini for the first edition of his *Prospectus*.⁴ The annual celebrations commemorating the Sposalizio del Mar, symbolic of Venetian seafaring supremacy, are represented in Canaletto's picture by the elaborate state barge, or '*bucintoro*', stationed at the Molo in front of the Ducal Palace. As this vessel is absent from James's rendition, which only depicts a corner of the Ducal Palace, as well as the temporary buildings in the Piazzetta, which housed a Venetian market in the event of the celebrations, the original subject is lost. Instead, James presents a narrow frame of the *veduta*, which, in the absence of the celebrations conveyed in the prime, would have appealed to prospective clients as a typical representation of the Molo as they may have witnessed it during their Grand Tour. The Zecca is can be witnessed on the far left, with the

white *façade* of the Libreria next to it and the Campanile protruding above. At the centre of the frame is the Piazzetta with the columns of St. Mark and St. Theodore, and part of the Clock Tower and St. Marks beyond. The view closes with a section of the Palazzo Ducale on the right. In the foreground, gondolas and other vessels carrying passengers, which are absent from the original and thus derive from James's own imagination, add to the narrative element of the scene.

Richard and Samuel Redgrave, in their *A Century of British Painters*, state that 'many of [Canaletto's] mechanical modes of imitating Nature were adopted by our landscape painters of this period'.⁵ The authors proceed to make mention of William James's series depicting the banks of the Thames, in which 'he resorted to ruling for the lines of his buildings, and to the still more mechanically conventional treatment of the ripple in water as expressed by Canaletto'. These rather amusing observations made in 1947 suggest that Canaletto's influence was detrimental to the history of British topographical painting, rather than reinvigorating as we would be inclined to argue today. Regardless of this, the authors' remarks are valuable in assessing the lessons learnt by painters such as James from Canaletto's presence in England.

For the present *veduta*, James has indeed adopted Canaletto's ripples, as well as the precision in depicting architecture through the use of the *camera obscura*, but here achieved probably by tracing Visentini's engraving. Attempts have been made to mimic Canaletto's shorthand for the *macchiette*, although these naturally appear rather more laboured. The palette of colours used is rich and evocative, conjuring up a sense of the lagoon's atmosphere. The indirect absorption of Venice's splendours bestows an almost surreal quality upon James's *vedute*, whereby the static imitation of Canaletto's prototype is reminiscent of a distant memory, or in our artist's case, his imagination.

1. E. Edwards, H. Walpole, *Anecdotes of painters, who have resided or been born in England: with critical remarks on their productions*, London 1808.

2. F. Pedrocchi, *Il Settecento a Venezia. I vedutisti*, Milan 2001.

3. E. Edwards, H. Walpole, 1808, p. 17

4. W.G. Constable, *Canaletto*, Oxford 1989, II, n. 335, pp. 357-8, I, pl. 64.

5. R. Redgrave, S. Redgrave, *A Century of British Painters*, New York 1981.



WILLIAM JAMES

(Active in England between 1746-1771)

a. *Venice, a view of the Grand Canal with a regatta, looking north-east from Palazzo Balbi to the Rialto Bridge*

b. *Venice, a view of the Molo with the Bucintoro on Ascension Day*

A pair, oil on canvas, 71.5 x 91.5 cm each

PROVENANCE

European private collection.

According to Edward Edwards's *Anecdotes of a Painter* (1808), William James was a 'pupil or assistant' of Canaletto during his English sojourn between 1746 and 1756.¹ Edwards tells us that he 'painted landscapes, chiefly views in the neighbourhood of London'. Circulation on the international market of numerous *vedute* with their original frames, which include plaques inscribed with the artist's name, attest to James's rich production of topographical pictures. Many of these are taken from the repertoire of Canaletto, leading in recent years to the inclusion of the artist as an honorary member of the Venetian school of *Vedutisti*.² Information regarding James's life and career is scarce. According to his nineteenth-century biographer, 'he for several years resided in Maid-en-lane, Covent-garden, and his works were shown at his shop-window'.³ We know that James later moved to the Golden Head in May's Buildings, St Martin's Lane, an area frequented by artists and craftsmen during his time. He exhibited at the Society of Artists of Great Britain from 1761 to 1768 and at the Royal Academy from 1769 to 1771. Most of his exhibited pictures were views of London, apart from a series of Egyptian temples, which he exhibited at the Royal Academy between 1768 and 1770. Edwards argues that 'as these were subjects which he had never seen, they could only be considered as copies'.

It is precisely James's activity as a copyist that makes him an intriguing case study. The present painting is a slight variant of the original composition by Canaletto at Windsor, in the collection of Her Majesty the Queen. The view is taken from the Palazzo Foscari on the sharp bend in the Grand Canal, known as the *Volta de Canal*, roughly equidistant from its entrance onto the Bacino di San Marco and the Rialto Bridge. Looking North-East from there the stretch of the canal is visible, as far as the Rialto Bridge, part of which is shown in the far distance, with the roof and dome of the church of Santi Giovanni e Paolo and beyond. Apart from being a particularly well balanced composition, and one in which water occupies the full breadth of the canvas, the view has the relatively unusual distinction of being observable from high above the water, from the viewpoint of the Palazzo Foscari. A *macchina* erected next to the Palazzo Balbi was the focal point of the annual regatta (gondola race), where the winners received their flags and prizes, therefore the view is known above all for its setting for regatta depictions.

This painting is accompanied by a pendant showing *The Bucintoro returning to the Molo on Ascension Day*, after a Canaletto formerly with Bellesi in London.⁴ The annual celebrations commemorating the Sposa-

lizio del Mar, symbolic of Venetian seafaring supremacy, are represented in Canaletto's and James's pictures through an elaborate state barge, or '*bucintoro*', stationed at the Molo in front of the Ducal Palace.

The pairing of the two subjects is unusual, as the sobriety of this painting contrasts with the gaiety of the pendant. However one must know that Canaletto was the one who previously proposed this unconventional combination, as in the case of the Grand Canal sold at Sotheby's in 2005 (7/07/2005, lot 47)⁵ and its pendant sold in Paris in 1993 (15/12/1993, lot 13).⁶

Richard and Samuel Redgrave, in their *A Century of British Painters*, state that 'many of [Canaletto's] mechanical modes of imitating Nature were adopted by our landscape painters of this period'.⁷ The authors proceed to make mention of William James's series depicting the banks of the Thames, in which 'he resorted to ruling for the lines of his buildings, and to the still more mechanically conventional treatment of the ripple in water as expressed by Canaletto'. These rather amusing observations made in 1947 suggest that Canaletto's influence was detrimental to the history of British topographical painting, rather than reinvigorating, as we would be inclined to argue today. Regardless of this, the authors' remarks are valuable in assessing the lessons learnt by painters such as James from Canaletto's presence in England.

For the present *vedute*, James has indeed adopted Canaletto's ripples, as well as the precision in depicting architecture through the use of the *camera obscura*. Attempts have been made to mimic Canaletto's shorthand for the *macchiette*, although these reproductions naturally tend to appear more laboured. The palette of colours used is rich and evocative, conjuring up a sense of the lagoon's atmosphere. The indirect absorption of Venice's splendours bestows an almost surreal quality upon James's *vedute*, whereby the static imitation of Canaletto's prototype is reminiscent of a distant memory, or in our artist's case, his imagination.

1. E. Edwards, H. Walpole, *Anecdotes of painters, who have resided or been born in England: with critical remarks on their productions*, London 1808.

2. F. Pedrocchi, *Il Settecento a Venezia. I vedutisti*, Milan 2001.

3. E. Edwards, H. Walpole, 1808, p. 17

4. W.G. Constable, *Canaletto*, Oxford 1989, vol. II, pp. 364-66, cat. no. 347, reproduced vol. I plate 65.

5. R. Redgrave, S. Redgrave, *A Century of British Painters*, New York 1981.

6. *Ibidem*, vol. I, vol. II, no. 340, reproduced plate 64.

7. R. Redgrave, S. Redgrave, 1981, p. 39.



a



b

CIRCLE OF CANALETTO

(active c. 1750-60)

View of the Grand Canal with Rialto Bridge from the South

Oil on canvas, 67 x 114 cm

PROVENANCE

Private collection, United Kingdom.

This richly coloured *veduta* is an incredible eighteenth-century copy of the painting by Canaletto in the Duke of Bedford's collection at Woburn Abbey,¹ which looks towards the Rialto Bridge from the Campo San Bartolomeo, where the Campo is approached from the opposite direction. The viewer may gain an understanding of the viewpoint by comparing the steps that lead up to the bridge in the far-left corner of Domenichini's painting with the same steps, here seen in the lower-right corner. The Fondamento del Vin, where barrels of wine were unloaded, is here depicted on the left, with the Palazzo dei Dieci Savi, the sixteenth-century seat of the superintendents of taxes, joining the bridge next to it. On the right, beyond the bridge, is the Fondaco dei Tedeschi, the thirteenth-century Veneto-Byzantine palazzo that at the time was a slum inhabited by Venice's Ottoman Turkish population.

Illuminated from the right, elegant figures populate Campo San Bartolomeo and can be just witnessed crossing the Rialto Bridge. Gondoliers drive their passengers across the Canal, and shops are open for business along the Fondamento del Vin. The high-key palette, which is emphasised locally in the blue-green roof of the bridge and the Canal, the brown-red tiles and the scarlet, yellow and blue colours of the figures, invigorate the painting, and also create a contrast with the light-blue sky and its fleecy white clouds.

The present picture is larger than the original, which measures 47 x 80 cm, and whether or not our artist had direct access to it is fundamen-

tally questionable, as it was bought by John, the 4th Duke of Bedford (1710-71), along with twenty-four other views, directly from Canaletto following the commission he gave to the artist during his visit to the lagoon city in 1732. Although it is sometimes stated that parts of this collection of views were engraved by Visentini in his *Prospectus Magni Canalis* (1735, 1742, 1751), there is no existing plate of the present view, eliminating the possibility that the artist may have worked directly from a print. He may, however, have known of the drawings now in the Queen's collection at Windsor Castle, where the view point is identical, but the *staffage* and vessels are arranged differently, and the wooden hut is represented.³ Bernardo Bellotto was active in his uncle's studio from 1736, and while the quality of the present painting would not discredit him as a possible author, it is unlikely that a prolific and commercially-minded artist would have taken four years to complete a commission.

It is therefore probable that the author is a precocious, albeit anonymous, follower of the great *Vedutista*. The refined brushwork, harmonious palette and skilled overall execution of the present picture demonstrate the hand of an artist who was closely associated with Canaletto and his circle.

1. W. G. Constable - J.G. Links, *Canaletto*, 1989, I, n. 225, pl. 47, II, p. 294.

2. *Ibid.*, II, n. 4, pp. 188-9.

3. *Ibid.*, I, nos. 591, 592, pl. 108, II, pp. 509-10.



GIUSEPPE BERNARDINO BISON

(Palmanova 1762 – 1844 Milan)

The Grand Canal looking north-east from Ca' Foscari to the Rialto Bridge

Oil on canvas, 47.5 x 74.5 cm

PROVENANCE

Private collection

LITERATURE

The Splendours of Venice. View Paintings from the Eighteenth Century, exhibition catalogue (London 2014), ed. by V. Rossi and A. Hilliam, Rome 2014, pp. 54-55.

The impeccable skill of Giuseppe Bernardino Bison, often described as the last heir to the Venetian tradition of *Vedutismo*, is displayed in all its vividness in the *Grand Canal from Ca' Foscari towards the Rialto Bridge* here present. The work is closely based upon Canaletto's painting depicting the same subject in the Uffizi, Florence, with differences in the handling of the palette, which is injected here with a vibrant series of blues and greens. Both pictures depict the Grand Canal from Palazzo Balbi. On the left Palazzo Querini Dubois and Ca' Bernardo appear, and further beyond one can locate the Palazzo Tiepolo Businello and Palazzo Barzizza, an illustration which follows the compositional structure of a drawing in the Accademia.¹ The Rialto Bridge can just be made out in the distance with the Basilica of Santi Giovanni Paolo behind it, while to the right another sequence of patrician residences appears, such as, Palazzo Contarini dalle Figure, the four Mocenigo palazzos, and towards the Rialto, Ca' Corner Spinelli and Ca' Grimani.

Bison was perhaps best known during his lifetime as a painter of decorative frescoes in the interiors of elegant villas, which he would execute in the style of Costantino Cedini and Giambattista Tiepolo, and like many of the painters in this catalogue, as a painter of theatrical backdrops, following in the footsteps of his eighteenth-century predecessors. The artist's training at the Accademia di Venezia proved fundamental to his



Courtesy of Sotheby's

John Scarlett Davis (Leominster 1804 – 1845 London)

The Long Gallery At The Uffizi, Florence

Signed and dated lower left: J. SCARLETT DAVIS 1834 - Oil on canvas - 109 x 143.5 cm.

activity as a painter, as it was there that he would be encouraged to study Antonio Visentini's engravings after Canaletto's *vedute*, as well as learnt how to paint *staffage* in the eighteenth-century manner, whereby thick, bright globules of paint are used to suggest forms and details with great precision and resourcefulness. Pedrocco has shown that Bison's method often consisted on making tracings of prints from Visentini's *Prospectus* directly onto the canvas, which would then be adapted to include different elements, explaining the small format of many of the painter's Venetian views.²

The present painting is unusual in that it is not based upon any of Visentini's engravings, but on a painting by Canaletto that has no printed equivalent. Bison therefore must have had direct access to the picture, which is believed to have been acquired in 1728 by the art historian Francesco Maria Niccolò Gabburri through the art dealer Anton Maria Zanetti. The painting is mentioned in 1742 in a register documenting the movement of objects from the Pitti Palace to the Palazzo Vecchio, and in 1798 in another document tracking the transferral of paintings from the Pitti Palace to the Uffizi, where it is presently on display.³ We know that Bison undertook an Italian sojourn between 1834 and 1838, during which time he visited Florence, Rome, Naples and Paestum, which in return broadened his '*vedutist*' repertoire. It is therefore highly likely that he saw Canaletto's picture on display at the Uffizi, as it is reproduced in a painting depicting *The Long Gallery in the Uffizi* by John Scarlett Davis, which was exhibited in 1834 at the Royal Academy in London, the year that Bison arrived in Florence.⁴ One can imagine Bison seated at his easel, replacing the female artist in Davis's picture, creating a copy of Canaletto's painting, which he surely must have had the curators remove from its high-up position near the ceiling in order to better study it. What is further unusual about Bison's copy is that it is just that: a copy, and not a variation, unlike most of his Venetian subjects, where the vessels, staffage and other details are modified. This may be explained by the fact that he was working directly from the painting rather than the print. One can suggest that perhaps the scale of the project gave him less freedom to devise his own elements, or perhaps a patron had requested a direct copy of the Uffizi picture. Certainly, this notion is substantiated by the fact that the paintings have near identical dimensions, the original measuring 45 x 73 cm. Alternatively, Bison may have been intrigued by Canaletto's picture, which is often cited as being a stylistic anomaly within the painter's *oeuvre*. The issue of the painting's authorship was raised by Constable, who stated that the handling of the water and the buildings "has raised some doubt with its being by Canaletto, but are consistent with its being an early work".⁵ The painting's full attribution was later supported by Bożena Anna Kowalczyk, who suggested that the work reveals a phase of technical experimentation in which Canaletto sought to create delicate transparent effects by spreading a layer of blue-grey paint over the red-brown preparation.⁶

An interest in conveying Venice's translucent qualities is also present in this painting, which recreates the fluid handling of Canaletto's view. Where Bison's rendition comes into its own is in the astonishingly clear use of colour, which electrifies the image and imbues the eighteenth-century view with a modern touch.

1. W.G. Constable, J.G. Links, *Canaletto*, 1976.

2. F. Pedrocco, *Il Settecento a Venezia. I vedutisti*, Milan, 2001, p. 229.

3. V. Conticelli, in G. Pavanello, *Canaletto: Venezia e i suoi splendori*, Venice 2008, n. 29, pp. 258-9.

4. The picture was sold in a Sotheby's Old Master and British Paintings sale, lot 214, 6 Dec. 2012.

5. W.G. Constable, *Canaletto*, 1962, p. 290.

6. B. A. Kowalczyk, *Bernardo Bellotto and the capitals of Europe*, New Haven-London, 2001, p. 190; Canaletto, 2005, p. 78.



GIOVANNI MIGLIARA
(Alessandria 1785 – 1837 Milan)

Venice, Campo Santi Giovanni e Paolo

Oil on canvas, 40.8 x 58 cm

EXPERTISE

Egidio Martini, written communication; Dario Succi, 23 February 2007.

Giovanni Migliara, one of the most important Italian landscape painters of early-19th century, initially dedicated himself to the production of small-scale works, depicting whimsically imaginative subjects inspired by the iconographic repertoire of Gaspare Gallari on to small boxes and medallions. At the same time, he would begin to draw closer to the great eighteenth-century *vedutisti*, specifically Canaletto, Bellotto and Guardi.

The painting presented here is part of the medium-sized pictorial works created by Migliara in the first period of his artistic career, which corresponds approximately the years following 1825. In this period, the artist sought to reproduce the style of the great Venetian masters, by personally recreating the atmosphere and charm of the eighteenth-century *veduta* and architectural *capriccio* in a completely original and inventive manner.

This specific representation of Campo Santi Giovanni e Paolo was first conceived by Canaletto in two large canvases of the mid-1720s, now located in Dresden, as well as the equivalent rendering, painted for Stefano Conti of Lucca.¹ Michele Marieschi's engraving of a slightly more distant cityscape, plate 15 of his *Magnificentiores Selectioresque Urbis Venetiarum Prospectus* (1741), established the success the composition amongst a wider public, and soon it became one of the most popular Venetian pictorial subjects.

The Campo Santi Giovanni e Paolo is here portrayed from a southern viewpoint of the piazza together with the *façade* of the church of Santi Giovanni e Paolo, one of the largest churches in Venice, located on the right. The focus of the view is the Scuola Grande di San Marco, one

of the city's six major guilds, founded in 1485 by Pietro Lombardo and Giovanni Buora and completed by Mauro Codussi ten years later. Furthermore, Andrea del Verrocchio's famous equestrian statue of the *condottiere* Bartolomeo Colleoni is depicted on the far right. The execution of this sculpture was finished in 1496 and it would stand as the only outdoor public monument in the city until 1866.

In the painting here discussed, Migliara adapted Canaletto's composition in order to grant the spectator a total view of the church on the right, filling the scene with figures garbed in vivaciously coloured robes. Also similar to Canaletto, is Migliara's taste for architectural detail and subtle use of light, both of which seamlessly create a naturally descriptive and vibrant narrative.

When referring to the present painting, one must emphasize the originality of the compositional and perspective configuration, an exemplary technique which differentiates the artist's depiction greatly when compared to traditional eighteenth-century lagunar portrayals. Indeed, the Mendicanti canal is animated by various boats while the field in close proximity is populated by multiple splendid figures, creating a marvelous pictorial execution which seamlessly combines influences from both Canaletto and Guardi. Moreover, the colour palette impresses a peaceful and subdued atmosphere of a distinctly preromantic taste through the application of luminous tones and soft shadows.

1. See Constable, *Canaletto*, 2nd ed. revised by J.G. Links reissued with supplement and additional plates, Oxford, 1989, vol. I, pl. 58; II, nos. 305 and 304 respectively.



CARLO GRUBACS

(Perast c. 1801 – 1870 Venice)

View of Venice during the Festa del Redentore

Oil on canvas, 67.5 x 100 cm

PROVENANCE

Private collection, Bologna.

EXPERTISE

F. Mazzocca, 8 May 2010.

EXHIBITION

Lo splendore di Venezia: Canaletto, Bellotto e i vedutisti dell'Ottocento, exh. cat. ed. by D. Dotti, Brescia, Palazzo Martinengo Cesaresco, 23 January - 12 June 2016, Milan, 2016, cat. n. 51, pp. 172-173; *L'impressionismo di Zandomenighi*, exh. cat., ed. by F. Dini and F. Mazzocca, Padova, October 2016-January 2017, cat. 5, p. 77.

LITERATURE

D. Trevisani, notice n. 14, in *Tableaux Anciens du XVIe au XIXe siècle. Old Master Paintings from the XVI to the XIX Century*, exh. cat., Paris Tableau, Palais Brongniart 13-16 november 2014, eds. L. Marchesini, M. Nobile, D. Trevisani, Cento (FE), 2014.

Carlo Grubacs, the leading figure in Venetian *veduta* painting in the period following Canaletto and Guardi, maintained the glory of this illustrious artistic past while also profoundly influencing the history of Italian art in the centuries to come. Originally from Eastern Europe, this maestro lived and worked prevalently in the lagoon city, earning for himself the title of “il veneziano” (“the Venetian”). His early artistic formation cannot easily be documented, and few details are available regarding his apprenticeship. During the early decades of the 19th century, Venice would continue to boast a highly relevant position within Italy’s cultural panorama, thanks to the complete renewal of the *Accademia* promoted by count Leopoldo Cicognara, one of many innovations undergone at the time. This renowned institution, which admitted Grubacs as a student in 1818, was responsible for the artistic instruction of La Serenissima’s best artists, later favouring their careers through its annual exhibitions. An unparalleled connoisseur of 18th century landscape painting, in particular Francesco Guardi, Grubacs nevertheless developed a new sense of color and quickly affirmed his own autonomous means of expression that would gain him a wide success both in the Veneto region and among the most prestigious international collectors.¹ This sparkling *veduta*, that can be dated to the 1840s, portrays the crucial moment of the festivity that was unquestionably most beloved by Venetians for centuries, namely the Festa del Redentore, celebrated every third Sunday of July since 1577 to commemorate the city’s liberation from the black plague. During the preceding night, St. Mark’s basin and the entire lagoon between Venice and the Lido are invaded by boats overflowing with Venetians who celebrate by eating and drinking while they wait for the most spectacular moment to arrive when the fireworks begin to explode – exactly the moment depicted by Grubacs. Choosing

an extremely low horizon line, he succeeds in encompassing the vastness of the entire lagoon, from the Zattere to the shore of the Giudecca, the island on which the Palladian church of the Redentore was built as an *ex-voto*.

The kaleidoscopic effect created by the light and colours of the fireworks bursting in the night offers Grubacs an excellent chance to demonstrate his impeccable technical mastery. While the extraordinary chromatic effects created by the flares in the sky and their sudden fall over the calm reflective surface of the lagoon are rendered in an exemplary manner, Grubacs also unsurprisingly succeeds in conveying of the roar produced by the crackling fireworks and the cheerful voices of the murmuring and festive crowd. The spectacular artifice of the fireworks takes the equally astonishing spectacle of the night sky as its background, against one of those Prussian blues that only the summer season can offer, pervaded by the silver light of the full moon. It is as if nature were mirrored by the artifice of man, for example in the halos of coloured light around the lanterns on the boats, expressed by Grubacs with unparalleled technical skill and an enchanting touch, experienced by as if we were witnessing it through a magnifying lense. As Fernando Mazzocca observes in the expertise that accompanies this work, the painting can be compared, by way of the choice of its identical point of view, to the landscape of the *Zattere ai Gesuati* at the Museo Civico di Bassano del Grappa, and, through the nocturnal motif, with the *Bombardment in Marghera* conserved at the Museo Correr in Venice.

1. Many of his works are found in private collections and important European museums, such as the Kestner Museum in Hanover and the Stadtmuseum in Oldenburg (for both a biography and numerous bibliographic references, see the updated entry in C. Tonini in *Pavanello*, 2003, II, pp. 743-744).



GIOVANNI GRUBACS
(Venice 1830 – 1919 Pola)

a. *The bridge of the “Redentore”
to the Lido Santa Maria Elisabetta*

b. *The Feast of Santa Marta*

A pair, oil on panel, 32.7 x 50.5 cm each

PROVENANCE

Private collection, United Kingdom.

EXPERTISE

Prof. Ugo Ruggeri, 24th May 2010.

The Grubacs family, originally from Perast (in the Gulf of Cattaro, Montenegro), settled in Venice in the second half of the eighteenth century, and Carlo (Venice 1802-1878), the son of a merchant marine captain named Giovanni Battista, was the first of his family to dedicate himself to painting, having had some early success as a view painter. His works seemed to be a reworking of Canaletto models, executed as if seen through a less sumptuous and opulent lens, closer to the reality of Venice in the first half of the nineteenth century. Carlo Grubacs had six sons, among whom Giovanni and Marco (Venice 1838-1910) would follow to his footsteps, drawing inspiration from a concept of view-painting born in the late eighteenth century, and applying an updated and innovative use of reflected light and unprecedented effects that enlivened the architectural elements of the city.

Giovanni, having learned the rudiments of the profession in his father's studio, was admitted to the Accademia di Belle Arti of Venice in 1847, but his studies were interrupted the next year by the outbreak of the revolution that concluded with the Austrian siege on the city. His first significant painting is the canvas in the Museo Correr in Venice titled *Marghera, the Bombardment in the Year 1848-1849*, signed on the reverse, “Gi. Grubacs, fece il 26 luglio (1848)”, and portrays one of the dramatic bombings of the Marghera Fort held by the Venetian patriots and captured by the Austrians on May 26-27, 1849. In 1854, having finished his academic studies, Giovanni took part for the first time in the annual exhibition of the Accademia, submitting two perspective views in a neo-eighteenth-century taste depicting *The Grand Canal*, and *The Riva degli Schiavoni*. In the following years he was a regular participant in Venetian exhibitions, at the Istituzione Veneziana in 1855, 1856, 1858, 1861, 1862, 1854, and 1866, and later at the Società Veneta Promotrice di Belle Arti in 1867, 1869, 1872, and 1880.

The artist almost always exhibited paintings of Venetian cityscapes. Interestingly, at the beginning of his career he strictly followed eighteenth-century prototypes, whereas in the later decades to come his style would be influenced by the suffused naturalism of Ippolito Caffi which gave a new life and expression to his depictions, infusing them with more realistic figural groups and dramatic long views of the city bathed in an opalescent atmosphere, brightened with sudden flashes of light that create unique luminous effects.

The paintings under consideration are splendid examples of the delicacy with which Giovanni Grubacs interpreted view-paintings of the Grand Siècle, depicting two typical Venetian festivals that were established after the plague of 1575-1577, and are still celebrated to this day: the Festa del Redentore (“Feast of the Redeemer”) and the Feast of Santa Marta. The first work illustrates the celebration of the Festa del Redentore on the third Sunday of July, which commemorates the building of the Church of the Redentore in the Giudecca by order of the Venetian Senate (4 September 1576). The bridge was erected as a votive offering for the city's deliverance from the plague, the scourge that caused the death of more than a third of the population of Venice in just two years. Meanwhile, the pendant painting depicts the Feast of Santa Marta, celebrated on the eve of the saint's feast day (July 29th) in the poor fishing neighbourhood surrounding the church known by the same name. The scene depicts the local fishermen arriving on the shore, where musicians, dancers, cooks, members of the nobility and the poor fisher-folk alike dance, feast and celebrate together.

Both works are reinventions of themes and views explored in the paintings of Antonio Giovanni Canal. Indeed, the *Feast of Santa Marta* is inspired by the painting by Canaletto in the Gymnasium zum Grauen Kloster, Berlin, probably known to Grubacs through the engraving by Giovan Battista Brustolon.¹ The series of watercolours by Canaletto was engraved by Giambattista Brustolon (Venice 1712 – 1796) in a spectacular collection that was first published in Venice by Ludovico Furlanetto in 1766 and from 1773-1775. The series proved so successful that it was reprinted three times; the first by Furlanetto, the second by Teodoro Viero in the 1790s and the third printed prior to 1831 by Giuseppe Battaglia.

Grubacs was also a close imitator of his father, the painter Carlo Grubacs and the strong stylistic similarities with the work of his father suggest an early dating for the present pendants, which fundamentally demonstrate a profound interest in an eighteenth-century revival of Venetian view painting. The revival of this tradition, initiated by Giuseppe Bernardino Bison, would be significantly pervasive throughout the nineteenth century.

1. G.W. Constable, *Canaletto*, Oxford 1962, n. 360.



a



b

LOUIS CLAUDE MOUCHOT

(Paris 1830 – 1890)

Venice, masquerade party

Oil on canvas, 38 x 61,5 cm

Signed 'C. MOUCHOT' (lower left)

The Orientalist painter Louis-Claude Mouchot was born in Paris on August 25, 1830. In 1847 he was admitted to the École des Beaux-Arts and was taught by the history painters Michel Martin Drolling (1786-1851) and Jean-Hilaire Belloc (1787-1866). Furthermore, Mouchot's relationship with Léon Belly (1827-1877), with whom he would travel to Egypt in 1857, was incredibly significant to the development of his artistic personality.

His debut was held at the Salon in 1859, where he would later exhibit works on many occasions (in 1865, 1867, 1868).

There are several well-known works by Louis Mouchot representing Venice, such as the painting belonging to the Lampronti collection presented here. Under the arches of St. Mark's Square, on a bright cloudless day, we witness a cheerful group of people animating the pictorial scene. The Marciana Library is depicted in light tones of beige and is barely a faint spot of colour, it is essentially only a blurred shape within the pictorial composition. The lively individuals located on the porch

and pavement are also depicted in similar hues of sepia, which seamlessly emphasizes the ruby red, blue and yellow ochre colours of each individual's clothing, creating an intense and vivid aesthetic palette. The same compositional display is also evident in other works by the artist, such as *The Boarding of the Gondola in Venice*, auctioned by Christie's in September 2016, and in other Venetian masquerade paintings all of which date back to 1880.

The work of art is animated by several quotidian scenes. On the right, a man dressed as a harlequin draws a dog's attention, while to the left a woman wearing a pale white and scarlet red gown is elegantly handing a flower to a man just as the young boy by her side insistently attempts to attract her attention.

The composition is delightful, harmonious and well-balanced in the tones of its palette as well as its composition.

Mouchot's works are on display in the museums of Bordeaux, Dijon, Narbonne, Paris (Orsay), Rennes, Troyes, and Versailles (Trianon).



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Eighteenth Century View Paintings

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On the cover:

Giovanni Battista Cimaroli, *The Celebrations for the Marriage of the Dauphin of France with the Infanta Maria Teresa of Spain at the French Embassy in Venice in 1745*, detail.

This exhibition brings together a fine selection of Venetian cityscapes, romantic canals and quality of light which have never been represented with greater sensitivity or technical brilliance than during the wondrous years of the eighteenth century.

The masters of *vedutismo* – Canaletto, Mareschi, Bellotto and Guardi – are all included here, represented by key works that capture the essence and sheer splendour of Venice. The desire to record one's surroundings drove the demand for the *vedute*, offering contemporary viewers a vivid insight into the period's taste, culture and economy. The diffusion of prototypes via prints, particularly those of Antonio Visentini, namely his series of engraved plates, the *Prospectus Magni Canalis Venetiarum* (1735-1742), inspired by the work of Canaletto, dramatically influenced the development of the genre, and has, since then, generated much debate concerning the twin-notions of originality and replication in art.

However, rather than slavishly imitating the art of the past, artists such as Cimaroli and Domenichini became well-known for producing highly personalised reimaginings of

earlier models through their liveliness of vision and masterful execution.

Later nineteenth-century painters such as Bison and Zanin reveal the profound influence that Canaletto and his rivals had upon future generations of artists. The culture of reciprocity between the Italian Peninsula and England during the Grand Siècle, epitomised by the relationship between Canaletto and Joseph Consul Smith, is a key aspect of the history of *vedutismo*, and this culture of international artistic exchange continues to resonate to this very day. Many viewers will be familiar with such views of Venice through excursions to the National Gallery or the Royal Collection at Windsor Castle and, of course, from visiting the city itself, in person.

We hope, therefore, that this exhibition and catalogue will be of special interest to London audiences and beyond, who we invite to enjoy the evocative and resplendent qualities of Venice, La Serenissima.

Cesare Lampronti

1. JOSEPH HEINTZ THE YOUNGER

(Augusta c. 1600 – 1678 Venice)

Venice, The Bull Hunt in Campo San Polo

Oil on canvas, 61 x 91.5 cm

PROVENANCE

Private Collection, United Kingdom.

Joseph Heintz the Younger, son of the painter and etcher Joseph Heintz the Elder (Basle 1564 – 1609 Prague) served his apprenticeship as a painter under his stepfather Matthäus Gundelach in Augsburg between 1617-21. Sometime before travelling to Italy, the Younger Heintz may have also attended the workshop of Matthias Kager (1621), a miniaturist and former pupil of Hans Rottenhammer in Venice. By 1625 he was already active in Italy, particularly in Venice and Rome, where he worked on a number of paintings which can be considered “capricciosissimi” for their association of monsters to classical or mythological heroes.

In 1632 he was in Venice, as demonstrated by the votive altarpiece he painted for the Church of San Fantino. Between 1634 and 1639 he was registered in the “fraglia dei pittori” (the Guild of Saint Luke), while later on, between 1648 and 1649 he painted the *Entrance of Patriarch Federico Corner in San Pietro di Castello* and the *Bull hunting in Campo San Polo*, which is under discussion here, and *The Breeze on the Boat* (Museo Correr, Venice). On 30th November, 1655, the painter was called along with Nicolas Régnier to evaluate the collection of Giovanni Pietro Tiraboschi. In 1663, the Count Czernin, plenipotentiary of Emperor Leopold I, commissioned to him some works.

The unaffected and dazzling eclecticism of Heintz the Younger, a sign of the diversity of his tirelessly-pursued interests, makes it almost impossible to place the artist’s output in chronological order. His ability and willingness to follow various vogues between the years 1648 and 1655 meant that some of his paintings were still tied to Mannerism as shown in the *Transference of Loreto*, while others were inspired by the farcical impetus of Jacques Callot, just as in the present painting in the Lampronti collection. Heintz was able to apply his own style where appropriate, switching from the furious density of narrative typical of Callot’s style and evident in Heintz’ depictions of the Venetian festivities, to more atmospheric still-lives such as *The Seller of Fish*, previously in a Roman collection, which are comparable to those of the Neapolitan painters Recco and Ruoppolo. He can therefore rightfully be called a “painter of multiple brushes”.

In the fourth and fifth decades of the 1600s, Heintz the Younger established himself in Venice as a painter of *stregozzi*, created as pastiches of details literally taken from well-known northern and Italian engravings. This composition type was greatly appreciated by Venetian patrons who had recently rediscovered the works of Bosch. Differently from the late fifteenth-century Flemish artist, Heintz abandoned any moralistic intent to recast Bosch’s monsters into facetious creatures inspired by the tone of Callot’s works. He was the first and only artist to pursue this successful genre in the Venetian region.

Time after time the artist includes his little monsters, the real main protagonists of this artistic genre, regardless of the dedication of the painting to Pluto, Orpheus, or Medea. Drawn from prints by Pieter Brughel the Elder and especially from Jacques Callot’s work, in *The Temptations of Saint Anthony* deformed beings such as *Barbariccia*, a knight riding a dragon, or a *strigozzo* (witch-like monster) with a lobster, inhabit compositions suspended between the grotesque and the fanciful.

The setting for this splendid and lively bull-hunting scene here represented connects it with this venetian milieu, as it portrays the Church of San Polo and focuses on the Gothic-Moorish *façade* of Palazzo Garzoni, which was demolished in the early nineteenth century. The painting represents one of the most popular and gory Venetian festival traditions that were held at Carnival. It consisted in a tame bullfight where the bull - although oxen were often used instead of a bull - had to defend itself from the attacks of specially trained dogs. Usually, the dog tried to grasp onto the bull’s ear from the side, biting impetuously. Sometimes the bull escaped from the circle of shooters surrounding it, charging towards the crowd, spreading panic among the bystanders and hilarity among the observers seated on balconies or behind windows. In the Lampronti painting, the chaos of the violent game does not affect a group of gymnasts competing in a game known as the Strength of Hercules, a competition which typically took place during Carnival between the two Venetian fractions of the Castellani and Nicolotti. The aim of the challenge consisted in constructing a human pyramid with assistance of wooden beams.



2. BERNARDO CANAL

(Venice 1664 – 1744)

Venice, Cannaregio with the Ponte dei Tre Archi and Palazzo Valier

Oil on canvas, 73.5 x 112.5 cm

LITERATURE

V. Rossi, A. Hilliam, *The Splendours of Venice: View Paintings from the Eighteenth Century*, Rome 2014, pp. 26-27.

First described as ‘pitor’ in a document dating back to 1696, Bernardo Canal worked as both a painter and stage designer. Little information survives regarding the early years of his activity, however we know that from 1716 to 1718 he collaborated with his brother Cristoforo and his son Antonio – who would become known as Canaletto – in the designing of stage sets for the Venetian theatres of San Cassiano and Sant’Angelo. In 1719 Bernardo travelled to Rome, where he had been commissioned to paint the sets for the Teatro Argentina. His son Antonio, then in his early twenties, would accompany him to Rome.

The majority of Canal’s dated *vedute* were executed between the late 1730s and 1740s. This evidence has led art historian Filippo Pedrocco to suggest that the painter decided to devote himself to view painting only in his artistic maturity, possibly as a result of the increasing success of his son’s compositions of that genre. The corpus of Bernardo’s view paintings was first analysed by Giuseppe Fiocco in the 1947 catalogue for the exhibition *Pittura Veneta*, in which two representations of Piazza San Marco by the artist from the Salom collection at Segromigno Monte – including *Venice, Piazza San Marco towards the church of San Gem-*

iniano, signed and dated ‘Bernardo Canal Fecit 1735’ – were displayed. The paintings discussed by Fiocco form a stylistically homogeneous group, which the present picture bears a close resemblance to. The composition’s view-point, located little above the canal’s water level, is typical of Canal’s style. Equally characteristic of the artist’s vocabulary is the light that crisply defines each building’s surface and creates vivid reflections in the lagoon. The sky above is defined by a palette of intense light blues and whites, which gently contrast with the ochre colours of the buildings.

In the present work, the artist depicts a relatively rare *veduta* in the Venetian 18th Century repertoire. An engraving, published by Domenico Lovisa in 1717 in his *Il Gran Teatro di Venezia* shows various compositional similarities and could have possibly served as reference for this historically interesting view. Whereas the Ponte dei Tre Archi Bridge, built in 1688 following a project by the architect Andrea Tirali, still exists, the Palazzo Valier, a remarkable 14th Century building with a *façade* embellished by fourteen windows divided by columns, was damaged by a fire and subsequently demolished between 1789 and 1805.



3. GIOVANNI RICHTER (Stockholm 1665 – 1745 Venice)

Venice, view of the Piazzetta

Oil on canvas, 94 x 127 cm

PROVENANCE

Palazzo Corner Spinelli, Venice.

Born in Stockholm in 1665, Richter left his homeland when he was approximately thirty years of age to move to Venice, where he remained until his death. It is presumed that his artistic training in Sweden was completed in close proximity to his father, a goldsmith, or his brother, a miniaturist. His first individual commission, however, is believed to have been for the painterly decorative campaign conducted in the royal castle of Drottningholm. His Venetian sojourn is believed by scholars to have occurred between the full maturity of the Friulian Luca Carlevarijs and that of the rising star, Canaletto, with whom Richter was able to gain employment in various projects commissioned by local and foreign buyers passing through Venice. Indeed, the urban Venetian views, a genre that Richter specialised in, began to generate much interest at the time, particularly among non-Italian patrons.

Richter's views were often inspired by the works of Carlevarijs and, as a consequence, they were frequently attributed to the latter as demonstrated by the emblematic case of the Wadsworth Atheneum painting in Hartford, a work depicting the *Votive Bridge for the celebration of the Madonna of Health*. Pedrocchi reminds us that Richter's name appears quoted in the inventory of drawings compiled by Florentine collector Francesco Gaburri, and is registered as a student of Carlevarijs himself. Furthermore, the artist was also in close contact with Antonio Balestra,

who we know wrote a letter to Gaburri himself in 1717 to recommend that he purchase some of Richter's works, which he described as being "made with all his love...". This statement professes a particular approval towards the artists' accomplishments and sheds light upon Richter's production of paintings featuring religious subjects, which to this day remain relatively obscure and understudied.

Although the painter conceptualises and conceives the view as a means of evoking an infamous place, Richter's views are also characterised by the fact that he reveals a particular interest in everyday reality, in the vivid scenes embedded in an architectural setting of a fairy-tale-like atmosphere, from which one can also delineate stylistic influences from Michele Marieschi.

The splendid view of St. Mark's Square presented here is a unique example of Richter's style. In this painting the *palette* is clear and elegant, and the expressive dots characterized by their natural and long silhouette reflect the style of Antonio Pellegrini. Moreover, the scenic accentuation of the architectural structures, depicted with the utmost attention to detail, the tendency of a vertical compositional development, as well as the originality of the perspective, which unnaturally enlarges the scenographic stage, are all fundamentally characteristic of the artist's pictorial technique.



4. GIOVANNI BATTISTA CIMAROLI

(Salò 1687 – 1771 Venice)

The Celebrations for the Marriage of the Dauphin of France with the Infanta Maria Teresa of Spain at the French Embassy in Venice in 1745

Oil on canvas, 97.9 x 133.9 cm

PROVENANCE

Comte Pierre-François de Montaigu, Venice and Paris; and by descent.

LITERATURE

The Splendours of Venice. View Paintings from the Eighteenth Century, exh. cat., Lampronti Gallery, Rome 2014, cat. n. 13 pp. 32-33; *Sérénissime! Venise en fête, de Tiepolo à Guardi*, exh. cat., ed. by R. Herda-Mousseaux, Paris, Musée Cognacq-Jay, Paris 2017, cat. 18, p. 87-89.

COMPARATIVE LITERATURE

L. Cust, 'A fête at Venice in 1747, attributed to Antonio Canale', *The Burlington Magazine*, XXIV, June 1914, pp. 174-75; W.G. Constable, *Giovanni Antonio Canal, Canaletto*, 1962, II, p. 346, no. 357; F. Spadotto, *Giovan Battista Cimaroli*, Rovigo 2011.

EXHIBITIONS

Sérénissime! Venise en fête, de Tiepolo à Guardi, Parigi, Musée Cognacq-Jay, 25 February - 25 June 2017.

On 23 February 1745 the marriage between Louis, Dauphin of France, and his cousin Maria Theresa Raphaella, daughter of King Philip V of Spain, was celebrated in Versailles. The union was cherished all throughout Europe and homage was paid to the royal couple with celebrations held in almost every capital. In Venice, the French Ambassador to the Republic, Comte Pierre-François de Montaigu,¹ organised a glorious fête at Cannaregio, by the French Embassy, which is skilfully portrayed by Cimaroli in the present painting.

The seat of the French Embassy was the 17th Century Palazzo Surian, seen here on the right, its *façade* looking over the Cannaregio canal. Just behind the palace is the Ponte delle Guglie, which served as support for the main body of the grand temporary structure built to host the celebrations. Predominantly made of wood, the latter was modelled like the central section of a baroque building, with stairs leading up to a portal, flanked by two sets of columns and topped by the insignia of the French monarchy, and two further storeys, one with a balconade decorated by statues, the other ending in a golden spire embellished by a jewel-like circle. At the feet of the main structure, one finds acrobats performing daring exercises, while the orchestra plays from a pavillion located opposite Palazzo Surian. A loggia runs across both sides of the canal, encircling the fête as if it were taking place in the courtyard of a palace. Onlookers dressed in vivacious robes attend the celebrations from the loggia's balcony and from under its arches. Gondolas assemble in the foreground, drawing the viewer into the composition, while a young painter, brush and palette in hand, observes the scene from a window of the house on the right. The Comte of Mointagu follows the fête with his family from the balcony of Palazzo Surian's *piano nobile*. The spectacular celebrations were intended as a display of the excellent relations between the French monarchy and the Republic of the Serenissima. Festivities for the Dauphin's marriage had also been held in Rome, opposite the family palace of his betrothed in Piazza Farnese, under the patronage of

Monsignor Claude-François Rogier de Beaufort-Montboisier de Canillac, *chargé d'affaires* of the French Embassy in Rome and auditor of the Sacred Rota.

The present composition remained in the Montaigu family for centuries, which suggests that the ambassador had commissioned it as a private commemoration of this special occasion. Another version of the composition was first published by Lionel Cust² and exhibited in Florence in 1922. Tentatively attributed to Canaletto, it was then correctly ascribed to the master's school by Constable.³ In both instances, the subject was wrongly identified as the fête on the occasion of the Dauphin's second marriage, to Maria-Josepha of Saxony, which had taken place on 2 December 1747, when Montaigu was no longer in Venice. In the present picture, an inscription added at a later date to the upper section, removed after cleaning, specified that the scene portrayed the Dauphin's first marriage: 'VUE DE LA FÊTE QUI FU DONNÉE À VENISE LE MAY.1745. A L'OCCASION DU MARIAGE DE M^C DAUPHINE AVEC L'INFANTE. MARIE. THÉRESE D:ESPAGNE PAR S:E.M^R. LE COMTE DA MONTAIGU / AMBASSADEUR DE S: M.T.C. AUPRÈS DE LA SEREN: M^E RÉPUBLIQUE'.

It has been suggested that the Comte de Montaigu commissioned the plan of the temporary structure in Cannaregio from the Venetian architect Antonio Visentini, who would have known the analogous constructions often used for celebrations in Rome thanks to the highly commissioned and widely circulated engravings commemorating these events. No record survives regarding the commission of the present picture, yet its style and attention to topographical detail point towards the circle of Canaletto. Giovanni Battista Cimaroli, a native of Salò on Lake Garda, had moved to Venice around 1713, where he collaborated with Canaletto. His works were highly popular among foreign visitors to the city, as they were characterised by a descriptive quality that vivaciously evoked the colours and atmosphere of the Serenissima and its surroundings.

The relationship between Visentini, Canaletto and Cimaroli is well known, documented by the various paintings by the latter that are after Visentini's engravings.⁴ Of course, the large majority of Visentini's engravings are in turn after paintings by Canaletto, published in his 1735 volume, *Prospectus Magni Canalis Venetianum*. It therefore follows that the *vedute* by Cimaroli often have early attributions to Canaletto, due to the near-identical compositions and similar techniques of the two painters. However, the early attribution to Canaletto of the present work is based solely on the handling and the Venetian subject matter, for the celebrations at the French Embassy in 1745 were never depicted by the more famous *vedutista*. Indeed, upon close examination, the lighter palette, the important role given to the *staffage* and the delight in depicting the joyful chaos of celebration, all reveal themselves as characteristic attributes in the *oeuvre* of Giovan Battista. These elements all come into play in the marvellous *Bull fight of 1740 in Piazza San Marco* in a private collection,⁵ where sways of figures crowd the piazza, taking full possession of the viewer's attention, much like in the present image.

1. Comte Pierre-François de Montaigu was appointed ambassador to Venice in 1743, but soon returned to France in 1746.

2. L. Cust, 1914, pp. 174-75.

3. W.G. Constable, 1962, II, p. 346, no. 357.

4. F. Spadotto, 2011, cat. 72, pp. 224-225; cat. 77, pp. 234-235; cat. 78, pp. 236-7.

5. Illustrated in F. Spadotto, 2011 figs. 81-82.



5. JACOPO FABRIS

(Venice 1689 – 1761 Charlottenborg)

The entrance of Grand Canal with the Piazzetta and the Libreria Marciana on the right, the Dogana and the Church of Santa Maria della Salute on the left

Oil on canvas, 103 x 127.8 cm

COMPARATIVE LITERATURE

A. Morassi, 'Anticipazione per il vedutista Jacopo Fabris', *Arte veneta*, XX, 1966, pp. 279-281; M. Mosco, 'Minori del Settecento veneto, Jacopo Fabris', *Arte illustrata*, VII, 1974, pp. 82-97; J. G. Links, *Canaletto and his patrons*, London 1977; 'Scenes and machines from the 18th century: The stagecraft of J. F. and Cityoen (sic) Boullé', *Performing arts resource*, XI, New York 1986, pp. XI-XIV, 2-51; F. Pedrocchi, *Il Settecento a Venezia. I vedutisti*, Milan 2001, pp. 178-180.

The present painting is a significant addition to the *oeuvre* of Jacopo Fabris, whose painterly production is closely linked to his undertakings as a set designer, a creative interconnection which led him to execute numerous perspective views inspired mostly by Roman and Venetian topography to which he would integrate imaginary elements.

Born in Venice in 1689 to Domenico and Benedetta Guarini, it is believed that Fabris trained as an artist in Venice and Rome although information on his artistic instruction is scarce. The artist had great international success, and his works can be found in important English, Italian and Danish collections.¹ Some of his mural works can also be found to this day in various locations, for example, in the Moltke palace once belonging to Christian VII, in the Lerche Palace in Copenhagen (currently the Ministry of Defence) located in Amalienborg, and lastly in the large garden room in the Fredensborg castle (once the breakfast room). In this particular location, there are ten large mural paintings and three smaller panels for the doors, all depicting fantastical *vedute* featuring ruins populated by lively figures.²

A landmark for the reconstruction of the corpus of Roman images produced by Fabris is the mural *Roman capriccio with the arch of the Argentari*, signed 'Ja. Fabris pin', published by Mosca and Pallottini. There is a lack of information regarding the artist's relationship with the theatre prior to 1719 when he was nominated as a painter at the Karlsruhe court of Karl Willhelm von Baden-Durlach and was called to execute decorations and screen sets. In February 1721 he left the position and was called to the Gansemarkt theatre of Hamburg at the court of Benedict Ahlefeldt in 1724. The Hamburg Opera had a mod-

est stage set, but with the arrival of Fabris, it began to present new operas, for example, pastoral, intermezzi and solemn shows. Together with two French set designers, the artist produced scenes with magnificent gardens, rooms, military camps, along with landscapes depicting ruins and buildings. It is thought that Fabris probably left the Hamburg theatre in 1730, coincidentally the same year in which his brief sojourn to London took place. In 1750, the artist moved to Berlin under the patronage of Frederick the Great, a lover of Italian opera, who, in 1741, had commissioned the architect G.W. von Knobelsdorff to construct a theatre on the Unter den Linden. In 1746 he moved to Denmark, where he would stay until his death in 1761.

Both the present view and its pendant, *The Molo with the Palazzo Ducale seen from the Bacino di San Marco*, were inspired by engravings produced in 1736 by Louis Philippe Boitard (1694-1794), based on Canaletto's compositions. The work in the Lampronti collection is also linked to the print *View of Palazzo del Doge* (37.8x50 cm, signed «L.P.Boitard Sculp»), now at the Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo.

Compared to the printed prototypes, the canvas displays a closer framing of the scene, focusing on the everyday life on the Molo. The care displayed in the depiction of gestures and clothes, as well as the detailed description of architectural elements are recurrent features in Fabris's *oeuvre*, which tends to combine theatrical compositions and animated urban scenes.

1. See Mosco, 1974.

2. See J. Steenberg, *Fredensborg Slot (The Fredensborg Castel)*, Copenhagen 1969.



6. GIOVANNI ANTONIO CANAL, called CANALETTO

(Venice 1697 – 1768)

A Capriccio of the Prisons of San Marco

Oil on canvas, 105.5 x 127.5 cm

PROVENANCE

Venice, Palazzo Mangilli-Valmarana, commissioned by Joseph Consul Smith (c. 1674-1770); London, King George III, 1762; Dr. Grant David Yeats (1773-1836); London, sale, Christie's, April 8, 1815, lot 95; London, sale, Christie's, January 13, 1816, lot 57; London, the Earl of Annaly; Liverpool, John H. Paris, 15 & 17 Leece Street, early 20th Century; Ireland, C.B. Ponsonby; New York, Koetser-Lilienfeld Galleries, 1948; Comte de Messay London, Edward Speelman; London, Partridge Gallery, 1957; New York, Schaeffer Galleries, until 1964; Hans S. Schaeffer.

LITERATURE

J. Smith, Manuscript Catalogue of his Paintings bought by George III (Windsor), among nos. 85-97; 'Note apart', no. 9 'The Publick Prison at St. Mark's'; W.G. Constable, *Canaletto*, Oxford, 1962, I, pl. 68; II, p. 356, no. 374; M. Levey, *The Later Italian Pictures in the Collection of Her Majesty the Queen*, London, 1964, p. 35, fig. XII; T.J. McCormick, 'The Canaletto Exhibition in Canada', *The Burlington Magazine*, CVII, No. 742, January 1965, p. 29, fig. 34; L. Puppi, *L'opera completa del Canaletto*, Milan, 1968, no. 227, reproduced; F. Vivian, *Il Console Smith mercante e collezionista*, Vicenza, 1971, p. 197; W.G. Constable, *Canaletto*, 2nd ed. revised by J.G. Links, Oxford, 1976, I, pl. 68; II, pp. 382, no. 374, 433, under no. 451, and 439, under no. 460; W.L. Barcham, *The Imaginary View Scenes of Antonio Canaletto*, New York/London, 1977, pp. 157-8 and 161, fig. 153; O. Millar, catalogue of the exhibition *Canaletto. Paintings & Drawings*, The Queen's Gallery, London, 1980-1, p. 68, note 1; J.G. Links, *Canaletto. The Complete Paintings*, London, 1981, no. 186, reproduced; A. Corboz, *Canaletto. Una Venezia immaginaria*, Milan, 1985, I, p. 333, fig. 399; II, p. 604, no. P 123, reproduced; W.G. Constable, *Canaletto*, 2nd ed. revised by J.G. Links issued with supplement and additional plates, Oxford, 1989, I, pp. LV-LVI, pl. 68; II, pp. 382, no. 374, 433, under no. 451, 439, under no. 460, and 737; M. Levey, *The Later Italian Pictures in the Collection of Her Majesty the Queen*, 2nd ed., Cambridge, 1991, p. 43, under no. 408, fig. 13; *The Splendours of Venice. View paintings from the Eighteenth Century*, exh. cat. ed by V. Rossi and A. Hilliam, Lampronti Gallery London, 1 - 24 December 2014, Rome 2014, cat. 1 pp. 6-9.

EXHIBITIONS

Louisville, Kentucky, The J.B. Speed Art Museum, *Eighteenth Century Venetian Painting*, 1948; Toronto, Art Gallery of Toronto, October 17 – November 15, 1964; Ottawa, National Gallery of Canada, *Canaletto*, December 4, 1964 – January 10, 1965; Montreal, Museum of Fine Arts, *Canaletto*, January 29 – February 28, 1965.

Listed by W.G. Constable in 1962 as depicting the 'Villa Pisani, Stra (?)', the correct subject of this painting was first identified by Mr Richard J. Zimmerman of New York (letter to W.G. Constable of March 27, 1962). The Public Prisons of San Marco are one of the most prominent buildings on the Venetian Molo, and stand adjacent to the Doge's Palace, to which they are joined by the Bridge of Sighs. As Lord Byron's poem, *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, recounts, "I stood in Venice, on the Bridge of Sighs; / A palace and a prison on each hand; / I saw from out the wave of her structure's rise / As from the stroke of the enchanter's wand".

The Prisons were designed around 1580 by Antonio da Ponte, who was also responsible for the Rialto Bridge (1588-90), and were completed shortly after his death in 1597. Built of Istrian stone, they contained the quarters for the Signori di Notte, the nocturnal security police, as well as a separate wing for women, cells for the victims of the Inquisition, an infirmary and a chapel. Among the earliest purpose-built prisons in Europe, they remained in use until 1919. Casanova famously escaped from them in 1756. Here they are transposed to the Venetian mainland and are reborn as the wing of a villa with such success that their true identity long went unrecognised.

This painting has the most distinguished provenance a painting by Canaletto can have, as it was painted for the artist's great patron and agent Joseph Consul Smith and subsequently passed, along with much of his collection, into that of King George III in 1762. It originally formed part of a series of thirteen canvases of similar size, presumably intended as overdoors to decorate the Palazzo Mangilli-Valmarana, Smith's house on the Grand Canal just above the Rialto Bridge.

Five of these are signed and dated 1744 (in June of which year Smith was appointed British Consul) and it must be presumed that all were executed at, or around, that date. With the exception of a representation of how Palladio's design for the Rialto Bridge might have looked if it had been executed,¹ all are fairly faithful renderings of prominent Venetian buildings or monuments, the character of each having been changed to a greater or lesser degree by the introduction of extraneous or imaginary elements.²

Smith, who was largely responsible for the painter's career from the early 1720s onwards, had kept many of Canaletto's finest productions for himself and already owned an unrivalled collection of Venetian views by the artist, and as such, he must have relished the novel element of invention that the series introduced. Venetians and Venetian residents, who enjoyed the great views of Venice on a daily basis, naturally tended to take more interest in *capricci*, because of their required use of imagination.

Canaletto's series was to be joined in Smith's collection two years later by a second series of eleven *capricci* of English, mainly Palladian, buildings in imaginary settings painted by Antonio Visentini and Francesco Zuccarelli, several of which are dated 1746. Although this suggests that the idea may have originated with Smith, after two decades of painting views of Venice Canaletto showed a clear desire for new challenges, and this commission took him back to the world of the imagination that he had left in the early 1720s.

In 1762 Smith sold the finest works of his collection, including all his paintings and drawings by Canaletto as well as such masterpieces by other artists as Vermeer's *Lady at the Virginals*, to King George III of England. Almost all of it remains in the Royal Collection, with very few exceptions. These include, however, this painting and three other components of the same series, as well as three components of the Visentini-Zuccarelli series, which were de-accessioned for reasons unknown by the early nineteenth century. This painting was offered in 1815 and sold in 1816 from the collection of Dr. Yeats, a Florida-born physician who had lived in England or Ireland since the 1780s and had settled in London in 1814. Furthermore, two other absent canvases by Canaletto have re-emerged. The one depicting San Francesco della Vigna³ was sold at Christie's, London, in 1838, and is now in a Milanese private collection, while the one depicting with the Redentore⁴ first reappeared at Sotheby's, London, July 6, 1988 (lot 53).

The only component of the series that has not been identified with certainty is the painting described as 'The Loggetta by Sansovino'. It should be considered, however, whether this could possibly be the *capriccio* of the loggia between the Piazza San Marco and the Calle dell'Ascensione, as suggested when it first reappeared with Colnaghi, London, in 1978.⁵ Due to its appropriate width, it was subsequently offered at Sotheby's, London, July 3, 1985 (lot 23) and is now located in an English private collection.⁶

Constable's statement (1962 and 1964) that this painting is signed 'A.C.' on the capital of the left-most arch of the prison is incorrect. The design on the capital is, in fact, a row of four coats-of-arms (three of them illegible). The statement is, however, repeated by Mc-



Cormick⁷ and Puppi⁸ and in later editions of Constable's catalogue. In general, Canaletto very rarely signed his paintings but did effectively go through a phase of signing them in the first half of the 1740s, possibly in response to the emergence of his nephew Bernardo Bellotto, a significant artist in his own right who often used the name Canaletto. While several components of this series of overdoors are signed, currently there is no reason to believe that the artist himself was attempting to distinguish the signed ones from those that he left unsigned.

Charles Beddington

1. See W.G. Constable under no. 457.
2. See W.G. Constable under nos. 451-6, 462 and 476.
3. See W.G. Constable under no. 460.
4. See W.G. Constable under no. 465; J.G. Links, *A Supplement to W.G. Constable's Canaletto*, London, 1998, p. 43, no. 459**, pl. 237.
5. *Pictures from the Grand Tour*, exh. cat. ed. J.B. Shaw (London 1978) no. 29.
6. J.G. Links, 1998, p. 43, no. 453*, pl. 237.
7. T.J. McCormick, 1965, p. 29.
8. L. Puppi, 1968, p. 58.



7. GIOVANNI ANTONIO CANAL, called CANALETTO and studio

(Venice 1697 – 1768)

Venice, San Pietro di Castello

Oil on canvas, 68 x 114 cm

PROVENANCE

Private collection, United Kingdom.

EXPERTISE

Charles Beddington, 2013.

LITERATURE

The Splendours of Venice. View paintings from the Eighteenth Century, exh. cat. ed by V. Rossi and A. Hilliam, Lampronti Gallery, London 1-24 December 2014, Rome 2014, cat 2, pp. 10-11.

This newly discovered *veduta* by the undisputed master of the genre, Giovanni Antonio Canal, known as Canaletto, with the collaboration of his studio, dates to 1738-9 and depicts the elegant *façade* of the Basilica of San Pietro di Castello in Venice. It was executed at the height of Canaletto's career, a time that inevitably coincided with the apex of Venetian view painting in its entirety. In pristine condition, the canvas is painted in the crystalline and translucent tones that marked Canaletto's style for a short period between circa 1738 and 1742.

Illuminated from the left by a warm light, the present composition is populated by an array of gondolas, hay-barges and boats sailing along the calm waters of the lagoon, whose ripples are described by the gentle white highlights characteristic of Canaletto's hand. The figures, delineated by fluid brushstrokes, animate the scene with their red, yellow and blue robes, while the white Istrian stones of the church *façade* and the surrounding buildings are depicted with painstaking attention to detail and surface texture.

The church's *façade*, carefully illustrated in the present picture, dates to the late 16th century and was inspired by a design by Andrea Palladio. Indeed, strong similarities can be noted between San Pietro di Castello and the celebrated Palladian church of the Redentore, also in Venice. To the right of San Pietro di Castello are the Palace of the Patriarch, the 15th Century bell tower, which lost its dome due to a lightning strike in 1822, and the Ponte San Pietro. Evidence of Christian worship on the site of present-day San Pietro di Castello can be traced back as far as the 7th century, when the Venetian lagoon was under the rule of the Byzantine Empire. In 1451, the church acquired an important status as the Cathedral of Venice, making it the seat of the bishop of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese, known as the Patriarch of Venice. Located in the *sestiere* di Castello in the eastern part of Venice, the church was the official centre of the city's religious life until 1807, when St Mark's Basilica, previously the Chapel of the Doge, became the cathedral.

It is probable that the composition was executed using the *camera obscura*, an instrument that projected a faint image of a view onto canvas or paper that could then be traced. Canaletto made frequent use of this device, but would adapt his scenes in order to disguise his use of a

mechanical tool. In this instance, the viewpoint set from above cleverly disguises his use of the instrument.

The present painting is one of four known versions of this composition. A drawing of San Pietro di Castello by Canaletto is now in the Royal Collection at Windsor Castle (inv. no. RL 7485). A canvas now in the National Gallery, London (inv. no. NG1059), was attributed by W.G. Constable and J.G. Links to the master and his studio, while a version in the collection of a Mrs B.M. Lindsay-Flynn, London, was defined by scholars as a studio piece. Another painting of the same subject, of larger scale (86 x 124 cm.), was sold at Semenzato, Venice, in 1987 and was considered by Links as autograph (written note, Constable and Links archive).¹

By the early 1730s, Canaletto was unrivalled in his field and continued to dominate the genre of *Vedutismo* until the end of the decade and beyond. Commissions from English noblemen marked his career during this period, largely through his agent Joseph Smith (later consul between 1744-60). Although no secure history of ownership for the present painting was known until the beginning of the twentieth century, when it was bought by a distinguished English collector, it is likely that it too was either acquired in Venice through Smith by an English grand tourist or, as was also common, commissioned directly from England.

This painting belongs to the finest period of Canaletto's production and dates from a time described by Charles Beddington as "the apex of the history of Venetian view painting". Although Canaletto had enjoyed a serene and unrivalled journey to the top of his field during the early to mid-1730s, his success would, by the end of the decade, be interrupted by the emergence of several rivals. Aside from his nephew, Bernardo Bellotto, Canaletto found competition in a variety of younger artists, including Antonio Joli, Giovanni Battista Cimaroli and, most closely to him, Michele Marieschi. The latter brought to Venetian view painting a quicker, livelier technique that directly challenged the perfect precision of Canaletto, as can be seen in the view of Ca' Pesaro in the present exhibition.

1. W.G. Constable - J. G. Links, *Canaletto*, Oxford 1976, p. 345-46, n. 315.



8. ANTONIO JOLI

(Modena 1700 – 1770 Naples)

Venice, a view of St. Mark's Basin with the Church of St. Giorgio Maggiore and the Giudecca

Oil on canvas, cm 56 x 97

EXPERTISE

G. Briganti, October 1990.

PROVENANCE

Sotheby's, London, sale 16 April 1980, lot. 18; Galleria Salamon, Milan, 1990.

LITERATURE

R. Middione, *Antonio Joli*, Soncino 1995, p. 66, tav. 11; M. Manzelli *Antonio Joli. Opera pittorica*, Venice 1999, p. 102, V.12, fig. 74; R. Toledano, *Antonio Joli: Modena 1770-1777 Napoli*, Turin 2006, p. 202.

Antonio Joli trained in his native city of Modena, in the workshop of Raffaello Rinaldi, known as *Il Menia*, where he specialised in perspectival views. At the age of twenty, Joli travelled to Rome in order to train under the direction of the celebrated masters Giovanni Paolo Panini and Codazzi, to whom he owed his international renowned style that would later become highly sought after.

Upon his return to Modena in 1725, after a brief *sojourn* in Perugia working on the interior decoration of Palazzo Donnini and Palazzo Crispoldi, the artist decided to move to Venice in 1732. There, he immersed himself in the world of stage design, and began to specialise in scenography – a successful activity which would accompany him throughout his career.

During the following decade, he visited the major European courts extensively, both in England and Germany as well as in Spain. These experiences were fundamental to his career, not only in terms of expanding his personal network but also for maturing into his own style. It is indeed during these years that his *vedute* increasingly featured the wide-angle perspective, a technique clearly inspired by the artistic out-

put of Vanvitelli and Canaletto.

From thereafter, his reputation as an acclaimed painter of *vedute* led him to become the most sought-after artist by foreign, aristocratic grand tourists in Italy, particularly amongst the English elite, such as, Sir William Hamilton and Lord Montague Brudenell, who were indeed among his most active patrons. Finally, in 1762 he decided to reside in Naples, where he became scenographer of the renowned Teatro San Carlo, and spent the rest of his life there.

The present *View of the Bacino of San Marco* dates back to his Venetian period (1732-1742) and represents the entire cityscape illuminated by the warm, Mediterranean sun and its billowing clouds, which add a dramatic effect to the scene. The composition recalls a similar one realised by Marieschi in 1735, previously in the prestigious Carlyle collection, though an even wider perspectival angle is applied to include the churches of Zitelle and Redentore. Towards the centre of the canvas, it is possible to identify the walls and squared towers, which distinctively adorned the *façade* of Palazzo Dandolo delle Torri but were demolished at the turn of the XIX Century.



9. MICHELE MARIESCHI

(Venice 1710 – 1743)

The Grand Canal with Ca' Pesaro and Palazzo Foscarini-Giovannelli, from the Campiello of Palazzo Gussoni

Oil on canvas, 58 x 86 cm

PROVENANCE

Private collection, United Kingdom.

EXPERTISE

Ralph Toledano, verbal communication; Dario Succi, verbal communication.

LITERATURE

V. Rossi and A. Hilliam, *The Splendours of Venice. View Paintings from the Eighteenth Century*, exh. cat. Lampronti Gallery, 1-12 December 2014, p. 12, cat. n. 3.

COMPARATIVE LITERATURE

D. Succi, in *Marieschi tra Canaletto e Guardi*, exh. cat., Turin, 1989, nn. 17-18; R. Toledano, *Michele Marieschi. L'opera completa*, Milan 1995, p. 102, n. V.32; F. Montecuccoli degli Erri - F. Pedrocco, *Michele Marieschi. La vita, l'ambiente, l'opera*, Milan 1999, nn. 88-89.

In this elegant and highly characteristic *veduta*, Marieschi depicts a section of the Grand Canal looking northwest from the *campiello* to the side of Palazzo Gussoni. On the left-hand side of the canvas is the Ca' Pesaro, designed for the influential Pesaro family by the renowned architect, Baldassare Longhena (1598-1682), and completed by Gian Antonio Gaspari in 1710. In 1898 the palace was bequeathed to the city by the owner at the time, Duchess Felicità Bevilacqua La Masa, and today it houses the International Museum of Modern Art and the Museum of Oriental Art. To the left of Ca' Pesaro is the seventeenth-century Palazzo Foscarini Giovannelli, its *façade* once decorated with frescoes. Further along the waterfront, part of the Church of San Stae can be seen, its white marble *façade* by Domenico Rossi (1709) standing out against the other buildings. Past the church is Palazzo Priuli Bon, originally built in the Fourteenth Century, immediately next to it stands Palazzo Giustinian, later Contarini, which was destroyed by a fire in the Eighteenth Century. In the distance, the pinnacles of Ca' Tron are just discernible against the white clouds.

This unusual, oblique composition was used on several occasions by the painter, whereby the flat surface of the water is juxtaposed with the vertical bulk of the buildings to create multiple vanishing points, enhancing the shimmering ripples on the Canal and the lively everyday scene on the embankment. Rather than being the most significant element of the composition, the ornate white *façade* of Ca' Pesaro is surpassed by the human presence in the foreground: an elegant group of noblemen gathers in conversation whilst waiting for a *gondola* to take them elsewhere; a pair of laundresses approach the water in dialogue; on the other side of the steps, another nobleman instructs a man where to place a basket containing produce; a woman peeks out a window, probably called by the knock of the figure at her door. It is a subtle but intensely poignant representation of mid-seventeenth-century Venetian life, which Marieschi executes in the style of Francesco Simonini (1686-

1753), to whom many figures in the artist's paintings are attributed.

An autographed version of the same composition, with slight differences, is in the Alte Pinakothek, Munich, paired with a view of the Piazzetta di San Basso.¹ Toledano dates the Munich pictures to 1737-38, whereas Succi favours a slightly earlier date of 1736-37 for the pair.² The authorship of the present work, which is slightly larger than the Munich picture, has been confirmed by both Toledano and Succi, who also suggest a similar dating. The expressive brushstrokes that delineate the figures, the thick texture of the clouds and the bright palette that animates the entire composition leave no doubt as to the work's attribution. Far from being a mere repetition of a well-known masterpiece, the painting possesses highly unique qualities, such as the idiosyncratic figures and the vessel passing in front of Ca' Pesaro, with its weathered sails and the pile of rags on deck, elements that differentiate the picture from its less-animated counterpart in Munich.

By the time that this picture was executed, Marieschi's reputation as a gifted view painter had spread throughout Venice, transforming him into one of Canaletto's greatest rivals. Following his apprenticeship in the studio of the history painter Gaspare Diziani (1689-1767), Marieschi established himself as an independent artist and received commissions for *vedute* from Johann Matthias, Graf von der Schulenburg (1661-1747) in 1736 and for the palace of Sanssouci, Potsdam in 1738. In 1741, he completed a set of twenty-one etchings of his views entitled *Magnificentiores Selectioresque Urbis Venetiarum Prospectus*, which were widely circulated and reproduced by later artists. Fortunately for Canaletto, although not for his posterity, Marieschi's short but prolific career was brought to an end by his untimely death in 1743 at the age of thirty-three.³

1. R. Toledano, 1995, p. 102, no. V.32.

2. D. Succi, 1989, p. 97.

3. F. Montecuccoli degli Erri - F. Pedrocco, 1999, pp. 24-37.



10. MICHELE MARIESCHI

(Venice 1710 – 1743)

The Grand Canal at the confluence with Rio di Cannaregio

Oil on canvas, 62 x 97 cm

PROVENANCE

Private Collection, United Kingdom.

LITERATURE

R. Toledano, *Michele Marieschi: l'opera completa*, Milan 1988, p. 105, V 28,5.

COMPARATIVE LITERATURE

F. Montecuccoli degli Erri, F. Pedrocco, *Michele Marieschi. La vita, l'ambiente, l'opera*, Milan 1999, p. 181, cat. 21, cat. 185, p. 485.

The view depicts the entrance to the Cannaregio river and the Labia palace located on the same *fondamenta*, evoking, with an audacious and bold wide-angle perspective, the right bank of the Grand Canal, or more precisely, the end of the Riva di Biasio. The view derives from two fundamental sources: firstly, a well-known engraving by Michele Marieschi published in 1741; and secondly, an earlier view painted by Marieschi himself which is now conserved in the Gemäldegalerie, Berlin (GK No. 5680) and replicated in other signed versions from 1742, now located in the private collection of the Count of Malmesbury.¹

It is worth noting from the numerous articles written about the works the great fortuity of this original perspective design, which is marvelously scenic in its pictorial framing. It is likely that Marieschi was inspired by the Canaletto painting engraved by Visentini kept in Windsor in the Royal English collections² (I, X).

When examining this view one can notice how on the corner of the foundations facing the Palazzo Labia, the artist has depicted two

works by the sculptor Giovanni Marchiori, specifically the balustrade and statue of San Giovanni Nepomuceno, a martyr drowned in the Moldava. This is an element unfound in most other versions of the view or its related engravings, with the exception of the version belonging to the Count of Malmesbury.

These alternative versions were produced in May 1742 at the behest of Maria Labia, whose name is written on the pedestal alongside that of her servant, Antonio Gratolo. This detail is decisive for dating the work, which must be placed after 1742, in the last years of Marieschi's work before his death in 1743. It can be suggested that the version belonging to the Lampronti collection, with its vibrant materiality and wonderful vivacity, is reminiscent of Gian Antonio Guardi.

1. See F. Montecuccoli degli Erri – F. Pedrocco, 1999, pp. 408-9, n. 177; pp. 415-16, n. 185.

2. W. G. Constable, *Giovanni Antonio Canal, 1697-1768*, Oxford 1976, n. 251, *Grand Canal: San Geremia and the entrance to Cannaregio*.



11. FRANCESCO GUARDI

(Venice 1712 – 1793)

A Capriccio with Figures and a Bridge above a Canal

Oil on canvas, 31.6 x 52 cm

PROVENANCE

A private Pisan collection; Bellesi collection, Florence; Private collection, London.

LITERATURE

A. Morassi, *Antonio e Francesco Guardi*, Venice 1973, I, cat. no. 855, II, fig. 775; L. Rossi Bortolatto, *L'opera completa di Francesco Guardi*, Milan 1974, p. 134, no. 756; A. Morassi, *Guardi: I disegni*, Venice 1993, cat. no. 602, fig. 592.

A fine example of Guardi's activity as a painter of *capricci rustici*, a term devised by the scholar Antonio Morassi to define a genre that the artist embraced during his maturity, the present canvas plays on the light grey-blue tonalities of the sky and the earthen colours of the architecture, interrupted by dashes of white or red to define the individual figures. Guardi adopts light brushstrokes to convey a sense of the lagoon's misty atmosphere.

Distancing himself from the meticulous topographical views of Canaletto and Bellotto, Guardi sought to portray the poetic essence of his subjects with more impressionistic brushstrokes and a greater feel for the texture of the painted surface. In the present work, the figures are animated by the painter's vibrant touch and the architecture is defined by *chiaroscuro* gradations that endow them with a sense of depth and immediacy typical of the artist. The composition is cut diagonally, with houses and a church on the riverside to the right and a bridge in the background.

Like most of Guardi's works, the present canvas cannot be precisely dated, but its visual conceptualisation is comparable to a *capriccio* in the Uffizi, which could be a slightly earlier work.¹ However, the

composition is based on a signed, pen and ink drawing formerly in the collection of Paul Wallraf and published by Morassi,² described by the scholar himself as a '*bel foglio dell'epoca tarda*'. While the drawing demonstrates that Guardi had carefully planned out the composition for the present picture prior to execution, the various differences found in the finished work reveal that the artist further developed his ideas in the midst of the creative process. For example, the mother and son holding hands and the figure walking in the opposite direction, struggling with what appears to be a heavy load of laundry, are absent in the preparatory study. Conversely, he pinpointed the exact location and gestures of the other figures in the picture, such as the stooped, red-caped figure walking towards the bridge and the three figures on the bridge, all of which are present in both drawing and painting. The near-identical compositions suggest, therefore, that the Wallraf drawing is indeed preparatory for the present picture, which supports an association in date with Guardi's artistic maturity.

1. See Morassi, 1984, I, p. 468, no. 853; II, fig. 773.

2. *Op. cit.*



12. FRANCESCO GUARDI

(Venice 1712 – 1793)

Venice, a view of the Piazzetta looking south with the Palazzo Ducale

Oil on canvas, 47 x 65 cm

Signed 'F.CO GUARDI', lower left, beneath the standard-bearer

PROVENANCE

Eugène Fischhof collection, Paris; E. Arnholt, Berlin; H.G. Sohl collection, Düsseldorf.

LITERATURE

A. Morassi, *Guardi: Antonio e Francesco Guardi*, Venice, 1973, I, cat. no. 380; II, fig. 403; L. R. Bortolatto, *L'opera complete di Francesco Guardi*, Milan 1974, cat. no. 187; *The Splendours of Venice. View Paintings from the Eighteenth Century*, exh. cat. (London 2014), ed. by A. Hilliam, V. Rossi, Rome 2014, cat. n. 19, pp. 44-45.

COMPARATIVE LITERATURE

D. Succi, *Canaletto & Visentini, Venezia & Londra*, exhibition catalogue, Venice, Ca' Pesaro, October 18, 1986 - January 6, 1987, p. 200, cat. no. 21.

Antonio Morassi dates this splendid view, signed by Francesco Guardi, to around 1755-60, shortly after the execution of the painting depicting the same subject located in the Academy of Fine Arts, Vienna.¹ The present cityscape takes a more distanced viewpoint than the Vienna illustration, where the measurements are almost squared, allowing for a highly detailed and panoramic rendition of the Piazzetta. While several figural groups are identical in both pictures, such as the three senators that gather in the centre-right foreground, the work of art presented here places a greater emphasis on the human element, as an official reading a decree unites the *staffage* in the same activity. The finer execution of this painting and the fact that it is signed supports Morassi's proposition that it postdates the Vienna view. Indeed, the image arguably represents a more refined essay on the subject of the Piazzetta.

The composition is closely related to an engraving by Visentini after Canaletto in the Royal Library at Windsor Castle dating to the early 1740s, a second reproduction of which is in the Gabinetto Disegni e Stampe, Museo Correr, Venice.² In both views, the Piazzetta looks south towards the Molo, where the dome and campanile of San Giorgio Maggiore, a sixteenth-century Benedictine Church designed by Palladio, can be located in the distance to the left. The columns of St Mark and St Theodore can be seen on the periphery of the Molo. Further beyond, the Bacino di San Marco is depicted teeming with vessels.

The focal aspect of this partial view of the Piazzetta is the majestic west *façade* of the Palazzo Ducale, which is bathed in a warm afternoon light irradiating from the right. Below, in the square, gentlemen, senators and commoners congregate to listen to a decree being read by an official that stands upon the *Piera* (or *Pietra*) del Bando, a fragment of ancient porphyry column looted from Genoa during a thirteenth-century battle. To the far left of the canvas, on the steps to the southern end of the Basilica

di San Marco, sits a solitary standard bearer. Directly under the figure on top of the step is the painter's signature. In this composition, Guardi has captured certain anecdotal details, such as the street seller with his basket of goods seated upon the balustrade of Sansovino's Loggetta, the three pairs of playful dogs in the piazza and the figures leaning over the terrace of the Palazzo Ducale.

Interestingly, the painting now in Vienna was conceived as part of a set, from which three others were produced and still exist (*The Piazzetta towards the Library*, *The Piazza San Marco looking towards San Gemini-ano* and *The Molo with the Ponte della Paglia looking towards the Riva degli Schiavoni*)³ all deriving from Canaletto's prototypes.⁴ It was not unusual for Guardi to have executed particularly successful compositions on more than one occasion, as is the case with the present work. This theory is further borne out by the more confident handling of paint in the present version, where rapid, loaded brushstrokes effortlessly distinguish details, such as the brightly coloured hats of the figures that populate the piazza and the shimmering effect of the Palazzo Ducale in the late-afternoon sun. Furthermore, the warm palette and the topographical accuracy of the painting are fully indicative of Guardi's work during the latter part of the 1750s. Indeed, the frenetic, irregular brushwork characteristic of the 1770s and 1780s are entirely absent from our picture, which displays an expressive yet highly meticulous handling.

1. A. Morassi, 1973, vol. I, cat. no. 379, vol II, fig. 402.

2. Reproduced in D. Succi, *Canaletto & Visentini, Venezia & Londra*, exhibition catalogue, Venice, Ca' Pesaro, October 18, 1986 - January 6, 1987, p. 200, cat. no. 21.

3. A. Morassi, 1973, vol. I, cat. nos. 384, 343, 413, reproduced vol. II, figs. 405, 370, and 433 respectively.

4. Succi, *op. cit.*, pp. 198-9, cat. nos. 18, 20, and 19, all reproduced.



13. FRANCESCO GUARDI

(Venice 1712 – 1793)

Venice, a view of the Church of Santa Maria della Salute and the Punta della Dogana

Oil on canvas, 67 x 109 cm

PROVENANCE

Private collection.

EXPERTISE

Dr. Dario Succi, 3 February 2016.

COMPARATIVE LITERATURE

A. Morassi, *Antonio and Francesco Guardi*, Venezia 1973, I, pp. 472-496; II, figs. 476 - 490.

In the first thirty years of his artistic activity, Francesco Guardi, famous as a masterful painter of Venetian *vedute*, collaborated with his brother, Antonio Guardi, realising landscape and still life details found within larger compositions. Later in the second half of the century, the artist turned his full attention to *vedute* and *capricci*.

From the 1750s, Francesco Guardi distanced himself from the style of Canaletto, the great master of Venetian *vedute*, seeking novel compositions and a wider range of subjects. He experimented with the creation of brighter, illusionistic spaces which became typical of his mature painting. With his growing success came several important commissions. Between 1770 and 1775, Guardi painted the *Dodge's Feasts*, a series of twelve canvases celebrating the ceremonies held in 1763 in honour of Doge Alvise IV Mocenigo. Soon after in 1782, Guardi was commissioned by Pietro Edwards, Inspector of Fine Arts to the Republic, to paint four canvases commemorating the visit of Pius VI to Venice from 15 to 19 May 1782, during a return trip to Rome.

The present painting, a view of the church of Santa Maria della Salute with the Punta della Dogana, is characterised by the impressive mass of the church building, a striking masterpiece designed by Baldassarre Longhena and erected in 1631-1687 as a votive offering to the Virgin, who had miraculously delivered the city from a terrible pestilence. Antonio Morassi published many replicas and variants of this view, among which twenty-five copies are considered autographs and mostly

attributed to the mature phase of the artist's career.

Among the many versions of this panoramic view, the canvas in question is dated to the second half of the 1780s, contemporary to the versions belonging to the Wallace Collection and the National Gallery in London, and also to that of Rockill Nelson Gallery, Kansas City, or even in the Spencer-Churchill Collection, in London. The Lampronti painting is closest to the National Gallery version, from which it however differs in its larger dimensions (67 x 109 cm, while the National Gallery version is 56 x 76 cm) and in its fluid technique.

As evidenced by Dario Succi scholar "this bright, fresh and brilliantly-coloured painting is notable for its meticulous description of the complex of the Basilica della Salute. Elsewhere in the work brushstrokes become more liquid, for example in the renderings on the right margin and on the Giudecca Island, characterised by a light and beautifully synthetic touch. Even the small figures which populate the painting, known as *macchiette*, are typical of the style of the artist, who portrayed with great attention to definition not only the bodily foreground figures, but also the small, distant figures dotting the area around the church and the Punta della Dogana with their colourful clothing. Here Francesco Guardi masterfully expressed the charm and glamour of the Italian lagoon city, creating an engrossing and chromatically vibrant composition through the attentive description of each individual element – buildings, boats, and figures surrounded by water and sky".



14. FRANCESCO GUARDI

(Venice 1712 – 1793)

Venice, San Giorgio Maggiore seen from the West

Oil on canvas, 17.8 x 24 cm

PROVENANCE

Private Collection, United Kingdom.

This delightful view depicts the Basilica of San Giorgio Maggiore, a part of the homonymous monastery, which is located on the Island of San Giorgio, a small island in front of Piazza San Marco in Venice.

The Island of San Giorgio is separated from the Island of the Giudecca by the small Canale della Grazia, while also being surrounded by the Giudecca Canal, the San Marco Basin, the San Marco Canal and by the Lagoon of Venice to its south.

The Paduan architect Andrea Palladio was called upon for the construction of the refectory (1560-1563), the monastery and subsequently for the design of the new church.

In 1566 the first stone was laid, while in 1575 the perimeter walls of the church and the dome drum had already been raised. The latter was finished in 1576 and in 1591 the choir was completed. The *façade* was built between 1597 and 1610 by Vincenzo Scamozzi, thirty years after the death of the great master.

The present-day bell tower (75 m high) was designed by the architect Somasco Benedetto Buratti and dates back to 1791. It was originally built in 1467 and then collapsed three centuries later in 1774. From the bell tower, one can enjoy a truly sublime view of Venice and its magnificent lagoon.

The view is a splendid example of Francesco Guardi's pictorial mastery, particularly emphasizing his expressive and romantically poetic style. The blue-green tones dominate the painting, creating visual continuity between the sky and lagoon. Furthermore, this effect is seamlessly complemented by the delicate earthly tones of the monastery and the boat located on the extreme left of the painting, where quick brushstrokes accentuate the immediacy of the white sails folding over themselves. Moreover, the stunning reflective quality achieved in the rendering of the lagoon emphasizes the excellence of this small canvas.



15. APOLLONIO DOMENICHINI (MASTER OF THE LANGMATT FOUNDATION VIEWS)

(Venice 1715 – c. 1770)

View of the Grand Canal from the Rialto Bridge towards Palazzo Foscari

Oil on canvas, 57.1 x 85.2 cm

LITERATURE

The Splendours of Venice. View Paintings from the Eighteenth Century, exh. cat., Lampronti Gallery, Rome 2014, cat. n. 15, pp. 36-37.

The elegant linear touch, the lively scattered staffage and the bright morning palette of the present painting confirm its attribution to Apollonio Domenichini, formerly known as the Master of the Langmatt Foundation Views after the group of thirteen *vedute* held in this Swiss collection. The view depicts a stretch of the Grand Canal, looking southwest from the left side of the Rialto bridge, as it curves out of sight into the distance, with gondolas and other vessels populating it, shops lining the pier and figures, both in the water and on the shore, going about their everyday business. Indeed, Domenichini has taken great delight in portraying the paraphernalia of daily life. Washing hangs from balconies and at pier level, as the Venetian locals take advantage of the warm, dry weather, a myriad of chimney tops crown the palazzos, some releasing smoke and wooden roof-top verandas for relaxing upon and private gondolas parked outside the palazzos are all indications of the private and practical needs of the local residents.

In the foreground to the left, the sunlit Campo San Bartolomeo is animated by brightly coloured *staffage*. The lateral steps approaching the Rialto bridge at the far bottom left indicate the cityscape's view point. The ground level of the immediate building in the *campo* is lined with shops, which have not yet opened for the day's business. A small wooden hut is stationed on the pier, possibly for the sale of lottery tickets. Further on the left are Palazzo Dolfin Marnin and Palazzo Bembo lining the Riva del Ferro, followed by the Ponte della Pescaria, the Riva di Carbon and the imposing sixteenth-century structure of

Palazzo Grimani. In the far distance one can witness the *façade* of Ca' Foscari depicted just as the Canal makes a sharp right. On the right side of the Canal is the Fondamenta del Vin with its shops at pier level. The rest of the right bank is largely hidden from view by the slight curve of the Canal.

The same view was portrayed by Canaletto in a painting now located in the Queen's collection at Windsor castle, one of a series of twelve views of the Grand Canal with the same dimensions, which form the basis of the fourteen engraved plates in Visentini's *Prospectus Magni Canalis Venetiarum* (Venice, 1753).¹ It is highly likely that Domenichini would have had access to this set of engravings when producing the present painting, although the artist has somewhat modified the disposition of the *staffage* and the vessels, as well as the colour palette and the general casting of shadows. The Grand Canal in our painting is largely traffic-free, allowing Domenichini to paint the pastel reflections in the waters of the palazzos lining the left bank, while Canaletto's Grand Canal is more densely populated with vessels. Furthermore, the left bank of Domenichini's view is bathed in morning sunlight, whereas in the prototype it appears in shadow. It is also important to note how our artist has replaced the soft cloudy mist in Canaletto's picture with a dramatic, vertical cumulonimbus, which elongates the sky and serves as an elegant backdrop to the scene.

1. W. G. Constable - J.G. Links, *Canaletto*, 1989, I, n. 219, pl. 46, II, pp. 291-292, n. 219.



16. BERNARDO BELLOTTO

(Venice 1722 – 1780 Warsaw)

The Entrance to the Grand Canal looking West

Oil on canvas, 80 x 120 cm

PROVENANCE

Sacerdoty Gallery, Milan; Private Collection, United Kingdom.

EXPERTISE

R. Pallucchini, written communication.

Bernardo Bellotto received his early training in the workshop of his uncle, the illustrious ‘Canaletto’ from around 1735. It was his ability to emulate the style of his master at a particularly early stage of his career that revealed his exceptional artistic potential. Through sophisticated modifications of Canaletto’s technique, the young Bellotto acquired his own style by skillfully modeling the chiaroscuro effects and demonstrating a great deal of architectural precision. At the same time, however, it was his style that set him apart from the former, most notably in his *capricci*, where he demonstrated an experienced handling of architectural forms in a convincing setting modeled by light and shadow and animated by figures.

By acquiring a deep understanding of Canaletto’s technique, Bellotto learned how to articulate deep shadows and glimmers of light on the *façades* and lateral elevations of buildings, how to precisely replicate architectural motifs, and how to achieve a convincing representation of luminosity and mutability in depictions of water. Bellotto also followed his mentor’s construction methods by using a ruler and incision marks in his paintworks. He dedicated ample space to the representation of the sky and clouds, as we can see for example in the *Entrance to the Grand Canal looking West*, where luminescent variations are rendered with precision. The young artist created solid forms, clearly defined in a muted brightness without contrasts: a world free of stress, peaceful and appeased in its immobility, epitomised by the tall, empty sky. As Longhi wrote: “the prodigious handwriting of Bellotto, almost a Morse alphabet of lines, dots, dashes of every kind and colour, reveals the secret passage from the optical to the narrative which is almost comparable to some famous eighteenth-century Russian works”.

The present view demonstrates the artist’s confidence in replicating complex perspectival structures, as well as his striking capacity to conjure atmospheres that differ considerably from his prototypes.

The scene derives from a composition by Canaletto and is now in the Queen’s collection at Windsor Castle.¹ This painting was part of a series of twelve views commissioned by Joseph Consul Smith, which were the basis of the fourteen engraved plates in Antonio Visentini’s *Prospectus Magni Canalis Venetiarum* (Venice, 1735). Canaletto’s painting was dated between 1729-1730 circa.

For the *Entrance to the Grand Canal looking West*, the artist benefited from the pictorial techniques Canaletto applied in his original composition, handpicking various details to replicate and inventing the rest of the painting’s composition himself. To the left is the Dogana and Santa Maria della Salute, one of the largest Basilicas in Venice, designed by Baldassare Longhena and built as a monument of gratitude for the cessation of the plague of 1630-31. Further beyond one finds the tall tower of Palazzo Venier dalla Torreselle, built in the fifteenth century and demolished in the nineteenth century. Again in the far distance, one can witness the Church of the Carità with its distinctive campanile, which now hosts the Accademia Gallery. To the right of foreground is Palazzo Tiepolo, and beyond this structure, the artist has placed a line of sixteenth-century palazzos. Near the Dogana quay, a galley with oars and sails part set adds character to the scene.

The style, choice of colour palette and full-bodied brush strokes in addition to the depiction of the sky are all characteristic features of the young Bellotto. There are some significant changes when compared to the original composition created by Canaletto, which include the introduction of the second vessel in the foreground and two new figures in the centre boat. It can be suggested that these modifications contribute to the overall liveliness of the composition.

1. W.G. Constable-J.G Links, 1976, I, pl. 36, n. 161, II, pp. 262-3 (for *Entrance to the Grand Canal looking West*), I, pl. 49, n. 236, II, 301-2 (for *The Rialto Bridge from the North*).



17. BERNARDO BELLOTTO

(Venice 1722 – 1780 Warsaw)

The Rialto bridge seen from the South

Oil on canvas 60.5 x 77.5 cm

PROVENANCE

Private Collection.

EXPERTISE

Dario Succi, December 2015.

The painting depicting the view of the Rialto bridge as seen from the southern viewpoint, reproduced in the image here, is a magnificent work by Bernardo Bellotto (Venice 1722 - 1780 Warsaw). The artist is considered the protagonist of the XVIII century Venetian landscape painting, along with Luca Carlevarijs, Antonio Canal known as Canaletto and Francesco Guardi.

The panoramic view includes the Vin river to the left, the Palazzo Dolfin Manin on the right, the buildings overlooking the Ferro river, while the San Bartolomeo church bell tower emerges from the rooftops. In the background we can see the Rialto bridge and a slight corner of the Camerlenghi Palace facing on the opposite side the Fondaco dei Tedeschi. The Grand Canal, surrounded by buildings reflected in the emerald green river, is animated by countless gondolas and boats of various types. On the left, a *burchiello*, an elegant river boat, that was used to transport gentlemen from Venice to Padoa along the Brenta river, emerges from the shadow.

This painting is particularly important as a documentation of Bellotto's style and technique in the year 1740 when, as a young artist, he worked in his uncle's workshop as an apprentice and collaborator, already displaying exceptional pictorial skills. His collaboration with his uncle ended in 1743.

When studying Bellotto's work, it becomes apparent that the theme of Venetian *vedute* executed by the artist in his early years represents one of the most interesting topics in XVIII century Venetian art history. I myself had the opportunity to execute an in-depth research on the subject, as, for instance in the essay 'The young Bellotto' in the Padoa exhibition catalogue *Luca Carlevarijs and the XVIIIth century Venetian veduta* (1994, pp. 51-58.), as well as in both catalogues that I curated *Bernardo Bellotto, called Canaletto* (Milan 1999, Marsilio ed.) and *Bernardo Bellotto, the Canaletto of European courts* (Conegliano 2011, Marsilio ed.).

My careful investigation of Bellotto's Venetian period along with an accurate analysis of the painting under examination here, allowed me to create a chronological timeline of the phase when his striking career led him, in his early twenties, to work for the major European courts (Turin, Vienna, Dresden, Warsaw).

The present *veduta* was executed during the initial period of his artistic production when he was working in the workshop of Canaletto, and it is marked by a pictorial expression that both reflects his uncle's luminous style while also distinguishing itself for being less accurate in its

details. Additionally, his style reveals a gradual shift from Canaletto's golden light, towards a subtle effect of crystalline and transparent cold tones, with an increasing emphasis on a chiaroscuro contrast.

Of particular interest is the comparison of this painting with the two *vedutas* from Earl of Malmesbury's prestigious collection, that illustrate *The Rialto bridge with Palazzo Camerlenghi* and *The beginning of the Grand Canal*, which I published in the above-mentioned catalogues.¹ In both works the main features that characterize his style come to light. A marked graphic trait seems to strengthen the framework of the buildings while particular emphasis is given to the black of the gondolas and of the other boats which seem to be suffused by their own dense shadow within the expanse of water, its characteristic rippling effect rendered through the artist's well known quick brush strokes.

This painting, in its stylistic and chromatic analogies with the two important *vedute*, could have possibly been executed around 1739-1740. The canvas we are examining here, is based on the Canaletto prototype now at the Musée Jacquemart-André in Paris,² reproduced in an engraving by Antonio Visentini and also as part of a series of 38 *vedutas* titled *Urbis Venetiarum Prospectus Celebriores*, published in 1742.³ However, the Bellotto painting distinguishes itself for illustrating a closer perspective of the Rialto bridge, while omitting on the right the bridge on the San Salvatore river and part of the Palazzo Dolfin-Manin, as well as the first two buildings on the opposite Vin river. We can also see some differences in the representation of the figures and the boats. A perspective plan analogous to the one employed in the painting by Canaletto was used by Bellotto in a drawing that was rejected from his atelier, now in the collection of the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam, Rijksprintkabinett, inv. n.53:216.⁴

In this *veduta* of the Rialto bridge, submerged by a luminosity inclined towards cold tonalities, we can see scathing diagonal lines and the unmistakable elongated and square *macchiette* in the portrayal of the sky, which constitute the stylistic and technical attributes representative of the authentic works by Bellotto (and by Canaletto).

Dario Succi

1. Succi, 1999, pp. 31, 32; 2011, p. 22.

2. Constable, Links, *Canaletto*, ed. 1989, n.228 [a] 1.

3. D. Succi, *La Serenissima nello specchio di Rame*, Castelfranco Veneto 2013, vol. I, p. 204, n. 24.

4. Kozakiewicz, *Bernardo Bellotto*, 1972, cat. n. 15.



18. BERNARDO BELLOTTO

(Venice 1722 – 1780 Warsaw)

Venice, the Grand Canal from Ca' da Mosto looking towards the Rialto Bridge

Oil on canvas, 62.5 x 97.8 cm

PROVENANCE

Rudolf Chillingworth; His sale, Lucerne, Galerie Fischer, 5 September 1922, lot 113 (as Canaletto), where purchased for the present collection.

LITERATURE

M. Bleyel, *Bernardo Bellotto genannt Canaletto*, Darmstadt 1981, n. 4 (preparatory drawing); D. Succi, *Bernardo Bellotto nell'atelier di Canaletto e la sua produzione giovanile a Castle Howard nello Yorkshire*, in *Bernardo Bellotto detto Canaletto*, exh. cat., Milano, Barchessa di Villa Morosini, 1999, p. 59, reproduced fig. 42, pp. 62 and 73, n. 62.

Bernardo Bellotto received his early training in the workshop of his uncle, the illustrious 'Canaletto' from around 1735. It was his ability to emulate the style of his master at a particularly early stage of his career that revealed his exceptional artistic potential. Through sophisticated modifications of Canaletto's technique, the young Bellotto acquired his own style by skillfully modeling the chiaroscuro effects and demonstrating a great deal of architectural precision. At the same time, however, it was his style that set him apart from the former, most notably in his *capricci*, where he demonstrated an experienced handling of architectural forms in a convincing setting modeled by light and shadow and animated by figures. By acquiring a deep understanding of Canaletto's technique, Bellotto learned how to articulate deep shadows and glimmers of light on the *façades* and lateral elevations of buildings, how to precisely replicate architectural motifs, and how to achieve a convincing representation of luminosity and mutability in depictions of water. Bellotto also followed his mentor's construction methods by using a ruler and incision marks in his paintworks. He dedicated ample space to the representation of the sky and clouds, as we can see for example in the *Entrance to the Grand Canal looking West*, where luminescent variations are rendered with precision. The young artist created solid forms, clearly defined in a muted brightness without contrasts: a world free of stress, peaceful and appeased in



Bernardo Bellotto

Venice, the Grand Canal from Ca' da Mosto looking towards the Rialto Bridge (1735- 1738)

Quill and brown ink over pencil, 24.8 x 38.8 cm, Darmstadt (Fritzsche VZ 12; Kozakiewicz Z 202).

its immobility, epitomised by the tall, empty sky. As Longhi wrote: "the prodigious handwriting of Bellotto, almost a Morse alphabet of lines, dots, dashes of every kind and colour, reveals the secret passage from the optical to the narrative which is almost comparable to some famous eighteenth-century Russian works".

The composition of the present painting derives from an original work by Canaletto (c. 1735), today in the Wrightsman collection in New York. The version exhibited here, in its distinctively darker tonality and characteristic calligraphic handling of the canal, reveals the hand of the young Bellotto. The latter evidently had free access to his uncle's drawings, and in fact a number of his early works were close adaptations of existing works by Canaletto, leading many scholars to mistakenly attribute his works to Canaletto.

Concerning the *View of the Grand Canal from Ca' da Mosto looking towards the Rialto bridge*, there survives a preparatory drawing by Bellotto, stored at Darmstadt, which dates to the years 1735-1738, also close the dating of Canaletto's painting in Wrightsman collection (c. 1735); both of which the young artist clearly took inspiration from. There is knowledge amongst scholars in academia of a second version of the present view,¹ already in the London collection of Henry Oppenheimer, which has the dimensions of 59 x 91 cm, and that had previously been attributed to Canaletto. This mentioned work seems to have belonged to a group of paintings sold by the merchant Donaldson in the late nineteenth century, previously belonging to Castle Howard, a famous country house in Yorkshire built in the early eighteenth century by George Howard, the third Earl of Carlisle. Moreover, Castle Howard boasts a significant collection of *vedute* including works by Canaletto, Bellotto and Marieschi.

The version exhibited here, which went on sale in Lucerne in 1922, shows very few amendments in comparison to the preparatory drawing although its point of view is slightly shifted to the right, and one can witness two more arches of *Fabbriche Nuove* on the right. The work is dated to 1739-40, while the version of Castle Howard is dated around 1743-45, and is stylistically homogenous with other works of Bellotto constituting part of the prestigious collection.

On the far left, one can see the *Ca' da Mosto* one of the oldest palaces in Venice located in the district of Cannaregio, which from the sixteenth to the eighteenth century functioned as the *Albergo del Leon Bianco*, the most famous hotel in Venice, frequented by prestigious guests such as the Emperor Joseph II and the Grand Duke of Russia and his wife. Just beyond this building is the *Palazzo Dolfin Manin*, followed by the *Fondaco dei Tedeschi* which can be seen from the bottom right of the Rialto Bridge. On the far right, there are the *Fabbriche Nuove*, structures built by Sansovino where the ground floors were once occupied by various shops owners, while the upper floors housed offices for the merchant administration. Later on, the *Fabbriche Vecchie* were built between 1520 and 1522 by the architect Antonio Abbondi, also known as 'Scarpagnino', after a terrible fire in 1513 destroyed most of the buildings that stood around the market. The buildings once housed the administrative courts that oversaw trade, navigation and supplies. Today the *Fabbriche Vecchie* host the Court of Venice.

Further onwards, one finds the *Palace of Camerlenghi*, known today as the *Court of Auditors*. The Grand Canal is animated by lively caricatures of gondoliers, grouped mostly outside of the hotel, while other gondolas cleverly lead the viewer's gaze to the Rialto Bridge.

1. S. Kozakiewicz, *Bernardo Bellotto*, Milano 1972, no. 16.



19. BERNARDO BELLOTTO

(Venice 1722 – 1780 Warsaw)

Venice, view of the Grand Canal with Santa Maria della Salute, seen from the Campo Santa Maria del Giglio

Oil on canvas, 61.1 x 97.1 cm

COMPARATIVE LITERATURE

Bellotto and Canaletto. Wonder and Light, exh. cat., ed. by B. A. Kowalczyk, Gallerie d'Italia, Milano, 25 Novembre 2016 – 5 March 2017, pp. 80-81.

Bernardo Bellotto received his early training in the workshop of his uncle, the famous 'Canaletto'. His ability to emulate the style of his master at a particularly early stage of his career revealed his promising artistic potential. During his apprenticeship, the artist began making sophisticated modifications of Canaletto's technique, acquiring his own style by skillfully modeling the chiaroscuro effects and demonstrating a great deal of architectural precision. At the same time, however, his style set him apart from the former, most notably in his *capricci*, where he demonstrated an experienced handling of architectural forms in a convincing setting modeled by light and shadow and animated by figures.

Acquiring a deep understanding for Canaletto's technique, Bellotto learned how to articulate deep shadows and glimmers of light on the *façades* and side elevations of buildings, how to precisely replicate architectural motifs, and how to achieve a convincing representation of luminosity and mutability of water, as is evident in the painting belonging to the Lampronti collection. It is incredible to witness how Bellotto is able to master Canaletto's technique while simultaneously making it his own. Bellotto clearly followed his *maestro's* constructive methodology by using a ruler and incision marks in his paintworks. The young artist consequently created solid forms, clearly defined in a muted brightness without contrasts: a world free of stress, peaceful and appeased in its immobility, epitomised by the tall, empty sky. As Longhi wrote: "the prodigious handwriting of Bellotto, almost a Morse alphabet of lines, dots, dashes of every kind and colour, reveals the *syntactic* secret of a passage from the optical to the narrative which is almost comparable to famous works of eighteenth-century Russia".

The painting presents a beautiful view of the Grand Canal seen from Campo Santa Maria del Giglio. Interestingly, a second well-known version of this painting which slightly varies in size (59.3 x 94.9 cm) is kept at the Fitzwilliam Museum in Cambridge. In the Fitzwilliam version, the building on the left is further extended, while the point of view is slightly more receding in the Lampronti version.

In addition, the two paintings differ in color range, with the Lampronti version presenting significantly brighter tones.

The Cambridge version is dated to around 1741, which provides a useful reference point when attempting to allocate a date to the present painting.

We know of another version of the same work conserved at the J. Paul Getty Museum in Los Angeles, a considerably larger piece (the piece measures 135.5 x 232.5 cm), dated to 1743 by scholars. However, beyond the significant increase in size, one can further see how the painting differs from the Lampronti version when analysing the illustration of boats and the incredible detail of the *staffage* present in the latter work of art.

On the left side of the painting, the viewer finds Palazzo Pisani-Gritti, here depicted with beautiful arched windows and luminous lighting effects created by the light reflected on the glass of the open and closed windows. When further analysing the Palazzo's *façade* we witness delicate brown and green tones arising from the plaster of a fresco.

The palace dates back to the fourteenth century when it was designed as a three-story building. It was erected on behalf of the Pisani "del Banco" family, an illustrious and wealthy Venetian family at the time, who kept it until 1814 when it was conceded to Camillo Gritti, a descendant of the ancient and noble family. However, very shortly after, the palace was sold by the Baroness Susanna Wetzlar who at the time resided there, and who, in 1851, gave hospitality to John Ruskin, a writer intent on drafting his famous treatise *The stones of Venice*.

On the right side of the painting, one can locate the monastery of San Gregorio, of which the foundation dates back to the early thirteenth century. It is incredible to witness Bellotto's extraordinary ability to depict every single brick of the *façade* with infinite shades of warm brown tones. Immediately beyond the monastery, one finds the church of Santa Maria della Salute, its *façade* represented laterally while the splendid dome and its external sculptures are emphasised through the application of rapid yet meticulous brushstrokes.

The Riva degli Schiavoni is depicted in the background, filled with multiple boats evoking the idea of a lively and energetic port-life typical of eighteenth-century Venice.



20. FRANCESCO ALBOTTO

(Venice 1721 – 1757)

a. *Venice, the Molo with Palazzo Ducale*

b. *Venice, the Grand Canal seen from the Chiesa degli Scalzi towards Santa Croce*

A pair, oil on canvas, 61 x 97.5 cm each

EXPERTISE

Filippo Pedrocco, 18 June 2012.

LITERATURE

L. Salerno, *I pittori di vedute in Italia*, cat. 61, fig. 61.2, pp. 210-211.

COMPARATIVE LITERATURE

P. J. Mariette, 'Abecedario de P. J. Mariette et autres notes inédites de cet amateur sur les arts et les artistes (ante 1774)', *Archives de l'Art Français*, Paris 1854, III, p. 264; W. G. Constable, *Canaletto: Giovanni Antonio Canal, 1697-1768*, Oxford 1962, nos. 101-07; R. Pallucchini, 'Francesco Albotto, erede di Michele Marieschi', *Arte Veneta*, XXVI, 1972, p. 222; M. Manzelli, 'Ulteriori notizie su Francesco Albotto, erede di Michele Marieschi', *Arte Veneta*, XXXVIII, 1984, pp. 210-11; M. Manzelli, 'Proposta per l'identificazione di Michele Marieschi e del suo alter-ego Francesco Albotto', *Arte Veneta*, 41, 1987, pp. 111-22; D. Succi, in *Marieschi tra Canaletto e Guardi*, exh. cat., Turin 1989, pp. 26-28 and pp. 165-82; R. Toledano, *Michele Marieschi. L'opera completa*, 2nd ed., Milan 1995, pp. 26-35 and pp. 40-44, nos. V.1.a-V.1.g; F. Montecuccoli degli Erri – F. Pedrocco, *Michele Marieschi. La vita, l'ambiente, l'opera*, Milan 1999, pp. 86-137; M. Manzelli, *Michele Marieschi e il suo alter-ego Francesco Albotto*, 2nd ed., Venice 2002, pp. 46-5.

Born in Venice, Albotto trained under the established painter of *vedute* Michele Marieschi, and upon the latter's death in 1743 took over his workshop and married his widow. To this day, only one signed work by Albotto survives¹ and in the past his compositions have often been misattributed to his master. Indeed, Albotto was a faithful pupil, to the extent that he was known to his contemporaries as "il secondo Marieschi" ("the second Marieschi").² Rediscovered thanks to the work of Rodolfo Pallucchini and, subsequently, Ralph Toledano, Dario Succi and Mario Manzelli, Albotto's corpus of paintings has increasingly been researched, yielding a clearer definition of the artist's own hand and style.

The present canvases were originally conceived as a pair, as testified by their identical format, harmonious palette and use of light. In the former, Albotto depicted a view very dear to the tradition of Venetian *vedutismo*. The Piazzetta, seen from the Bacino di San Marco, was the sight that greeted every visitor entering the city from the lagoon and had been frequently painted by Luca Carlevarijs, Gaspar van Wittel and Canaletto.³ On the far left, Jacopo Sansovino's Zecca, the old government mint, stands beside the Biblioteca Marciana, also designed by him and constructed in 1537. Behind them is the Campanile, whereas to the right there are the two columns of Saint Mark and Saint Theodore, along with a glimpse of Saint Mark's Clocktower and Basilica. Closing the composition on the right are the southern *façade* of Palazzo Ducale and the Ponte della Paglia, leading to the Prigioni, the Venetian state's prisons. In the view of the Grand Canal Albotto chose a more unusual subject. In the foreground, on the right, is the Church of Santa Maria di Nazareth, known as the Scalzi, which was designed by Baldassarre Longhena. Past the Scalzi, Albotto depicted the Church of Santa Lucia, a 12th Century parochial church that was dedicated to Saint Lucy in 1279, as the saint's

remains were kept there. The church was demolished in 1861 as part of the plans to build the city's train station, which to this day bears the church's name. On the other side of the canal Albotto painted the Church of San Simeone Piccolo, its classical portico abutting on the waterfront and its dome standing out above the Venetian roofs. Beyond it, along the Fondamenta di Santa Croce, is the Monastery of Santa Croce, which was founded in the 8th Century and gave its name to the local *sestriere* ("district"). This church was also torn down in the 19th Century, to create the Papadopoli gardens that still exist today.

Albotto's illustration of the section of the Grand Canal here described constitutes a crucial testimony to its appearance in the 18th Century, a configuration that was radically altered less than a hundred years later. In addition to this, the canvas depicting the Piazzetta offers another insight into the city's past, as Saint Mark's Clocktower appears as it was before 1755, when its side wings were raised following a plan by the architect Giorgio Massari. Notably, this detail offers a *terminus ante quem* for Albotto's execution of the canvases.

Heir to Canaletto and Marieschi's tradition, Albotto simultaneously drew closely on their compositions and established his own painterly vocabulary. Eschewing Marieschi's subtly loaded brush in favor of a more crisp surface texture, Albotto paints with firm touches that immortalize the scene and convey a sense of stillness and tranquility. This tendency is also reflected in his figures, which are sparse and mostly located in boats and gondolas, rather than busily walking along Venetian squares and alleyways.

1. Now private collection, see *Canaletto, Venezia e i suoi splendori*, ex. cat., 2008, p. 179.

2. See P.J. Mariette, 1854, III, p. 264.

3. See Constable, 1962, nos. 101-07.



a



b

21. FRANCESCO TIRONI

(c. 1745 – 1797)

a. *View of the Church of Santa Maria della Salute towards St. Mark's Basin*

b. *View of the Rialto Bridge with the Palazzo dei Camerlenghi*

A pair, oil on canvas, 52 x 69 cm each

PROVENANCE

Palazzo Corner Spinelli, Venice

COMPARATIVE LITERATURE

D. Succi, *F. Tironi. Ultimo vedutista del Settecento veneziano*, Mariano del Friuli 2004, pp. 36-38, 44-45, fig. 24 p. 53; D. Succi, *Il fiore di Venezia. Dipinti dal Seicento all'Ottocento in collezioni private*, Gorizia 2014, p. 249, fig. 178.

Of Friulan origins, the artist Francesco Tironi had embarked on ecclesiastical life of priesthood, a well-established attribute we know from his obituary. He died the same year as the fall of Venice, a singular coincidence which has made it possible to believe that the artist was the last exponent of view painting and its glorious history during the Serenissima Republic.

The lack of research on Tironi as a painter has led, unfortunately, to a scarcely defined pictorial corpus to the extent that his name has been purposefully obscured in the past because of uncertain artistic origins related to individual view paintings.

Documentation about the Friulian artist is rare and derives almost entirely from the writings of Venetian canonist Giannantonio Moschini (1773-1840) in his literary work *Of Venetian literature from the eighteenth century to our days* (Venice 1806, volume III, 78). After mentioning the works of Modenese Francesco Battaglioli, Moschini writes: "Here I will add that we must mourn the death of our Francesco Tironi, who died too early, because the Ports of Venice and the islands drawn by him and engraved by our Antonio Santi [sic] make us realize how much more was to come". Later, in his memoir *Of Engraving in Venice before 1840*, Moschini remembers how Antonio Sandi had aspired to transpose the tonal importance of Francesco Tironi's beautifully animated designs in his engravings.

Interestingly, sources from the 18th century define Tironi exclusively as

a designer. Indeed, his pictorial activity is mentioned for the first time by F. De Boni in his *Artist Biography* (Venice 1840, p. 1014), where the artist is referred to as the "Venetian prospective painter".

Furthermore, Tironi's style is defined by an eclectic taste, where elements of pictorial expression deriving from both Canaletto and Francesco Guardi are fused with originality, as can be seen in the two views presented here by the Lampronti Collection. The great compositional skill of Canalettian origin merges with a dynamic scenic background where multiple boats congregate in the water. Generally, the colours of the buildings are of a golden brown tone, while the water is depicted in an intense green, almost brown hue so as to create an interplay of reflexions which animates the numerous boats afloat.

In *View of the Church of Santa Maria della Salute*, the setting diagonally marks the magnificent hill of Santa Maria della Salute and the adjacent convent of San Gregorio. This spectacular scenographic composition is followed by the moving lyricism of the buildings of the Punta della Dogana placed within the backdrop of the Riva degli Schiavoni. A similar version, published by Dario Succi (cm 58 x 75), dates back to 1780, a date which also seems well-suited for the Lampronti version.

There is a slightly larger version of the luminous *View of the Rialto Bridge with the Camerlenghi Palace* published by Succi (57 x 74 cm), which the scholar dated to 1770.



a



b

22. WILLIAM JAMES

(Active in England between 1746-1771)

The Molo with the Piazzetta and the Ducal Palace from St. Mark's Basin

Oil on canvas, 63.5 x 47 cm

PROVENANCE

Private collection, United Kingdom

LITERATURE

The Splendours of Venice. View Paintings from the Eighteenth Century, exhibition catalogue (London 2014), ed. by V. Rossi and A. Hilliam, Rome 2014, pp. 40-41.

According to Edward Edwards's *Anecdotes of a Painter* (1808), William James was a 'pupil or assistant' of Canaletto during his English sojourn between 1746 and 1756.¹ Edwards tells us that he 'painted land-scapes, chiefly views in the neighbourhood of London'. Circulation on the international market of numerous *vedute* with their original frames, which include plaques inscribed with the artist's name, attest to James's rich production of topographical pictures. Many of these are taken from the repertoire of Canaletto, leading in recent years to the inclusion of the artist as an honorary member of the Venetian school of *Vedutisti*.²

Information regarding James's life and career is scarce. According to his nineteenth-century biographer, 'he for several years resided in Maiden-lane, Covent-garden, and his works were shown at his shop-window'.³ We know that James later moved to the Golden Head in May's Buildings, St Martin's Lane, an area frequented by artists and craftsmen during his time. He exhibited at the Society of Artists of Great Britain from 1761 to 1768 and at the Royal Academy from 1769 to 1771. Most of his exhibited pictures were views of London, apart from a series of Egyptian temples, which he exhibited at the Royal Academy between 1768 and 1770. Edwards argues that 'as these were subjects which he had never seen, they could only be considered as copies'.

It is precisely James's activity as a copyist that makes him an intriguing case study. The present painting replicates a section of Canaletto's celebrated *Bucintoro Returning to the Molo on Ascension Day* in the collection of Her Majesty the Queen at Windsor Castle, which was engraved by Visentini for the first edition of his *Prospectus*.⁴ The annual celebrations commemorating the Sposalizio del Mar, symbolic of Venetian seafaring supremacy, are represented in Canaletto's picture by the elaborate state barge, or '*bucintoro*', stationed at the Molo in front of the Ducal Palace. As this vessel is absent from James's rendition, which only depicts a corner of the Ducal Palace, as well as the temporary buildings in the Piazzetta, which housed a Venetian market in the event of the celebrations, the original subject is lost. Instead, James presents a narrow frame of the *veduta*, which, in the absence of the celebrations conveyed in the prime, would have appealed to prospective clients as a typical representation of the Molo as they may have witnessed it during their Grand Tour. The Zecca is can be witnessed on the far left, with the

white *façade* of the Libreria next to it and the Campanile protruding above. At the centre of the frame is the Piazzetta with the columns of St. Mark and St. Theodore, and part of the Clock Tower and St. Marks beyond. The view closes with a section of the Palazzo Ducale on the right. In the foreground, gondolas and other vessels carrying passengers, which are absent from the original and thus derive from James's own imagination, add to the narrative element of the scene.

Richard and Samuel Redgrave, in their *A Century of British Painters*, state that 'many of [Canaletto's] mechanical modes of imitating Nature were adopted by our landscape painters of this period'.⁵ The authors proceed to make mention of William James's series depicting the banks of the Thames, in which 'he resorted to ruling for the lines of his buildings, and to the still more mechanically conventional treatment of the ripple in water as expressed by Canaletto'. These rather amusing observations made in 1947 suggest that Canaletto's influence was detrimental to the history of British topographical painting, rather than reinvigorating as we would be inclined to argue today. Regardless of this, the authors' remarks are valuable in assessing the lessons learnt by painters such as James from Canaletto's presence in England.

For the present *veduta*, James has indeed adopted Canaletto's ripples, as well as the precision in depicting architecture through the use of the *camera obscura*, but here achieved probably by tracing Visentini's engraving. Attempts have been made to mimic Canaletto's shorthand for the *macchiette*, although these naturally appear rather more laboured. The palette of colours used is rich and evocative, conjuring up a sense of the lagoon's atmosphere. The indirect absorption of Venice's splendours bestows an almost surreal quality upon James's *vedute*, whereby the static imitation of Canaletto's prototype is reminiscent of a distant memory, or in our artist's case, his imagination.

1. E. Edwards, H. Walpole, *Anecdotes of painters, who have resided or been born in England: with critical remarks on their productions*, London 1808.

2. F. Pedrocchi, *Il Settecento a Venezia. I vedutisti*, Milan 2001.

3. E. Edwards, H. Walpole, 1808, p. 17

4. W.G. Constable, *Canaletto*, Oxford 1989, II, n. 335, pp. 357-8, I, pl. 64.

5. R. Redgrave, S. Redgrave, *A Century of British Painters*, New York 1981.



23. WILLIAM JAMES

(Active in England between 1746-1771)

a. *Venice, a view of the Grand Canal with a regatta, looking north-east from Palazzo Balbi to the Rialto Bridge*

b. *Venice, a view of the Molo with the Bucintoro on Ascension Day*

A pair, oil on canvas, 71.5 x 91.5 cm each

PROVENANCE

European private collection.

According to Edward Edwards's *Anecdotes of a Painter* (1808), William James was a 'pupil or assistant' of Canaletto during his English sojourn between 1746 and 1756.¹ Edwards tells us that he 'painted landscapes, chiefly views in the neighbourhood of London'. Circulation on the international market of numerous *vedute* with their original frames, which include plaques inscribed with the artist's name, attest to James's rich production of topographical pictures. Many of these are taken from the repertoire of Canaletto, leading in recent years to the inclusion of the artist as an honorary member of the Venetian school of *Vedutisti*.² Information regarding James's life and career is scarce. According to his nineteenth-century biographer, 'he for several years resided in Maid-en-lane, Covent-garden, and his works were shown at his shop-window'.³ We know that James later moved to the Golden Head in May's Buildings, St Martin's Lane, an area frequented by artists and craftsmen during his time. He exhibited at the Society of Artists of Great Britain from 1761 to 1768 and at the Royal Academy from 1769 to 1771. Most of his exhibited pictures were views of London, apart from a series of Egyptian temples, which he exhibited at the Royal Academy between 1768 and 1770. Edwards argues that 'as these were subjects which he had never seen, they could only be considered as copies'.

It is precisely James's activity as a copyist that makes him an intriguing case study. The present painting is a slight variant of the original composition by Canaletto at Windsor, in the collection of Her Majesty the Queen. The view is taken from the Palazzo Foscari on the sharp bend in the Grand Canal, known as the *Volta de Canal*, roughly equidistant from its entrance onto the Bacino di San Marco and the Rialto Bridge. Looking North-East from there the stretch of the canal is visible, as far as the Rialto Bridge, part of which is shown in the far distance, with the roof and dome of the church of Santi Giovanni e Paolo and beyond. Apart from being a particularly well balanced composition, and one in which water occupies the full breadth of the canvas, the view has the relatively unusual distinction of being observable from high above the water, from the viewpoint of the Palazzo Foscari. A *macchina* erected next to the Palazzo Balbi was the focal point of the annual regatta (gondola race), where the winners received their flags and prizes, therefore the view is known above all for its setting for regatta depictions.

This painting is accompanied by a pendant showing *The Bucintoro returning to the Molo on Ascension Day*, after a Canaletto formerly with Bellesi in London.⁴ The annual celebrations commemorating the Sposa-

lizio del Mar, symbolic of Venetian seafaring supremacy, are represented in Canaletto's and James's pictures through an elaborate state barge, or '*bucintoro*', stationed at the Molo in front of the Ducal Palace.

The pairing of the two subjects is unusual, as the sobriety of this painting contrasts with the gaiety of the pendant. However one must know that Canaletto was the one who previously proposed this unconventional combination, as in the case of the Grand Canal sold at Sotheby's in 2005 (7/07/2005, lot 47)⁵ and its pendant sold in Paris in 1993 (15/12/1993, lot 13).⁶

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For the present *vedute*, James has indeed adopted Canaletto's ripples, as well as the precision in depicting architecture through the use of the *camera obscura*. Attempts have been made to mimic Canaletto's shorthand for the *macchiette*, although these reproductions naturally tend to appear more laboured. The palette of colours used is rich and evocative, conjuring up a sense of the lagoon's atmosphere. The indirect absorption of Venice's splendours bestows an almost surreal quality upon James's *vedute*, whereby the static imitation of Canaletto's prototype is reminiscent of a distant memory, or in our artist's case, his imagination.

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2. F. Pedrocchi, *Il Settecento a Venezia. I vedutisti*, Milan 2001.

3. E. Edwards, H. Walpole, 1808, p. 17

4. W.G. Constable, *Canaletto*, Oxford 1989, vol. II, pp. 364-66, cat. no. 347, reproduced vol. I plate 65.

5. R. Redgrave, S. Redgrave, *A Century of British Painters*, New York 1981.

6. *Ibidem*, vol. I, vol. II, no. 340, reproduced plate 64.

7. R. Redgrave, S. Redgrave, 1981, p. 39.



a



b

24. CIRCLE OF CANALETTO

(active c. 1750-60)

View of the Grand Canal with Rialto Bridge from the South

Oil on canvas, 67 x 114 cm

PROVENANCE

Private collection, United Kingdom.

This richly coloured *veduta* is an incredible eighteenth-century copy of the painting by Canaletto in the Duke of Bedford's collection at Woburn Abbey,¹ which looks towards the Rialto Bridge from the Campo San Bartolomeo, where the Campo is approached from the opposite direction. The viewer may gain an understanding of the viewpoint by comparing the steps that lead up to the bridge in the far-left corner of Domenichini's painting with the same steps, here seen in the lower-right corner. The Fondamento del Vin, where barrels of wine were unloaded, is here depicted on the left, with the Palazzo dei Dieci Savi, the sixteenth-century seat of the superintendents of taxes, joining the bridge next to it. On the right, beyond the bridge, is the Fondaco dei Tedeschi, the thirteenth-century Veneto-Byzantine palazzo that at the time was a slum inhabited by Venice's Ottoman Turkish population.

Illuminated from the right, elegant figures populate Campo San Bartolomeo and can be just witnessed crossing the Rialto Bridge. Gondoliers drive their passengers across the Canal, and shops are open for business along the Fondamento del Vin. The high-key palette, which is emphasised locally in the blue-green roof of the bridge and the Canal, the brown-red tiles and the scarlet, yellow and blue colours of the figures, invigorate the painting, and also create a contrast with the light-blue sky and its fleecy white clouds.

The present picture is larger than the original, which measures 47 x 80 cm, and whether or not our artist had direct access to it is fundamen-

tally questionable, as it was bought by John, the 4th Duke of Bedford (1710-71), along with twenty-four other views, directly from Canaletto following the commission he gave to the artist during his visit to the lagoon city in 1732.² Although it is sometimes stated that parts of this collection of views were engraved by Visentini in his *Prospectus Magni Canalis* (1735, 1742, 1751), there is no existing plate of the present view, eliminating the possibility that the artist may have worked directly from a print. He may, however, have known of the drawings now in the Queen's collection at Windsor Castle, where the view point is identical, but the *staffage* and vessels are arranged differently, and the wooden hut is represented.³ Bernardo Bellotto was active in his uncle's studio from 1736, and while the quality of the present painting would not discredit him as a possible author, it is unlikely that a prolific and commercially-minded artist would have taken four years to complete a commission.

It is therefore probable that the author is a precocious, albeit anonymous, follower of the great *Vedutista*. The refined brushwork, harmonious palette and skilled overall execution of the present picture demonstrate the hand of an artist who was closely associated with Canaletto and his circle.

1. W. G. Constable - J.G. Links, *Canaletto*, 1989, I, n. 225, pl. 47, II, p. 294.

2. *Ibid.*, II, n. 4, pp. 188-9.

3. *Ibid.*, I, nos. 591, 592, pl. 108, II, pp. 509-10.



25. GIUSEPPE BERNARDINO BISON

(Palmanova 1762 – 1844 Milan)

The Grand Canal looking north-east from Ca' Foscari to the Rialto Bridge

Oil on canvas, 47.5 x 74.5 cm

PROVENANCE

Private collection

LITERATURE

The Splendours of Venice. View Paintings from the Eighteenth Century, exhibition catalogue (London 2014), ed. by V. Rossi and A. Hilliam, Rome 2014, pp. 54-55.

The impeccable skill of Giuseppe Bernardino Bison, often described as the last heir to the Venetian tradition of *Vedutismo*, is displayed in all its vividness in the *Grand Canal from Ca' Foscari towards the Rialto Bridge* here present. The work is closely based upon Canaletto's painting depicting the same subject in the Uffizi, Florence, with differences in the handling of the palette, which is injected here with a vibrant series of blues and greens. Both pictures depict the Grand Canal from Palazzo Balbi. On the left Palazzo Querini Dubois and Ca' Bernardo appear, and further beyond one can locate the Palazzo Tiepolo Businello and Palazzo Barzizza, an illustration which follows the compositional structure of a drawing in the Accademia.¹ The Rialto Bridge can just be made out in the distance with the Basilica of Santi Giovanni Paolo behind it, while to the right another sequence of patrician residences appears, such as, Palazzo Contarini dalle Figure, the four Mocenigo palazzos, and towards the Rialto, Ca' Corner Spinelli and Ca' Grimani.

Bison was perhaps best known during his lifetime as a painter of decorative frescoes in the interiors of elegant villas, which he would execute in the style of Costantino Cedini and Giambattista Tiepolo, and like many of the painters in this catalogue, as a painter of theatrical backdrops, following in the footsteps of his eighteenth-century predecessors. The artist's training at the Accademia di Venezia proved fundamental to his



Courtesy of Sotheby's

John Scarlett Davis (Leominster 1804 – 1845 London)

The Long Gallery At The Uffizi, Florence

Signed and dated lower left: J. SCARLETT DAVIS 1834 - Oil on canvas - 109 x 143.5 cm.

activity as a painter, as it was there that he would be encouraged to study Antonio Visentini's engravings after Canaletto's *vedute*, as well as learnt how to paint *staffage* in the eighteenth-century manner, whereby thick, bright globules of paint are used to suggest forms and details with great precision and resourcefulness. Pedrocco has shown that Bison's method often consisted on making tracings of prints from Visentini's *Prospectus* directly onto the canvas, which would then be adapted to include different elements, explaining the small format of many of the painter's Venetian views.²

The present painting is unusual in that it is not based upon any of Visentini's engravings, but on a painting by Canaletto that has no printed equivalent. Bison therefore must have had direct access to the picture, which is believed to have been acquired in 1728 by the art historian Francesco Maria Niccolò Gabburri through the art dealer Anton Maria Zanetti. The painting is mentioned in 1742 in a register documenting the movement of objects from the Pitti Palace to the Palazzo Vecchio, and in 1798 in another document tracking the transferral of paintings from the Pitti Palace to the Uffizi, where it is presently on display.³ We know that Bison undertook an Italian sojourn between 1834 and 1838, during which time he visited Florence, Rome, Naples and Paestum, which in return broadened his '*vedutist*' repertoire. It is therefore highly likely that he saw Canaletto's picture on display at the Uffizi, as it is reproduced in a painting depicting *The Long Gallery in the Uffizi* by John Scarlett Davis, which was exhibited in 1834 at the Royal Academy in London, the year that Bison arrived in Florence.⁴ One can imagine Bison seated at his easel, replacing the female artist in Davis's picture, creating a copy of Canaletto's painting, which he surely must have had the curators remove from its high-up position near the ceiling in order to better study it. What is further unusual about Bison's copy is that it is just that: a copy, and not a variation, unlike most of his Venetian subjects, where the vessels, staffage and other details are modified. This may be explained by the fact that he was working directly from the painting rather than the print. One can suggest that perhaps the scale of the project gave him less freedom to devise his own elements, or perhaps a patron had requested a direct copy of the Uffizi picture. Certainly, this notion is substantiated by the fact that the paintings have near identical dimensions, the original measuring 45 x 73 cm. Alternatively, Bison may have been intrigued by Canaletto's picture, which is often cited as being a stylistic anomaly within the painter's *oeuvre*. The issue of the painting's authorship was raised by Constable, who stated that the handling of the water and the buildings "has raised some doubt with its being by Canaletto, but are consistent with its being an early work".⁵ The painting's full attribution was later supported by Bożena Anna Kowalczyk, who suggested that the work reveals a phase of technical experimentation in which Canaletto sought to create delicate transparent effects by spreading a layer of blue-grey paint over the red-brown preparation.⁶

An interest in conveying Venice's translucent qualities is also present in this painting, which recreates the fluid handling of Canaletto's view. Where Bison's rendition comes into its own is in the astonishingly clear use of colour, which electrifies the image and imbues the eighteenth-century view with a modern touch.

1. W.G. Constable, J.G. Links, *Canaletto*, 1976.

2. F. Pedrocco, *Il Settecento a Venezia. I vedutisti*, Milan, 2001, p. 229.

3. V. Conticelli, in G. Pavanello, *Canaletto: Venezia e i suoi splendori*, Venice 2008, n. 29, pp. 258-9.

4. The picture was sold in a Sotheby's Old Master and British Paintings sale, lot 214, 6 Dec. 2012.

5. W.G. Constable, *Canaletto*, 1962, p. 290.

6. B. A. Kowalczyk, *Bernardo Bellotto and the capitals of Europe*, New Haven-London, 2001, p. 190; Canaletto, 2005, p. 78.



26. GIOVANNI MIGLIARA

(Alessandria 1785 – 1837 Milan)

Venice, Campo Santi Giovanni e Paolo

Oil on canvas, 40.8 x 58 cm

EXPERTISE

Egidio Martini, written communication; Dario Succi, 23 February 2007.

Giovanni Migliara, one of the most important Italian landscape painters of early-19th century, initially dedicated himself to the production of small-scale works, depicting whimsically imaginative subjects inspired by the iconographic repertoire of Gaspare Gallari on to small boxes and medallions. At the same time, he would begin to draw closer to the great eighteenth-century *vedutisti*, specifically Canaletto, Bellotto and Guardi.

The painting presented here is part of the medium-sized pictorial works created by Migliara in the first period of his artistic career, which corresponds approximately the years following 1825. In this period, the artist sought to reproduce the style of the great Venetian masters, by personally recreating the atmosphere and charm of the eighteenth-century *veduta* and architectural *capriccio* in a completely original and inventive manner.

This specific representation of Campo Santi Giovanni e Paolo was first conceived by Canaletto in two large canvases of the mid-1720s, now located in Dresden, as well as the equivalent rendering, painted for Stefano Conti of Lucca.¹ Michele Marieschi's engraving of a slightly more distant cityscape, plate 15 of his *Magnificentiores Selectioresque Urbis Venetiarum Prospectus* (1741), established the success the composition amongst a wider public, and soon it became one of the most popular Venetian pictorial subjects.

The Campo Santi Giovanni e Paolo is here portrayed from a southern viewpoint of the piazza together with the *façade* of the church of Santi Giovanni e Paolo, one of the largest churches in Venice, located on the right. The focus of the view is the Scuola Grande di San Marco, one

of the city's six major guilds, founded in 1485 by Pietro Lombardo and Giovanni Buora and completed by Mauro Codussi ten years later. Furthermore, Andrea del Verrocchio's famous equestrian statue of the *condottiere* Bartolomeo Colleoni is depicted on the far right. The execution of this sculpture was finished in 1496 and it would stand as the only outdoor public monument in the city until 1866.

In the painting here discussed, Migliara adapted Canaletto's composition in order to grant the spectator a total view of the church on the right, filling the scene with figures garbed in vivaciously coloured robes. Also similar to Canaletto, is Migliara's taste for architectural detail and subtle use of light, both of which seamlessly create a naturally descriptive and vibrant narrative.

When referring to the present painting, one must emphasize the originality of the compositional and perspective configuration, an exemplary technique which differentiates the artist's depiction greatly when compared to traditional eighteenth-century lagunar portrayals. Indeed, the Mendicanti canal is animated by various boats while the field in close proximity is populated by multiple splendid figures, creating a marvelous pictorial execution which seamlessly combines influences from both Canaletto and Guardi. Moreover, the colour palette impresses a peaceful and subdued atmosphere of a distinctly preromantic taste through the application of luminous tones and soft shadows.

1. See Constable, *Canaletto*, 2nd ed. revised by J.G. Links reissued with supplement and additional plates, Oxford, 1989, vol. I, pl. 58; II, nos. 305 and 304 respectively.



27. CARLO GRUBACS
(Perast c. 1801 – 1870 Venice)

View of Venice during the Festa del Redentore

Oil on canvas, 67.5 x 100 cm

PROVENANCE

Private collection, Bologna.

EXPERTISE

F. Mazzocca, 8 May 2010.

EXHIBITION

Lo splendore di Venezia: Canaletto, Bellotto e i vedutisti dell'Ottocento, exh. cat. ed. by D. Dotti, Brescia, Palazzo Martinengo Cesaresco, 23 January - 12 June 2016, Milan, 2016, cat. n. 51, pp. 172-173; *L'impressionismo di Zandomeneghi*, exh. cat., ed. by F. Dini and F. Mazzocca, Padova, October 2016-January 2017, cat. 5, p. 77.

LITERATURE

D. Trevisani, notice n. 14, in *Tableaux Anciens du XVIe au XIXe siècle. Old Master Paintings from the XVI to the XIX Century*, exh. cat., Paris Tableau, Palais Brongniart 13-16 november 2014, eds. L. Marchesini, M. Nobile, D. Trevisani, Cento (FE), 2014.

Carlo Grubacs, the leading figure in Venetian *veduta* painting in the period following Canaletto and Guardi, maintained the glory of this illustrious artistic past while also profoundly influencing the history of Italian art in the centuries to come. Originally from Eastern Europe, this maestro lived and worked prevalently in the lagoon city, earning for himself the title of “il veneziano” (“the Venetian”). His early artistic formation cannot easily be documented, and few details are available regarding his apprenticeship. During the early decades of the 19th century, Venice would continue to boast a highly relevant position within Italy’s cultural panorama, thanks to the complete renewal of the *Accademia* promoted by count Leopoldo Cicognara, one of many innovations undergone at the time. This renowned institution, which admitted Grubacs as a student in 1818, was responsible for the artistic instruction of La Serenissima’s best artists, later favouring their careers through its annual exhibitions. An unparalleled connoisseur of 18th century landscape painting, in particular Francesco Guardi, Grubacs nevertheless developed a new sense of color and quickly affirmed his own autonomous means of expression that would gain him a wide success both in the Veneto region and among the most prestigious international collectors.¹ This sparkling *veduta*, that can be dated to the 1840s, portrays the crucial moment of the festivity that was unquestionably most beloved by Venetians for centuries, namely the Festa del Redentore, celebrated every third Sunday of July since 1577 to commemorate the city’s liberation from the black plague. During the preceding night, St. Mark’s basin and the entire lagoon between Venice and the Lido are invaded by boats overflowing with Venetians who celebrate by eating and drinking while they wait for the most spectacular moment to arrive when the fireworks begin to explode – exactly the moment depicted by Grubacs. Choosing

an extremely low horizon line, he succeeds in encompassing the vastness of the entire lagoon, from the Zattere to the shore of the Giudecca, the island on which the Palladian church of the Redentore was built as an *ex-voto*.

The kaleidoscopic effect created by the light and colours of the fireworks bursting in the night offers Grubacs an excellent chance to demonstrate his impeccable technical mastery. While the extraordinary chromatic effects created by the flares in the sky and their sudden fall over the calm reflective surface of the lagoon are rendered in an exemplary manner, Grubacs also unsurprisingly succeeds in conveying of the roar produced by the crackling fireworks and the cheerful voices of the murmuring and festive crowd. The spectacular artifice of the fireworks takes the equally astonishing spectacle of the night sky as its background, against one of those Prussian blues that only the summer season can offer, pervaded by the silver light of the full moon. It is as if nature were mirrored by the artifice of man, for example in the halos of coloured light around the lanterns on the boats, expressed by Grubacs with unparalleled technical skill and an enchanting touch, experienced by as if we were witnessing it through a magnifying lense. As Fernando Mazzocca observes in the expertise that accompanies this work, the painting can be compared, by way of the choice of its identical point of view, to the landscape of the *Zattere ai Gesuati* at the Museo Civico di Bassano del Grappa, and, through the nocturnal motif, with the *Bombardment in Marghera* conserved at the Museo Correr in Venice.

1. Many of his works are found in private collections and important European museums, such as the Kestner Museum in Hanover and the Stadtmuseum in Oldenburg (for both a biography and numerous bibliographic references, see the updated entry in C. Tonini in *Pavanello*, 2003, II, pp. 743-744).



28. GIOVANNI GRUBACS

(Venice 1830 – 1919 Pola)

a. *The bridge of the “Redentore” to the Lido Santa Maria Elisabetta*

b. *The Feast of Santa Marta*

A pair, oil on panel, 32.7 x 50.5 cm each

PROVENANCE

Private collection, United Kingdom.

EXPERTISE

Prof. Ugo Ruggeri, 24th May 2010.

The Grubacs family, originally from Perast (in the Gulf of Cattaro, Montenegro), settled in Venice in the second half of the eighteenth century, and Carlo (Venice 1802-1878), the son of a merchant marine captain named Giovanni Battista, was the first of his family to dedicate himself to painting, having had some early success as a view painter. His works seemed to be a reworking of Canaletto models, executed as if seen through a less sumptuous and opulent lens, closer to the reality of Venice in the first half of the nineteenth century. Carlo Grubacs had six sons, among whom Giovanni and Marco (Venice 1838-1910) would follow to his footsteps, drawing inspiration from a concept of view-painting born in the late eighteenth century, and applying an updated and innovative use of reflected light and unprecedented effects that enlivened the architectural elements of the city.

Giovanni, having learned the rudiments of the profession in his father's studio, was admitted to the Accademia di Belle Arti of Venice in 1847, but his studies were interrupted the next year by the outbreak of the revolution that concluded with the Austrian siege on the city. His first significant painting is the canvas in the Museo Correr in Venice titled *Marghera, the Bombardment in the Year 1848-1849*, signed on the reverse, “Gi. Grubacs, fece il 26 luglio (1848)”, and portrays one of the dramatic bombings of the Marghera Fort held by the Venetian patriots and captured by the Austrians on May 26-27, 1849. In 1854, having finished his academic studies, Giovanni took part for the first time in the annual exhibition of the Accademia, submitting two perspective views in a neo-eighteenth-century taste depicting *The Grand Canal*, and *The Riva degli Schiavoni*. In the following years he was a regular participant in Venetian exhibitions, at the Istituzione Veneziana in 1855, 1856, 1858, 1861, 1862, 1854, and 1866, and later at the Società Veneta Promotrice di Belle Arti in 1867, 1869, 1872, and 1880.

The artist almost always exhibited paintings of Venetian cityscapes. Interestingly, at the beginning of his career he strictly followed eighteenth-century prototypes, whereas in the later decades to come his style would be influenced by the suffused naturalism of Ippolito Caffi which gave a new life and expression to his depictions, infusing them with more realistic figural groups and dramatic long views of the city bathed in an opalescent atmosphere, brightened with sudden flashes of light that create unique luminous effects.

The paintings under consideration are splendid examples of the delicacy with which Giovanni Grubacs interpreted view-paintings of the Grand Siècle, depicting two typical Venetian festivals that were established after the plague of 1575-1577, and are still celebrated to this day: the Festa del Redentore (“Feast of the Redeemer”) and the Feast of Santa Marta. The first work illustrates the celebration of the Festa del Redentore on the third Sunday of July, which commemorates the building of the Church of the Redentore in the Giudecca by order of the Venetian Senate (4 September 1576). The bridge was erected as a votive offering for the city's deliverance from the plague, the scourge that caused the death of more than a third of the population of Venice in just two years. Meanwhile, the pendant painting depicts the Feast of Santa Marta, celebrated on the eve of the saint's feast day (July 29th) in the poor fishing neighbourhood surrounding the church known by the same name. The scene depicts the local fishermen arriving on the shore, where musicians, dancers, cooks, members of the nobility and the poor fisher-folk alike dance, feast and celebrate together.

Both works are reinventions of themes and views explored in the paintings of Antonio Giovanni Canal. Indeed, the *Feast of Santa Marta* is inspired by the painting by Canaletto in the Gymnasium zum Grauen Kloster, Berlin, probably known to Grubacs through the engraving by Giovan Battista Brustolon.¹ The series of watercolours by Canaletto was engraved by Giambattista Brustolon (Venice 1712 – 1796) in a spectacular collection that was first published in Venice by Ludovico Furlanetto in 1766 and from 1773-1775. The series proved so successful that it was reprinted three times; the first by Furlanetto, the second by Teodoro Viero in the 1790s and the third printed prior to 1831 by Giuseppe Battaglia.

Grubacs was also a close imitator of his father, the painter Carlo Grubacs and the strong stylistic similarities with the work of his father suggest an early dating for the present pendants, which fundamentally demonstrate a profound interest in an eighteenth-century revival of Venetian view painting. The revival of this tradition, initiated by Giuseppe Bernardino Bison, would be significantly pervasive throughout the nineteenth century.

1. G.W. Constable, *Canaletto*, Oxford 1962, n. 360.



a



b

29. LOUIS CLAUDE MOUCHOT

(Paris 1830 – 1890)

Venice, masquerade party

Oil on canvas, 38 x 61,5 cm

Signed 'C. MOUCHOT' (lower left)

The Orientalist painter Louis-Claude Mouchot was born in Paris on August 25, 1830. In 1847 he was admitted to the École des Beaux-Arts and was taught by the history painters Michel Martin Drolling (1786-1851) and Jean-Hilaire Belloc (1787-1866). Furthermore, Mouchot's relationship with Léon Belly (1827-1877), with whom he would travel to Egypt in 1857, was incredibly significant to the development of his artistic personality.

His debut was held at the Salon in 1859, where he would later exhibit works on many occasions (in 1865, 1867, 1868).

There are several well-known works by Louis Mouchot representing Venice, such as the painting belonging to the Lampronti collection presented here. Under the arches of St. Mark's Square, on a bright cloudless day, we witness a cheerful group of people animating the pictorial scene. The Marciana Library is depicted in light tones of beige and is barely a faint spot of colour, it is essentially only a blurred shape within the pictorial composition. The lively individuals located on the porch

and pavement are also depicted in similar hues of sepia, which seamlessly emphasizes the ruby red, blue and yellow ochre colours of each individual's clothing, creating an intense and vivid aesthetic palette. The same compositional display is also evident in other works by the artist, such as *The Boarding of the Gondola in Venice*, auctioned by Christie's in September 2016, and in other Venetian masquerade paintings all of which date back to 1880.

The work of art is animated by several quotidian scenes. On the right, a man dressed as a harlequin draws a dog's attention, while to the left a woman wearing a pale white and scarlet red gown is elegantly handing a flower to a man just as the young boy by her side insistently attempts to attract her attention.

The composition is delightful, harmonious and well-balanced in the tones of its palette as well as its composition.

Mouchot's works are on display in the museums of Bordeaux, Dijon, Narbonne, Paris (Orsay), Rennes, Troyes, and Versailles (Trianon).



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