

THE
BURLINGTON
MAGAZINE

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8. *Agrippina and Germanicus*, by Peter Paul Rubens. c.1614. Oil on panel, 66.4 by 57 cm. (National Gallery of Art, Washington).

(c.1601; Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; no.III.3) and the marble *Rape of Prosperina* (1621–22; Galleria Borghese; no.III.6). This is followed by reflections on portraiture, a subject also addressed by Simonato in her essay. She quotes a passage from Paul Fréart de Chantelou's *Journal de voyage du Cavalier Bernin en France*, describing the sculptor's visit to Paris in 1665 and his instructions on how to 'supplement [. . .] the art of sculpture, which cannot give colour to things' (p.95), and rightly contextualises the Berniniesque notion of 'speaking likeness' within the theme of the *paragone* and, thus, Bernini's ambition to compete with painting, using the tools of the sculptor. This is a theme that underlies almost the entirety of his theoretical thinking, as is evident from his relationship with the tradition of the marble relief, a topic that is not touched on here. For his part, Rubens sought not only in his drawings but also in his paintings to give life to marble by transforming it into living flesh, as we see in the herm bust of Hippocrates that appears in his portrait of Ludovicus Nonnius (c.1627; National Gallery, London; no.VI.9). In the exhibition it was flanked by two busts of Scipione Borghese by Bernini (both 1632; Galleria Borghese; nos. VI.10–11), once more evoking the theme of the *paragone*.

1 The catalogue of *Rubens: Picturing Antiquity* (Getty Villa, Los Angeles; 10th November 2021– 24th January 2022) was reviewed by David Jaffé in this Magazine, 164 (2022), pp.1145–48.

2 A. Coliva et al.: *I Borghese e l'antico*, Rome (Galleria Borghese) 2011–12.

The Hub of the World: Art in Eighteenth-Century Rome

Edited by Alan P. Wintermute, with contributions by Edgar Peters Bowron, Alvar González-Palacios, J. Patrice Marandel and Melissa Beck Lemke. 360 pp. incl. numerous col. + b. & w. ill. (Nicholas Hall, New York, 2023), \$65. ISBN 978-1-7326492-5-5.

by ERIC M. ZAFRAN

When the American painter Robert W. Weir went to study in Rome in 1825, he and a friend, the sculptor Horatio Greenough, dined in an eating house known as the Bacco di Lione, which, he noted, had previously been the 'painting room' of Pompeo Batoni (1708–87). This led Weir to observe that 'the art had been long declining in Italy, and poor Batoni was the mere smoke after the last flame had flickered out'.¹ It was to combat this widely shared negative opinion that the painter turned art historian Anthony M. Clark (1923–76) devoted his scholarly and museum career to eighteenth-century Roman art and especially Batoni, on whom he wrote a catalogue raisonné, edited and published by Edgar Peters Bowron after Clark's untimely death.² To mark the centenary of Clark's birth, the art dealers Nicholas Hall and Carlo Orsi presented an exhibition in Hall's gallery in New York devoted to him and his wide-ranging influence (closed 23rd November 2023).

Of the fifty-five works in the exhibition, forty-three were for sale and the remainder were lent from private collections. Although most of the exemplary entries in the compact, handsome catalogue, which includes colour images and details of all the exhibits, were written by Hall, some were contributed by other experts and there are two notable essays surveying the art scene in settecento Rome by friends and associates of Clark.

Alvar González-Palacios has written a touching memoir of Clark as well as contributing a catalogue entry on a pair of Egyptian-style candelabras by Luigi Valadier.

Clark was first able to pursue his goal of making Roman eighteenth-century art a respectable subject for study in 1953, when he was appointed a curator at the Rhode Island School of Design Museum. During the 1950s he and the director, John Maxon, purchased works by such generally little-known artists as Stefano Tofanelli, Michele Rocca, Benedetto Luti and Giovanni Battista Lusieri, as well as Batoni, Benjamin West, Anton Raphael Mengs, Angelica Kauffman and Corrado Giaquinto. This culminated in an exhibition in 1957, *The Age of Canova*, in the modest catalogue of which Clark declared, 'Batoni was the last great painter of un plundered Rome'.³

In 1959 Clark took his enthusiasm to the grander scale of the Minneapolis Institute of Art, where, as curator and subsequently director, he had the assistance of Bowron, who has written the principal essay on eighteenth-century Roman painting and drawing for this catalogue. Clark also bought works for himself, and after his death his collection of paintings was sold at Christie's to raise funds for the publication of his Batoni catalogue raisonné. One of these works, Pier Leone Ghezzi's remarkable caricature *Paolo de Matteis in his studio* (1734; private collection; cat. no.4), was included in the exhibition. Others have found their way into public collections, including *St Benedict Joseph Labre* by Antonio Cavallucci (1795; Museum of Fine Arts, Boston), Luti's *Christ and the woman of Samaria* (1715–20; Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York) and Batoni's portrait of John Woodyear (1750), acquired in Clark's memory by the Minneapolis Institute of Art. The bulk of the collection that remained after the sale – drawings, sculpture, maps and medals – was given to the Museum of Art in Clark's native Philadelphia, where it was presented in a memorable exhibition in 1980.⁴ Among its riches is Giuseppe Cades's *Caricature of Pompeo Batoni* (Fig.9), which he identified.

Exhibition catalogues

Clark's notebooks and photographic archive were donated by Bowron to the Department of Image Collections at the National Gallery of Art, Washington in 2012, as related in the catalogue in a brief essay by Melissa Beck Lemke. From this rich trove the exhibition borrowed a selection of his notebooks, with scribbled information on church architecture and altarpieces, dealers' holdings, portraits of popes and much else; these are reproduced at actual size in small groupings throughout the catalogue.

The exhibition was a major undertaking, with a wonderfully diverse selection of paintings, drawings, prints, sculptures and decorative arts, but it is curious that none of the works in the exhibition are mentioned in the essays and, more disappointingly, that some of the artists discussed in the essays (most notably Luti, Giovanni Paolo Panini, Marco Benefial and Pierre Subleyras) were not represented in the display.

The title of the exhibition is taken from Johann Wolfgang von Goethe,

who found eighteenth-century Rome a life-changing experience. The city's importance as a hub of education and training for foreign artists in this period is the subject of an erudite and witty essay by J. Patrice Marandel, who covers much ground, from designs for festivals by Joseph-Marie Vien and Jean Barbault to Subleyras's altarpiece for St Peter's, Rome. Particular attention is given to the parade of Germanic artists influenced by the Neo-classical aesthetics of Johann Joachim Winckelmann, such as Mengs, his brother-in-law Anton von Maron and Johan Heinrich Wilhelm Tischbein, as well as the Swiss-born Kauffman, all of whom were represented in the exhibition. Of British painters, Marandel notes especially the key role of Allan Ramsay. He was not represented in the exhibition, but Joshua Reynolds, Henry Fuseli, Johann Zoffany, John Deare and Thomas Jones all were.

Marandel mentions the American painter Benjamin West only in passing, as an influence on Kauffman,



9. *Caricature of Pompeo Batoni*, by Giuseppe Cades. c.1780. Pen and ink on paper, 11.3 by 8.3 cm. (Philadelphia Museum of Art).

10. *Study for St Louis Gonzago*, by Pompeo Batoni. 1744. Red and white chalk on paper, 19.3 by 7.1 cm. (Private collection).



but West, who was in Rome from 1760 to 1763, quickly became what Walter Dunlap described as 'the lion of the day in Rome', helped by his unusual status as a Quaker painter.⁵ According to Dunlap, West was taken to meet Batoni, who received him in such a grandly pompous manner that despite the obvious influence of Batoni on his own work, West made his much-quoted waspish comment that 'Italian artists talked of nothing, looked at nothing but the works of Pompeo Batoni'.⁶ Dunlap also discusses a much less well known American artist who studied in Rome, Henry Benbridge from Philadelphia. Arriving in Italy in 1770, he became a pupil of Batoni and also studied with Mengs before returning in 1774 to America, where he worked in the South as well as Philadelphia, primarily as a portrait painter.⁷ Although there is no evidence that another American-born painter, John Singleton Copley, met Batoni, during a visit to Rome in 1775 he painted the *Double Portrait of Mr and Mrs Ralph Izard* (Museum of Fine Arts, Boston), which depicts the South Carolina couple with the usual

Grand Tour accoutrements of antique sculpture and a distant view of the Colosseum, employing a new-found smoothness of paint application and brightness of palette that clearly reflect Batoni's influence.

French visitors to Rome in the eighteenth century ranged from Jean-Honoré Fragonard and Hubert Robert – a magnificent, recently discovered *View of the Villa Medici* (1759) by the latter was on show – to Jacques-Louis David. The exhibition included a rare Roman period work by David, *The Vestal*, which has been in America since it was acquired by William Randolph Hearst in 1928.

In his essay Bowron provides a concise yet richly detailed overview of Roman painting and drawing in the eighteenth century, in which he emphasises the importance of ecclesiastical commissions in the papal city. He notes 'a rich vein of dramatic naturalism' in religious paintings (p.12), especially in scenes from the lives of sometimes rather obscure saints, citing as examples works by both Benefial and Agostino Masucci. Bowron has described elsewhere this concern for 'the emotional involvement of the observer by presenting the sacred drama in a convincing narrative manner', using the example of Domenico Corvi's *Miracle of St Joseph Calasanz resuscitating a child* (1767), which probably belonged to Pope Clement XIII and was purchased by the Wadsworth Atheneum in 1981.⁸ The 'intimacy between spectator and painting' described by Bowron is there emphasised by the portrait-like presence of a young boy in a blue coat.

Bowron goes on to discuss the important role of sketches, modelli, and especially drawings in the repertoire of Roman artists. The exhibition presented two superb oil studies by Domenico Corvi (c.1770; both private collections; nos.15–16), Batoni (c.1761; private collection; no.13), Placido Costanzi (1727/28–31; private collection; no.3) and Giaquinto (c.1740; private collection; no.5). Bowron's statement that Batoni was 'a superb draftsman' (p.23) was supported in the exhibition by the juxtaposition of an exquisite oval painting of St Louis Gonzaga (c.1744;



private collection; no.6) with a red and white chalk preliminary study (no.7; Fig.10). Also significant, as Bowron points out, are the delicate pastel head studies by Luti and the grotesque caricatures by Ghezzi. The latter artist was well represented in the exhibition; as well as the painting mentioned above, there were a group of pen and ink caricatures of French dignitaries (all c.1729–30; all private collections;

11. *Two English gentlemen before the Arch of Constantine*, by Anton von Maron. 1767. Oil on canvas, 137 by 100.5 cm. (Private collection)

nos.33–38) and an unusual set of four freely rendered watercolour studies of Classical polychrome marbles (c.1726; private collection; no.32).

Bowron also focuses on *vedute*, another key component of Roman art of the settecento. Foreigners such as Jan Frans van Bloemen, Jacob Philipp Hackert, Claude-Joseph Vernet and Robert (the last three all represented in the exhibition)

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were notable practitioners of this genre, but even more intriguing is the less well-known Lusieri. He worked in graphite, watercolour and ink, producing, in Bowron's words, 'meticulous but atmospheric large-scale panoramas *en plein air* of Rome and its environs' (p.21). Of these rare works he reproduces a view dated 1783 in the Gemäldegalerie der Akademie der bildenden Künste, Vienna.

Another monumental example, a *View of the Tiber Valley* (c.1778–89; private collection; no.44), was in the exhibition, but perhaps his finest work is the *Extensive view of Rome* (1780; J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles), which so effectively captures the luminous quality of the Italian *campagna*.

Lusieri's Roman vistas are part of a much broader phenomenon highlighted in both Bowron's and Marandel's essays: the importance of the Grand Tour for many of the city's artists, who were only too happy to fulfil the wish of visitors from abroad to take home a visual souvenir or have their presence in the eternal city recorded for posterity. Batoni alone painted some two hundred British sitters – and even one American, Philip Livingston (1783; Utah Museum of Fine Arts). The exhibition offered two excellent examples of this cultural phenomenon. Von Maron's portrait of two English gentlemen before the Arch of Constantine (no.41; Fig.11) is a work in the classic Batoniesque manner and, like so many of Batoni's portraits, includes a dog – but whereas elsewhere they are active participants, here it slumbers peacefully. At the opposite end of the spectrum in terms of artistic decorum was a caricature by Reynolds of four British *milordi* (c.1751; private collection; no.39) engaged in examining a volume humorously titled 'Cloaca Massima' – the main sewer of ancient Rome.

1 W. Dunlap: *A History of the Rise and Progress of The Arts of Design in The United States*, New York 1834, II, p.392.

2 A. M. Clark and E. Peters Bowron: *Pompeo Batoni: Complete Catalogue*, New Haven and London 1985, reviewed by Oliver Millar in this Magazine, 129 (1987), pp.603–05. The catalogue was revised as E. Peters Bowron, *Pompeo Batoni: A Complete Catalogue of His Paintings*, New Haven and London 2016, reviewed by Stéphane Loire in this Magazine, 161 (2019), pp.164–66.

3 Exh. cat.: *The Age of Canova: An Exhibition of the Neo-Classical*, Providence (Rhode Island School of Design Museum) 1957, p.10.

4 U. Hiesinger, ed.: *A Scholar Collects: Selections from the Anthony Morris Clark Bequest*, Philadelphia 1980.

5 Dunlap, *op cit.* (note 1), p.47.

6 A.M. Clark: 'Batoni's professional career and style', in E.P. Bowron, ed.: *Studies in Roman Eighteenth-Century Painting*, Washington 1981, pp.103–118, at p.103; the book was reviewed by Ellis Waterhouse in this Magazine, 958 (1983), pp.41–42.

7 Dunlap, *op cit.* (note 1), pp.142–43.

8 E.P. Bowron: 'The Miracle of Saint Joseph Calasanz Resuscitating a Child in a Church at Frascati', in E. Zafran, ed.: exh. cat. *Renaissance to Rococo: Masterpieces from the Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art*, Sarasota (John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art), Fort Worth (Kimbell Art Museum), Charlotte (Mint Museum), 2004–05, p.90, no.26.

12. *Madame J (young woman in black)*, by Mary Cassatt. 1883. Oil on canvas, 80 by 63.5 cm. (Maryland State Archives).

Cassatt–McNicoll: Impressionists Between Worlds

Edited by Caroline Shields. 151 pp. incl. 122 col. + 8 b. & w. ills. (Goose Lane Editions, Fredericton, and Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto, 2023), \$45. ISBN 978-1-77310-317-4.

by ALLISON MACDUFFEE

Mary Cassatt (1844–1926) is well-known worldwide. The Pennsylvania-born artist made Paris her home in 1865, and showed in four of the Impressionist



exhibitions. She is also remembered for her role in serving as a bridge between French Impressionist painters and American collectors. A generation later, Helen McNicoll (1879–1915), who was born in Toronto and raised in Montreal, pursued her artistic career in England, where she studied at the Slade School of Fine Art, London, and the Cornish School of Landscape, Figure and Sea Painting, St Ives. Like the exhibition that it was published to accompany, held at the Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto (AGO; closed 4th September 2023), this catalogue considers these two North American artists side-by-side for the first time.

Edited by Caroline Shields, the Curator of European Art at the AGO, the volume is both scholarly and sumptuous. The aim of the exhibition was to bring together, in a thematically rich manner, the work of the two Impressionist artists. The catalogue pays particular attention to both artists' depictions of women and children (Fig.13), and also argues for the importance of travel for their careers. The exhibition included more than sixty-five works, including paintings, prints and sketchbooks, enriched by archival material. The representation of both artists was strong: the AGO has an unrivalled collection of oil paintings and sketchbooks by McNicoll and was able to borrow the complete suite of Mary Cassatt's 1890–91 colour prints from the National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa. To these were added many loans from other North American museums and collections.

Although McNicoll was represented by a greater number of paintings, the Cassatt works on display included stellar examples, such as *Portrait of Madame J (young woman in black)* (Fig.12). The exhibition design was uncluttered, with works spaciouly arranged across five rooms and, as is typical of AGO exhibitions, there was an informative and clear chronology in the first room. The present reviewer was struck by the fact that in 1898, for example, Cassatt was a mature fifty-four, whereas the nineteen-year-old McNicoll was just beginning her formal art studies at the Art Association of Montreal. Also included here were promotional brochures