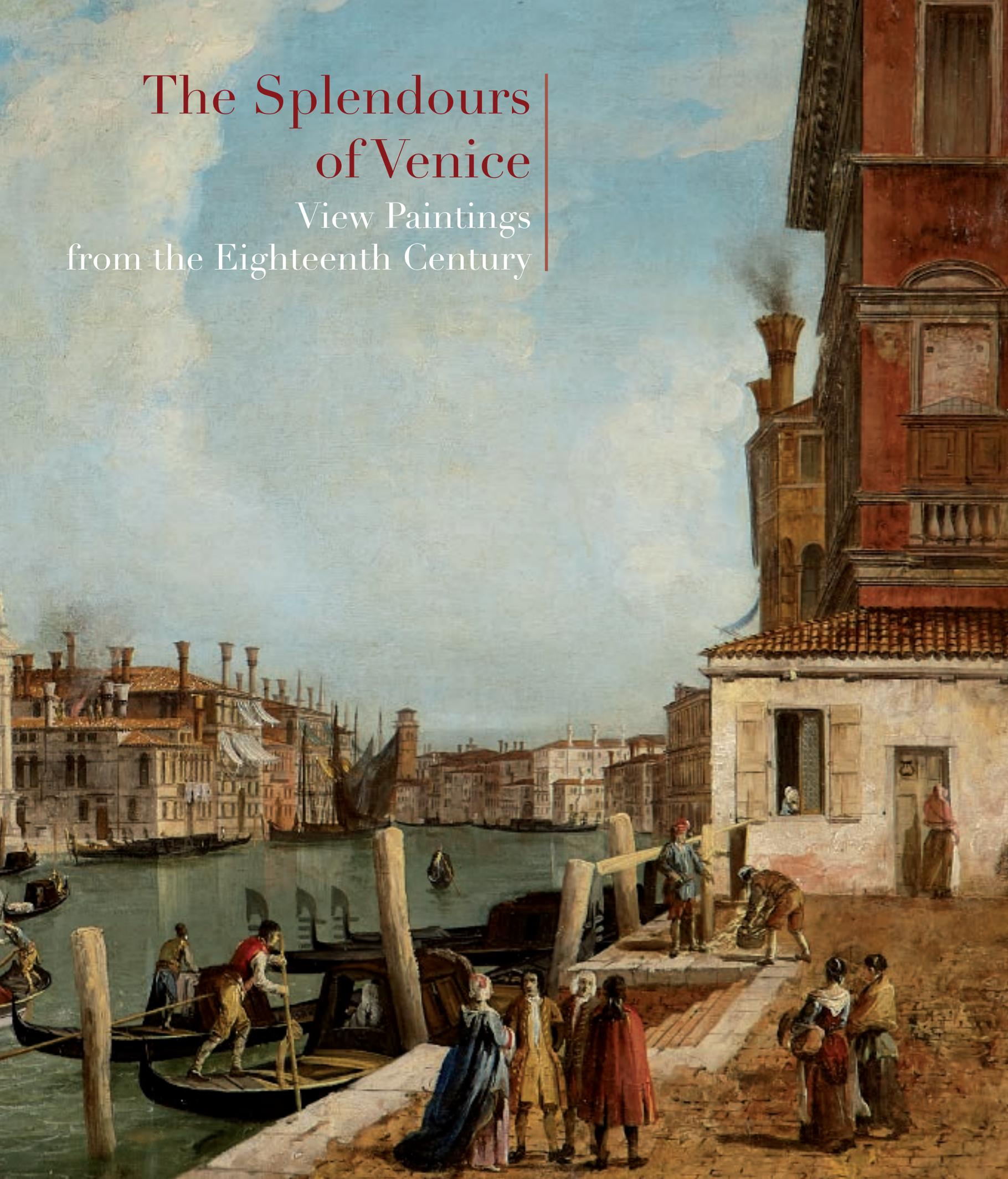


# The Splendours of Venice

View Paintings  
from the Eighteenth Century



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CESARE LAMPRONTI  
*fine old masters since 1914*



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Valentina Rossi and Amanda Hilliam

DE LUCA EDITORI D'ARTE

**The Splendours of Venice**  
View Paintings from the Eighteenth Century

Lampronti Gallery  
1-24 December 2014  
9.30 - 6 pm

*Exhibition curated by*  
Amanda Hilliam  
Valentina Rossi

*Catalogue edited by*  
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Valentina Rossi

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p. 2: Francesco Guardi, *The lagoon with the Forte di S. Andrea*, cat. 20,  
detail

This exhibition and catalogue commemorates the one-hundred-year anniversary of Lampronti Gallery, founded in 1914 by my Grandfather and now one of the foremost galleries specialising in Italian Old Master paintings in the United Kingdom. We have, over the years, developed considerable knowledge and expertise in the field of *vedute*, or view paintings, and it therefore seemed fitting that this centenary exhibition be dedicated to our best examples of this great tradition, many of which derive from important private collections and are published here for the first time.

More precisely, the exhibition brings together a fine selection of views of Venice, a city whose romantic canals and quality of light were never represented with greater sensitivity or technical brilliance than during the eighteenth century. The masters *vedutismo* - Canaletto, Marieschi, Bellotto and Guardi - are all represented here by key works that capture the essence of Venice. A desire to record one's surroundings, as well as issue of taste, culture and economy, drove the demand for *vedute* and offer a vivid insight into the period. The diffusion of prototypes via prints, particularly Antonio Visentini's series of engraved plates after Canaletto, the 'Prospectus Magni Canalis Venetiarum' (1735, 1742), dramatically influenced the genre's development and proposes interesting questions concerning originality and replication. Rather than being passive imitators, however, artists such as Cimaroli and Domenichini demonstrate highly personal re-imaginings of past models through their liveliness of vision and masterful execution. Later nineteenth-century interpreters of 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 exchange between Canaletto and Joseph Consul Smith, is a key aspect of the history of *vedutismo* and continues to resonate to this day. Many will be familiar with the corners of Venice represented in the paintings from their visits to the National Gallery or the Royal Collection at Windsor Castle and, of course, to the city itself. We therefore hope 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.  
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 20<sup>th</sup> 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*, 2<sup>nd</sup> 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*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. revised by J.G. Links reissued 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*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., Cambridge, 1991, p. 43, under no. 408, fig. 13.

#### 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 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 was, famously, to escape from them in 1756. Here they are transposed to the Venetian main-

land 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 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,<sup>1</sup> 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.<sup>2</sup>

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, so 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*, with their requisite use of the 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 cream 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. Those 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. Two others of the absent canvases by Canaletto have re-emerged. That with San Francesco della Vigna<sup>3</sup> was sold at Christie's, London, in 1838, and now in a Milanese private collection, while that with the Redentore<sup>4</sup> 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 that 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.<sup>5</sup> Of the appropriate width, it was subsequently offered at Sotheby's, London, July 3, 1985 (lot 23) and is now in an English private collection.<sup>6</sup>

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 McCormick<sup>7</sup> and Puppi<sup>8</sup> and in later editions of Constable's catalogue. Canaletto in general very rarely signed his paintings but did 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, who often used the name Canaletto, as a significant artist in his own right. While several components

of this series of overdoors are signed, in the current state of knowledge 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

<sup>1</sup> See W.G. Constable under no. 457.

<sup>2</sup> See W.G. Constable under nos. 451-6, 462 and 476.

<sup>3</sup> See W.G. Constable under no. 460.

<sup>4</sup> 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.

<sup>5</sup> *Pictures from the Grand Tour*, exh. cat. ed. J.B. Shaw (London 1978) no. 29.

<sup>6</sup> J.G. Links, 1998, p. 43, no. 453\*, pl. 237.

<sup>7</sup> T.J. McCormick, 1965, p. 29.

<sup>8</sup> L. Puppi, 1968, p. 58.



2.  
GIOVANNI ANTONIO CANAL, called CANALETTO and studio  
(Venice 1697 - 1768)

### *San Pietro di Castello*

Oil on canvas, 68 x 114 cm

#### PROVENANCE

Private collection, United Kingdom

#### EXPERTISE

Charles Beddington, 2013

Unpublished

This newly discovered *veduta* by the undisputed master of the genre, Giovanni Antonio Canal, called 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 as a whole. 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 with 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 described in the present picture, dates to the late sixteenth century and derives from 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 fifteenth 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 seventh 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 *ses-triere* 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 high-up viewpoint 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).<sup>1</sup>

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 from 1744-60). Although no secure history of ownership for the present painting is 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." For 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, 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 (Cat. 3).

<sup>1</sup> W.G. Constable - J. G. Links, 1976, p. 345-46, n. 315.



3.  
MICHELE MARIESCHI  
(Venice 1710 - 1743)

*The Grand Canal with Ca' Pesaro and Palazzo Foscari-Giovanelli, 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.

Unpublished

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 then owner, Duchess Felicita 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 Foscari-Giovanelli, 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, and 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 remains second to the human presence in the foreground: an elegant group of noblemen gathers whilst waiting for a *goldola* to take them elsewhere in conversation; 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 autograph version of the same composition, with slight differences, is in the Alte Pinakothek, Munich, paired with a view of the Piazzetta di San Basso.<sup>1</sup> Toledano dates the Munich pictures to 1737-38, whereas Succi favours a slightly earlier date of 1736-37 for the pair.<sup>2</sup> 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 posterity, Marieschi's short but prolific career was brought to an end by his untimely death in 1743 at the age of thirty-three.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> R. Toledano, 1995, p. 102, no. V.32.

<sup>2</sup> D. Succi, 1989, p. 97.

<sup>3</sup> F. Montecuccoli degli Erri – F. Pedrocchi, 1999, pp. 24-37.



4.  
MICHELE MARIESCHI  
(Venice 1710 - 1743)

*The Molo from the Bacino di San Marco*

Oil on canvas, 63.8 x 99.8 cm

PROVENANCE

Acquired in Naples by Antoine Liquier (1732-1810), consul general of the Netherlands in the Kingdom of Naples; And by descent.

EXPERTISE

Ralph Toledano, 18 June 2007.

Unpublished

The present painting is a panoramic view of the north bank of the entrance to the Grand Canal – the sight that greeted all visitors approaching Venice from the sea – taken from the waters of the Bacino di San Marco. Immediately on the right-hand side of the composition is the building of the Prigioni (See Cat. 1), which is connected to the Ducal Palace by the celebrated Bridge of Sighs. The building was commissioned from the architect Antonio da Ponte, who was superintendent of public works for the Republic and also responsible for planning the Rialto Bridge in 1588-90. Construction of the Prigioni began in 1591 and was completed shortly after da Ponte's death in 1597. The stern, elegant, classical style of the architecture reflects the solemnity of the building's function, but also echoes the proportions of the aristocratic palazzos in the adjacent St. Mark's Square. At the heart of the painting is the Ducal Palace, recognisable thanks to its iconic rose and ochre colour and white marble gothic loggia. The Ducal Palace was the seat of the Venetian Republic's government. First founded in the ninth Century, the building as we see it today is made up of three large blocks: The wing facing the St. Mark's Basin is the oldest, rebuilt from 1340 onwards, whereas the wing facing St. Mark's Square was built in its present form from 1424 onwards. The canal-side wing, housing the Doge's apartments and many government offices, dates from the Renaissance and was built between 1483 and 1565.

To the left of the Palace is the Piazzetta, the small square that precedes St Mark's Square, with its two granite columns, said to have been erected in the thirteenth century. These are surmounted by statues of Venice's two patrons: St Mark and St Theodore. Visible behind the columns are the entrance to the Basilica of St Mark and the Clocktower. Closing the Piazzetta on the left is the Libreria, begun in 1537 and designed by Jacopo Sansovino to house the Biblioteca Marciana, an extraordinary collection of printed books and manuscripts. Behind the Libreria, the Campanile, or bell tower, of St Mark rises against the clear blue sky. The composition ends on the left with the sixteenth-century palace of the Zecca, also designed by Jacopo Sansovino, which was the official government mint where the Republic's money was coined.

The present subject was particularly dear to the Italian tradition of

view painting and was represented on many occasions by Gaspar van Wittel, Luca Carlevarijs and Canaletto to name a few. Given the historical and topographic significance of the buildings shown here, it is not surprising that this composition and its variants were in considerable demand, not least in England, where Venice's status as an aristocratic republic gave such pictures a particular political resonance at the time. Vanvitelli's frontal view of the Molo, of which the earliest dated version is 1697, was so popular that at least eleven variants, painted over a period of twenty years, are known. Carlevarijs also selected a frontal viewpoint for his several versions of the scene; Canaletto, by contrast, understood that a slightly oblique viewpoint could achieve greater compositional success, but it also seems likely that his frequent use of such perspectives was determined by the need to give due prominence to the Bucintoro in the Ascension Day pictures, the earliest of which predates the Molo views, in which a large galley is moored in front of the Doge's Palace.

An oblique viewpoint was also chosen in the present work by Marieschi, who has employed a complex perspectival recession and luminous light effects to achieve the balance evident in the present painting. Illuminated by a suffused light, Marieschi's composition shows a palette of whites, greys and earthen tones for the buildings on the left-hand side, while the warm colours of the bricks of the Ducal Palace seem to shimmer in the light reflecting from the lagoon. The flickering, feathery reflections of the library, palace and columns in the waters of the *Bacino* are masterfully portrayed, imbuing the scene with a transient feel. The pink, rococo clouds that dot the otherwise clear sky – studded with Marieschi's characteristic impasto touches – further heighten the sense of movement that animates the entire surface of the work.

Owing to the great success of his oeuvre, Marieschi, like Canaletto, decided to produce a series of engravings after his paintings, which were published in 1741 with the title, *Magnificentiores Selectioresque Urbis Venetiarum Prospectus*, in which the present view of the Molo from the Bacino di San Marco is included.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> M. Marieschi, 1975, p. 90.



5.  
MICHELE MARIESCHI  
(Venice 1710 - 1743)

a. *A capriccio of the church of San Francesco alla Vigna with a gothic colonnade, a classical rounded temple, boats in the lagoon and a village in the distance*

b. *A capriccio of the church of San Pietro in Castello, the temple of San Niccolò dei Tolentini and rustic ruins with a bridge flanked by gondolas*

c. *A capriccio with a squared renaissance temple, a gothic round building, boats in the lagoon and a village in the distance*

d. *A capriccio of Roman ruins with figures*

Oil on canvas, a set of four, each 36.5 x 56.5 cm

PROVENANCE

Mrs. E. Salway, Bournemouth; Mrs. Eugene Atwood, New York; Mr. and Mrs. R. Kirk Askew, Jr., New York; Private Collection, California.

LITERATURE

R. Toledano, *Michele Marieschi. L'opera completa*, Milan 1988, pp. 53, 119, 128, 142, 143-144, nn. C.1.3, C.16, C.31.2, C.32, C.33 and C. 34.1; R. Toledano, *Michele Marieschi. Catalogo ragionato*, Milan 1995, pp. 132, 165, 167-169, nn. C.1.c, C.30, C.31.b, and C.32-4; F. Montecuccoli degli Erri and F. Pedrocco, *Michele Marieschi. La vita, l'ambiente, l'opera*, Milan 1999, pp. 260-3, 281, nn. 41-4, 62-2.

EXHIBITED

New York, Durlacher Brothers, *Venetian Painting*, 1934, nn. 24 and 25; San Francisco, California Palace of the Legion of Honor, *Italian Baroque Painting*, May-June 1941, nn. 71 and 72.

Born in Venice in 1710, Marieschi began his training as a designer of theatrical sets and other decorative schemes, although recent research suggest that he may have spent some time with the history painter Gaspare Diziani. In the *Abecedario pittorico* of 1753 his first biographers, Orlandi and Guarienti, state that as a young man he worked in Germany at the court of Saxony, although there is no documentary proof of this statement.<sup>1</sup> His first recorded commission in 1731 was for the backdrop of the Carnival celebrations in Venice's Piazzetta, but he began to work independently from the second half of the 1730s. His name appears in the Venetian painters' guild, called the *Fraglia de' Pittori*, only for five years, from 1736 to 1741, and it was in this period that the artist established himself as a painter of 'beautiful views of the Grand Canal, and of churches and palaces'.

Initially influenced by the work of Marco Ricci and Luca Carlevarijs, Marieschi painted *capricci* that blend medieval and classical ruins in a serene Venetian landscape, characterised by a soft handling of the brush and a clear palette. Shortly after this period he turned

his attention to view paintings, undoubtedly encouraged by Canaletto's growing success in this field. Apart from this simple distinction, the chronology of his oeuvre is difficult to establish, as the only recorded dates for his works are those for the twelve compositions painted between 1736 and 1738 for Field Marshal Johannes Matthias von der Schulenberg. Among them are recorded 'sei quadretti di Prospettiva d'Architettura del Signor Michelin' (six small architectural paintings by Mr. Michelin); it is therefore a likely but still unproved theory that this archival evidence refers to the present series of lively *capricci*.

The scholar Ralph Toledano dates these works to circa 1738,<sup>2</sup> when Schulenberg paid for the aforementioned set of six, not excluding the possibility that they could also have been painted before, around 1735, due to stylistic considerations that are shared by Montecuccoli degli Erri and Pedrocco, who notes affinities with Marieschi's style in around 1735.<sup>3</sup>

In the first painting (fig. a) Marieschi juxtaposes a church based on San Francesco alla Vigna in Venice, a gothic colonnade inspired by the Arche Scaligere in Verona and a round classical temple, much like the Tempio di Ercole Vittorioso in Rome. Within this imaginative setting, various spirited figures painted with vibrant colours animate the scene. This composition is known in another version, which was most possibly used by Bernardo Zelotti for his print.<sup>4</sup> The second *capriccio* (fig. b) depicts the church of San Pietro di Castello and a temple based on San Niccolò dei Tolentini among rustic ruins, as well as a typical Venetian bridge flanked by gondolas. The *macchiette* that animate the composition are characterised by a vibrant palette colours and were probably executed by Francesco Simonini (1686-1766), whose collaboration with Marieschi was often recorded and has been widely accepted by scholars.

The final two *capricci* of the group (figs. c,d) are the most whimsical, making less concessions to the tradition of view painting: the architectural elements are barely recognisable and elegant figures move easily among buildings and ruins, rendering the setting even more fantastical. Compared to the previous *capricci*, these are characterised by a more spirited handling of the brush and a more vivid palette. The last *capriccio* (fig. d) exists in another version, initially published with a full attribution by Toledano in 1988, and then again in 1995 more tentatively, judging the picture 'too vulgar and disorganised' to be by the hand of Marieschi.<sup>5</sup> Montecuccoli degli Erri and Pedrocco agree that the painting appears to be of inferior quality, to the extent that it must be a copy of the present painting.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> P. Guarienti, 1753, p. 30.

<sup>2</sup> R. Toledano, *op. cit.* 1995, p. 165.

<sup>3</sup> See Montecuccoli degli Erri and Pedrocco, pp. 281, n. 62. Both scholars note the rich, impastoed treatment of paint, which is present in the painting in a private Milanese collection dated to this period.

<sup>4</sup> The painting is in a private collection, Milan, see Montecuccoli degli Erri and Pedrocco, pp. 277-8, n. 57.

<sup>5</sup> R. Toledano, *op. cit.* 1995, p. 190.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 282.



a



b



c



d

6.  
MICHELE MARIESCHI  
(Venice 1710 - 1743)

*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.

Unpublished

This partial view of the entrance to the Grand Canal taken from the northern bank was depicted by Marieschi on various occasions and exists today in several versions.<sup>1</sup> In the present example the artist presents a frontal view dominated by Santa Maria della Salute, one of the city's most celebrated buildings, designed by Baldassare Longhena and erected as a dedication to the Virgin for ending a plague that had ravaged the city between 1629 and 1630. On the left-hand side of the painting is the Isola della Giudecca with the Church of the Redentore, designed in 1575-77 by the celebrated architect Andrea Palladio (1508-1580). Further to the right is Punta della Dogana, the seventeenth century headquarters of the Venetian Republic's customs, which 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

Marieschi's *vedute* strongly appealed to Grand Tourists and, due to this work's distinctive composition, Ralph Toledano has suggested it originated in a specific commission from a foreign patron, who wished to possess a memento of this particular corner 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 liberal and whimsical, sculpting painterly form in grey, white and beige tones.

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. The present work demonstrates the use of a lighter palette than that of Canaletto, as can be seen in the sky and the façades of the buildings, as well as the favouring of more panoramic composition. Indeed, it is interesting to note that the construction of this particular scene derives from 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 Selectioresque Urbis Venetiarum Prospectus*. The right side of the present work 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 an 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.

Another point of comparison for the present work is the version that entered the Thyssen-Bornemisza collection in 1970, which had previously been attributed to Canaletto by Constable. Apart from a slightly closer viewpoint that distinguishes the Thyssen version from the present work, the comparison between the two pictures is particularly helpful in understanding the role of *macchiette*, or the figures that animate the Canal, in Marieschi's work. The presence of a banner with the image of the Virgin in the Thyssen picture suggests that the numerous gondolas and elegantly dressed figures are taking part in a water-borne procession; this element is absent from the Lampronti version, which, while replicating the general disposition of gondolas and boats, focuses on portraying a lively scene of everyday life.

The stylistic parallels with the Thyssen version substantiate Toledano's opinion regarding the late dating of this work: the classicism of the composition shared by both works would in fact suggest an execution to the 1740s, a phase during which Marieschi had superseded his youthful baroque style.

Of Marieschi's various versions of the subject, 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.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> F. Montecuccoli degli Erri – F. Pedrocchi, 1999, pp. 319, 383, 389-391, 393, nn. 99, 155, 161-163, 165.

<sup>2</sup> R. Toledano, 1995, pp. 81-88, nn. V.18 a-e.



7.  
FRANCESCO ALBOTTO  
(Venice 1721 - 1757)

a. *The Molo with Palazzo Ducale*

b. *The Canal Grande seen from the Chiesa degli Scalzi towards Santa Croce*

A pair, oil on canvas, 61 x 97.5 cm

EXPERTISE  
Filippo Pedrocchi, 18 June 2012.

Unpublished

Born in Venice, Albotto trained under Michele Marieschi (see cats. 3-6), 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 survives, now private collection,<sup>1</sup> and as such his compositions have in the past 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".<sup>2</sup> Albotto must have enjoyed his momentary status as the principal *vedutista* in Venice during the later 1740s and '50s, helped in great part by Marieschi's untimely death and Canaletto's departure for England in 1746. It is likely that if Albotto himself had not died prematurely at the age of thirty-five, his reputation might have endured beyond the memory of his contemporaries. By the 1760s, the artist was active as an independent artist, for between 1750 and 1756 a certain Francesco Alboro – probably identifiable with Francesco Albotto – is recorded in the *Fraglia*, the list of Venetian painters registered at the Accademia.

The present canvases were conceived as a pair from the start, as testified by their identical format, harmonious palette and use of light. In the first example, Albotto depicts a view 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 depicted by Luca Carlevarij, Gaspar van Wittel and Canaletto.<sup>3</sup> On the far left, Jacopo Sansovino's Zecca, the old mint, stands beside the Biblioteca Marciana, also designed by the architect and begun in 1537. Behind them is the Campanile, while to the right are the two columns of Saint Mark and Saint Theodore, as well as 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 right-hand foreground 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 twelfth-century parochial church that was dedicated to Saint Lucy in 1279, when the saint's remains were housed 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 old 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 Venetian roofs. Beyond it, along the Fondamenta di Santa Croce, is the Monastery of Santa Croce, which had been founded in the eighth century and gave its name to the local *sestiere* ("district"). This church was also demolished in the nineteenth century to create the Papadopoli gardens that still exist today.

Albotto's rendition of this section of the Grand Canal constitutes a crucial testimony to its appearance in the eighteenth century, for it was radically altered less than a hundred years later. Further, the picture 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. Importantly, this detail offers a *terminus ante quem* for Albotto's execution of the canvases.

Re-acknowledged thanks to the work of Rodolfo Pallucchini<sup>4</sup> and, subsequently, Ralph Toledano,<sup>5</sup> Dario Succi<sup>6</sup> and Mario Manzelli,<sup>7</sup> the study of Albotto's corpus of paintings has yielded a clearer definition of the artist's style. Heir to the Canalettian and Marieschian tradition, Albotto simultaneously drew closely on their compositions and established his own painterly vocabulary. Eschewing Marieschi's subtly loaded brush in favour of a more crisp surface texture, Albotto paints with firm touches that immortalise the scene and convey a sense of stillness and tranquillity. 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, as can be observed in many of the other *vedute* in this catalogue.

<sup>1</sup> G. Pavanello, 2008, p. 179.

<sup>2</sup> P. J. Mariette, 1854, III, p. 264.

<sup>3</sup> W. G. Constable, 1962, nos. 101-07F.

<sup>4</sup> R. Pallucchini, 1972, p. 222.

<sup>5</sup> R. Toledano, 1995, pp. 26-35 and pp. 40-44, nos. V. 1.a-V. 1.g.

<sup>6</sup> D. Succi, 1989, pp. 26-28 and pp. 165-82.

<sup>7</sup> M. Manzelli, 1984, pp. 210-11; *Ibidem*, 1987, pp. 111-22; *Ibidem*, 2002, pp. 46-5.



a



b

8.  
BERNARDO CANAL  
(Venice 1664 - 1744)

a. *The Rialto Bridge from the North*

b. *The Entrance to the Grand Canal looking West*

A pair, oil on canvas, 65 x 85 cm

INSCRIPTIONS

Signed and dated, 'Bernard Canal gennaio 1737'

Unpublished

Executed at the high point of the career of Bernardo Canal, the present views demonstrate the artist's confidence in replicating complex perspectival structures, as well as his striking capacity to conjure atmospheres that differ considerably from his prototypes. Both views derive from compositions by the artist's son, the celebrated Antonio Giovanni Canal, known universally as Canaletto, and are now in the Queen's collection at Windsor Castle.<sup>1</sup> They formed part of the 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). The paintings' identical dimensions, their complementary subjects and handling, and their history as a pair, make it likely that they were conceived as pendants.

Canal has received an increased reappraisal in recent years in light of his lively collaboration with his son, Antonio, as well as other Venetian artists. In his lifetime, he was known primarily as a stage designer, but was described as a 'pitor' in a document from 1697 relating to Antonio's baptism. Little information survives regarding his early years of activity, but we know that from 1716 to 1718 he collaborated with his brother, Cristoforo, and his son on the set designs for the Venetian theatres of San Cassiano and Sant'Angelo, where the operas of Vivaldi, Chelleri and Pollarolo were performed. In 1719-20 Bernardo travelled to Rome, where he executed theatrical sets with the young Antonio's assistance for the operas *Tito Sempronio Gracco e Turno Aricino* by Scarlatti, which were performed at the Capranica theatre during the Carnevale of 1720. From 1737 to 1743 Canal's name appears in the register of the *Fraglia dei Pittori Veneziani*, while in 1739, he was nominated as a 'Priore', or master, of the *Collegio dei Pittori*, indicating that by his late career the painter had achieved a certain prestige.

The composition of *The Rialto Bridge from the North* follows its prototype in the Royal Collection closely, with minor differences in the placing of the vessels, the figures and the presence of other details, such as the red and white striped canopy over the Fondaco dei Tedeschi on the left of Canal's picture. The proportions of the architecture are interpreted differently in some cases, such as the Bridge, which appears more compact than in the prototype, and

the adjoining Palazzo dei Camerlenghi, whose foreshortening has been emphasised. Although Canaletto repeated this view on numerous occasions, we know that Canal based his picture upon the version at Windsor Castle, as it was from this painting that Visentini made his engraving; moreover, the replication of certain details, such as the way that the drapery of the sails falls on the central vessel and the poses of the three gondoliers in the fore-and-middle-grounds, are absent in other versions, all of which are framed slightly differently.<sup>2</sup>

The corner of what is probably Palazzo Civran is seen at the left edge of the painting. The early sixteenth-century Fondaco dei Tedeschi, the offices and warehouse of the German traders (now the city post office), is seen from an oblique angle, with the spire of San Bartolomeo protruding just above its rooftop. To the right of the bridge is the Palazzo dei Camerlenghi, the seat of the financial officers of the Republic, reconstructed in the 1520s in a restrained Renaissance style. Further on the right are the *Fabbriche Vecchie*, a block of offices and workshops also built in the 1520s.

Similarly, for *The Entrance to the Grand Canal looking West*, Canal takes the vantage point of Canaletto's prime, handpicking various details to replicate and inventing the rest of the picture'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 in thanksgiving for the cessation of the plague of 1630-31. Beyond is the tall tower of Palazzo Venier dalla Torreselle, built in the fifteenth century and demolished in the nineteenth century. In the far distance, the church of the Carità with its distinctive campanile, which now houses the Accademia Gallery. To the right foreground is Palazzo Tiepolo, and beyond it a line of sixteenth-century palazzos. Near the Dogana quay, a galley with oars and sails part set adds character to the scene.

<sup>1</sup> 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*).

<sup>2</sup> W.G. Constable-J.G. Links, 1976, II, pl. 49, nos. 234-8.



a



b

9.  
BERNARDO CANAL  
(Venice 1664 - 1744)

*The Grand Canal below the Rialto with the Fondaco dei Turchi at the centre-left and the Palazzo Vendramin-Calergi on the right and the Campanile of San Geremia in the distance*

Oil on canvas, 73.5 x 113.5 cm

Inscribed on the canvas reverse 'Aedibus Grimana da [...] Canalem Regium'

Unpublished

Dario Succi's description of Bernardo Canal's *Entrance to the Grand Canal with the Church of Santa Maria della Salute* in a private collection, as characterised by an 'azzurro intenso del cielo solcato da banchi di candide nubi' and by the 'cifra tondeggianti che connota le macchiette ancora memori della lezione di Luca Carlevarij', lends itself to the present painting.<sup>1</sup> An inscription on the canvas reverse erroneously identifies the subject of the picture as Palazzo Grimani. Depicted on the right-hand side of the composition is actually the façade of Palazzo Vedramin Calergi, commissioned in 1481 from the architect Mauro Codussi.

Canaletto's various portrayals of the Grand Canal and their subsequent replications, both in the form of prints and interpretations by other artists, were in high demand from collectors of the day. He depicted this particular view several times, but his best known version is the picture at Windsor Castle in the Queen's Collection, which was commissioned from Consul Smith and formed part of the group that were engraved by Visentini for the 'Prospectus' (Venice, 1735).<sup>2</sup>

To the right is the imposing Renaissance façade of Palazzo Vendramin-Calergi, commissioned in 1481 from Mauro Codussi. Canaletto erroneously added a balustrade to the second floor, and depicted two arched windows either side of the door opening onto the canal – there should be just one either side, flanked by a rectangular window. In the distance of the prime is the tower of San Geremia, correctly proportioned but with three rather than two openings on each side of the bell-storey, and without its flags. Canaletto rendered the pitched-roof church itself very inaccurately – whether deliberately or not – with the windows completely at

odds with those in other depictions of the same subject. Visentini corrected these inaccuracies, and those in the façade of Palazzo Vendramin-Calergi, in his engraving after the painting. This therefore leaves no doubt as to whether Canal based his painting upon the prototype on canvas or in print, as our painting includes Visentini's topographical corrections.

From the left, in shadow, are Ca' Tron and Palazzo Belloni-Battaglia; only the latter, by Longhena, retains the obelisks on its roof. Beyond is the brick façade of the fifteenth-century granaries, the Deposito del Megio, followed by the Fondaco dei Turchi, the offices and warehouse of the Turkish traders between 1621 and 1838, built in the twelfth or thirteenth century, and one of the finest Byzantine buildings in Venice. In 1858 it was acquired by the state and essentially destroyed in a complete 'restoration'; it is now the Natural History Museum.

In addition to the topographical inaccuracies, which are resolved in the present view, Canal distributes the vessels and staffage across the waters differently, including a greater number of gondolas ferrying passengers from one side of the canal to the other. At the entrance to Palazzo Vendramin-Calergi an elegant woman is greeted by a host, while above, a gentlemen in red looks out from his balcony. Bernardo's portrayal is thus not merely an architecturally accurate view, but conveys something of the local atmosphere, with anecdotal details that animate an otherwise severe representation.

<sup>1</sup> D. Succi, 1994, pp. 35-58; pp. 256-7, 261, fig. 78.

<sup>2</sup> W.G. Constable - J.G. Links, 1976, I, pl. 51, n. 250, II, p. 311.



10.  
BERNARDO CANAL  
(Venice 1664 - 1744)

*Cannaregio with the Ponte dei Tre Archi and Palazzo Valier*

Oil on canvas, 73.5 x 112.5 cm

LITERATURE

C. Lollobrigida, "Fiamenghi che vanno e che vengono". *Vanvitelli e le origini del vedutismo*, in *Canaletto e i vedutisti. L'incanto dell'acqua*, ex. cat. L. Tonani, S. Cominigo (Orta San Giulio 2011), p. 26, no. 10.

The activity of Bernardo Canal has undoubtedly been overshadowed by that of his prodigy son, Canaletto, and until the mid-twentieth century, not a single painting had been attributed to the artist. Indeed, it was following the ground-breaking exhibition on Venetian painting of 1946, which saw the rediscovery of two *vedute* of Piazza San Marco from the Salom collection at Segromigno Monte, bearing the inscriptions 'Bernardo Canal Fecit 1735', that Canal's work first received serious scholarly attention.<sup>1</sup> The catalogue for the exhibition, curated by Giuseppe Fiocco and entitled *Pittura Veneta*, brought together a core group of view paintings, which demonstrated the hand of a single artist working in close proximity with Luca Carlevarijs (1663-1730) and the Swedish artist, Giovanni Richter (1665-1745), who was active in Venice certainly by 1717. Other *vedute* were published in 1969 by Rodolfo Pallucchini and in 2001 by Filippo Pedrocco, who argued that the fact that the majority of Canal's dated paintings were executed between the late 1730s and the 1740s suggests that the painter decided to devote himself to view painting in his maturity as a result of his son's increasing success in that field.<sup>2</sup> Indeed, departing from the sober palette of colours based on deep browns and reds that characterise his earlier work, Canal's *vedute* from the 1730s demonstrate the influence of Canaletto's atmospheric light effects, of which the present pendants are fine examples. The close dependence upon Canaletto's models, particularly in their engraved form, was to prove pivotal to the genre of Venetian *vedutismo* and its developments as the eighteenth century wore on.

Like Cats. 8-9,<sup>3</sup> this lively painting by Canal bears striking similarities with the group of stylistically homogeneous paintings discussed by Giuseppe Fiocco in the 1946 exhibition catalogue.<sup>1</sup> The composition's particularly close vantage point, located slightly above the level of the canal, is a characteristic found in most of the paintings that have been attributed to Canal, said by Pallucchini to be a result of the artist's short-sightedness. Highly personal is al-

so the way in which the clouds are depicted, described by Pallucchini as "luminous and lucid at the same time, by way of the crisp, painterly touch".<sup>4</sup> As can be seen in the cloud formations of Cats. 8-9, Canal begins with a build up of white paint to define the curvatures of thicker areas of cloud, which he then merges softly with the blue of the sky, allowing the white to dissolve into an effervescent mist that diffuses across the upper picture plane.

The various umber tones used for the architecture, and the solid definition of form, suggest an earlier dating than that of Cat. 8. The views of *Santa Maria d'Aracoeli and its Campidoglio* and *The Temple of Antonio and Faustina* in the Szépművészeti Múzeum, Budapest, derive from an earlier phase in the artist's career, and thus serve as points of comparison for the present work. All three pictures show a prevalence of umber tones, a cursory execution of the architecture, as well as a more scenographic approach in the views' strong diagonal inclination, a pictorial device that undoubtedly derives from Canal's activity as a set designer.

The subject is a relatively rare *veduta* in the repertoire of Venetian *vedutismo*. An engraving, published by Domenico Lovisa in 1717 in his *Il Gran Teatro di Venezia*, shows various compositional similarities and could have 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 fourteenth-century building with a façade embellished by fourteen windows divided by columns, was damaged by a fire and subsequently demolished between 1789 and 1805.

<sup>1</sup> A. Riccoboni, G. Fiocco eds., *Pittura Veneta. Prima mostra d'arte antica delle raccolte private veneziane*, 1947.

<sup>2</sup> R. Pallucchini, 1969, pp. 141-155; F. Pedrocco, 2001, pp. 66-69.

<sup>3</sup> See Cat. 8 for biographical and critical information on the artist.

<sup>4</sup> R. Pallucchini, *op. cit.*, 1996, II, pp. 297-301.



11.  
CIRCLE OF CANALETTO  
(active c. 1750-60)

*The Grand Canal with Rialto Bridge from the South*

Oil on canvas, 67 x 114 cm

PROVENANCE  
Private collection, United Kingdom.

Unpublished

This richly coloured *veduta* is a very good eighteenth-century copy of the picture by Canaletto in the Duke of Bedford's collection at Woburn Abbey.<sup>1</sup> Looking towards the Rialto Bridge from the Campo San Bartolomeo, the view can be compared with Cat. 15, where the Campo is approached from the opposite direction. The viewer may gain an understanding of the vantage point by comparing the steps that lead up to the bridge in the far-left corner of Domenichini's picture with the same steps, here seen in the lower-right corner. The Fondamento del Vin, where barrels of wine were unloaded, is now 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 used as a ghetto for Venice's Ottoman Turkish population.

Lit from the right, elegant figures populate Campo San Bartolomeo and can be just made out 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 of the figures, invigorates the painting, and contrasts with the light-blue sky and its fleecy white clouds.

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

tionable, as it was bought by John, 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.<sup>2</sup> Although it is sometimes stated that some of this group was engraved by Visentini in his *Prospectus Magni Canalis* (1735, 1742, 1751), there is no existing plate of the present view, renouncing 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 vantage point is identical, but staffage and vessels are arranged differently, and the wooden hut, also seen in Cat. 15., is represented.<sup>3</sup> Bernardo Bellotto was active in his uncle's studio from 1736, and while the quality of the present painting would not discount him as a possible author, it is unlikely that a prolific and commercially-minded artist like Canaletto 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.

<sup>1</sup> W. G. Constable - J.G. Links, 1989, I, n. 225, pl. 47, II, p. 294.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, II, n. 4, pp. 188-9.

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



12.

JACOPO FABRIS

(Venice 1689 - 1761 Charlottenborg)

*The Entrance to the 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

Unpublished

The present view is a significant addition to the oeuvre of Jacopo Fabris, whose pictorial production, like many of the Venetian *vedutiste* in this exhibition, is closely linked to his activity as stage designer. This is particularly evident in the exaggerated perspective of his compositions, and the animated, fantastical flourishes that characterise them. Prior to Antonio Morassi's seminal essay of 1966, when a group of core signed paintings were published under the name of Fabris, the artist's works were attributed to an anonymous painter; indeed, Morassi himself classed them under the acronym S.C.O.F., which stood for *Seguace Canaletto Ombre Forte* (Follower Canaletto Strong Shadows).<sup>1</sup> A considerable body of works has since been added to this core nucleus, from which the figure of an artist working closely in the early style of Canaletto has emerged.

Key to Fabris' Venetian production is a *Grand Canal with the Rialto looking towards the Camerlenghi Palace*, signed "Ja. Fabris pin" and published for the first time by Morassi.<sup>2</sup> Both the latter and its pendant, a *Molo with the Ducal Palace seen from the Bacino di San Marco*, are based on engravings of views after Canaletto, executed in 1736 by Louis-Philippe Boitard (1694-1794).<sup>3</sup> Fabris evidently revisited this series of engravings on numerous occasions, as the present view is based upon another print by Boitard (37.8 x 50 cm, signed 'LPBoitard Sculp'), now in the Albright-Knox Art Gallery in Buffalo. The prime version by Canaletto is now in the Castello Sforzesco, Milan, along with its pendant, *The Riva degli Schiavoni facing West with the Column of St. Marks*.<sup>4</sup> While Fabris has taken inspiration from several of Canaletto's figures, such as the seated man on the steps of the pier, and has replicated the pile of barrels and baskets containing vegetables in front of the Column of St. Mark, as well as the placing of the vessels, his rendition also presents numerous differences. Fabris presents a narrower, almost squared viewpoint compared with that of the Canaletto. Other than the ones mentioned, his figures are also original, as are the cloud formations, which unravel dramatically in a manner with which one can imagine he might have painted his theatre designs.

The view is taken from near the water's edge opposite the column of St. Mark. This vantage point, with the Molo receding almost at right angles to the picture plane, would have held a particular appeal for Fabris, who wrote a treatise on prospective and architec-

ture, completed in 1760 and now conserved in the Royal Library of Copenhagen.<sup>5</sup> The column of St. Mark stands out against the shadowed east façade of the Libreria, beyond which the Zecca, the Public Granaries and the Fonteghetto della Farina can be seen. In the distance on the left are the Dogana with Santa Maria della Salute. Stationed on the quay are a number of temporary canvas booths, beneath which stalls selling fish can be seen. The scene is characterised by a saturated palette and a clear, graphic style achieved using broad brushwork, elements that are present in the other *vedute* that make up Fabris's catalogue.

Born in Venice in 1689 to Domenico and Benedetta Guarini, Jacopo is believed to have trained as a painter both in his native city and in Rome. His works on canvas, which were purchased in great numbers as souvenirs by Grand Tourists, are to be found today in private collections throughout the United Kingdom, Italy and Denmark.<sup>6</sup> Frescoes by Fabris are in the palace formerly known as Moltke at Amalienborg in Copenhagen; in the Lerche Palace in Copenhagen (now the Ministry of Defence); in the great hall of the garden at Fredensborg Castle (formerly the dining room), with ten large murals and three smaller panels for doors, all *capricci* incorporating classical ruins populated by spirited *macchiette*.<sup>7</sup>

Little is known of the early years of Fabris' career as a stage designer, until his appointment as painter in 1719 at the court of the Margrave Karl Wilhelm von Baden-Durlack in Karlsruhe, where he was commissioned to create stage backdrops and scenery. In 1724, the artist was called by Count Benedict Ahlefeldt to the Opera in Hamburg, where he collaborated with two French designers until 1730, when he sojourned briefly in London. In the 1750s Fabris was summoned to Berlin as stage designer by Frederick the Great, a passionate advocate of Italian opera who, in 1741, commissioned the architect G. W. von Knobelsdorff to build an opera house on Unter den Linden. In 1746 Fabris moved definitively to Denmark. Where he was a painter at the court of Frederick V.

<sup>1</sup> A. Morassi, 1966, pp. 279-281.

<sup>2</sup> *Idem*.

<sup>3</sup> M. Blondel, 1987, pp. 165-172.

<sup>4</sup> Constable-Links, II, n. 95, pp. 230-232.

<sup>5</sup> F. Pedrocchi, 2001, pp. 178-180.

<sup>6</sup> M. Mosco, 1974, pp. 82-97.

<sup>7</sup> J. Steenberg, 1969, pp. 116, 127, 143, 243.



13.  
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.

Unpublished

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 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,<sup>1</sup> organised a glorious fête at Cannaregio, by the French Embassy, which is skilfully portrayed by Cimaroli in the present picture.

The seat of the French Embassy was the seventeenth-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, that is almost identical to the structure depicted in Canaletto's *The Doge attends the Giovedì Grasso Festival in the Piazzetta*.<sup>2</sup> Predominantly made of wood, the structure 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 platform populated by statues, the other ending in a golden spire embellished by a jewel-like circle. At the foot of the main structure acrobats perform daring exercises, while the orchestra plays from a pavilion 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 the window of a house on the right. The Comte of Montaigu follows the celebrations with his family from the balcony of Palazzo Surian's *piano nobile*. The spectacular event was 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 Cust and exhibited in Florence in 1922.<sup>3</sup> Tentatively attributed to Canaletto, it was then correctly ascribed to the master's school by Constable.<sup>4</sup> 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.<sup>5</sup> 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 of the analogous constructions often used for celebrations in Rome thanks to the engravings that were commissioned and widely circulated to commemorate 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 in around 1713, where he collaborated with Canaletto. The relationship between Visentini, Canaletto and Cimaroli is well known, documented by the various paintings by the latter that are after Visentini's engravings.<sup>6</sup> Of course, the large majority of Visentini's engravings are in turn after paintings by Canaletto, published in his 1735 volume, *Prospectus Magni Canalium Venetianum*. It therefore follows that *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.

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

<sup>2</sup> W.G. Constable, 1962, I, pl. 62, no. 330 (VII.I).

<sup>3</sup> L. Cust, 1914, pp. 174-75.

<sup>4</sup> W.G. Constable, 1962, II, p. 346, no. 357.

<sup>5</sup> 'VUE DE LA FÊTE QUI FUT DONNÉE À VENISE LE MAY .1745. A L'OCCASION DU MARIAGE DE M<sup>CE</sup> DAUPHINE AVEC L'INFANTE. MARIE. THÉRESE D'ESPAGNE PAR S.E.<sup>MR</sup>. LE COMTE DA MONTAIGU / AMBASSADEUR DE S. M.T.C. AUPRÈS DE LA SEREN.<sup>ME</sup> RÉPUBLIQUE'.

<sup>6</sup> F. Spadotto, 2011, cat. 72, pp. 224-225; cat. 77, pp. 234-235; cat. 78, pp. 236-7.



14.

APOLLONIO DOMENICHINI  
(MASTER OF THE LANGMATT FOUNDATION VIEWS)  
(Venice 1715 - c. 1770)

a. *The Piazzetta Looking North*

b. *The Campo Santi Giovanni e Paolo with the West End of the Church and the Scuola di San Marco*

A pair, oil on canvas, 109 x 159.5 cm

Unpublished

Apollonio Domenichini was formerly known as the Master of the Langmatt Foundation Views, named after a series of thirteen views of Venice in the Swiss Langmatt Foundation, Baden, which most probably came from the Venetian collection of the Lezze family. Attributable to a single painter due to their stylistic consistency, and datable to the mid-eighteenth century on the basis of architectural evidence, some one hundred works have now been convincingly assigned to Domenichini by Dario Succi, creating a substantial catalogue of works.<sup>1</sup>

The name of Domenichini was identified for the first time by Fabio Mauroner among those belonging to painters subscribed to the *Fraglia dei Pittori di Venezia* in 1757. We know that the artist was born in 1715, and his pictures are mentioned on numerous occasions in correspondence between the Venetian art dealer Giovanni Maria Sasso and the English collector Sir John Strange, who had been resident in the *Serenissima* in 1774.<sup>2</sup> It has been suggested that Domenichini is identifiable with the pupil of Luca Carlevarijs, of whom Moschini wrote in the nineteenth century, recounting that he was fondly known by his contemporaries under the pseudonym of 'Menichino'.<sup>3</sup> There is certainly something to be said for this hypothesis if one compares the dry, light palette employed by Carlevarijs with that of the present work, as well as the elegant, stylised staffage, which give an almost picture-book quality to the oeuvre of both painters. Nonetheless, the style of the pictures that have been attributed to the artist reveal the influence of the lively, narrative manner of Marieschi, particularly in the marked distortion of perspective that has come to characterise Domenichini's work. The warm palette and light, painterly quality of his work also relates to the precise touch of Francesco Albotto, the pupil and successor of Marieschi.

As can be observed from various topographical details, the artist was active in the lagoon city from the 1740s, precisely during the moment at which Canaletto had left Venice for London, where he stayed between 1746 and 1756. Marieschi died in 1743 and neither Guardi nor Albotto were yet active in the field.<sup>4</sup> This situation proved to be particularly favourable for Domenichini's career, as he enjoyed many important commissions that he otherwise might not have received. As well as being one of the most innovative view

painters active in Venice during the course of the eighteenth century, it seems that Domenichini was also responsible for several architectural and landscape *capricci*.<sup>5</sup> Research thus portrays the figure of a prolific painter, who was an integral part of the second generation of Venetian *vedutiste*.

The present *vedute* depict two iconic places in Venice, but an accentuation of the vanishing points gives a sense of the unreal. Both repeat prototypes painted by Canaletto in numerous versions, but with slightly differing viewpoints and arrangements of the figures.<sup>6</sup> Each picture incorporates stylised, slender figures, delicately painted with an elegant conciseness that is highly characteristic of Domenichini's style.

In the first painting the Piazzetta is depicted looking North from between the columns of St. Mark and St. Theodore. To the left is the Libreria and the Campanile, surmounted by the Lion of St. Mark facing right and at its base, the Loggetta del Sansovino. To the right, the corner of the Ducal Palace can be seen, with a figure in blue on the balcony. The Palace casts a shadow onto the Piazzetta and part of the façade of the Basilica of St. Marks, which can be seen just behind. In the background are the east end of the Procuratie Vecchie and its Clocktower, with three flagstaffs lined up in front. The Piazzetta is populated by groups of elegant figures, several of which are dressed in the *tabàro* and *baùta*, the standard attire for eighteenth-century maskers that consisted of a black cloak worn over coats and breeches for men, or over flowing skirts for women, with a close-fitting hood that encircled the face and hid the neck. Groups of children play, senators talk, and dogs wander throughout the square.

In the second painting the Campo Santi Giovanni e Paolo is depicted, with the west end of the severe gothic mass of the Dominican Basilica on the right and, at the centre, the Scuola Grande di San Marco with its refined Lombardy façade crowned by Mauro Codussi's spiers. The equestrian monument to Bartolommeo Colleoni is shown looking north from the Campo Santi Giovanni e Paolo. The Ponte del Cavallo crosses the Canal, and opposite it, in front of the Scuola, is a stone pillar to which a flagstaff can be attached. The Basilica casts a shadow onto the campo and across part of the façade of the Scuola, in much the same way as in Canaletto's treatment of the subject; however, Domenichini's scene is wider than that of Canaletto, portraying more of the red bulk of the Church and is animated by a greater number of figures in bright, elaborate costumes. His meticulous description of the physical aspect of the buildings is striking, conveying in detail their decadence and even reproducing the deterioration of the plastered façades.

<sup>1</sup> D. Succi, 2003, p. 103-107.

<sup>2</sup> F. Mauroner, 1947, pp. 48-50.

<sup>3</sup> G. Moschini, 1806, p. 87.

<sup>4</sup> D. Succi, 1994, pp. 38-51.

<sup>5</sup> D. Succi, 2003, pp. 103-107.

<sup>6</sup> W.G. Constable - J.G. Links, 1989, vol. II, pp. 216-18, cat. nos. 64-66; vol. III, Plate 23, cat. no. 64 reproduced (for the *Piazzetta*), and pp. 338-41, cat. nos. 304-307; vol. III, Plate 58, cat. nos. 304 and 305 reproduced (for the *Campo Santi Giovanni e Paolo*).



a



b

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

Unpublished

The elegant, linear touch, the lively, scattered staffage and the bright, morning palette of the present painting confirm the 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.<sup>1</sup> The view depicts a length of the Grand Canal, looking south-west from the left side of the Rialto bridge, as it curves out of view into the distance, with gondolas and other vessels populating it, shops that line 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; wooden roof-top verandas for relaxing upon and private gondolas parked outside the palazzos are signs of the private and practical needs of the local residents.

In the left foreground, 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 view's vantage 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 is the façade

of Ca' Foscari, just as the Canal makes a sharp right. On the right 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 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).<sup>2</sup> It is highly likely that Domenichini would have had access to this set of engravings for producing the present painting, although the artist has modified somewhat the disposition of the staffage and the vessels, as well as the palette of colours and the way in which the shadows are cast. 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; the left bank of Domenichini's view is bathed in morning sunlight, whereas in the prototype it appears in shadow; our artist has replaced the soft mist of cloud in Canaletto's picture with a dramatic, vertical cumulonimbus, which elongates the sky and serves as an elegant backdrop to the scene.

<sup>1</sup> See Cat 14 for more information on the identity of this artist.

<sup>2</sup> W. G. Constable - J.G. Links, 1989, I, n. 219, pl. 46, II, pp. 291-292, n. 219.



16.  
BERNARDO BELLOTTO  
(Venice 1722 - 1780 Warsaw)

*A Capriccio with the Ducal Palace, the Prisons, Santi Giovanni e Paolo, San Giorgio Maggiore and Palazzo Grimani*

Oil on canvas, 64 x 82 cm

EXPERTISE

Egidio Martini, undated.;  
Dario Succi, undated;  
Filippo Pedrocco, 22 December 2002.

Unpublished

Dating to an early phase in Bernardo Bellotto's career, the present view is an ingenious re-imagining of Venice and reveals the artist's precocious talent as it emerges from the powerful influence of his master, Canaletto. Here, Bellotto has made an imaginative pastiche of Venice's most iconic buildings, each deriving from different periods and locations throughout the city. In the left foreground stands the majestic Ducal Palace, followed by the Prisons and the Church of Santi Giovanni e Paolo, with the Campanile of St Marks and the dome of the Basilica of Santa Maria della Salute protruding in the distance. At the centre-right is the sixteenth-century Palladian church of San Giorgio Maggiore and its campanile. Moving across to the right of the canal is part of the Palladian building of the Fabbriche Nuove di Rialto, followed by some typical Venetian houses and the bulk of the Zecca del Sansovino, the imposing sixteenth-century building that once housed the official government mint, and finishing with Palazzo Grimani on the far right. These elegant structures face each other on a wide canal populated with gondolas and other vessels. The entire scene is animated by bright *macchiette*, which parade along the banks and are the passengers or rowers of gondolas. A small bank in the left foreground, serving as a platform upon which gentlemen and townspeople converse, draws the viewer's attention to the picture's narrative element, in turn deceiving us into believing that this dream-like city is in fact a product of human activity, rather than a thing of Bellotto's imagination.

Bellotto's early career, from its beginnings in Canaletto's workshop in around 1736 until the artist broke professional ties with his uncle in 1743, has in recent years been the subject of in-depth critical study.<sup>1</sup> The subsequent knowledge of the artist's early production, along with a close examination of the present painting, has allowed Dario Succi, Filippo Pedrocco and Egidio Martini, three of the foremost scholars on the artist, to agree upon a dating to between 1753 and 1740, Bellotto's first phase as an apprentice in Canaletto's studio. At this moment, the visual language of the artist was characterised not by the lenticular execution that was to define his later work, but by a luminosity that evolves gradually from warm tonalities to transparent effects, with accented chiaroscuro

contrasts and an inclination towards an icy light. The present painting's colour axis is based broadly upon a two tones, a rose tint that traces the curved line of buildings across the centre of the picture plane, and various shades of turquoise in the sky and the waters that board the architecture on both sides. This has the effect of unifying the picture into a harmonious whole, which would have made it a particularly attractive souvenir for Grand Tourists. The idiosyncratic way of defining the architectural details using rapid flicks of black paint, the bright beads that pinpoint the figures and dot the buildings, and the delicate white ripples in the water, are wholly typical of the young Bellotto.

The painting's status as a *capriccio* is of special interest, and has served as the subject of lively scholarly debate. Succi maintains that the absence of any analogous paintings or drawings by Canaletto means that the painting is entirely of Bellotto's invention.<sup>2</sup> While this may be true, both Pedrocco and Martini point to the fact that in the same years, Canaletto was working on his the splendid series of overdoor paintings, executed between 1742 and 1744 for the British Consul, Joseph Smith and now at Windsor, in which famous monuments are removed from their original contexts and transplanted into new settings (see Cat. 1). It is generally accepted that these overdoors constituted a visual elaboration of the ideas that were discussed within the intellectual circles frequented by the famous British consul, which centred upon imagining a different Venice from that which existed. Pedrocco suggests, therefore, that the present picture seems to indicate the young Bellotto's participation in this debate during the years in which the creative relationship between the young painter and his uncle was at its most dynamic.

Our picture bears striking similarities with one of Bellotto's earliest known paintings, the *Grand Canal from Palazzo Foscari towards the Scuola Grande della Carità*, today in the Stockholm National Museum, dated 1740 and commissioned from Frederick Christian I, Duke of Augustenborg and son of the Elector of Saxony, King Augustus III of Poland (1721-1794), to commemorate his visit to Venice from December 1739 to June 1740, during which time he was resident at Palazzo Foscari.<sup>3</sup> Although the Stockholm picture depicts a real Venetian view, it demonstrates almost identical handling to the present work, particularly in the definition of the '*macchiette*' and the soft, rippling waters, which bespeak of the artist's emulation of his master. The dramatic shadows, however, which are cast along the facades of the buildings lining the right bank in our picture and the left in the Stockholm picture, are fully indicative of the young Bellotto's personal style during this period, and reveal his early interest in the effects of light, an element that was to develop in different ways from Canaletto as his career progressed.

<sup>1</sup> *Bernardo Bellotto. Il Canaletto delle corti europee*, exh. cat. ed. D. Succi, (Conegliano 2011- 2012); *Canaletto, Bernardo Bellotto malt Europa*, exh. cat. ed. A. Schumacher (München 2014-2015).

<sup>2</sup> Written communication.

<sup>3</sup> B.A. Kowalczyk, M. da Cortà Dumei, 2001, Fig. 1, p. 4.



17.

WILLIAM JAMES

(Active in England between 1746-1771)

*The Molo with the Piazzetta and the Ducal Palace from the Bacino di San Marco*

Oil on canvas, 63.5 x 47 cm

PROVENANCE

Private collection, United Kingdom

Unpublished

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.<sup>1</sup> Edwards tells us that he 'painted landscapes, chiefly views in the neighbourhood of London.' Circulation on the international market of numerous *vedute* inside 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 artist being included as an honorary member of the Venetian school of *Vedutisti*.<sup>2</sup>

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'.<sup>3</sup> 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*.<sup>4</sup> 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 seen it during their Grand

Tour. The Zecca is just in view 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 prime 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.'<sup>5</sup> 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 that he reinvigorated it, 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 with which he depicted architecture by using the *camera obscura*, but here achieved probably by tracing Visentini's engraving. Attempts have been made at 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, the imagination.

<sup>1</sup> E. Edwards, H. Walpole, 1808, pp. 26-7.

<sup>2</sup> F. Pedrocco, 2001, pp. 144-145.

<sup>3</sup> E. Edwards, H. Walpole, 1808, p. 17.

<sup>4</sup> W.G. Constable-J.G. Links, II, n. 335, pp. 357-8, I, pl. 64.

<sup>5</sup> R. Redgrave, S. Redgrave, 1981, p. 39.



18.  
FRANCESCO GUARDI  
(Venice 1712 - 1793)

*Campo San Zanipolo with the Loggia erected on the occasion  
of the blessing of Pope Pius VI on 19 May 1782*

Oil on canvas, 36 x 30.5 cm

PROVENANCE

Christie's, London, 30 November 1973, lot 45 (as 'Francesco Guardi. A view of the Scuola di San Marco'); Christie's, London, 27 June 1975, lot 30 (as 'Francesco Guardi. Campo SS.Giovanni Paolo'); Private English Collection.

LITERATURE

A. Morassi, *Guardi. I disegni*, Venice, 1993, nos. 274-75, figs. 276 and 277.

From the 1750s Francesco Guardi started to look beyond Canaletto's models for representing Venice, seeking new compositional arrangements and a wider range of subjects. Between 1770 and 1775 Guardi executed a cycle of pictures representing the celebrations connected to the election of the doge, known as the 'Dodici Feste', in honour of doge Alvise IV Mocenigo. Shortly afterwards, on 25 April 1782, Pietro Edwards, who was Ispettore delle Belle Arti in Venice and had close ties with the city's political authorities, commissioned Guardi to paint four canvases representing the most important episodes of Pope Pious VI's forthcoming visit to the Serenissima on 15-19 May 1782. The contract, dated 21 May 1782, stipulates carefully how Guardi was to proceed, stating that he was obliged to "prender le vedute dei siti sopralluogo, e di dipendere dalla direzione del sud.o Sig. Edwards in quanto riguarda la disposizione e collocazione delle figurine rappresentanti le funzioni medesime".<sup>1</sup>

The four canvases were: *Pious VI meeting doge Paolo Renier at San Giorgio in Alga* (Philadelphia Museum of Art; a smaller version is the Rossello collection, Milan); *Pious VI holding mass in the church of Santi Giovanni e Paolo* (Private collection; a smaller version is in the Cleveland Museum of Fine Arts); *Pius VI taking his leave from the Doge in the Sala delle Udienze in the Convent of San Zanipolo* (Meyer collection, Milan; a smaller version is in the Cleveland Museum of Fine Arts); *Pius VI blessing the crowd in the Campo San Zanipolo* (Oxford, Ashmolean Museum; a the smaller version is in the Bearsted collection, Upton House, National Trust, as well as a third version in the Gemaldegalerie, Dresden). For the first series, destined for the Republic, Guardi was paid 40 *zecchini*. The smaller canvases, part of a second series, were apparently commissioned shortly afterwards – probably by Edwards himself.<sup>2</sup>

The present composition takes the same viewpoint as the Ashmolean picture, but zooms in on the the Scuola Grande di San Marco, where the elaborate temporary staircase and balcony had been erected to accommodate the Pope, the Doge, the Patriarch of Venice and other dignitaries. The scene is portrayed some days after the celebrations, as figures wander freely over the structure where the Pope can be clearly seen seated in the centre gold niche in the Ashmolean picture. The existence of four further variants of the present subject, including the present canvas, attest to the popularity of the composition: one is in Washington, National Gallery of Art (37.5 x 31.5 cm); one in the Modiano collection, Bologna (26.5 x 20.5 cm); and one in a private collection in Bergamo, Italy (62 x 47 cm).<sup>3</sup>

A preparatory drawing by Guardi for this composition was formerly in the Pierre Decourcelle collection, while another drawing – slightly larger – is in the Komer collection, London.<sup>4</sup> The staffage of both drawings is nearly identical to that of the present composition, which has maintained the spirited handling of the pen and ink; the Bergamo version instead seems to have lost this effect. The excitement of the celebrations conveyed in the Ashmolean picture is thus maintained here through lively brushwork and a golden palette of colours, characteristic attributes of Guardi's works executed during the 1780s.

<sup>1</sup> A. Morassi, 1973, I, pp. 360-61, no. 271; II, pl. 304; *Ibidem*, 1993, I, pp. 360-61, no. 271; II, pl. 304.

<sup>2</sup> L. Rossi Bortoletto, *L'opera completa di Francesco Guardi*, Milan 1974, p. 131, no. 700.

<sup>3</sup> M. Azzi Visentini, 1993, p. 194, under no. 70.

<sup>4</sup> A. Morassi, 1993, nos. 274-75, figs. 276 and 277.



19.  
FRANCESCO GUARDI  
(Venice 1712 - 1793)

*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.

Antonio Morassi dates this splendid view, signed by Francesco Guardi, to around 1755-60, shortly after the execution of the picture depicting the same subject in the Academy of Fine Arts, Vienna.<sup>1</sup> The present view takes a more distanced viewpoint than the Vienna picture, whose 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 to the centre-right foreground, the present work 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 present painting and the fact that it is signed supports Morassi's proposition that it postdates the Vienna view. Indeed, the picture 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 state of which is in the Gabinetto Disegni e Stampe, Museo Correr, Venice.<sup>2</sup> 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 seen to the left in the distance. The columns of St Mark and St Theodore, can be seen on the periphery of the Molo; 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 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 south end of the Basilica di San Marco, sits a solitary standard bearer. Directly under the figure on 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.

The Vienna picture was conceived as part of a set, from which three others exist (*The Piazzetta towards the Library*, *The Piazza San Marco looking towards San Geminiano* and *The Molo with the Ponte della Paglia looking towards the Riva degli Schiavoni*,<sup>3</sup> all of which derive from Canaletto's prototypes.<sup>4</sup> It was not unusual for Guardi to execute 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 pick out 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. The warm palette and the topographical accuracy of the painting are fully indicative of Guardi's work during the latter part of the 1750s; the frenetic, irregular brushwork characteristic of the 1770s and 1780s is entirely absent from our picture, which displays expressive but meticulous handling.

<sup>1</sup> A. Morassi, 1973, I, no. 379, vol II, fig. 402.

<sup>2</sup> Reproduced in D. Succi, 1986-1987, p. 200, cat. no. 21.

<sup>3</sup> Morassi, *op. cit.*, vol. I, cat. nos. 384, 343, 413, reproduced vol. II, figs. 405, 370, and 433 respectively.

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



20.  
FRANCESCO GUARDI  
(Venice 1712 - 1793)

*The lagoon with the Forte di S. Andrea*

Oil on canvas, 36 x 55.7 cm

PROVENANCE

Berthe Juliette de Rothschild, later Baronne Léonino (1870-1896), Paris (according to Morassi, see Literature); By descent to Baron Henri De Rothschild (1872-1947); By descent to James Nathaniel de Rothschild (1896-1987), by whom sold to Wildenstein, New York, in 1955; With Wildenstein, New York, from whom acquired by a member of the present owner's family in 1960; Thence by descent.

LITERATURE

A. Morassi, *Guardi. Antonio e Francesco Guardi*, Venice 1973, vol. I, pp. 251-52 and 430, cat. no. 642, reproduced, vol. II, fig. 604; L. R. Bortolato, *L'opera complete di Francesco Guardi*, Milan 1974, cat. no. 744.

This exquisitely calm view of a little-visited corner of the Venetian lagoon is a late work by Francesco Guardi. Here Guardi returns to a theme he concentrated on as a young man when painting a series of views, all of broadly similar dimensions to the present work, of the calm backwaters of Venice.<sup>1</sup> Of the numerous views of islands and outposts in the lagoon, many of which are actually by the artist's son Giacomo, Morassi considers this to be a very beautiful example by Francesco himself. These topographical views, classified by Morassi as 'vedute lagunari', are all characterised, whether youthful or mature, by their modest subject matter and prevailing tranquillity, standing in stark contrast to the artist's opulent panoramas of, for example, the Bucintoro in the Bacino di San Marco,<sup>2</sup> or his busy depictions of regattas on the Grand Canal. Indeed, architecture plays a secondary role in these lagoon pictures, and is included only to add a topographical point of reference to the compositions, which are in all other respects *capricci*. The translucent effects of water and the sweeping wash of blues, which are broken up by gondolas, boats and galleys, recall another work, also assigned to Guardi's late period by Morassi, depicting the Isola di S. Michele, in a private collection.<sup>3</sup>

The view is taken from the north-east and looks south-west. The Lido can be seen at the extreme left of the composition, with the church of San Nicolò and its campanile breaking the horizon beyond; to the right stands the Isola le Vignole, dominated by the Forte di Sant' Andrea. In these waters, each year on Ascension day, the Doge (today the mayor) celebrated the annual *Sposalizio del Mare* (the 'marriage' of Venice to the sea), by throwing a golden ring into the water; a token of the Republic's former dominance over the Adriatic. The Forte di Sant' Andrea was built in 1543 to a design by Michele Sanmichele, the leading architect in Venice and the man

responsible for all defensive constructions in the lagoon. The Forte guarded the main entrance to Venice from the Adriatic, the Porte del Lido; it was from the Forte that the Venetians fired upon the French warship, the *Liberateur d'Italie*, killing its commander and, with it, giving Napoleon a pretext for declaring war in May 1797. Morassi states that this painting once belonged to the Baronne Léonino, Bertha Juliette de Rothschild, daughter of Baron Gustave Samuel de Rothschild (1829-1911), in Paris. Gustave was the son of James (formerly Jacob) Mayer de Rothschild (1792-1868) and this may be to whom Morassi refers under provenance as 'J.N. de Rothschild' (J.N. being a possible misprint of J.M.). The painting cannot be traced in any of the Rothschild archives, nor is it listed in Gustave's inventory of 1911, where no Guardi's are mentioned at all. The painting may have entered the Léonino collection through Bertha's husband, the Baron Emmanuel Léonino (1864-1936), whom she married in 1892, although it is not included in his posthumous sale.<sup>4</sup> If the painting did belong to Baronne Léonino it may well have hung in the Château de Montvillargenne, her former residence in Chantilly, just north of Paris. She owned a number of Old Masters, particularly of the Dutch and Flemish schools, many of which she had inherited from her father; among them Sir Peter Paul Rubens' *Portrait of a Woman*, probably Susanna Lunden (1599-1628) today in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

<sup>1</sup> See, for example, Guardi's *View of the lagoon with the Fondamenta Nuove* sold at Sotheby's, 5 July 2006, lot 15.

<sup>2</sup> In the Musée du Louvre, Paris, for which see A. Morassi, 1973, vol. I, no. 247, reproduced vol. II, fig. 273.

<sup>3</sup> A. Morassi, I, p. 424, II, n. 610.

<sup>4</sup> The sale was held in Paris, Galerie Charpentier, 18 March 1937.



21.  
FRANCESCO GUARDI  
(Venice 1712 - 1793)

*A Capriccio with Figures and a Bridge on a Canal*

Oil on canvas, 31.6 x 52 cm

PROVENANCE

A private Pisan collection; Bellesi collection, Florence; Private collection, United Kingdom.

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*, Milano 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 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 figures. Guardi adopts light brushstrokes to convey a sense of the lagoon's misty atmosphere. 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.

Distancing himself from Canaletian and Marieschian prototypes, which had defined the development of *Vedutismo* up until this point, 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. While Guardi's *capricci* are undoubtedly the products of his own creative imagination, by the very nature of the genre itself, they are not without their pictorial precedents. The artist was particularly influenced by his contact with the architectural *capricci* of Marco Ricci through paintings and engravings, which combine architectural fragments with figures, set within the boundless Roman *campagna*. In this particular example, however, Guardi's interest in the rusticity of the lesser-known corners of Venice is also indebted to the great Antonio Canal in pictures such as *The Stonemason's Yard* (The National Gallery, London), in which we catch a glimpse of the local people at work behind the city's resplendent façade. Where the present picture differs, of course, is in the fact that it derives from the painter's imagination, despite appearing as if it may depict an ac-

tual area of Venice. This aspect – of its seeming to portray reality – sets the picture apart from other *capricci* by the artist, in which fantastical elements betray the invented nature of the composition. The convincing simplicity of the painting therefore presents an intriguing play on reality and fantasy, which can be said for only a handful of other works by the artist.

Like most of Guardi's works, the present canvas cannot be precisely dated, but its visual conception is comparable to a *capriccio* in the Uffizi, which could be a slightly earlier work.<sup>1</sup> The present composition, however, is based on a signed, pen and ink drawing formerly in the collection of Paul Wallraf and published by Morassi (see *op. cit.*), described by the scholar as a '*bel foglio dell'epoca tarda*'.<sup>2</sup> 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. He had, on the other hand, 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. This visual development therefore confirms that the Wallraf drawing was made in preparation for the present picture, which supports a dating to Guardi's maturity.

<sup>1</sup> A. Morassi, 1984, I, p. 468, no. 853; II, fig. 773.

<sup>2</sup> A. Morassi, *op. cit.*, cat. no. 602, fig. 592.



22.  
FRANCESCO GUARDI  
(Venice 1712 - 1793)

a. *A Capriccio with Ruins and a Lagoon*

b. *A Capriccio with a Bridge, Ruins and a Lagoon*

A pair, oil on canvas, 30.5 x 51.1 cm

PROVENANCE

Private collection, France (according to the customs stamps on the reverse); with Frank T. Sabin, London; with Knoedler, London and New York, by 1931; Marshall Field V (b. 1941), Chicago, by 1967, by whom bequeathed in memory of his great-great-grandfather Marshall Field I to The Art Institute of Chicago (the former picture in 1970 and the latter in 1977).

EXHIBITED

Chicago, The Chicago Art Institute, on loan 1967-1970 and 1967-1977 respectively, and subsequently the property of the Institute.

LITERATURE

A. Morassi, *Guardi: Antonio e Francesco Guardi*, Venice, 1973, I, p. 280, p. 491, no. 980 and p. 470, no. 863; II, figs. 869 and 780.

The present *capricci* are recorded in Antonio Morassi's *catalogue raisonné* of Francesco Guardi's *oeuvre* – together with two other compositions preserved in the collection of E. Hamill, Chicago – as part of series of four canvases of notable and outstanding quality.<sup>1</sup> The scholar ascribed all four paintings to Guardi's maturity and listed them in the same section as other *capricci* dating to the years 1775-1780. Like many works from this period, the present pictures are built on a palette of grey-blue tonalities, used for the sky, and earthen colours, which define the architecture, interrupted by dashes of white or ochre to outline the figures. Guardi's 'impressionistic' brushstrokes and vibrant rendering of light skilfully convey a sense of the lagoon's misty atmosphere. Guardi's *capricci* were widely collected during the eighteenth century by Venetians and foreign visitors on their Grand Tour alike. The presence of French export stamps on the reverse of both canvases suggests that the pictures, like other mature works by the artist, were part of a French collection from a relatively early stage. However, if Morassi's proposed dating is accepted, it is worth noting that in that period, due to the American War of Independence's effect on countries such as France and England, Guardi may well have experienced a fall in commissions from foreign patrons. In the twentieth century, the paintings were donated to the Art Institute of Chicago by Marshall Field V (b. 1941) in memory of his great-great-grandfather, Marshall Field I (1834-1906),

one of the most celebrated American entrepreneurs of his time. The ruined gateway at the centre of what was clearly conceived as the left hand-side painting echoes numerous such buildings represented by the artist in his lagoon *capricci*, with the function of guiding the viewer's eye through the composition. However, what Morassi defined as the 'long rustic house' to the left is not repeated in other published *capricci*. The bridge in the second picture reappears, but without the arch to the right, in a *capriccio* formerly in Hamburg<sup>2</sup>: this was doubtless of an almost identical size to the present pair originally (Morassi records its dimensions as 30.5 x 49.5 cm) and most likely dates to the same years. The composition of *A capriccio with a bridge, ruins and a lagoon* must have enjoyed considerable popularity: an enlarged version in the Chiamonte-Bordonaro collection was regarded as autograph by Giuseppe Fiocco, but was not accepted as such by Morassi; a late copy was exhibited in Stockholm in 1962-1963; and a picture of similar appearance in Philadelphia was described by Morassi, who considered it to be the work of Giacomo Guardi, as 'scadente' (Museum of Art, John G. Johnson Collection, inventory no. 311).

<sup>1</sup> A. Morassi, 1973, p. 280.

<sup>2</sup> A. Morassi, 1973, no. 865, fig. 779.



a



b

23.  
NICCOLÒ GUARDI  
(Venice 1715 - 1786)

### *The Rialto Bridge seen from the North*

Oil on canvas, 114.7 x 74.9 cm

Unpublished

This atmospheric *veduta* is based upon the left section of a painting by Canaletto, commissioned in 1725 by Stefano Conti di Lucca along with a pendant, the *Grand Canal looking North from near the Rialto Bridge*.<sup>1</sup> A corner of Palazzo Civran runs down the left edge of the painting, with the Fondaco dei Tedeschi beyond, still bearing traces of the now lost frescoes by Giorgione. At the centre is the Rialto Bridge, bordered on the right by a section of Palazzo dei Camerlenghi, built from 1525 to 1528 following the designs by Guglielmo dei Grigi. Entering the scene from the right is a private barge driven by four gondoliers and carrying noble men and women at a table under a red awning.

The view is close to the prime, with identical positioning of the *macchiette* and vessels, but has been elongated to include a greater expanse of sky and a section of the dock, suggested in the far left corner in Canaletto's painting and here extended to incorporate two washerwomen in conversation and a gondolier gathered near the water. The cloud formations of the prime differ considerably from the present picture, where a build up of white above the Rialto diffuses into mist up ahead, while a darker section at the top of the canvas threatens the onset of a storm.

The picture's attribution to Niccolò Guardi, the youngest brother of the celebrated Francesco Guardi, is based upon the striking stylistic parallels it bears with the nucleus of works formed by Dario Succi, which possess a deep, earthen palette, full-bodied, fluid brushstrokes, dramatic skies and broadly painted staffage.<sup>2</sup> The group's highly personal style, which combines the influence of Marieschi and Canaletto with distinct Guardi-esque qualities, has sparked lively critical debate. Prior to Succi's findings, these discussions centred upon three paintings: *A Grand Canal with Ca' Pesaro* (The National Gallery, London), *Santa Maria della Salute* and an *Entrance to the Cannaregio* (both Baltimore Museum of Art), which are after the series of engravings published between 1741 and 1742 by Michele Marieschi entitled *Magnificentiores Selectioresque Urbis Venetiarum Prospectus*, and possess the same dimensions, making it likely that they were part of a series. Constable had attributed the paintings to Marieschi himself,<sup>3</sup> while Pallucchini assigned them to Francesco,<sup>4</sup> based upon the fact that his first attempts in the field were inspired by Marieschi. Referring to this intriguing group, Morassi, evidently perplexed by their appearance, assigned them to a moment '*in verità non molto felice*' in the career of Francesco when he was still training in Antonio's studio and had been influenced by Marieschi's expressive *vedute*.<sup>5</sup> Succi, on the other hand, draws attention to the fact that chronological contradictions between the output of Francesco and topographical evidence pre-

sented by the group in question prevent them from being attributable to the early career of the famous *vedutista*.<sup>6</sup> Moreover, on the occasions that Francesco did work from one of Marieschi's prototypes, he did so '*magistralmente ed in maniera coerente con il suo stile*', such as in the superb *Regatta on the Grand Canal*, formerly in the Johnson collection.<sup>7</sup>

Succi argues that this evidence, as well as distinctive stylistic differences – broadly conceived *macchiette*, described by Morassi as '*un po' largo ed espanso*', a brown-green palette, dramatic skies, fluid brushwork – suggest the hand of another painter altogether, namely that of Niccolò, the youngest of the three Guardi brothers.<sup>8</sup> Niccolò is mentioned in 1790 as a "renowned painter" of landscape *capricci*,<sup>9</sup> while in 1739 Domenico Francesco was baptised as the son of 'Niccolò de Guardi Pittor' and Cecilia dal Moro.<sup>10</sup> We know that already by the 1750s Niccolò was well established as an artist, and was probably as famous as his brothers, given that at the age of thirty he was able to pay considerably high rent on a newly constructed residence in the Fondamenta dello Squero ai SS. Apostoli.<sup>11</sup>

Among the nucleus of paintings formed by Succi is a *Rialto Bridge with Palazzo dei Camerlenghi* (private collection, Milan), dated to 1746-1750.<sup>12</sup> Modelled on the Canalettian prototype, the picture represents the wide perspective of the prime but with a different placing of the vessels. The painting is evidence of Niccolò's interest in this particular view, and thus acts as a valuable point of comparison for the present work. Succi dates the work to 1746-1750, bearing in mind that from 1755 the painter exchanged his highly saturated palette for one with lighter tones, possibly inspired by Francesco's experiments. The deep, earthen palette, the rough painted surface defined by spirited brushstrokes and the expressive sky, which contrasts with the meticulous architecture, are features of both the present painting and the one published by Succi.

<sup>1</sup> W. G. Constable - J.G. Links, 1989, I, pl. 49, n. 234, II, p. 301.

<sup>2</sup> D. Succi, 1993, pp. 191-208.

<sup>3</sup> W. G. Constable, 1948, p. 4, ill. 16.

<sup>4</sup> R. Pallucchini, 1966, pp. 314-325.

<sup>5</sup> A. Morassi, 1973, p. 230.

<sup>6</sup> D. Succi, *op. cit.*, p. 199.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>8</sup> G. Ciccolini, 1954, pp. 189, 195, 199, note 25.

<sup>9</sup> G. Fiocco, 1923, p. 8.

<sup>10</sup> A. Binion, 1971, p. 96.

<sup>11</sup> F. Pedrocchi - F. Montecuccoli degli Erri, 1992, p. 65; G. Knox, 2003, pp. 533-535.

<sup>12</sup> D. Succi, *op. cit.*, fig. 215, p. 195.



24.  
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

Unpublished

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 present *Grand Canal from Ca' Foscari towards the Rialto Bridge*. The work is closely based upon Canaletto's painting of the same subject in the Uffizi, Florence, with differences in the handling and 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 appear Palazzo Querini Dubois and Ca' Bernardo and beyond Palazzo Tiepolo Businello and Palazzo Barzizza, following the composition of a drawing in the Accademia. In the distance the Rialto Bridge can just be made out, with the Basilica of Santi Giovanni Paolo behind it, while to the right appears another sequence of patrician residences: 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 Cenedini 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 activity as a painter, as it was here that he was encouraged to study Antonio Visentini's engravings after Canaletto's *vedute*, as well as taught how to paint staffage in the eighteenth-century manner, whereby thick, bright globules



John Scarlett Davis, *The Long Gallery at the Uffizi, Florence*, oil on canvas, 109 by 143.5 cm Courtesy of Sotheby's

of paint are used to suggest form and detail with great precision and economy. Pedrocco has shown that Bison's method often consisted of making tracings of prints from Visentini's 'Prospectus' directly onto the canvas, which would then be adapted to include different elements; this may explain the small format of many of the painter's Venetian views.<sup>1</sup>

The present painting is unusual in that it is not based upon any of Visentini's engravings, but upon a painting by Canaletto with 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 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 on display today.<sup>2</sup> We know that Bison undertook a sojourn between 1834 and 1838, during which time he visited Florence, Rome, Naples and Paestum, in turn broadening 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.<sup>3</sup> One can imagine Bison seated at his easel, in replacement of 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. 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 such as Cat. 26, 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; 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 idea is substantiated by the fact that the pictures have near identical dimensions, the prime 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".<sup>4</sup> 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.<sup>5</sup>

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 atmosphere.

<sup>1</sup> F. Pedrocco, 2001 p. 229.

<sup>2</sup> V. Conticelli, in G. Pavanello, 2008, n. 29, pp. 258-9.

<sup>3</sup> The picture was sold in a Sotheby's Old Master and British Paintings sale, lot 214, 6 December 2012.

<sup>4</sup> W.G. Constable, 1962, p. 290.

<sup>5</sup> B. A. Kowalczyk, 2001, p. 190; *Canaletto*, 2005, p. 78.



25.

GIUSEPPE BERNARDINO BISON  
(Palmanova 1762 - 1844 Milan)

a. *The Molo from the Bacino di San Marco*

b. *The Grand Canal from The Palazzo Balbi facing  
the Rialto Bridge with a Regatta*

A pair, oil on canvas, 57.5 x 79.5 cm

PROVENANCE

Private collection, United Kingdom

Unpublished

Described by Egidio Martini as a 'painter of inexhaustible fantasy',<sup>1</sup> Bison's style as a *vedutista* can be located in a transitional phase between the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries as the last heir to the Venetian tradition of view painting, which he paid tribute to by reusing the compositions of Carlevarijs and Canaletto with a modern spirit.

The present pair of paintings depict two typical eighteenth-century Venetian views: the Grand Canal with Palazzo Balbi captured at the time of a regatta and the Molo taken from the Bacino di San Marco. In the latter – arguably the most iconic view of Venice – Bison associates himself with the venerable tradition of *vedutismo* of the early seventeenth century, made famous by the numerous versions executed by Canaletto,<sup>2</sup> as well as the examples by Gaspar van Wittel and Luca Carlevarijs. Rather than seeking out pictorial precedents in single works, it is worth noting that the dominant channel of diffusion – as well as the model for the vast majority of the versions painted over the course of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries – were the celebrated engravings by Antonio Visentini for the *Prospectus Magni Canalis Venetiarum* (1735), based on the series of Venetian views commissioned from Canaletto by Joseph consul Smith.

Three other autograph versions by Bison of the view depicting the Grand Canal are known,<sup>3</sup> the most important of which formed part of the collection of Henrietta Vernon, Countess of Warwick.<sup>4</sup> Once again, the subject is a typical example from the eighteenth-century tradition of *Vedutismo*, depicted for the first time by Luca Carlevarijs to mark the occasion of the regatta that took place on 4 March 1709 in honour of Federico IV, king of Denmark and Norway.<sup>5</sup> The same viewpoint, also featuring a regatta, was replicated on various occasions by Canaletto,<sup>6</sup> but once again it is more likely that Bi-

son's composition was based upon the engraving by Antonio Visentini, who was in turn guided by the painting by Canaletto depicting a *Ragatta on the Grand Canal*.<sup>7</sup>

Compared to the lucidity of the examples that preceded him, Bison interpreted his subjects by employing a warm golden light and a soft touch, bestowing a romantic, dream-like quality upon his scenes. The views are enlivened by flickering touches of red and blue found in the clothing of the contestants and the banners, imbuing the painting with a chromatic vibrancy that is absent from the earlier examples. Although Bison's work demonstrates a sensitivity towards variations in climate and atmospheric effects, in accordance with the best examples of the tradition of Venetian *Vedutismo*, the optical effects that were a characteristic feature of the work of his predecessors are replaced by fluid colours and swift brushstrokes that attest to the artist's modernity.

The twofold nature of the artist – inspired by tradition with regards to his choice of iconography but strongly contemporary in his palette and painterly conduct – led Martini to insist upon the necessity of understanding Bison's work to be "as eighteenth-century as it is neoclassical and romantic".<sup>8</sup>

<sup>1</sup> E. Martini, 1998, p. 224.

<sup>2</sup> W.G. Contable-J.G. Links, I, nn. 101-107, pl. 28 and n. 335, pl. 64.

<sup>3</sup> F. Magani, 1995, p. 121; *Ibid.*, 1998, pp. 44-45, n. 13.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 1997, pp. 41-47, fig. 7 and p. 65, note 51.

<sup>5</sup> A. Rizzi, pp. 51, 88, 93, plates 35, 38-39; W.G. Contable-J.G. Links, ed. 1976, I, pl. 7b.

<sup>6</sup> W.G. Contable-J.G. Links, I, ed. 1989, nn. 347-350, II, pp. 364-367, nn. 347-350.

<sup>7</sup> K. Baetjer - J.G. Links, 1998, pp. 166-171, n. 43; W.G. Constable-J.G. Links, ed. 1989, I, n. 347, II, n. 347, p. 364.

<sup>8</sup> E. Martini, 1998, p. 280.



a



b

26.

FRANCESCO ZANIN

(Active in Venice, second half of the nineteenth century)

*The Scuola Grande di San Marco by the Rio dei Mendicanti*

Oil on canvas, 44.5 x 63.5 cm

Signed "N. 19. ZANIN FRAN.CO" (lower left)

Unpublished

A prolific painter, surprisingly little is known of the career of Francesco Zanin, despite the significant number of works by the artist that have come to light in recent years, which reveal him as one of the most gifted and interesting of the Venetian view painters active in the nineteenth century.<sup>1</sup> Zanin graduated from the Venetian Accademia in 1855, the year in which two views by the artist of the interior of the Basilica of San Marco were included in the annual exhibition, noted for their strong contrasts of light and shade and free handling.<sup>2</sup> Clearly under the influence of Canaletto, Zanin's views are, however, more topographically accurate, use a more saturated palette, and are executed with smoother, more precise handling, characteristics that mark most of his later work.

This phase of his career culminated in paintings such as the present example, in which Zanin depicts the Scuola Grande di San Marco by the Rio dei Mendicanti. A subject much loved by eighteenth-century masters like Canaletto and Francesco Guardi, the Scuola is represented here from an innovative viewpoint, which runs parallel to the Rio dei Mendicanti canal, rather than perpendicular to it, as was traditional. The canal takes centre stage in the picture's foreground, thus concealing from the viewer the Campo Santi Giovanni e Paolo, which is only alluded to on the right, where the bridge, known as Ponte del Cavallofino, ends. Further in the background, Zanin painted silhouettes of the bell tower and dome of the church of San Michele.

In 1485 the original building, which had a spiral staircase designed by Gentile Bellini, was destroyed by fire. Four years later the reconstruction of the building was assigned to Pietro Lombardo, who had been working on the Doge's Palace, and to Giovanni Buora. Due to a quarrel between the two architects, the commission of the building was passed on to another architect, Mauro Codussi, whose contribution to the building plan is most apparent in the façade. The Scuola Grande di San Marco was for many years the richest guild in Venice.

As is the case with the present work, the majority of Zanin's known paintings are skilful imitations of Canaletto's *oeuvre*, often prominently signed in red and occasionally numbered.<sup>3</sup> For this, as well as the romantic touch that pervaded his views, the artist was nick-

named the "Canaletto of the nineteenth century", a pseudonym that is endorsed by the present work, a minutely descriptive view characterised by a subtle, atmospheric palette and play on shadows. Several versions are known of the prime view of the Rio dei Mendicanti and the Scuola di San Marco, which has been in the Galleria dell'Accademia in Venice since 1856 and was long attributed to Canaletto, only being recognised relatively recently as an early work by his nephew, Bernardo Bellotto. A close comparison between the present painting and that in the Accademia reveals Zanin to be not only a meticulous copyist, but also one of great ingenuity, as he masterfully transforms Bellotto's scene into a dream-like re-imagining of eighteenth-century Venice through a nineteenth-century lens. Indeed, the tendency to bestow a nostalgic veil upon views treated by the seminal *vedutiste* such as Canaletto and Bellotto is frequent among the works of later interpreters, such as Giuseppe Bernardino Bison (see cats. 25-26). In the present example, a medley of pastel tones give the impression that the sun is beginning to set over Venice, bathing the buildings in a warm haze and causing the waters to reflect the now purple and turquoise sky. Zanin's characteristic palette and his clean treatment of paint, which is applied with thick, confident brushstrokes, differentiates the picture from its counterpart in the Accademia, whose colour scheme incorporates more yellows and whose brushwork is more expressive. Aside from these characteristics, Zanin's version is a faithful imitation of Bellotto's painting, so much so that he must have had the work by his side as he made his picture.

Far from being a passive imitator, Zanin deserves to be recognised for his portrayals of the splendours of the grand Venetian palazzos, which are executed with breath-taking precision and faultless perspective, as well as for the light atmosphere and mystique that he bestows upon examples such as the present painting.

<sup>1</sup> F. Magani, 1998 ; *Ibidem* 2008.

<sup>2</sup> *Degli oggetti d'arte ammessi all'Esposizione nelle sale della I.R. Accademia veneta di Belle Arti nell'agosto 1855.*

<sup>3</sup> The present work is signed and numbered in white in the lower left-hand corner.





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