

HARTFORD FINE ART

LAMPRONTI GALLERY

Monaco, 1 December 2025

For Brafa 2026 Hartford Fine Art-Lampronti Gallery has made a selection of important Italian Old Masters, with a specific focus on views of Venice, Caravaggesque masters, and women painters. In our booth there will be works by Canaletto, Bellotto, Artemisia Gentileschi and Rosalba Carriera among others.

We would like to highlight the *Capriccio of Piazza San Marco and the Redentore* by Canaletto and the *Portrait of a Boy with Dogs* by Bartolomeo Passarotti.

Giovanni Antonio Canal, known as Canaletto (Venice, 1697-1768) is undoubtedly the best known of the Venetian painters of *vedute*. This painting is particularly rare because it is a *capriccio*, a genre that 18th century Venetian painters invented where the view is made of elements taken from reality mixed with inventions of the artist, or with buildings and details that in the real world are not close to each other. The latter is the case of this Canaletto, painted when the artist was living in Great Britain, as the church of the Redentore is not just behind St. Mark's as in the canvas. The artist probably added it because it had been designed by the great Renaissance architect Palladio and the British were mad about his buildings.

Bartolomeo Passarotti (Bologna, 1529-1592) was a protagonist of 16th century painting in Italy. His mannerist style of very present especially in his religious works, but he was also gifted with a great sense of reality and naturalism, which he expressed mainly in portraits like this wonderful image of a proud boy, quite probably a member of an aristocratic family from Bologna, and his loving dogs.

Booth number 070

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GIOVANNI ANTONIO CANAL, CALLED CANALETTO
(Venice, 1697 – 1768)

*Capriccio of Piazza San Marco from San Marco Basin with the church of the
Redentore*

Oil on canvas, 130 x 105 cm

PROVENANCE

Mrs. Van der Gucht Collection;
Christie's sale, catalogue n.78, November 1965;
Fogg Collection, acquired from the above sale;
Sotheby's sale, catalogue n.110A, March 1968;
Johnson Collection, acquired from the above sale;
Sotheby's sale, catalogue n.70, June 1970;
Harlow Collection, acquired from the above sale

EXPERTISE

Antonio Morassi, comunicazione scritta;
Rodolfo Pallucchini, comunicazione scritta;
B. A. Kowalczyk, dicembre 2021.

LITERATURE

W. G. Constable, *Canaletto*, seconda edizione a cura di J. G. Links, Volume II, n.459*, pg. 438, pl. 208

Around 1740, Canaletto's market declined as the War of the Austrian Succession (1741-1748) led to a sharp decrease in British visitors to Venice. Smith was no longer able to guarantee the high number of customers he once had, partly because all the most important English patrons who frequented Venice had already purchased a large number of works by Giovanni Antonio Canal.

Joseph Smith was therefore no longer able to guarantee him commissions, and in 1746 Canaletto decided to move to London. The artist wrote a letter to his first "agent", Owen

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McSwiny, begging him to introduce him to the Duke of Richmond, who had already been a client of Canaletto's in the 1720s. Canaletto then began to establish relationships with his new clients, including the Bohemian prince Johann Georg Christian von Lobkowitz and the English nobleman Hugh Percy, future Duke of Northumberland. Initially met with scepticism, he nevertheless managed to receive several commissions from the English aristocracy: among his works from this period, *Il Parco di Badminton da Badminton House* (The Park of Badminton from Badminton House), painted in 1748 for Charles Somerset, 4th Duke of Beaufort, is particularly noteworthy.

This is an interesting painting because it shows a different side to Canaletto: while the artist was accustomed to painting urban views of Venice, rich in buildings and bustling with people, in England Canaletto began to depict the typical calm landscapes of the English moors, devoid of complex architecture. Examples of this include paintings such as *Warwick Castle*, created for Francis Greville Brooke, future Duke of Warwick, and several views of the Thames, in which the painter was able to use the techniques he employed to depict the canals and basins of Venice. Another interesting painting is kept at Westminster Abbey, depicting the abbey itself with the procession of the Knights of the Order of the Bath: this is a celebratory painting in which Giovanni Antonio Canal was able to draw on his experience in painting the luxurious celebrations of the Republic of Venice. After interrupting his stay in England for the first time in 1750 and a second time in 1753, Canaletto returned to London and established a relationship with Thomas Hollis, one of the most important patrons of the English period: for him, the artist painted *Walton Bridge* and *The Interior of the Rotunda at Ranelagh*, the latter one of the rare interiors painted by the artist.

The version on offer also belongs to the London period, and the stylistic characteristics of the painting are unique, undoubtedly revealing and confirming their typicality for that phase. The clarity of perspective, the slightly pale silvery-grey colouring and the imaginative mixture of architectural elements are convincing evidence of this. Particularly bizarre and unusual is the view from above (at least 12-15 metres above the ground), a legitimate testimony to Canaletto's extravagance and eccentricity, which would be taken up and further exaggerated by the posthumous Joseph Mallord William Turner, who also immortalised Antonio Canal painting outdoors with an easel in a famous painting created during one of his three periods in Venice.