

## Tiepolo. Venezia, Milano, l'Europa

Gallerie d'Italia - Piazza Scala, Milan

30 October 2020 – 21 March 2021

Exhibition curated by Fernando Mazzocca and Alessandro Morandotti

- Under the High Patronage of the Italian President of the Republic;
- The first exhibition in Milan to focus on Giambattista Tiepolo, with around forty of his original works on display;
- An exhibition that highlights the close relationship between this remarkable Venetian maestro and his Milanese patrons;
- Incredible restoration work means that, for the first time, the general public can enjoy these extraordinary frescoes removed from the Sant'Ambrogio church and Palazzo Gallarati Scotti;
- An opportunity to explore the work of this artist in Milan, in the palazzi of Archinto, Casati Dugnani, Clerici and Gallarati Scotti, and see how his career then launched towards Europe, in Germany and Spain.

*Milan, 28 October 2020* - From **30 October 2020 to 21 March 2021**, the **Gallerie d'Italia – Piazza Scala** (the Intesa Sanpaolo museum complex in Milan) hosts the exhibition ***Tiepolo. Venezia, Milano, l'Europa***, curated by **Fernando Mazzocca and Alessandro Morandotti** with general coordination by **Gianfranco Brunelli**.

To commemorate the 250th anniversary of **Giambattista Tiepolo's** death (Venice 1696 - Madrid 1770), the first dedicated exhibition in Milan is now being staged.

The exhibition, **under the High Patronage of the Italian President of the Republic** and in partnership with the Gallerie dell'Accademia of Venice, presents around **seventy works by Tiepolo and his most important peers** (including the Venetian artists Antonio Pellegrini, Giovanni Battista Piazzetta and Sebastiano Ricci as well as Lombardy-born Paolo Pagani) to trace the artistic career of the Venetian maestro, and his main patrons in the cities where he achieved his success: Venice, Milan, Dresden and Madrid.

**Giovanni Bazoli**, President Emeritus of Intesa Sanpaolo, said: *«Intesa Sanpaolo's ongoing support to the art and culture world takes on even more importance today in the light of the dramatic events that are unfolding in our country and the rest of the world. Despite the difficult situation caused by the health crisis, we have decided to open the Gallerie d'Italia venue in Milan with a remarkable exhibition, to offer our citizens (who have been obliged to renounce many of their usual public areas) the opportunity to admire works of art that can - we hope - restore some moments of serenity and faith in the future. The exhibition pays homage to the extraordinary artistic works of Tiepolo, an Italian and European painter, presenting creations from Italian and international collections. Through this initiative, the Bank reasserts its conviction that the restoration of our historic assets (especially in the moment of uncertainty that we are currently experiencing) represents a fundamental incentive in activating processes of civil, social and economic growth».*

*"The exhibition 'Tiepolo. Venezia, Milano, l'Europa' is undoubtedly one of the most prestigious initiatives promoted in Italy or abroad to celebrate the renowned eighteenth-century Venetian artist; the Gallerie dell'Accademia of Venice could hardly fail to participate, with some truly impressive loans. The works will thus be available for viewing before being returned to the large halls of the museum's ground floor, the areas*

*dedicated to paintings of the seventeenth and eighteenth century which are to be inaugurated next spring. The participation of the Gallerie dell'Accademia confirms the strong collaborative partnership with Intesa Sanpaolo, which began with the Restituzioni project and sees the two institutions working together on "Un capolavoro per Venezia" (A masterpiece for Venice) - this has enabled the Venetian museum to receive some extraordinary loans from leading European museum collections", observed Giulio Manieri Elia, Director of the Gallerie dell'Accademia di Venezia.*

#### THE EXHIBITION:

In the logical and concise exhibition path designed by the curators to help track Tiepolo's international success - from his years of apprenticeship in Venice to his consecration within the major European courts - extraordinary masterpieces are revealed. These range from the **youthful mythological creations** of the Gallerie dell'Accademia of Venice to the **Martyrdom of St. Bartholomew**, painted in 1722 for the San Stae church in Venice (a true museum of early eighteenth-century Venetian art), displayed alongside the **Martyrdom of St. James** by Piazzetta (a contemporary work completed for the same location).

The **vast series of paintings for Venetian palaces** commissioned by ambitious and newly-ennobled families such as the **Sandi** and **Zenobio** households, sealed Tiepolo's early success, as he proved able to mastermind works with many figures and recreate ancient tales with fantasy and flair.

On separate occasions (1730-1731, 1737 and 1740), **Milan** proved to be the **first stop on his route to international success**: the exhibition allows us to admire a series of works restored for the occasion, which are normally rarely or not at all available for public viewing, **including the frescoes of the Basilica of Sant'Ambrogio and the fresco created for Palazzo Gallarati Scotti**. The two removed frescoes that were created for the Sant'Ambrogio church present holy events in the epic style of this renowned history painter, while the allegory from Palazzo Gallarati Scotti reveals the fluid spatial illusion that would become a recurring theme in his works.

It will be possible to follow the preparatory process of the **fresco for the Galleria on the piano nobile of Palazzo Clerici**, thanks to some drawings and a wonderful sketch on loan from the Kimbell Art Museum of Fort Worth (United States).

Tiepolo's German output includes **a sketch for a drawing room for the Würzburg** family residence (based in Stuttgart), and a freehand interpretation of a work designed, in agreement with his friend Francesco Algarotti, for the Elector of Saxony and king of Poland, Augustus III: the **Banquet of Antony and Cleopatra**, here visible in the version from the National Gallery of London.

The years in Germany and Spain produced a close working relationship between Tiepolo and his sons, especially Giandomenico: the exhibition closes with a symbolic 'showdown' between father and son, with **St. Francis of Assisi receiving the stigmata** by Tiepolo senior from the Museo del Prado on one side and **Abraham and the Three Angels** from Gallerie dell'Accademia of Venice, by Giandomenico on the other.

The exhibition offers the chance to admire a series of works restored for the event: *Apollo flaying Marsyas, Hercules suffocating Antaeus, Ulysses discovering Achilles among the daughters of Lycomedes, The Triumph of Virtue and Nobility over Ignorance, The Martyrdom of St. Victor, The Shipwreck of St. Satyrus* by Giambattista Tiepolo; *Spartacus leading the slaves' uprising* by Antonio Pellegrini; *Bacchus and Ariadne* and *The Contest of Apollo and Pan judged by King Midas* by Sebastiano Ricci.

#### THE SECTIONS:

1. The first section, **The cities of Tiepolo: Venice, Milan, Madrid** - figuratively summarises the places that played a part in the life and fortunes of Tiepolo, providing a birds-eye view of the eighteenth century, an era of international success for Italian artists. In the first half of the eighteenth century, Venice was perhaps the

most beloved city in Europe for its artists, beginning with the 'vedutista' group, the city-scape painters: these included Canaletto and Bellotto along with Antonio Joli, an artist who studied in Rome and was influenced by the work of Gaspar van Wittel.

2. The next section focuses on **Academy studies of nudes in Venice**. Sketching nudes is a fundamental part of training for artists all over Europe, especially since the academies started to favour this drawing exercise in the seventeenth century. Venice became a centre which made this particular type of exercise its own, enlivened by the presence of many foreign artists with whom Tiepolo exchanged ideas, drawing and painting his own first independent works.
3. In the third section, closely connected to the previous element, **The beginnings of Tiepolo betwixt Pagani, Pellegrini and Piazzetta** takes different perspectives on the inspiration Tiepolo drew from his contemporaries.
4. The exhibition then arrives at **Early success in Venice. History and mythology on the wings of fantasy**. Here, the main elements of two periods of work in Venice for the Sandi and Zenobio families, are emblematically represented. Tiepolo started to creatively conjure up mythological and historical stories with an incredible skill in orchestration and free interpretation; the key to his success in Europe would be as a wonderful storyteller at the service of his patrons for their own glorification.
5. The fifth section of the exhibition looks at **Venice and Milan, a backstory: Sebastiano Ricci**. Milan and Venice share a special relationship, with Milan representing the first step to international success for many Venetian artists: this was the case for Tiepolo and Bellotto, as it had been some time earlier for Sebastiano Ricci.
6. The sixth section, **Tiepolo in Milan: the first step to international success**, revolves around the complex network of relationships that allowed Tiepolo to enjoy success in Milan in two important moments of his career. The artist's choices in many frescoes of the city allow us to trace, through a succession of drawings and sketches, his modus operandi and ability to offer solutions that were increasingly spacious and airy, as well as increasingly spectacular. These solutions include his work in Palazzo Clerici, practically a forerunner to what the painter would complete some years later in Würzburg and Madrid.
7. Between 1751 and 1753, Tiepolo moved to Würzburg in Germany, with his children. The section **Tiepolo and Germany** focuses on how Giandomenico (by now, the famous maestro's travel companion) had begun to work alongside his father. In this context, Tiepolo's time in Würzburg is traced via a preparatory sketch for the fresco and his version of the *Banquet of Antony and Cleopatra*, a theme much-loved by the court of Dresden (one of the most modern artistic centres of that time in Europe) where he was enthusiastically welcomed and acclaimed in a career orchestrated by Francesco Algarotti.
8. The last stage in Giambattista's life, as encapsulated in **Tiepolo and his children in Spain**, was marked by an increasingly close relationship with his children who would then follow him to Madrid, remaining there after his death. Challenged by Giandomenico's emerging talent, Gianbattista Tiepolo was led to make new stylistic choices, marked by an unusually expressive tenderness, an air of melancholic introspection, with

repercussions in the softer brushstrokes, and in the more meticulous and less resentful drawing. This final stage in the story of Tiepolo is particularly evocative and marked by only a few works, with father and son being symbolically placed head-to-head in the field of *Character Heads*, a very popular genre with international audiences.

An advanced **projector system** has transformed the vault of the Hall at the beginning of the exhibition path into an **extraordinary immersive experience**, allowing visitors a visual journey through the vaults of the Würzburg Palace and Royal Palace of Madrid, the largest in Europe, where Tiepolo achieved his greatest work - on the wings of fantasy and with an amazing ability to combine it with reality.

At the end of the exhibition path, Tiepolo's works in other areas of Lombardy will be projected, to encourage the public to explore his career further and beyond the exhibition - these include the magnificent decorative series of the Colleoni Chapel of Bergamo.

The **exhibition catalogue** is published by Edizioni Gallerie d'Italia | Skira, and includes essays by curators Fernando Mazzocca and Alessandro Morandotti, and texts by Elena Lissoni, Fabrizio Magani and Andrés Ubeda.

#### **BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES:**

**Giambattista Tiepolo** first visited the Republic of Venice in 1715, benefiting from a particular historical-political climate that kept Venice safe from European turbulence for almost a century, while guaranteeing a proliferation of art and literature.

A contemporary of Canaletto, Tiepolo understood how to win favour with the clergy and Venetian aristocracy, decorating churches and palaces with his artwork on canvas and frescoes - allegorical, mythological and holy themes, richly theatrical and magnificent.

Tiepolo's greatness, which would make him one of the most acclaimed and sought-after artists of his time (and, in a certain sense, a forerunner of Enlightenment) can be attributed to his capacity for observation of nature. Indeed, nature became his main source of inspiration, of his unlimited narrative flair and expert skill in the use of colours, light and perspective.

His success took him to **Milan**, ruled by the Hasburgs, where he and Sebastiano Ricci revolutionised the art scene. Tiepolo developed a freedom of expression and an extraordinary skill in orchestrating grandiose compositions consisting of hundreds of figures in series of frescoes for the palazzi Archinto, Casati, Clerici and Gallarati Scotti as well as at the Basilica of Sant'Ambrogio. Launched to the top of the international art scene, he would become an artist sought-after in all the major European courts.

He enjoyed a strong relationship with Germany, struck up in the 1730s, particularly with the court of **Dresden** where his philosopher, intellectual and connoisseur friend **Francesco Algarotti**, his avid supporter and admirer, acted as a diplomat for Augustus III (Elector of Saxony and King of Poland).

The painter's success in Germany led him to settle between 1751 and 1753 in **Würzburg**, capital of Franconia, where he created the artwork for prince-bishop Carl Phillip von Greiffenclau's official residence.

From the 1760s until his death in 1770, he lived in **Spain**, under the patronage of King Charles III (Charles Bourbon). In **Madrid** he decorated the vast areas of the royal palace and later remained at the Bourbon court as an altarpiece painter.

His posthumous reputation was subject to a slow decline until he was again revalued by Francesco Hayez almost a century later - in fact, it was Hayez who was responsible for the rediscovery of Tiepolo, slightly earlier than collector Edward Cheney who stayed in Venice in the 1840s and managed to purchase a large number of magnificent oil sketches and various drawing books.

Press materials and pictures at: <https://bit.ly/2EhnTxr>

#### **PRESS INFORMATION:**

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#### **KEY INFORMATION**

*The exhibition "Tiepolo. Venezia, Milano, l'Europa"*

Gallerie d'Italia - Piazza Scala, Piazza della Scala 6, Milan

30 October 2020 – 21 March 2021

#### **Opening hours**

From Tuesday to Sunday, 9:30 am to 7:30 pm (last admission at 6:00 pm)

Thursdays 9:30 am to 9:00 pm (last admission at 7:30 pm) Monday: closed

Opening hours may vary as a result of the current health crisis - we recommend that you check our website for all updates/modifications.

#### **Admission**

Full-price 10 euro; reduced 8 euro; special price 5 euro for customers of the Intesa Sanpaolo Group and under 26s; free admission for pass holders, schools, and under 18s

Admission to the museum is subject to capped numbers and all visitors must have their

temperature checked at the entrance. It is recommended that you [purchase tickets online](#).

#### **Information**

Safety measures, information and bookings on [www.gallerieditalia.com](http://www.gallerieditalia.com), [info@gallerieditalia.com](mailto:info@gallerieditalia.com),

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As regards the environment, the Group has set up a 5-billion-euro fund for the circular economy. Intesa Sanpaolo supports major economic inclusion and poverty reduction projects, including an impact fund of 1.2 billion euro for loans available to social groups who struggle to access credit. Intesa Sanpaolo has a high level of involvement in cultural initiatives, organised by the Bank or in collaboration with other entities in Italy and further afield. These include permanent and temporary exhibitions showcasing the Bank's impressive artistic heritage at the Gallerie d'Italia, the Group's museums located in Milan, Naples, Vicenza and soon Turin.

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