



## Art History Talks: Venice - City of Water

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from marauding Huns and it became the **greatest seaport** in late medieval Europe. **For a thousand years** it was the centre of an ever expanding trading empire but in 1797 Napoleon Bonaparte conquered the city and Austria took control. In 1866 it became part of the newly created kingdom of Italy.

- This talk is about water and the history of Venice as illustrated by a few of the great works of art that show **Venice as a 'City of Water'**. It is not a history of Venetian painters but a history of Venice as told through paintings of its architecture and canals.

### SIZE

- Yet, Venice is only about **two and a half miles by just over one mile** so it can be walked across in an hour as long as you avoid tourist times and don't get lost which is very easy, even if you think you know Venice well. It is a maze of backstreets, dead ends and similar looking alleyways.

### QUOTE

- "Like spring, the beauty of Venice excites and arouses our softest desires; it animates and stirs the unspoiled heart like the promise of some near, undefined, mysterious pleasure"
  - Ivan Sergeevič Turgenev, pronounced 'e-VUN TER-gay-nev', *On the Eve*, 1860

### BRIEF HISTORY

- Traditionally Venice was founded at noon on Friday 25 March 421 by Padua as a trading post and the first duke proclaimed in 697. The original population were locals fleeing waves of Germanic and Hun invaders. The lagoon provided a safe haven as it was difficult to attack across the marshes.
- It became one of the richest merchant republics in Europe with a fleet that dominated the Mediterranean and land routes to Asia. It owned lands across Europe and was known for its glass works and shipbuilding as well as its exciting culture.
- It sacked Constantinople, the capital of the Byzantine Empire, in 1204 and carried away many treasures to Venice.
- It was a republic ruled by an oligarchy of merchants who elected a leader for life known as the Doge. The Doge lived in the Palazzo Ducale.
- Its decline began in 1453 when Constantinople fell to the Ottoman Turks. In addition Portuguese sailors had rounded Africa and found an alternative route to the far East avoiding the Silk Road.
- The Venetian Republic ended in 1797 when Napoleon conquered it and installed a new pro-French government, looting the city of its artworks. When Napoleon fell it was put under Austrian rule.
- In 1846 the rail link to the mainland opened and the number of tourists began to exceed the population. In the 1860s it became part of the new Kingdom of Italy.



North portal, west façade (detail), 1270-75, mosaic, Basilica di San Marco, Venice

North portal, west façade (detail), 1270-75, mosaic, Basilica di San Marco, Venice

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- This is one of the **earliest representations of Venice**. It is a 13th century mosaic in one of the lunettes of St Mark's Basilica showing St. Mark's Basilica. Note the four bronze horse on second-storey terrace that were taken during the Sack of Constantinople in 1204 an important date in the history of Venice. The ones there today are copies and the originals are inside the basilica.
- However, there is no water, the very essence of Venice...

### NOTES

- A lunette is an arched aperture especially one in a domed ceiling.





( Oldest known city  
view of Venice, 1350

Oldest known city view of Venice, 1350.

- Here we have water in the earliest known view of Venice. It is from a manuscript containing the travel account of Niccolò da Poggibonsi (pronounced 'podgy-bonzee'), an **Italian pilgrim who travelled to Jerusalem** in 1346-1350. The manuscript was likely made shortly after he returned to Italy in **1350**. During his pilgrimage, Niccolò passed through Venice and his description of the city is accompanied by a pen drawing of Venice.

### NOTES

- Poggibonsi went on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem that lasted five years. He travelled initially with seven others, six of whom returned. He started in Venice and visited Cyprus, Jafa, Jerusalem, Damascus, Beirut, Alexandria, New Cairo, Gaza, Cyprus again, Tripoli, Proreç where he was captured by brigands, Venice, Ferrara, where he was detained for a year and finally home. On his return he wrote a book about his journey describing the sights, distances and tolls. His descriptions are unusually detailed.
- Poggibonsi is a town near Sienna.
- "The church in the right background, defined by several large arches and an outsized bell in the campanile, is likely to represent **San Marco**. In 1346 the rebuilding of the south wing of the **Palazzo Ducale** had only recently begun, but the tall crenellated towers in the centre background may belong to the previous palace on the site. The



church on the water in the left middle-ground may be **San Giorgio Maggiore**, which Fra Niccolò probably visited on his tour of the city's relics, and the rest of the foreground could show either the **Giudecca or the Lido**. But it was the port that remained in his memory most clearly. The most prominent feature is the **broad quay across the centre** of the drawing, with its long jetties giving access to the two outsized ships, providing a vivid impression of the **Riva degli Schiavoni** [the waterfront outside the Doge's Palace] where pilgrims embarked for the Holy Land." [1]

- There is a 12th century map redrawn in 1346 the year Poggibonsi left.

#### **REFERENCES**

[1] <https://www.apollo-magazine.com/oldest-drawing-venice-niccolo-da-poggibonsi/>

M Marco Polo Leaving Venice from Marco Polo's *Travels* in 1271, 1338-1410, Bodleian, 264, fol. 218r



Marco Polo Leaving Venice from Marco Polo's *Travels* in 1271, 1338-1410, Bodleian, 264, fol. 218r

- This is **one of the earliest detailed views of Venice** showing the **Grand Canal and the Molo**. The Molo was the main entrance to and exit from Venice and is the area around the **two granite columns** that are still there today. They were brought from the Orient in the 12th century; one supports the **winged lion of St. Mark** supporting a book and the other **St. Theodore, Venice's first patron, standing on a crocodile**. The two figures were assembled from miscellaneous looted fragments brought back from the Sack of Constantinople in 1204. The lion had angel's winds welded to its back and the crocodile is meant to represent a dragon.
- The picture is from a 14th century story of Marco Polo's 13th century journey to the Far East.
- In the foreground we see the lands they will visit and some strange sights. Marco Polo and his uncles set off in 1271 and it took him three years to journey down the Silk Road to the court of Kubla Kahn in Xanadu. They stayed 17 years in China before returning to Venice in 1295. Having survived such an arduous journey he was captured by the Genoese for which we should be grateful because in prison he wrote the story of his journey.

## NOTES

- "Marco Polo, Venetian merchant and explorer, 14th century. Marco Polo (1254-1324)

setting out with his uncles from Venice for the Far East. In the foreground are lands they will visit and strange things they will see. The Polos set off from Venice for Asia in 1271, travelling the Silk Road and arriving at the court of Kubla Khan some three years later. They spent 17 years in China before returning home, arriving back in Italy in 1295. Marco Polo was imprisoned by the Genoese, writing an account of his travels, *Il Milione* whilst in captivity." [1]

- "This magnificent painting illustrates the opening of Marco Polo's *Travels*, and shows Marco, his father and his uncle on the brink of their departure from Venice in 1271, bound for Kublai Khan's Xanadu. In the bottom left exotic creatures evoke the marvellous lands for which they are headed. The painting not only celebrates the Polos' adventurousness, but the imperialist ambitions, wealth and extravagance for which Venice was famed." [2]
- The statues on the granite columns were assembled from parts brought back from the Sack of Constantinople. A breastplate, a head and a crocodile were used to create St. Theodore fighting a dragon and the angel's wings were welded to the lion to create the emblem of St. Mark.
- The reference to Kubla Kahn and Xanadu may remind you of Samuel Taylor Coleridge's famous poem 'Kubla Kahn' which begins,

*In Xanadu did Kubla Khan  
A stately pleasure-dome decree:  
Where Alph, the sacred river, ran  
Through caverns measureless to man  
Down to a sunless sea.*

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[1] <https://www.sciencephoto.com/media/1002166/view/marco-polo-venetian-merchant-and-explorer-14th-century>

[2] <https://treasures.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/treasures/marco-polos-travels/>  
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Bird's-eye View of Venice, 1572, Braun & Hogenberg's City Atlas. Volume 5

Bird's-eye View of Venice, 1572, Braun & Hogenberg's City Atlas. Volume 5

Venetia // Civitates orbis terrarum / [Georgius Bruin, Franciscus Hogenbergius]. - Colonia Agrippinae [Köln], MDLXXVII [1577]. – fol. 43

- This is **one of the most magnificent of the early maps** and it was published in Cologne in 1572. All the famous landmarks can be seen many similar to the way they are today.
- We see the Grand Canal snaking down under the Rialto bridge to St Mark's Square and the Molo. We can see the canals of Venice reminding us that it is a city built on a lagoon to protect the inhabitants from marauding Huns. **It is a city of 118 small islands joined by over 400 bridges.**
- **The city was the capital of the Republic of Venice for over a thousand years, from 697 to 1797.** It became a very wealthy city, a major financial and sea power during the Middle Ages and Renaissance and an important center of commerce—especially silk, grain, and spice.

## NOTES

- 'We can view all islands in the Venetian Lagoon and the city's architectural landmarks. St. Mark's Square and Basilica, the Old Library and Doge's Palace stand out at the heart of Venice. The numerous ship-building facilities are visible on the right. Small islands around the city are also shown and labeled. Notable among them are San Giorgio, home to a beautiful Palladian church and monastery, and the island

of Murano, a renowned center for the local glass industry. The Grand Canal and harbour are embellished with ships, boats and gondolas." [1].

#### **REFERENCES**

- [1] <https://expositions.nlr.ru/ve/RA4544/maps-of-venice>





Vittore Carpaccio (1465–1526), *Miracle of the Holy Cross at the Rialto Bridge*, c. 1496, 371 × 392 cm, Gallerie dell'Accademia, Venice

- **It was a deeply religious city.** This is the *Miracle of the Holy Cross at the Rialto Bridge*. The action is taking place on the left on the loggia of a palace. It celebrates a miracle concerning the **healing of a madman possessed by the devil**. The devil is driven from the man by Francesco Querini, the Patriarch of Grado, **using a fragment of the Holy Cross** in his palace near the Rialto.
- It was one of **nine large canvasses commissioned by the Grand Hall of the Scuola Grande di San Giovanni Evangelista**, by prominent artists of the time, including **Gentile Bellini, Perugino and Vittore Carpaccio**. The commission was to celebrate the donation of a fragment of the true cross and its associated miracles. The Scuola Grande was one of five in Venice. They were a form of men's club with charitable aims and which supported the arts.
- The bridge depicted is the one built in 1458 which collapsed 66 years later (in 1524). It was made of wood and like the current version (dating from 1591) it had a double row of shops at the sides and, at the top, a movable boardwalk needed to allow the passage of the taller vessels.
- **(CLICK)** If we look in detail we see the everyday life of fifteenth century Venice. Numerous foreigners mingle with the locals, women cleaning and workers moving barrels. The **peculiar chimneys** have a purpose. They were designed to stop sparks from setting the wooden buildings on fire by whirling the air around and cooling the



sparks.

### **NOTES**

- Grado is a town on an island between Venice and Trieste.
- In the late 13th century a major fire resulted in all the glassmaking workshops and furnaces being moved to Murano.

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<https://www.wga.hu/frames-e.html?/html/c/carpacci/2/01mirac.html>

<https://www.khanacademy.org/humanities/renaissance-reformation/early-renaissance1/venice-early-ren/a/vittore-carpaccio-miracle-of-the-relic-of-the-cross-at-the-rialto-bridge>



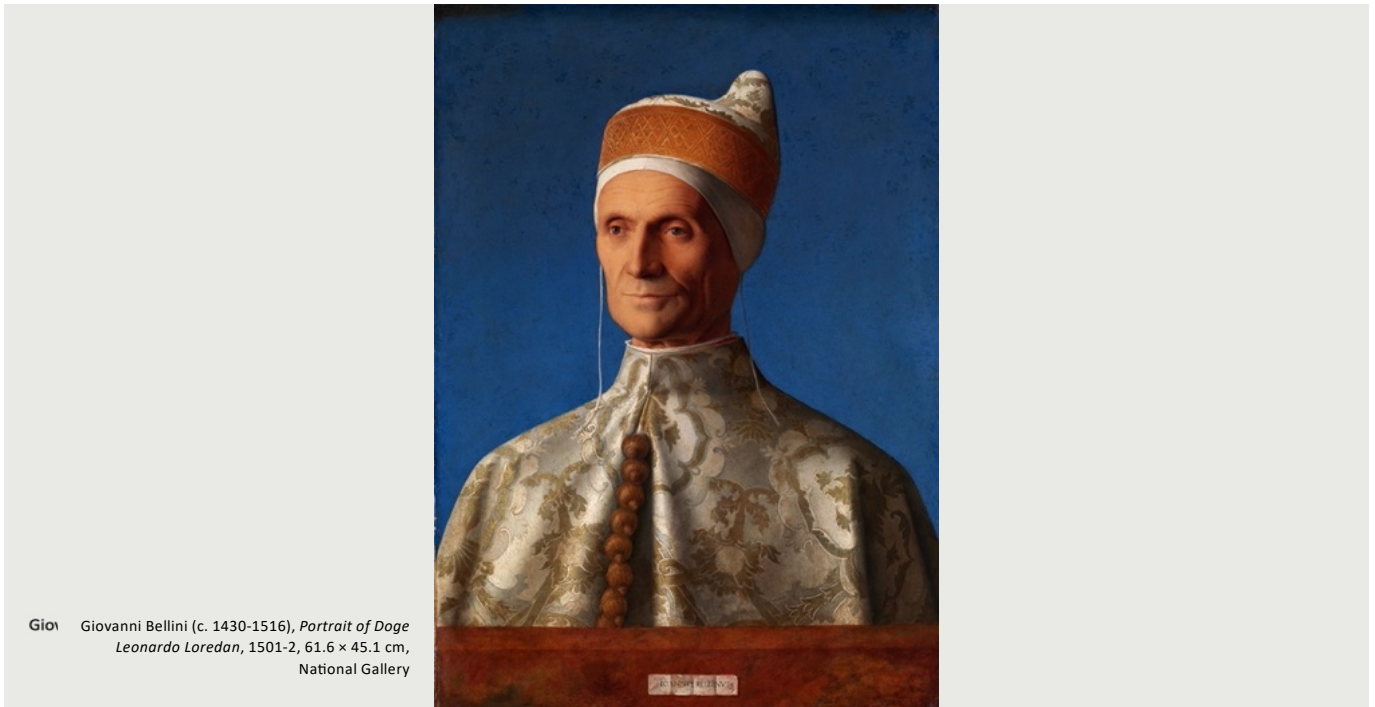
Gentile Bellini (1429–1507), *Procession of the True Cross. in St. Mark's Square*, 1496, 373 × 745 cm, Gallerie dell'Accademia

Gentile Bellini (1429–1507), *Procession of the True Cross. in St. Mark's Square*, 1496, 373 × 745 cm, Gallerie dell'Accademia

- **This is another of the nine canvases, this one by Gentile Bellini.** The canvas shows an event that took place about 50 years earlier, on 25 April 1444: while the members of the Scuola were **processing the fragment** through the Piazza San Marco (the square of St. Mark's), Jacopo de' Salis, **a tradesman from Brescia, knelt before the relic in prayer that his dying son might recover.** When he returned home, he discovered that the boy was completely well again.
- **(CLICK)** The confraternity of the Scuola Granda wear white robes and the Brescian merchant is hardly visible in the crowd: he kneels in red robes, immediately to the right of the last two canopy-bearers.**(CLICK)**
- This is the main square of Venice, called Piazza San Marco, St. Mark's Square. **Napoleon called it the "drawing room of Europe".** It is dominated at the far end by St Mark's Basilica. To the right of the Basilica is the beginning of the Doge's Palace and to the right again the campanile, of which more later.
- **The Basilica was built around 836 to house the relics of St. Mark which were stolen from Alexandria in 828-9.** The original patron saint of Venice was St Theodore but it became St Mark with the arrival of the relics.

## REFERENCES

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Procession\\_in\\_St.\\_Mark%27s\\_Square](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Procession_in_St._Mark%27s_Square)



Giovanni Bellini (c. 1430-1516), *Portrait of Doge Leonardo Loredan*, 1501-2, 61.6 × 45.1 cm, National Gallery

Giovanni Bellini (c. 1430-1516), *Portrait of Doge Leonardo Loredan*, 1501-2, 61.6 × 45.1 cm, National Gallery

- Bellini was one of the greatest portrait painters of the 15th century and this is his portrait of Doge Leonardo Loredan.
- Leonardo Loredan was the 75th Doge who reigned from 1501 to 1521. His rule was the most significant in Venice's history as through cunning plots and manoeuvres he **saved Venice from the Ottoman Empire, the Mamluks (in Egypt and Syria), the Pope, the Republic of Genoa, the Holy Roman Empire, the French, the Egyptians and the Portuguese.**
- More shamefully, in 1516 he passed a decree to formally persecute and isolate the **Jews of Venice** and he created the first '**Ghetto**' in the world and the name.
- The Doge was elected for life and the election process was a complex affair designed to prevent one family from ruling Venice. To give you an idea of the complexity there was a Great Council that ruled Venice and up to 2,095 citizens were entitled to sit on it. 30 of the Great Council were chosen by lot and then reduced to nine who chose 40 which was reduced by lot to twelve who chose 25 reduced by lot to nine who elected 45 reduced by lot to eleven who chose 41 who then elected the Doge. You can see it might be difficult to influence the vote. In addition, various restrictions were placed on the Doge's power which changed over time.
- This painting was looted from Venice by Napoleon then sold in 1807 for 13 guineas and resold to the National Gallery in 1844 for £630, a bargain.



## **REFERENCES**

- [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Doge\\_of\\_Venice](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Doge_of_Venice)
- [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leonardo\\_Loredan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leonardo_Loredan)
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Tintoretto (Jacopo Robusti, 1518–1594),  
*St Mark's Body Brought to Venice*, 1548,  
 398 × 315 cm, Gallerie dell'Accademia

Tintoretto (Jacopo Robusti, 1518–1594), *St Mark's Body Brought to Venice*, 1548, 398 × 315 cm, Gallerie dell'Accademia

- This is ***St Mark's Body Brought to Venice* by Tintoretto**. It has the look of the modern Italian artist Giorgio de Chirico (KIRR-ik-oh, 1888-1978).
- It is notable for its deep perspective, for its red, stormy sky with a thunderbolt, for its other worldly atmosphere and for the inclusion of a self-portrait in the man holding the camel.
- It is one of four works he was commissioned to paint by the Scuola Grande di San Marco.
- Shortly after he painted this work he married the daughter of a Venetian nobleman showing how highly regarded artists were. They had two sons and five daughters and one of his daughters became one of the leading artists in Venice, the equal to her father but sadly she died aged only 30.

## NOTES

- In 1546 Tintoretto was commissioned to paint three works for a church in Venice which he did on a cost only basis to make himself better known. In 1548 he was commissioned to produce four works for the Scuola di S. Marco *The Finding of the Body of St Mark*, *St Mark's Body Brought to Venice*, *St Mark Rescuing a Saracen from Shipwreck* and *The Miracle of the Slave*. They were well received and these works seem to have established his reputation as from then on he received paid

commissions.

- In 1550, Tintoretto married Faustina de Vescovi, daughter of a Venetian nobleman who was the guardian grande of the Scuola Grande di San Marco. She bore him two sons and five daughters and one of his daughters, Marietta Robusti (1560? – 1590), became a portrait painter. Some believe she was conceived before his marriage to Faustina. She worked in her father's workshop as women could not conduct business in their own right. She was described as one of the most illustrious women of her time having the same manner of skill as her father. She died of an unrecorded cause aged only 30 leaving her father distraught leading to a decline in his work.
- Between 1565 and 1567, and again from 1575 to 1588, Tintoretto produced a large number of paintings for the walls and ceilings of the Scuola Grande di San Rocco.





Tintoretto (Jacopo Robusti, 1518–1594), *Il Paradiso (Paradise)*, 1588, 22.6 × 9.1 m (74.1 × 29.89 feet), Doge's Palace

Tintoretto (Jacopo Robusti, 1518–1594), *Il Paradiso (Paradise)*, 1588, 22.6 × 9.1 m (74.1 × 29.89 feet), Doge's Palace

- This is Tintoretto's crowning achievement.
- **Following a fire in the Doge's Palace in 1577** a 14th century painting of the *Coronation of the Virgin* behind the chair in which the Doge sat during Council meetings was damaged. **A competition was held and Veronese was chosen but he died before he could start and Tintoretto was chosen to replace him.** Tintoretto received explicit instructions on the subject and even the composition. **The focus was to be on Christ rather than Mary setting Christ as the supreme authority.** The crowd of saints and angels purposefully suggests a Last Judgement reminding the Great Council of the importance of their decisions.
- The Archangel Gabriel is shown holding a lily out to Mary who is shown with a halo of seven stars. The divine light emanates from Christ who is holding a globe surmounted by a cross. To his right the Archangel Michael is holding the scales of justice.
- The composition contains **500 figures** each painted in detail and the overall effect enhances the prestige of the Venetian Republic more than the triumph of God.
- All Venice applauded the work and he was asked to **name his price**. He left it to the authorities to decide and when the **offered a handsome price he reduced the figure** telling of his lack of greed and his love for the work which he had prayed to God might result in Paradise being his just reward.

### **NOTES**

- An early sketch (143 × 362 cm) for this work is in the Louvre.



Tintoretto (Jacopo Robusti, 1518–1594), *The Capture of Constantinople in 1204*, 1580

Tintoretto (Jacopo Robusti, 1518–1594), *The Capture of Constantinople in 1204*, 1580

- “Constantinople, depicted here being attacked by crusaders in 1204, was the capital of the Byzantine Empire from the fourth century to 1453. It was renowned for centuries as an invincible fortress, having withstood the attacks of numerous peoples - such as the Persians, Arabs, Bulgars and Russians - both by land and by sea. For many years it was the centre of Christendom, but its citizens became arrogant and eventually succeeded in offending their fellow-Christians, crusaders who had been coming to Constantinople from 1096 onwards. In 1203, therefore, an army of crusaders sailed to the city in Venetian ships, and captured it for the first time. The crusaders provided fierce and well-trained warriors, while the Venetians contributed the technical skills. Using their ships as siege towers, the attackers were able to conquer the city in both 1203 and 1204. This remarkable achievement has been overshadowed by Ottoman conquest of Constantinople, using gunpowder artillery in 1453.” (BBC)





Paulo Veronese (1528-1588), *Battle of Lepanto*, 1572?, 169 × 137 cm, Gallerie dell'Accademia, Venice

Paulo Veronese (1528-1588), *Battle of Lepanto*, 1572?, 169 × 137 cm, Gallerie dell'Accademia, Venice

- This shows a famous and **important naval battle for Italy and Spain**. It is *Battle of Lepanto* by Paulo Veronese. Venice was one of the major combatants and the battle resulted in the **defeat of the Ottoman Empire and a turning point** in its expansion across the Mediterranean. It was the last major sea battle to be **fought between rowing boats** and so it marked the beginning of the 'Age of Sail'.
- 16 years later (in 1588) Spain sent 130 sailing ships to escort an army from Flanders to invade England and overthrow Queen Elizabeth.
- I am also showing this painting so that I can include the second great Venetian master Veronese. The third and best known Venetian artist was Titian...

## NOTES

- The Battle of Lepanto was a naval engagement that took place on 7 October 1571 when a fleet of the Holy League, a coalition of Catholic states (comprising Spain and most of Italy) arranged by Pope Pius V, inflicted a major defeat on the fleet of the Ottoman Empire in the Gulf of Patras. The Ottoman forces were sailing westward from their naval station in Lepanto (the Venetian name of ancient Naupactus – Greek Ναύπακτος, Ottoman İnebahtı) when they met the fleet of the Holy League which was sailing east from Messina, Sicily. The Spanish Empire and the Venetian Republic were the main powers of the coalition, as the league was largely financed by Philip II

of Spain, and Venice was the main contributor of ships.

- In the history of naval warfare, Lepanto marks the last major engagement in the Western world to be fought almost entirely between rowing vessels, namely the galleys and galleasses which were the direct descendants of ancient trireme warships. The battle was in essence an "infantry battle on floating platforms". It was the largest naval battle in Western history since classical antiquity, involving more than 400 warships. Over the following decades, the increasing importance of the galleon and the line of battle tactic would displace the galley as the major warship of its era, marking the beginning of the "Age of Sail".
- The victory of the Holy League is of great importance in the history of Europe and of the Ottoman Empire, marking the turning-point of Ottoman military expansion into the Mediterranean, although the Ottoman wars in Europe would continue for another century. It has long been compared to the Battle of Salamis, both for tactical parallels and for its crucial importance in the defence of Europe against imperial expansion. It was also of great symbolic importance in a period when Europe was torn by its own wars of religion following the Protestant Reformation. Pope Pius V instituted the feast of Our Lady of Victory, and Philip II of Spain used the victory to strengthen his position as the "Most Catholic King" and defender of Christendom against Muslim incursion.
- Historian Paul K. Davis writes that, "More than a military victory, Lepanto was a moral one. For decades, the Ottoman Turks had terrified Europe, and the victories of Suleiman the Magnificent caused Christian Europe serious concern. The defeat at Lepanto further exemplified the rapid deterioration of Ottoman might under Selim II, and Christians rejoiced at this setback for the Ottomans. The mystique of Ottoman power was tarnished significantly by this battle, and Christian Europe was heartened."

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Titian (c. 1488/90-1576),  
*Venus of Urbino*, begun 1532  
 or 1534, completed 1534,  
 sold 1538, 119 × 165 cm,  
 Uffizi, Florence



Titian (c. 1488/90-1576), *Venus of Urbino*, begun 1532 or 1534, completed 1534, sold 1538, 119 × 165 cm, Uffizi, Florence

- This is Titian's *Venus of Urbino*, thought to portray his companion Angela del Moro, a Venetian courtesan which reminds us of another important aspect of Venice.
- In 1348 the Black Death is thought to have killed half of Venice's population and the city faced a crisis. Women were in short supply and the church believed **Italian men were struck by a sin they considered worse than death—same sex attraction**. Italian cities decided to legalise prostitution and Venice did so in 1358 and set up the **first brothel in the Rialto area**. It was considered the **lesser of two evils**. Dowries became inflated and over 50% of wealthy Italian men never married. **Venice became known throughout Europe and Russia, for its beautiful and exotic prostitutes**.
- From the 13th century to the end of the 17th it was one of the most important **centres of Italian art** and it became an important stop on the **Grand Tour** for its art and because it was known by British aristocrats as the "**locus of decadent Italianate allure**" (Bruce Redford, *Venice and the Grand Tour*, Yale University Press: 1996, p. 6). One diarist (Sir James Hall) confided, "**The shameless women of Venice made it unusual, in its own way ... [I saw] more handsome women this day than I ever saw in my life ... how flattering Venetian dress [was]—or perhaps the lack of it**" (Iain Gordon Brown, "Water, Windows, and Women: The Significance of Venice for Scots in the Age of the Grand Tour," *Eighteenth-Century Life*, November 07, 2006, <http://muse.jhu.edu/article/205844>).



## **NOTES**

- The young nude woman is traditionally identified as Venus. The figure's pose is based on the Dresden Venus, attributed to Giorgione but which it is believed Titian completed. In this painting, Titian has moved Venus indoors, shown her engaging with the viewer, and making her sensuality explicit. It has been seen either as a portrait of a courtesan, perhaps Angela del Moro, or Angela Zaffetta, or as a painting celebrating the marriage of its first owner (who according to some may not have commissioned it). If it is intended to be Venus she does not have any classical or allegorical attributes of the goddess she is supposed to represent – the painting is sensual and unapologetically erotic. Recent analysis concludes that it might be simply “a representation of a beautiful nude woman on a bed, devoid of classical or even allegorical content”.
- It is believed to have been painted, possibly commissioned for a Medici cardinal who died before seeing it. It was bought by Guidobaldo II della Rovere, later the Duke of Urbino, which accounts for its title. It may have been commissioned by Guidobaldo possibly to celebrate his marriage in 1534 to the 10 year-old Giulia Varano, or its consummation a few years later.
- The two maids in the background are looking in a cassone, a chest where clothes were kept particularly a marriage trousseau. The dog represents fidelity or possibly the della Rovere home where its quietness indicates the viewer is her husband.
- Mark Twain called the Venus of Urbino "the foulest, the vilest, the obscenest picture the world possesses". He proposed that "it was painted for a bagnio[brothel], and it was probably refused because it was a trifle too strong", adding humorously that "in truth, it is a trifle too strong for any place but a public art gallery".

## **REFERENCES**

<https://imagesofvenice.com/prostitutes-and-courtesans/>



Giovanni Antonio Canal, called Canaletto  
(1697-1768), *The Stonemason's Yard*, c.  
1725, 124 × 163 cm, National Gallery

Giovanni Antonio Canal, called Canaletto (1697-1768), *The Stonemason's Yard*, c. 1725, 124 × 163 cm, National Gallery

- We return to the city and perhaps the most famous Venetian artists who specialised in views of Venice— Canaletto. This is *The Stonemason's Yard* of 1725.
- The area is looking across to Camp San Vidal and **today it is the Academia bridge** and the stonecutter's yard is replace by shops but **many of the buildings remain** the same as 300 years ago.
- "This square – the Campo San Vidal [still there] – was not usually a mason's yard: it appears to have been **temporarily transformed into a workshop** while repairs are done to the nearby church of San Vidal.
- On the far side of the Grand Canal is the church of **Santa Maria della Carità** [Saint Mary of Charity, now the Academy] and its campanile (bell tower) [now gone]." [1]
- **(CLICK)** In the yard a child is weeing on the ground while a woman moves in, typical of Canaletto's humorous representation of everyday life.

## NOTES

- The church tower on the right is a monastery on the Fondamenta Ognissanti (pronounced on-yee-santi, the All Saints Foundation') founded by nuns in 1472. In 1500 some nuns had children by a priest that attended the monastery. The convent was reformed and later fourteen nuns were named for their exemplary behaviour.

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Giovanni Antonio Canal, called Canaletto (1697-1768), *The Entrance to the Grand Canal, Venice*, c. 1730, 49.6 × 73.6 cm, Museum of Fine Arts, Houston



Giovanni Antonio Canal, called Canaletto (1697-1768), *The Entrance to the Grand Canal, Venice*, c. 1730, 49.6 × 73.6 cm, Museum of Fine Arts, Houston

- **Why did Canaletto paint so many views of Venice?** It was because by this period **many wealthy British aristocrats** were visiting Venice for its notorious vices. These Grand Tourists would have purchased these types of painting, known as vedute or 'views' as souvenirs and **reflections of their cultural sophistication**. However, this was not the only reason they came.
- Even by the seventeenth century Venice had become less dependent on trade and increasingly dependent on the tax revenue from gambling and prostitution. Venice was renowned throughout Europe for a special type of refined and cultivated prostitute known as a courtesan. One writer estimated there **"at the least twenty thousand, whereof many are esteemed so loose that they are said to open their quivers to every arrow."** (Thomas Coryate, 'Coryate's Crudities'). He describes their work as a 'most ungodly thing' but says he felt obliged to visit them in order to write accurately about them and he then spends ten pages describing them and ends **"if thou dost linger with them thou wilt find their poison to be more pernicious than that of the scorpion"**.
- But I digress, this painting shows the entrance to the Grand Canal with the Santa Maria della Salute (Saint Mary of Health, completed 1687) on the left, the beginning of the Dogana ('a' as in 'are') or customs house and a jostling, jumble of boats in the foreground. We can see the tower from the previous painting.

## **NOTES**

- "Painted views of towns and landscapes were enormously popular in the 18th century. Travelers to Italy eagerly sought accurate and detailed records of their visits to Rome, Florence, Venice, and Naples. Canaletto was the most famous painter of vedute (Italian for "views"). His ability to capture the light, life, buildings, and expanse of Venice established his reputation as one of the greatest topographical painters of all time." (MFA, Houston)

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1 Giovanni Antonio Canal, called Canaletto (1697-1768), *The Entrance to the Grand Canal, Venice*, c. 1730, 49.6 × 73.6 cm, Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, *Bucentaur's Return to the Pier by the Palazzo Ducale*, 1727-29, 182 × 259 cm, Pushkin Museum of Fine Arts

Giovanni Antonio Canal, called Canaletto (1697-1768), *Bucentaur's Return to the Pier by the Palazzo Ducale*, 1727-29, 182 × 259 cm, Pushkin Museum of Fine Arts

- Canaletto was the **most renowned Venetian landscape painter of his time**. This painting made between 1729 and 1732 depicts the return of the Bucintoro (Italian, pronounced 'butch-in-toro', Venetian Bucentaur 'bew-SEN-tor', the word derives from 'golden bull'). This boat went out to open sea once every year for a ceremony that **symbolically wedded Venice to the sea**. The Doge's throne was in the stern and the figure of Justice on the prow. The ship was **destroyed by Napoleon in 1798** to represent his conquest of Venice. In 2008 200 craftsmen started to build a replica. It was reported to take two years but it is still not completed.
- We can clearly see the **Doge's Palace**, the Molo with its granite columns, the campanile on the left with the **Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana** (pronounced 'MAR-chi-are-na', National Library of St Mark, built in 1468 by Jacopo Sansovino) in front of it. Sansovino's Library has been described as "one of the most satisfying structures in Italian architectural history".
- **St Mark's Campanile was reconstructed in 1912 as it collapsed in 1902**. It was originally intended as a **watchtower to look out for approaching ships and as a landmark** for those ships. It was first begun in the **early tenth century** and slowly increased in height over the years reaching its full height in 1514. In the 14th century to tower was gilded to make it more visible.

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Giovanni Antonio Canal, called Canaletto (1697-1768), *View of the Entrance to the Arsenal*, c. 1732, 47 × 78.8 cm, private collection

Giovanni Antonio Canal, called Canaletto (1697-1768), *View of the Entrance to the Arsenal*, c. 1732, 47 × 78.8 cm, private collection

- This is the entrance to the Arsenal **hidden away from the tourist routes** to the east of St. Mark's Square.
- Venice was a great naval power which depended on its ability to build state-of-the-art warships. The Arsenal is a massive shipyard owned by the state which was **responsible for Venice's naval power** from the Middle Ages to the fall of Venice to Napoleon's army in 1797.
- It is one of the **earliest large-scale industrial production lines** and the largest in Europe. At its peak it could produce and fit out a fully equipped merchant or naval vessel at the **rate of one per day**. In the rest of Europe this would take months and involve slow, inefficient guild-based hand crafted components. Venice invented an almost production line process based on standard components and a new design of keel. The vessel was moved down a canal as if on a modern production line so the ships were taken to the specialist workers rather than the workers taking it in turns to go to the ship.
- Construction of the Arsenal began in 1104, early in Venice's history and it was rebuilt in 1320 to increase and streamline production. By 1450, over 3,000 Venetian merchant ships were in operation and Venice controlled all trade in the Mediterranean.

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Bernardo Bellotto (1722–1780), *View of the Grand Canal: Santa Maria della Salute and the Dogana from Campo Santa Maria Zobenigo*, c. 1743, 139.1 × 236.9 cm, Getty Center

Bernardo Bellotto (1722–1780), *View of the Grand Canal: Santa Maria della Salute and the Dogana from Campo Santa Maria Zobenigo*, c. 1743, 139.1 × 236.9 cm, Getty Center

- **Bernardo Bellotto was the nephew of Canaletto** and together they produced many painted vistas for tourists who stopped in Venice on their Grand Tour of Italy.
- Here Bellotto presents a **cross-section of Venetian society** going about business on a sunny morning. Light from the east falls upon the Palazzo Pisani-Gritti with its arched windows and painted façade. **A Venetian devotional box** that would have housed a religious icon hangs below the arched windows of the building at the left. Such boxes were usually placed on a building right next to the canal so that passers-by could pause for a moment of prayer upon leaving or arriving.
- Opposite is the Baroque church of **Santa Maria della Salute** which dominates the right bank. Next to it, behind a shadowy row of houses, stands the Gothic façade of the **Abbey of San Gregorio**. At the center with its **copper globe** is the **Dogana or customs building**. Gondolas and ferries, modes of transportation still in use today, traverse the water between the two banks. The mouth of the canal, where seafaring vessels leave or enter the city, is visible in the distance.

## NOTES

- The view is from Campo Santa Maria Zobenigo which is next to the Chiesa di Santa Maria Zobenigo, named after the family that founded it in the 9th century. The church

is also known as Chiesa di Santa Maria del Giglio (Saint Mary of the Lily referring to the lily presented by the Angel Gabriel during the Annunciation),

#### **REFERENCES**

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Giovanni Antonio Canal, called Canaletto (1697-1768), Venice, a View of the Grand canal Looking North Towards the Rialto Bridge, c. 1729-30, 55 × 72.3 cm. sold by Sotheby's for \$4,225,000 in 2020.

- **Painted at the height of his career** this sunlit view of the Rialto Bridge was painted around 1729. He is in a raised position above the Riva del Ferro which today is a ferry terminal and packed with tourists. The area round the Rialto was the **main commercial area of Venice**, the market is to the left of the bridge.
- **The Rialto Bridge was among the most commonly depicted monuments** in eighteenth-century view painting; **Canaletto and Francesco Guardi all depicted it numerous times from both the west and east**. Lined with shops, this bridge stood at the center of the city's commercial district and joined the markets located on both sides of the Grand Canal.
- This was a natural subject for Canaletto as by the 1720s international tourists on the Grand Tour wanted pictures of the most famous sites of the city.
- Canaletto has captured **all the day-to-day detail of the city**. Gondoliers take their fares down the Grand canal, a dog growls at a man on a bench while at the foot of the bridge a man relieves himself. A man on the right is outside a wig shop powdering a wig on a stand.

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Francesco Guardi (1712-1793),  
*Venice: the Grand Canal with the  
Riva del Vin and the Rialto Bridge*, c.  
1770, 68.5 x 91.5 cm, Wallace  
Collection



Francesco Guardi (1712-1793), *Venice: the Grand Canal with the Riva del Vin and the Rialto Bridge*, c. 1770, 68.5 x 91.5 cm, Wallace Collection

- **This is Francesco Guardi's version of the Rialto Bridge** from the east numerous times throughout his career and seems to have favoured a viewpoint at about this distance down the Grand Canal.
- Guardi has distanced his work from that of Canaletto by painting **a more generalized view that captures the picturesque possibilities afforded by Venice's untidiness**. The rooftops, boats, oars and figures have been delineated with a **flickering scrawl of the paintbrush** and the overall effect is arguably **more stylised and atmospheric**.

### NOTES

- "The Riva del Vin (the paved street that runs along the Grand Canal from the Rialto Bridge to the church of San Silvestro) is shown on the left. The Fondaco dei Tedeschi, previously home to Venice's German merchants, can be seen beyond the bridge on the right. Guardi painted several versions of this scene, including two particularly comparable views now in the collections at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York and the National Gallery of Art, Washington, respectively. The version at the Metropolitan is described by them as "workshop of Francesco Guardi" ... Guardi seems to have been eager to distance his work from that of his predecessor by painting a more generalized view with scope for invention. Guardi's view of the Rialto, in contrast to Canaletto's meticulous approach, captures the picturesque

possibilities afforded by Venice's untidiness. The rooftops, boats, oars and figures have been delineated with a flickering scrawl of the paintbrush and the overall effect is arguably more stylised and atmospheric." [1]

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Giovanni Antonio Canal, called Canaletto (1697-1768), *Venice, a View of the Grand canal Looking North Towards the Rialto Bridge*, 55 by 72.3 cm



Francesco Guardi (1712-1793), *Venice: the Grand Canal with the Riva del Vin and the Rialto Bridge*, c. 1770, 68.5 x 91.5 cm, Wallace Collection

Giovanni Antonio Canal, called Canaletto (1697-1768), *Venice, a View of the Grand canal Looking North Towards the Rialto Bridge*, 55 by 72.3 cm. sold by Sotheby's for \$4,225,000 in 2020.

- It is interesting to compare the technique of the two artists, Canaletto and Guardi using views of the same location, the Rialto Bridge. **Guardi has a looser, more atmospheric style and Canaletto feels more precise and architectural.**

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<https://www.sothebys.com/en/buy/auction/2020/the-collection-of-ambassador-and-mrs-felix-rohaytn/giovanni-antonio-canal-called-canaletto-venice-a>

Francesco Guardi (1712-1793),  
Gi. *Grand Canal with the Rialto Bridge*,  
Venice, probably c. 1780, 68.5 x  
91.5 cm, National Gallery of Art,  
Washington DC



Francesco Guardi (1712-1793), *Grand Canal with the Rialto Bridge, Venice*, probably c. 1780, 68.5 x 91.5 cm, National Gallery of Art, Washington DC

- Another version by Guardi now in the National Gallery Washington.
- **Although he was little-known in his own day, his views of Venice are now highly prized for their atmospheric qualities and broad, sketchy brushwork.**  
The Rialto Bridge, built in 1592 as the first stone bridge to span the Grand Canal, is the focal point of Guardi's composition, one of several versions of this popular attraction.

## NOTES

- Just beyond the bridge at the right is the Fondaco dei Tedeschi, the warehouse of the German merchants -- now a collection of shops. It became famous in the Renaissance when Giorgione and Titian frescoed its facade. They were only 20 and 30 when the work was painted and were rising stars from the workshop of the leading Venetian artist of the time Giovanni Bellini. Within two years Giorgione was dead from the plague while Titian went on to become the most famous Venetian artist and he lived into his 80s. The frescoes became the talk of the city and launched Titian's career. They started to deteriorate as soon as they were finished because of the salt-laden air. In 1966 what remained was removed to a gallery.
- "For several decades after Canaletto painted his Quay of the Piazzetta, Francesco Guardi continued producing picturesque cityscapes for the tourist trade. Although the

artist was little-known in his own day, his views of Venice are now highly prized for their atmospheric qualities and broad, sketchy brushwork. The Rialto Bridge, built in 1592 as the first stone bridge to span the Grand Canal, is the focal point of Guardi's composition, one of several versions of this popular attraction. Lined with market stalls and shops, it formed the hub of an important commercial center. Just beyond the bridge at the right is the Fondaco dei Tedeschi, the warehouse of the German merchants -- now a post office -- that became famous in the Renaissance when Giorgione and Titian frescoed its facade. People poke their heads out of windows and gather on the balconies to watch the spectacle of daily life on the Rialto. The artist must have taken his view from a similar perch, looking down on the bustling scene. Market barges draped in canvas canopies are tied up at the quayside. Energetic gondoliers pole their boats up the crowded canal." [1]

- "The Rialto Bridge was among the most commonly depicted monuments in eighteenth-century view painting; Canaletto, Michèle Marieschi, and Francesco Guardi all depicted it numerous times from both the west and east. Lined with shops, this bridge stood at the center of the city's commercial district and joined the markets located on both sides of the Grand Canal. The present view is taken from the east a good distance down the Grand Canal and just slightly toward the right bank, giving a wider view of the Riva del Vin on the left and a more oblique view of the Riva del Ferro on the right. To the left of the bridge stands the Palazzo dei Dieci Savi, with the Palazzo dei Camerlenghi just behind; to the right, the Fondaco dei Tedeschi. The boats in the right foreground are moored directly in front of the Palazzo Dolfin-Manin, not visible here but often included in views of the Rialto Bridge.

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[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Francesco\\_Guardi](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Francesco_Guardi)



Francesco Guardi (1712–1793), *View of the Venetian Lagoon with the Tower of Malghera*, 1770s, 21.3 × 41.3 cm, National Gallery

Francesco Guardi (1712–1793), *View of the Venetian Lagoon with the Tower of Malghera*, 1770s, 21.3 × 41.3 cm, National Gallery

- Here we see better the **atmospheric qualities and broad, sketchy brushwork** he is known for. With a few flicks of the brush he captures the distant white sail and the figures washing clothes on the right.
- The tower is the cities ancient fortress at the edge of the lagoon near Mestre.
- Guardi's style is almost a precursor of Turner's atmospheric style which will shall see after the break...

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Art History Talks: Venice - City of Water

Break

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Joseph Mallord William Turner (1775-1851), *Bridge of Sighs, Ducal Palace and Custom-House, Venice: Canaletti Painting*, exhibited 1833, 51.1 × 81.6 cm, Tate

Joseph Mallord William Turner (1775-1851), *Bridge of Sighs, Ducal Palace and Custom-House, Venice: Canaletti Painting*, exhibited 1833, 51.1 × 81.6 cm, Tate

- **We have reached the period of that other great painter of Venice, Turner.** This is *Bridge of Sighs, Ducal Palace and Custom-House, Venice: Canaletti Painting* and Turner shows Canaletto in the left foreground, working at an easel.
- "This was Turner's **first view in oils of the city of Venice**. He exhibited it at the Royal Academy in 1833, more than a decade after he had been in Venice. The painting is less a response to the city itself, than an act of **homage to the greatest painter of Venice, Antonio Canaletto**, who had lived in the early part of the previous century." We can see Canaletto painting at the left of the painting.
- The Bridge of Sighs was built in 1600 by the nephew (Antonio Contino) of the designer of Rialto Bridge (Antonio da Ponte). The bridge connected the new prison to the interrogation that is torture rooms. The bridge's English name was given by Lord Byron as a translation from the Italian "Ponte dei sospiri" (Bridge of Sighs). The name comes from the idea that prisoners would sigh at their final view of beautiful Venice through the window before being taken down to their cells.

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Joseph Mallord  
 Wil 1 1851), *The Dogano,  
 S San Giorgio, Citella,  
 fr from the Steps of the  
 Europa  
 exh exhibited 1842, 61.6 ×  
 92.7 cm, Tate*

Joseph Mallord William Turner (1775-1851), *The Dogano, San Giorgio, Citella, from the Steps of the Europa*  
 exhibited 1842, 61.6 × 92.7 cm, Tate

- "When a critic saw this picture at the Royal Academy in 1842, he said, '**Venice was surely built to be painted by Turner**'. Turner was attracted to how water, light, sky and grand architecture interacted in the city. Here he captures the reflections of the churches of **San Giorgio Maggiore** and **Santa Maria della Presentazione**, known as the 'Zitelle' (or **Citella**). He painted this scene from his hotel, The Europa, at the mouth of the Grand Canal." [1]

## NOTES

- San Giorgio Maggiore is on an island at the eastern end of the Giudecca Canal and south of the main island group. By 829 there was a church consecrated to St. George. In 982 the Doge donated the whole island to the church to build a monastery. The church was designed by Palladio and was begun in 1566. It is now the home of an arts centre, an open-air theatre and two harbours.
- Zitelle means 'young maiden' and the church and complex gave shelter to young maidens who did not have a dowry and therefore could not marry. It is attributed to **Andrea Palladio**, the original design dates to 1579–80 and the construction to 1586, a year after his death.

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[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Le\\_Zitelle](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Le_Zitelle)





Joseph Mallord William Turner (1775-1851), *The Dogano, San Giorgio, Citella, from the Steps of the Europa*  
 exhibited 1842, 61.6 × 92.7 cm, Tate

- As you can see Turner has changed the perspective to emphasise the key buildings.
- San Giorgio Maggiore is on a small island and was designed by the architect Andrea Palladio (1508-1580) in 1566. Palladio, influenced by Roman and Greek architecture, primarily Vitruvius,[2] is widely considered to be one of the most influential individuals in the history of architecture.
- Le Zitelle (officially Santa Maria della Presentazione) is a church the formerly gave shelter to young maidens who had no dowry. It is on the east end of Giudecca island. It is attributed to Palladio but construction started in 1581, one year after his death. Many regard it as clumsy and uncharacteristic in its features.
- The Customs House dates from 1677-1682 and it replaced a 14th century watch tower. It was built when Venice was in decline and was built to try to halt the decline by collecting more taxes from merchants trying to declaring their goods by sneaking down the Grand Canal. On top two atlases support a globe on top of which is the figure of Fortuna holding a gilded sail.

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/San\\_Giorgio\\_Maggiore](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/San_Giorgio_Maggiore)

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Andrea\\_Palladio](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Andrea_Palladio)

Jo Joseph Mallord William  
 Tur Turner (1775-1851), *The  
 Sun of Venice Going to Sea*,  
 1843 1843, 61.6 × 92.1 cm, Tate



Joseph Mallord William Turner (1775-1851), *The Sun of Venice Going to Sea*, 1843, 61.6 × 92.1 cm, Tate

- This is ***The Sun of Venice Going to Sea***. The 'Sun of Venice' is the name of the fishing boat and it is going out fishing early one morning. On the canvas sail of the ship is a **Painted sun which stands in front of the real sun** of the painting. Turner is cleverly drawing our attention to the **process of painting** by showing how his canvases include a representation of the sun on canvas here hidden by his representation of a canvas sail with a painted sun on it. The buildings in the distance are the ducal palace, the dome of St Mark's, and on the **extreme left, the tower of San Giorgio Maggiore**.
- Many critics at the time saw it as simply a jolly fishing boat going out to sea, but this idyllic scene of Venice is **more pessimistic than it looks**. Turner added four lines of a poem in the Royal Academy catalogue,

*Fair Shines the morn, and soft the zephyrs blow,  
 Venezia's fisher spreads his painted sail so gay,  
 Nor heeds the demon that in grim repose  
 expects his evening prey.*

- These lines refer to the **fall of Venice**, once a great power it is now a shadow of its former self. This could be seen as a reference to the inevitable fall of all empires including the British Empire or perhaps a self-portrait of Turner, who loved fishing, aware that as he gets older the grim reaper waits.

- This painting was **one of the favourites of Turner's great supporter the pre-eminent Victorian art critic John Ruskin**. Ruskin was thrown out of the Royal Academy for making a pencil sketch of this painting, a practice which was strictly forbidden. He was taken aback when a year later when he went out on the lagoon and saw in the early sunlight a fishing boat in full sail that looked exactly like the 'Sun of Venice'.
- One critic decried what he called these 'wretched verses' and their effect on Turner's mind and wished he would 'go back to nature'. He went on to make an interesting comment. He said that **most celebrated artists are ahead of their time but in time the world catches up with them, but Turner was so 'far out of sight ... he cannot hope to be even overtaken by distant posterity'**. How astute the observation but how wrong the conclusion.

### NOTES

- Tate display caption, 'Steering through the glassy waters in this picture is a 'bragozzo', a characteristic Venetian fishing boat. The name emblazoned on the sail is the 'Sol di Venezia', or 'Sun of Venice' and, laid out in a shimmering haze of colour in the distance beyond, is the city itself. Those who read Turner's accompanying poem in the Royal Academy catalogue of 1843 would have found an unexpected premonition of doom contained therein. According to his verses a 'demon in grim repose' lay in wait for the boat. Even the temperate waters of the lagoon contained dangers for those who ventured afloat.'
- The verse in the catalogue was changed by Turner but one version was,
 

*Fair Shines the morn, and soft the zephyrs blow,  
Venezia's fisher spreads his painted sail so gay,  
Nor heeds the demon that in grim repose  
Expects his evening prey.*

### REFERENCES

<http://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/turner-the-sun-of-venice-going-to-sea-n00535>



Joseph Mallord William Turner (1775-1851), *Venice – Noon*, 91.8 (xc) 61 cm, exhibited 1845, Tate

- This is an example of Turner's late work. It was exhibited with another view of Venice called *Venice – Sunset, a Fisher*.
- *The Spectator* (10 May, 1845) described the two scenes as '**another pair of gorgeous visions of Venice, blazing with sunlight that floods sea and sky**' although sadly, the sky has darkened since it was first painted. Turner was unconcerned about the permanence of the pigments he used even though the problems were known at the time.
- Another critic (*Athenaeum*, 17 May, 1845) called it '**a beautiful dream, full of Italy, and poetry, and summer**' but claimed that most of Turner's 1845 exhibits did not make sense even at a distance. Other critics were also negative, one (*Blackwood's Magazine*) wrote "**As to Venice, nothing can be more unlike its character**".
- However, the leading Victorian art critic, **John Ruskin**, wrote "**Detail after detail, thought beyond thought, you find and feel them through the radiant mystery, inexhaustible as indistinct, beautiful but never all revealed ... Yes, Mr. Turner, we are in Venice now!**" (*Modern Painters*, 3, 255-7, published 1856).
- Turner exhibited this pair of paintings with the caption 'Fallacies of Hope'. This is the title of a poem he wrote over the course of his lifetime although he didn't include any verse in this case.
- Although the church of San Giorgio and the Doge's palace are visible to left and right,



the composition here is largely imaginary.

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Edward Pritchett (fl. 1828-1864), *The Church of the Salute Venice*

- There were a **group of British artists who devoted themselves to scenes of Italy**. **Edward Pritchett** (c. 1828-1864) is described as a **man of mystery** but we know he lived and worked for thirty years in Venice. He exhibited at the Royal Academy between 1828 and 1864. He may have died in 1879. He knew Venice so well that his paintings are **not only topographically accurate but reflect the atmosphere of Venice** with its crumbling masonry and bustling locals.
- This is another view of the Customs House with the Salute behind it. **Santa Maria della Salute** (English: Saint Mary of Health), commonly known simply as the Salute was started in the 1630s as an offering to Our Lady of Health (the Virgin Mary) **following a devastating outbreak of the plague**. The architect was designed in the fashionable Baroque style by **Baldassare Longhena** (pronounced 'balda-zari long-gaynar'). **The dome became a symbol of Venice** and we have seen it in works by locals such as Canaletto and Francesco Guardi, and visitors, such as J. M. W. Turner and later John Singer Sargent.
- On the right is the end of the Grand Canal and on the left the Giudecca Canal which separates the central islands from the island called Giudecca. Originally the Giudecca contained large gardens and palaces but in the early 20th century it was covered in shipyards and factories. It housed a gigantic flour mill called the Molino Stucky which was converted to a Hilton Hotel and conference centre.

## NOTES

- Sold by Sotheby's in 2007 for £98,400.
- Note 'fl.' Is an abbreviation of the Latin 'floruit' meaning 'flourished'. The floruit date refers to the time when the person was known to be active, and an exact birth or death date isn't known

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James Holland (1799-1870), *The Grand Canal Venice*, 1835-55, 41.6 × 74.2 cm, Tate

James Holland (1799-1870), *The Grand Canal Venice*, 1835-55, 41.6 × 74.2 cm, Tate

- **James Holland** was an English painter of flowers, landscapes, architecture and marine subjects, and book illustrator. He worked in both oils and watercolours and was a member of the Royal Watercolour Society. Holland did a great deal of drawing for the illustrated annuals of the day, and for this purpose visited Venice, Milan, Geneva, and Paris in 1836, and Portugal in 1837. He visited Venice again in 1857.
- We return to the end of the end of the Grand Canal and the Customs House, her on the left. We can see the two Atlas's holding up a globe surmounted by Fortuna.
- Beneath the campanile is the **Library designed by Jacopo Sansovino** in the sixteenth century and to the right we see the Molo, the water entrance to Venice. There are two granite columns, the leftmost is surmounted by **Saint Theodore**, who was the patron saint of the city before St Mark, holding a spear and with a crocodile to represent the dragon which he was said to have slain. The **second column** has a creature representing a winged lion — the Lion of Venice — which is the symbol of St Mark. This has a long history, probably starting as a winged lion-griffin on a monument to the god Sardon at Tarsus in Cilicia (Southern Turkey) about 300 BC.
- The columns are now thought to have been erected about 1268, when the water was closer and they would have been on the edge of the lagoon, framing the entry to the city from the sea. **Gambling was permitted** in the space between the columns and this right was said to have been granted as a reward to the man who first raised the columns. **Public executions also took place between the columns.**



- To their right is the **Doge's Palace** with its Gothic arcades at ground level and a loggia on the floor above.

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Franz Richard Unterberger (1838-1902), *Schiavoni - Venice*, 1864, private collection

Franz Richard Unterberger (1838-1902), *Schiavoni - Venice*, 1864, private collection

- **Franz Richard Unterberger** most famous paintings are of Venice and Naples. Both of which he loved to paint in a dreamy, romantic haze. He painted this image of Riva degli Schiavoni, a popular promenade in Venice which starts at St. Mark's Square outside the Doge's Palace and goes along almost to the Arsenale. He made Venice the main theme of his art which began to be exhibited internationally.
- We see elegantly dressed Venetians out for an evening stroll, playing children, barking dogs and a row of vendors that add life to the scene.
- Unterberger was an Austrian landscape painter who was born in Innsbruck the son of an art dealer. Following his training at art school he went to Dusseldorf. He went on an art tour of Norway and the success of the exhibition of these works led to a tour of Denmark, England and Scotland. He then moved to Brussels, which became his permanent home and he went on an art tour to Naples and Venice which became the centre of his artistic work. He became more famous in Brussels, Paris and London than in Austria and his elegance and impeccable international manners helped to establish him as an important figure in the art world. He died aged 64 of a stroke.

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James McNeill Whistler (1834–1903), *The Doorway*, First Venice Set, "Venice: Twelve Etchings," 1880, plate 29.2 x 20 cm

James McNeill Whistler (1834–1903), *The Doorway*, First Venice Set, "Venice: Twelve Etchings," 1880, plate 29.2 x 20 cm

- **James Abbott McNeill Whistler (1834–1903), one of the most renowned artists of the 19th century, was one of the great draftsmen and engravers.**
- Some of you will know of the **trial when Whistler sued the art critic John Ruskin** for libel. Whistler won the case but was awarded **damages of one farthing** and no costs. This bankrupted him but he was **rescued by the Fine Art Society of London** which ironically spoke against him at the trial but funded him on a visit to Venice in order to illustrate Ruskin's book *The Stones of Venice*.
- **Whistler went to Venice with his girlfriend Maud and shared a dilapidated palazzo with John Singer Sargent.** The original **planned three-month trip turned into fourteen months but he finished over fifty etchings**, several nocturnes, some watercolours, and over 100 pastels—illustrating both the moods of Venice and its fine architectural details as we see here.
- **Back in London his work sold well and he joked, "They are not as good as I supposed. They are selling!"**
- This etching belongs to his **"First Venice Set"** and the doorway is on the Rio de la Fava east of the Rialto. Notice the way Whistler has manipulated the tones to create the effect of depth in the water. Whistler is one of the great etchers alongside Rembrandt and Durer.

## **NOTES**

- The great engravers are the great German printmaker Albrecht Dürer (1471 - 1528), the highly experimental printmaker Rembrandt van Rijn (1606 - 1669), the Spanish artist Francisco de Goya y Lucientes (1746 - 1828) and James Abbott McNeill Whistler (1834-1903).
- Etching uses an etching needle to scratch through wax on a metal plate to form the image. The metal plate is then put in acid (called the mordant) which eats lines into the metal where the wax has been scored. The wax is then washed off and ink rolled over the plate. The ink is wiped off leaving it in the lines created by the acid so that when a piece of paper is pressed hard against the plate the ink transfers from the lines onto the paper, creating an etching.
- Engraving consists in incising lines into a metal plate using a sharp tool called a burin instead of using acid. Glass and metals can be engraved with a visible design and deep cuts into a metal plate can be used to produce a print using a similar technique to etching. Engraving is a general term that is sometimes used to include etching. It is also sometimes called intaglio as opposed to relief printing. In relief printing the ink sits on the plate and does not go into the lines.
- There are three periods when Whistler focused on etching and engraving:
  - French Set, as a student in Paris, absorbing the lessons of his Realist contemporaries and the Old Masters;
  - Thames Set, as an emerging artist in London, forging a name for himself as an etcher;
  - Venice Sets, and as a well-known artist in Venice, trying to recover fortune and his reputation following the Ruskin trial and his bankruptcy.

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James Abbott McNeill Whistler (1834-1903), *Nocturne*, from the First Venice Set, 1879–80, etching and drypoint on wove paper, Yale University Art Gallery

James Abbott McNeill Whistler (1834-1903), *Nocturne*, from the First Venice Set, 1879–80, etching and drypoint on wove paper, Yale University Art Gallery

- Here he has **manipulated the tones to suggest night falling**. It is St. Mark's Basin (the Bacino) and we are looking towards the entrance of the Giudecca Canal at a large sailing ship to the left of San Giorgio Maggiore. **As in most of his etchings the view is reversed.**
- This was one of the first plates he produced after he arrived and is one of a series of twelve etchings making up the First Venice Set. It was published by the Fine Art Society in 1880 the year after he arrived.

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<https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/337065>

Jar James Abbott McNeill Whistler, *Nocturne in*  
Blu *Blue and Silver The Lagoon Venice*, 1879-80,  
50.2 50.2 × 65.4 cm, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

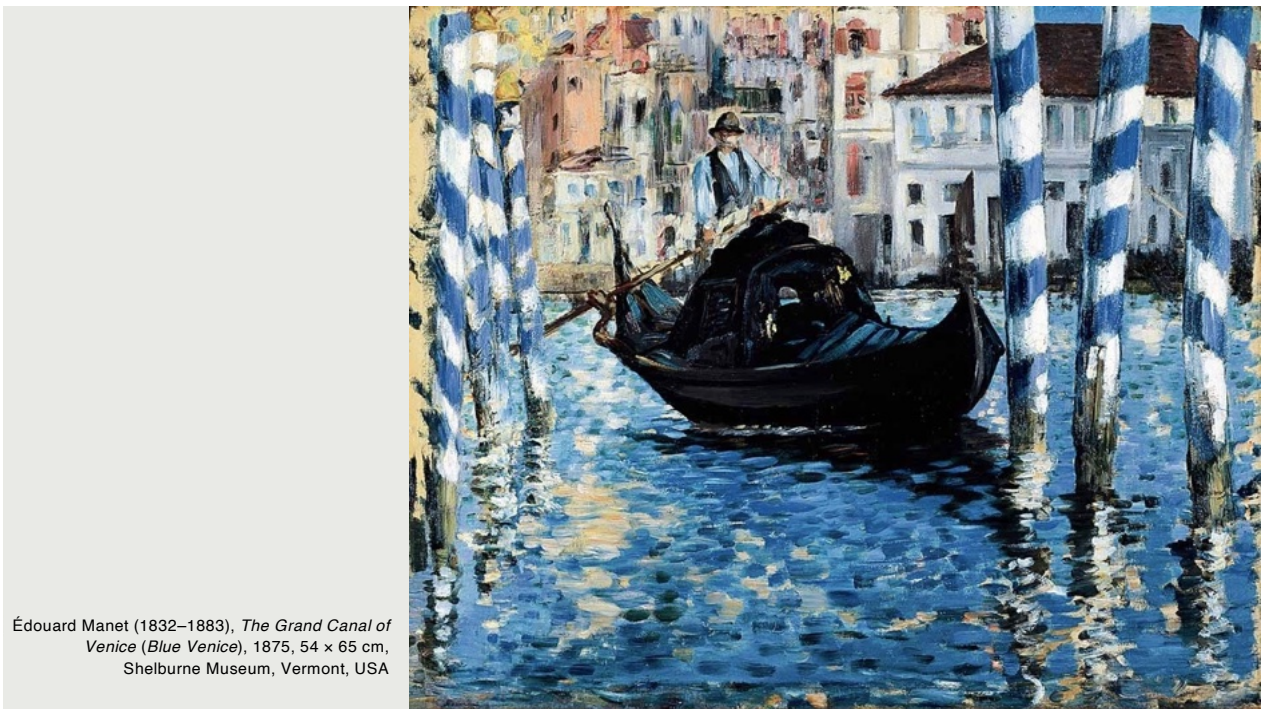


James Abbott McNeill Whistler, *Nocturne in Blue and Silver The Lagoon Venice*, 1879-80, 50.2 × 65.4 cm, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

- Whistler **only visited Venice once but the mystery of Venice suited his style**. He preferred to paint **mood and atmosphere** rather than meticulous detail. He likened his **work to music** and as here he described them as **nocturnes and symphonies**.
- In this painting he has reduced the sparkling colours of Venice to ethereal blue and greyish silver. In the background looms San Giorgio Maggiore and in the distance we see the flickering lights of the Lido. Whistler has captured Venice in the way the poet Lord Byron had described it—a “**fairy city of the heart**.” (Byron, *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, canto 4, stanza 18)
- It was Ruskin who claimed that his vision of Venice had mostly been created by Byron, and it was Byron, who in the words of Childe Harold, claimed “**I loved her from my boyhood: she to me | Was as a fairy city of the heart**”. (Lord Byron, *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, Canto 4, stanza 18)

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Édouard Manet (1832–1883), *The Grand Canal of Venice (Blue Venice)*, 1875, 54 x 65 cm, Shelburne Museum, Vermont, USA

Édouard Manet (1832–1883), *The Grand Canal of Venice (Blue Venice)*, 1875, 54 × 65 cm, Shelburne Museum, Vermont, USA

- Manet visited the Grand Canal Venice in September 1875 with his friend James Tissot, who had settled in London after the Franco-Prussian war of 1870-71. Manet found it hard to settle and according to artist Mary Cassatt, "**he was thoroughly discouraged and depressed at his inability to paint anything to satisfaction**".
- Manet had spent a summer painting alongside Claude Monet on the Seine. Before meeting Manet asked, "**Who is this Monet whose name sounds just like mine and who is taking advantage of my renown?**" Despite this he grew to respect Monet and famously dubbing him the "**Raphael of water**".
- Is he here emulating the bright flickering colours of the Impressionist Monet?

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Claude Monet (1840-1926), *San Giorgio Maggiore at Dusk*, 1908, 65.2 × 92.4 cm, National Museum, Cardiff

Claude Monet (1840-1926), *San Giorgio Maggiore at Dusk or Sunset in Venice*, 1908, 65.2 × 92.4 cm, National Museum, Cardiff

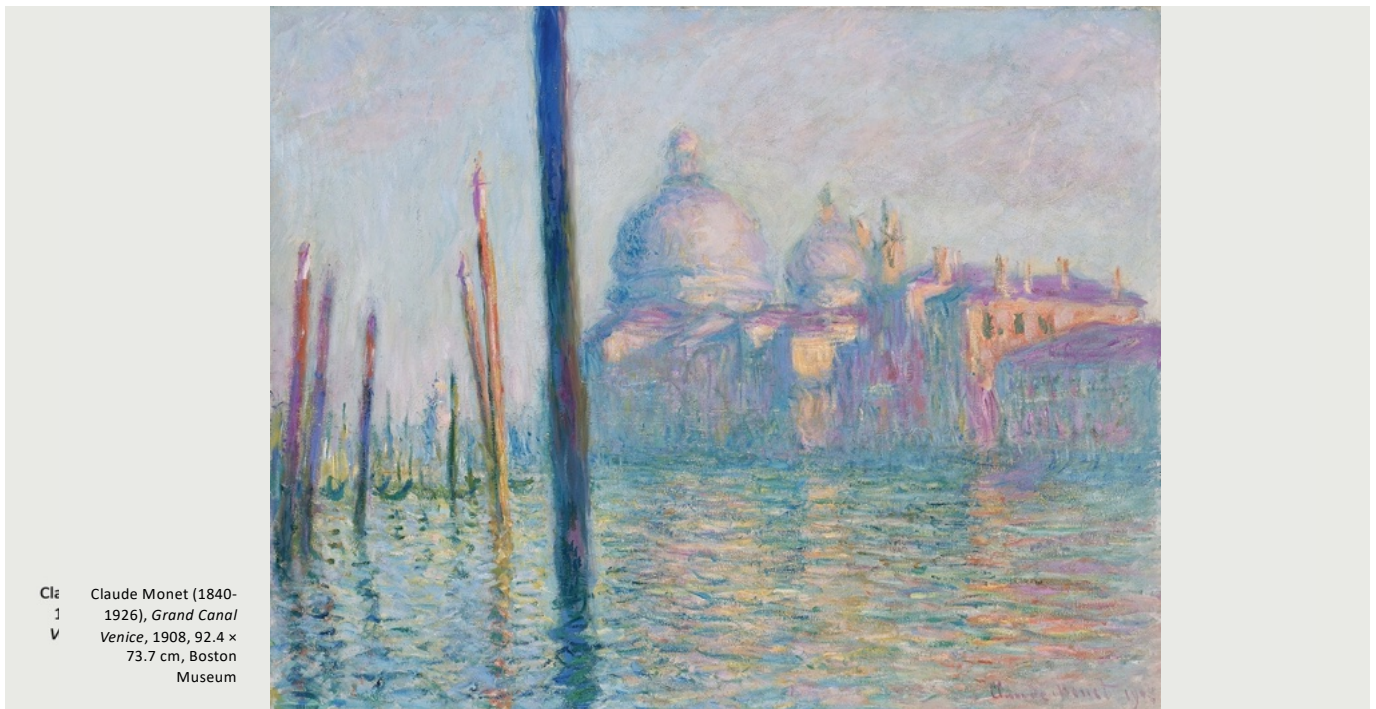
- In 1908, Monet finally visited Venice and painted a series of works. He said that Venice was a city **"too beautiful to be painted"** and he sent many of his paintings back to his home in Giverny unfinished. After his wife Alice died in 1911 he worked on the Venetian scenes at home and held an exhibition of the works in 1912.
- **He drove down to Venice with Alice in his chauffeur-driven car** and they stayed at the Palazzo Barbaro and then Hotel Britannia from where he painted this picture.
- It was painted in the autumn 1908 and is now in Cardiff. It was bought in Paris by a Welsh art collector and bequeathed to the museum.
- Monet eyesight was starting to deteriorate as he **suffered from grey cataracts** but the disability seemed to spur him to create some of his greatest works such as this vibrant sunset. The building on the left is San Giorgio Maggiore with its bell tower and on the right is the Santa Maria della Salute and the start of the Grand canal. He painted this church in six different lighting conditions and was particularly impressed by the sunsets, **"these splendid sunsets which are unique in the world"**.

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Claude Monet (1840-1926), *Grand Canal Venice*, 1908, 92.4 × 73.7 cm, Boston Museum

- This is another of Monet's Venetian paintings, **one of six looking down the Grand Canal towards the Salute**. It is **painted from his hotel, the Palazzo Barbaro** as he disliked painting in public. Note he has concentrated on depicting the light and in his series of paintings he **avoided painting people and water traffic**.
- He and his wife were invited to Venice by an American friend of his wife. He was 68 at the time and was not keen to travel but eventually relented. He stayed three months and **painted 37 works**.
- It was sold for **\$35 million in 2015** at Sotheby's and is now in Boston.

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Paul Signac (1863-1935), *Entrance to the Grand Canal, Venice*, 1905, 73.5 × 92.1 cm, Toledo Museum of Art

- We see **Signac's scientific approach to colour** used here to represent the Basilica di Santa Maria della Salute and the Dogana, the customs house. He is painting it what is called the Neo-Impressionist style which was based on colour theory.
- Georges Seurat (1859-1891) met the **renowned chemist Michel-Eugène Chevreul in 1886** and together they experimented on **Newton's colour wheel**, testing Chevreul's theories about colour. It was Seurat who said "**some say they see poetry in my paintings; I only see science**". He found that if he placed **small dabs of contrasting colours** side-by-side at a distance they blended together but the result **made the colours seem more vibrant**. The use of dabs or dots of colour **led to the term pointillism** to describe the technique. Signac favoured longer dashes of colour that resemble the stones of a mosaic and he was **influenced by the Byzantine mosaics** he saw in Istanbul and Venice.
- **Seurat can be considered the father of Neo-Impressionism but when he died in 1891 Signac became the leader and theorist of the group**. His theoretical work influenced Henri Matisse, Piet Mondrian and Pablo Picasso.

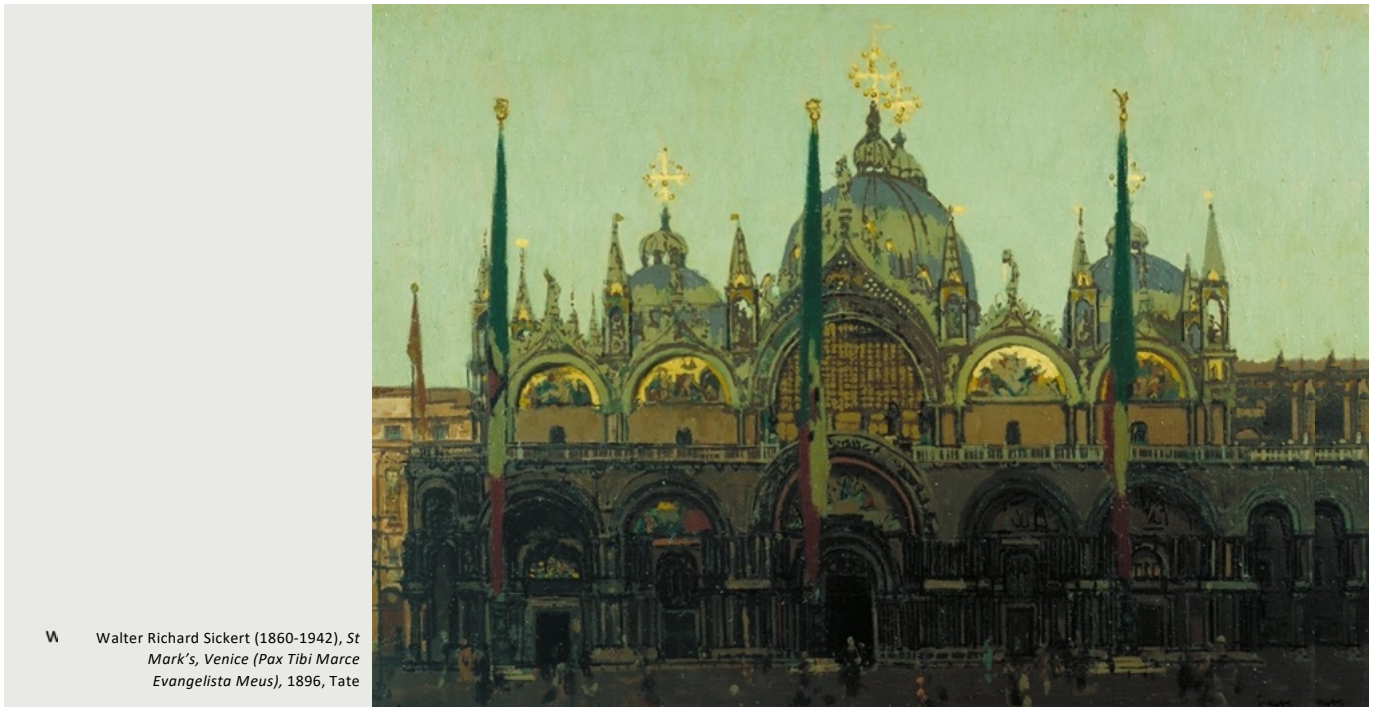


Pierre-Auguste Renoir  
(1841-1919), *Venice,  
The Doge's Palace*,  
1881, 54.5 × 65.7 cm,  
The Clark Museum,  
Massachusetts

Pierre-Auguste Renoir (1841-1919), *Venice, The Doge's Palace*, 1881, 54.5 × 65.7 cm, The Clark Museum, Massachusetts

- On his tour of Italy, **Renoir made a stop in Venice in late October 1881**. His Venetian canvases focus primarily on the famous sites such as St Mark's Basilica and this view of the Doge's Palace.
- It is painted from San Giorgio Maggiore and it was such a popular spot to paint that Renoir joked "**There were at least six of us queueing up to paint**".
- He has painted the buildings in all their architectural detail contrasting with the active sky and water surface.





W Walter Richard Sickert (1860-1942), *St Mark's, Venice (Pax Tibi Marce Evangelista Meus)*, 1896, Tate

Walter Richard Sickert (1860-1942), *St Mark's, Venice (Pax Tibi Marce Evangelista Meus)*, 1896, Tate

- This is one of Walter Sickert's **most famous views of Venice**, *St. Mark's*. He painted St. Marks several times under different conditions but unlike Monet he was more interested in the **form of the building** rather than the light.
- The title includes the Latin motto of the city '**Peace be unto to you, Mark, my Evangelist**'.
- Sickert is the artist who most clearly shows how far English art had moved away from French Impressionism as just illustrated in Monet's work. He has been described as the '**father of Modern British Art**'.

## NOTES

- "Sickert first visited Venice in 1895. He painted St Mark's basilica several times under different conditions, possibly inspired by Monet's paintings of Rouen Cathedral, which he had seen in Paris. However, unlike Monet, he was not concerned with fleeting effects of light. Instead, he concentrated on the structure and mosaics, using the light to accentuate the sparkling gold pinnacles and to emphasise the spirituality of the basilica. This is Sickert's largest and most elaborate depiction of the front elevation. The title includes the Latin motto of the city: 'Peace be unto to you, Mark, my Evangelist'. The picture was first exhibited at the New English Art Club in 1897." [1]
- Sickert is the artist who most clearly shows how far English art had moved away from

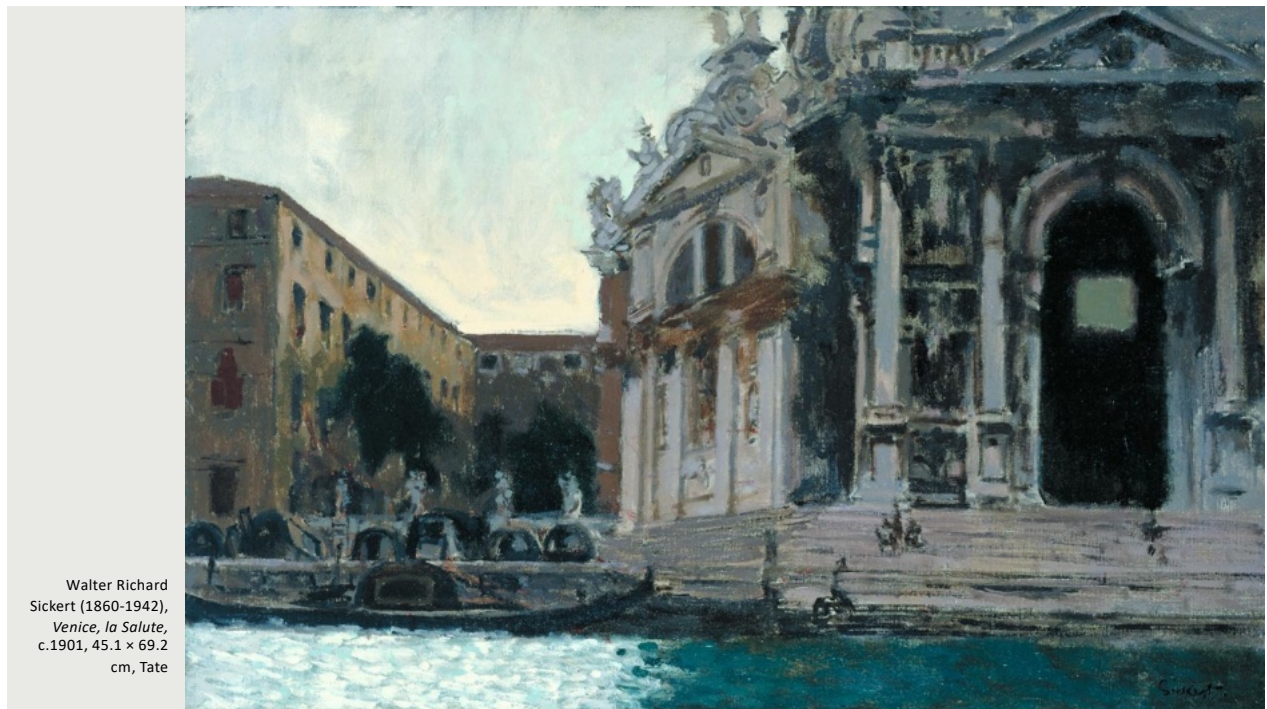


French Impressionism is Walter Sickert. He has been described as the 'father of Modern British Art'. Most of his work is of interiors, such as music halls and seedy boarding rooms. He focused on street scenes in Dieppe and Venice and between 1894 and 1904 he made a series of visits to Venice. John Ruskin's *Stones of Venice* (1851-3) had made the city very popular and built a passion for all things Venetian.

- The painter Alfred Thornton's recollection that Sickert worked 'early and late' bears out this timing. But it seems likely that a canvas of this size and complexity, with a carefully built up paint surface where each layer of paint has been allowed to dry fully, would more likely have been one that Sickert worked on after his return to London in the summer of 1896. He had a large amount of reference material on which to base such pictures, including both photographs and drawings. Indeed, Sickert's full-frontal, planar approach to St Mark's, Venice, with the building occupying almost all the picture space and the foreground reduced to a minimum, is like an illustration in a guidebook.
- Sickert wrote to his friend Philip Wilson Steer:
  - 'Venice is really first-rate for work ... and I am getting some things done. It is mostly sunny and warmish and on cold days I do interiors in St Mark's ... St Mark's is engrossing and the Ducal Palace and 2 or 3 Renaissance gems, the Miracoli and S. Zaccharia and the Scuola di San Marco. Of course one gets familiar with Tintoretto and Titian and Veronese ... The more one sees of them ... the more preposterous is the pessimistic contention that we who live now should not paint. We aim at and achieve totally different results, results that they neither dreamt of nor could compass. A fine Whistler or Degas or Monet could hang with any of them. It would be intrinsically every bit as good, and for us have the added sparkle and charm of novelty.'

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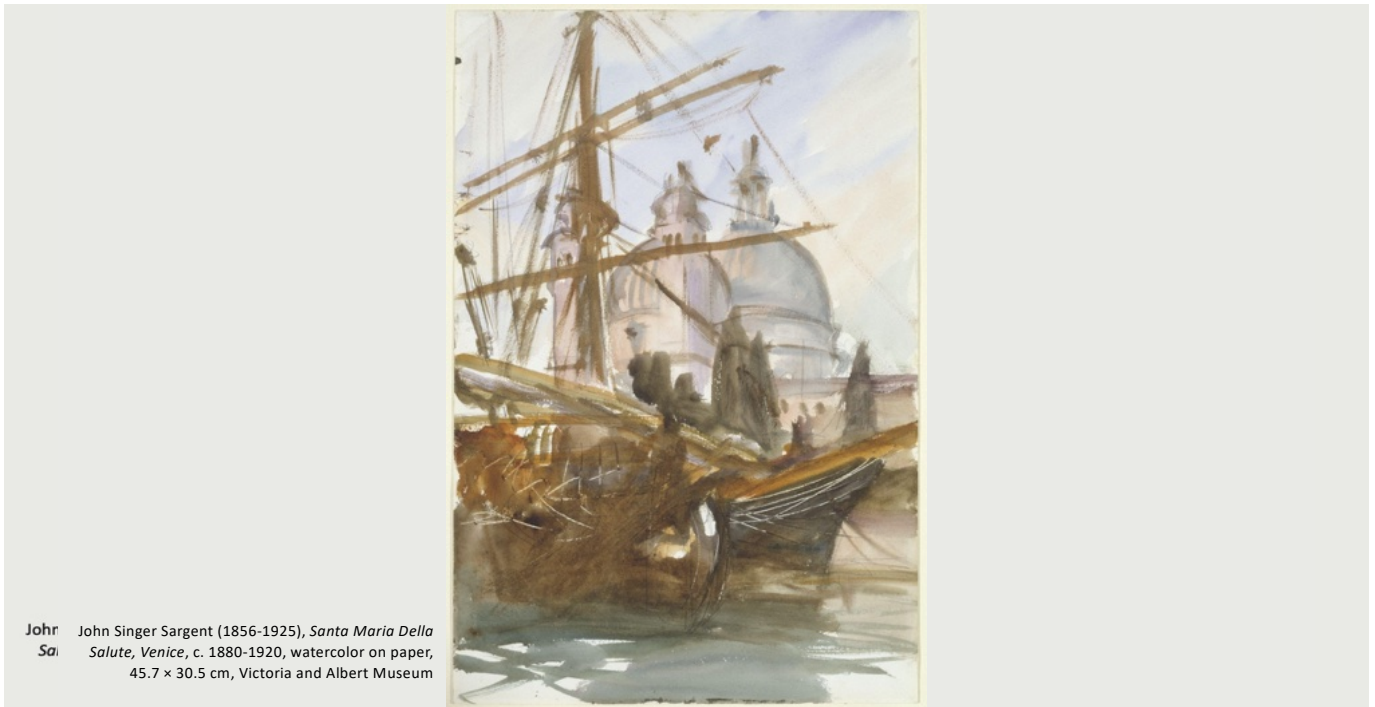


Walter Richard Sickert (1860-1942), *Venice, la Salute*, c.1901, 45.1 × 69.2 cm, Tate

- This is Walter Sickert's view of the Salute painted about the same time as Monet and Signac. **Sickert visited Venice several times between 1894 and 1904 and painted a series of works.** He became interested in painting close up and **capturing the forms and masses of the architecture.** Here, unusually, **he has avoided painting the complete building with its famous dome** and has focused on the side and the adjacent building. He has **also painted a building in shadow** rather than the usual contrasts of a sunlit facade.
- It was during his 1903-4 visit that rain forced him to work inside and he painted a series of pictures of prostitutes which lay the foundation for his later Camden Town murder series. It is said that it was this experience in Venice that changed his life and laid the foundation for a style that influenced many artists including Lucien Freud and Frank Auerbach.

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John Singer Sargent (1856-1925), *Santa Maria Della Salute, Venice*, c. 1880-1920, watercolour on paper, 45.7 × 30.5 cm, Victoria and Albert Museum

- John Singer Sargent has here painted **another unusual view of the Salute this time hidden by ships**.
- Sargent was born in Florence, the only son of an American surgeon, FitzWilliam Sargent. His childhood was spent touring Europe, mainly in Italy, France, Switzerland and Germany. Sargent became the leading portrait painter internationally in the 1890s and early 1900s. **By 1910 he had given up all but the occasional portrait** and devoted himself to landscape. He disliked having to chat to the people he was painting. He wrote, "**I abhor and abjure them and hope never to do another especially of the Upper Classes**".
- Sargent first visited Venice in the early 1880s, and made it a regular stop on his itinerary between 1898 and 1913.

## REFERENCES

See <https://www.tuttartpitturasculturapoesiamusica.com/2019/11/Venice-paintings-Turgenev.html> for many nineteenth century paintings of Venice  
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John Singer Sargent (1856-1925),  
*Venetian Canal*, 1913, watercolour  
and graphite on paper, 40 × 53.5  
cm, Metropolitan Museum

John Singer Sargent (1856-1925), *Venetian Canal*, 1913, watercolour and graphite on paper, 40 × 53.5 cm, Metropolitan Museum

- Here he is painting a view of **11th century tower of the Church of San Barnaba**. It is a good illustration of his watercolour technique which combines spontaneity with strict **technical control**. His watercolour captures the water of Venice typically under a clear blue sky.
- His technical control is demonstrated by the way he paints the buildings on the left compared with those on the right. Those **on the left are in full sunlight and to capture the hard edged outlines of the brightly lit building he uses wet-on-dry**, that is he allows the first coat to dry before adding the next. **On the right he paints wet-on-wet** so that the two colours run into each other and create the smudgy, less well-defined edges we see in the shadows of the buildings.
- San Barnaba is in the Dorsoduro and is now famous for appearing in the movie "Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade". The church is plain inside but its bell tower is one of the oldest in Venice. The church now houses a Leonardo da Vinci exhibition aimed at tourists.

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Ponte dei Pugni (Bridge of Fists)

John Singer Sargent (1856-1925), *Venetian Canal*, 1913, watercolour and graphite on paper, 40 × 53.5 cm, Metropolitan Museum

- Just briefly I thought I would show you **a photograph of the same view or a similar view**. We are looking towards the Grand Canal and the bridge is the **Ponte dei Pugni** ('pon-tay day poo-ni', Bridge of Fists), famous for fist fights. There are four footprints on the bridge marking the starting positions for the fighters. Rival clans would fight and try to throw each other into the canal. The 14th century tradition ended in 1705 when there was a bloodbath involving knives and stones.

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Duncan Grant (1885-1978), *Bridge over Canal, Venice*, 1955, gouache on paper, signed with initials and dated lower left 'DG 1955', 24.5 x 33.5 cm, sold at Roseberys in 2021 for £2,500

- This is one of the artist's celebrated depictions of Venice, a city to which **he made multiple visits** throughout the first half of the twentieth century, including when **representing Britain at the Biennales of 1926 and 1932**.
- Duncan Grant (1885-1978) studied at the Westminster School of Art, and is particularly well-known as a **central member of the Bloomsbury Group**. He was therefore closely **associated with Virginia Woolf, Vanessa Bell, E.M. Forster and Lytton Strachey**, alongside the **art critic Roger Fry**, the latter having a particularly strong impact on Grant's artistic approach.
- Grant's works can be found in a wide number of collections throughout the country, including the Tate Britain and the V&A in London, the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford and the Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art in Edinburgh.

## NOTES

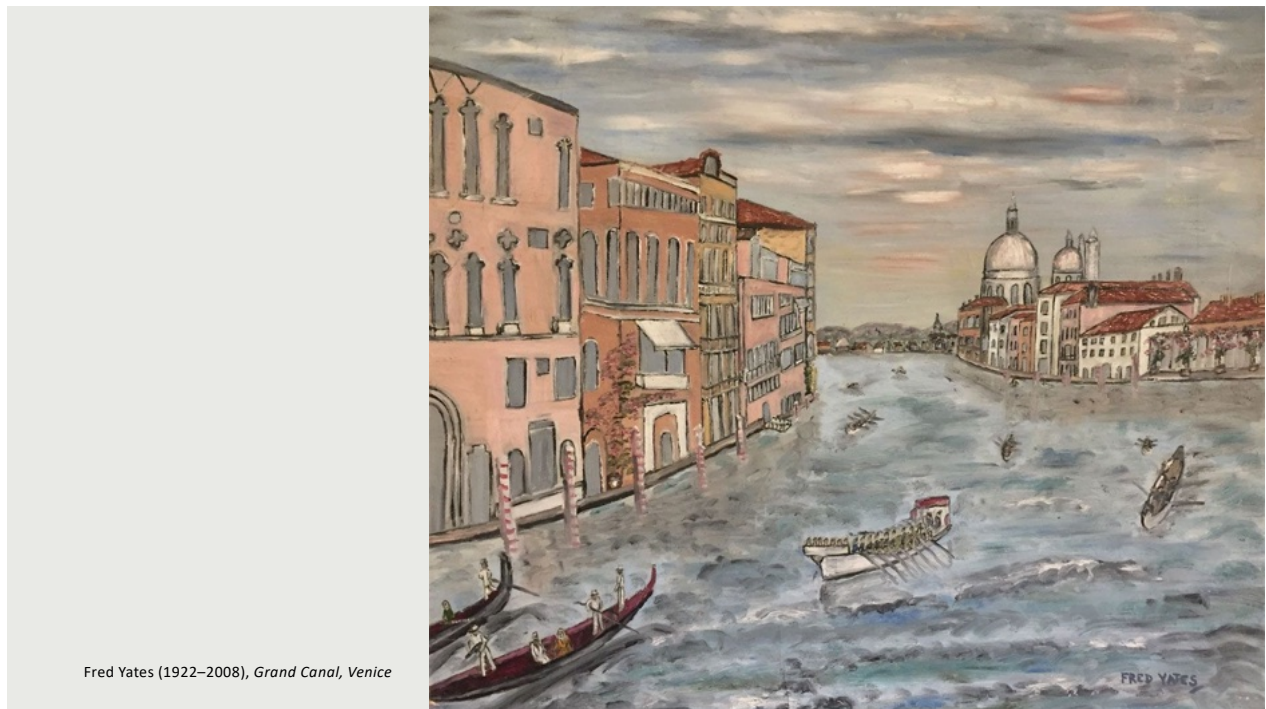
- **"Grant's early affairs were exclusively homosexual.** His lovers included his cousin, the writer **Lytton Strachey**, the future politician Arthur Hobhouse and the economist **John Maynard Keynes**, who at one time considered Grant the love of his life because of his good looks and the originality of his mind. Through Strachey, Grant became involved in the Bloomsbury Group, where he made many such great friends

including Vanessa Bell. He would eventually live with **Vanessa Bell** who, though she was a married woman, fell deeply in love with him and, one night, succeeded in seducing him; Bell very much wanted a child by Grant, and she became pregnant in the spring of 1918. Although it is generally assumed that Grant's sexual relations with Bell ended in the months before Angelica was born (Christmas, 1918), they continued to live together for more than 40 years. During that time, their relationship was mainly domestic and creative; they often painted in the same studio together, praising and critiquing each other's work." [1]

- In 1916 he registered as a **conscientious objector** and Bell found a cottage named **Charleston near Firle, Sussex** where they lived. Bell's husband **Clive Bell** often visited them with his mistress **Mary Hutchinson**.

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- [1] [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Duncan\\_Grant](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Duncan_Grant)



Fred Yates (1922–2008), *Grand Canal, Venice*

Fred Yates (1922–2008), *Grand Canal, Venice*

- **Fred Yates is one of the best-known recent 'naïve' artists**—he was **self-taught**, lived alone and painted in isolation, like artists **Alfred Wallis** and **L.S. Lowry**. He was inspired by Lowry and wanted to paint the lives of ordinary people. His work is in many collections including Brighton and Hove, Liverpool and Warwick Universities and the Russel Coates Gallery in Bournemouth.
- He began work as an **insurance clerk** but his career was cut short by WWII when he served in the Grenadier Guards. His twin brother was posted **missing in action** which had a profound effect on his life. He gave up his job in insurance and became an artist. He attended Bournemouth Teacher Training College and **won a scholarship to Rome**. He taught in Devon and on the South Coast for the next 20 years but his gentle ways meant he could not keep control of the class. He finally quit teaching and moved to **Cornwall to become a full-time artist** and in **1976** he had his first solo show in Plymouth and was a finalist in the prestigious John Moore prize. He began to gain wider acceptance and in **1992 had his first exhibition in London**. He lived in many houses in France and eventually returned to England but on his journey to complete the sale he fell and had a fatal heart attack. His grave overlooks St. Michael's Mount a subject he often painted.

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Derrick Greaves (b. 1927), *Domes of Venice*, 1953–4, 184.1 × 154.9 cm, Tate



Derrick Greaves (b. 1953), *Venice in the Rain*, 142.4 × 117 cm, Museums Sheffield

Derrick Greaves (b. 1927), *Domes of Venice*, 1953–4, 184.1 × 154.9 cm, Tate

Derrick Greaves (b. 1953), *Venice in the Rain*, 142.4 × 117 cm, Museums Sheffield

- Painted in London from drawings and studies made from the **top of the Campanile in the Piazza San Marco** during the artist's stay in Venice in January–February 1953, while on a **two years' scholarship in Italy**.
- He was initially recognised in the 1950s when he represented Britain at the **Venice Biennale** as one of the 'kitchen-sink' artists such as John Bratby. He has had numerous exhibitions and is in **over 30 galleries and collections including the Tate and the Philadelphia Museum of Art**.
- He was born in Sheffield and apprenticed as a sign-writer before studying at the **Royal College of Art**. He won a scholarship to study in Italy for two years (1952–54) before returning to teach at **St. Martin's School of Art**. In **1956 he represented Britain at the Venice Biennale**. He visited Moscow where he won a gold medal, he won the prestigious John Moore prize and taught at the Royal Academy School. He has had over **50 solo exhibitions** and his work is in over 30 major art collections. He now lives and works in Norfolk.

<https://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/greaves-domes-of-venice-t00033>



Eugenio Benvenuti (1881-1959), *Venice*, watercolour, 39.5 x 67cm

- **Benvenuti is an Italian artist born in 1881** who has painted many views of Venice. This one that sold at Bonhams auctioneers in 2012 for **£350**. So affordable pictures of Venice are available.
- Benvenuti has sold works at Christie's and Sotheby's and the most expensive sold was just under \$4,000.

#### **REFERENCES**

<https://www.bonhams.com/auctions/19903/lot/702/>





- I felt I could not end an artistic tour of Venice with mentioning the Biennale. **Established in 1895 it has for over 120 years** been one of the most prestigious art events with over half a million visitors.
- **This year, 2022, is the 59th exhibition and Britain is represented by the Academician Sonia Boyce.** She is the first Black woman to represent Britain at the Biennale and **she won the top prize, the Golden Lion award for "Feeling Her Way", a sound installation of five Black British female musicians** singing a cappella (Italian for "in the manner of the church", i.e. without instrumental accompaniment).

#### NOTES

- 0:00 Sonia Boyce speaking
- 1:00 singing
- 1:50 jazz piano





## Art History Talks: Venice - City of Water

Dr. Laurence Shafe

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- **"Like spring, the beauty of Venice excites and arouses our softest desires; it animates and stirs the unspoiled heart like the promise of some near, undefined, mysterious pleasure"**
  - Ivan Sergeevič Turgenev, pronounced 'e-VUN TER-gay-nev', *On the Eve*, 1860

### **BRIEF HISTORY**

- Traditionally Venice was founded at noon on Friday 25 March 421 by Padua as a trading post and the first duke proclaimed in 697. The original population were locals fleeing waves of Germanic and Hun invaders. The lagoon provided a safe haven as it was difficult to attack across the marshes.
- It became one of the richest merchant republics in Europe with a fleet that dominated the Mediterranean and land routes to Asia. It owned lands across Europe and was known for its glass works and shipbuilding as well as its exciting culture.
- It sacked Constantinople, the capital of the Byzantine Empire, in 1204 and carried away many treasures to Venice.
- It was a republic ruled by an oligarchy of merchants who elected a leader for life known as the Doge. The Doge lived in the Palazzo Ducale.
- Its decline began in 1453 when Constantinople fell to the Ottoman Turks. In addition Portuguese sailors had rounded Africa and found an alternative route to the far East

avoiding the Silk Road.

- The Venetian Republic ended in 1797 when Napoleon conquered it and installed a new pro-French government, looting the city of its artworks. When Napoleon fell it was put under Austrian rule.
- In 1846 the rail link to the mainland opened and the number of tourists began to exceed the population. In the 1860s it became part of the new Kingdom of Italy.