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**IL GIOVANE
GALLERIE
DELL'ACCADEMIA
TINTORETTO
VENEZIA**

**IL GIOVANE TINTORETTO –
THE YOUNG TINTORETTO –
Gallerie dell'Accademia di Venezia**

With its **60 works**, the show *Il giovane Tintoretto*, curated by **Roberta Battaglia**, **Paola Marini**, and **Vittoria Romani**, ranges over the first decade of the Venetian painter's activity, from **1538**, the year in which the independent activity of Jacopo Robusti in San Cassiano was first noted, to **1548**, the date of the clamorous success of his first public-commissioned work, *Il miracolo dello schiavo*, painted for the Scuola Grande di San Marco, and today the pride of the Gallerie dell'Accademia. It is an exciting itinerary that reconstructs the extraordinary period of stimuli and experimentation thanks to which Tintoretto deeply renewed Venetian painting, in a period of great changes.

The show brings together **26 exceptional paintings by Tintoretto**, which both promote the works in the museum's permanent collection, now seen in a new perspective, and shows them in the context of **loans from the most important public and private institutions in the world**: from the **Louvre** in Paris to the Washington **National Gallery**, the **Prado** museum in Madrid, the **Uffizi** in Florence, the **Galleria Borghese** in Rome, the **Kunsthistorisches Museum** in Vienna, the **Museum of Fine Arts** in Budapest, the **Fabbrica del Duomo** in Milan, the **Courtauld Gallery** in London, and the **Wadsworth Atheneum** in Hartford. Among the artist's masterpieces, mention should be made of the *Conversione di San Paolo* from the Washington National Gallery of Art, the *Contesa tra Apollo e Marsia* from Hartford, **now exhibited for the first time in Italy**, the *Disputa di Gesù* from the Veneranda Fabbrica del Duomo in Milan, the *Cena in Emmaus* from Budapest, and the mythical tales originally in Palazzo Pisani in Venice and now in the Gallerie Estensi in Modena.

In chronological order, and divided into four sections, the itinerary investigates the still much debated period of **Tintoretto's training**, not easily attributable to a particular workshop or person, by relating him to the Venetian artistic and cultural context of the 1530s and 1540s. In this way there will be clarified how Jacopo Robusti acquired and transformed his models in order to develop a dramatic and revolutionary style, through hints derived from **Titian**, **Pordenone**, **Bonifacio de' Pitati**, **Paris Bordon**, **Francesco Salviati**, **Giorgio Vasari**, and **Jacopo Sansovino**, **all present in the show with significant works**. Furthermore there will be exhibited paintings and sculptures by artists of Tintoretto's generation who worked in the same milieu, among whom **Andrea Schiavone**, **Giuseppe Porta Salviati**, **Lambert Sustrise**, and **Bartolomeo Ammannati**.

CELEBRAZIONI
PER IL CINQUECENTENARIO
DELLA NASCITA DI TINTORETTO

1519
TINTORETTO
2019

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The exhibition will be accompanied by an important volume, published by **Marsilio Electa**, with essays by Robert Echolls and Frederick Ilchman, Vittoria Romani, Roberta Battaglia, Paola Marini, Paolo Procaccioli, and Luciano Pezzolo.

www.mostratintoretto.it

Promotion and communications office of the Gallerie dell'Accademia
Maria Teresa Dal Bò mariateresa.dalbo@beniculturali.it
Tel. 041.5222247

PRESS OFFICE

Civita Tre Venezie
Giovanna Ambrosano ambrosano@civitatrevenezie.it Tel. 041 2725912 / M 338 4546387

Electa
Mara Pecci electalibri@mondadori.it
Tel. 02 71046441

EXHIBITION ITINERARY

The exhibition *Il giovane Tintoretto* follows the first decade of the Venetian painter's activity, a period that ranges from 1538, the year in which Tintoretto rented a house and studio in the parish of San Cassiano and began his independent activity, and 1548, the date of the great success of his first important public work, the *Miracolo dello schiavo*, for the Scuola Grande di San Marco and today the pride of the Gallerie dell'Accademia.

The **first section** of the show shows a series of paintings undertaken in Venice during the 1530s in order to reveal the most significant circumstances for contextualising Tintoretto's youth. These were the years when there was also great turmoil in the art world as a result of the policy for relaunching Venice by Doge Andrea Gritti, as well as to the contribution of many outsiders: from the Tuscan sculptor and architect Jacopo Sansovino, who was to give a new look to the city by replacing the local forms of architecture with those derived from antiquity, to the architect from Bologna Sebastiano Serlio who brought to the city an experience developed together with Baldassare Peruzzi in Bologna and Rome, and to the writer Pietro Aretino.

As a result of these new stimuli, the classical colour tradition was destined to undergo a crisis, but this period, still very much alive in the 1530s, is referred to in the show by the presence of the *Cena in Emmaus* by Titian, today in the Louvre; it is an example of a religious painting, made for a private client, that is based on a theme that, about a decade later, Jacopo was to treat in an extremely different way in the painting now in Budapest. Here it is accompanied by works by other artists from the Veneto region who, while touched by other influences, were still mainly influenced by Titian: Bonifacio Veronese, Paris Bordon, and Polidoro da Lanciano.

When selecting the works for this section we also tried to exemplify certain themes and typologies, the very ones that Tintoretto was to treat with great originality and an experimental approach in the following decade. The *Consegna dell'anello al doge* by Paris Bordon, a painter influenced by Titian, dating from about 1533-1535, is an important testimony to the Venetian tradition of narrative canvases, and it is of particular interest because it was painted for the same venue, the Scuola Grande di San Marco, where Tintoretto was to work in the following decade. This was a strong precedent for the importance given to the idea of architecture and for its particular spatial construction and the staging, all of which the young artist would have to deal with.

The *Giudizio di Salomone* by Bonifacio Veronese, painted to decorate the financial magistrates' room in Palazzo dei Camerlenghi and dated 1533, shows another aspect of narrative canvases for public viewing: the relationship between the narrative scene and the setting (a terrace with a checkerboard floor, and two figures who close off the scene at the sides), and it testifies to the influence of Raphael in Venice in the 1530s, the result of prints and drawings and of mentions in such texts as those of Vitellio Grimani.

Titian-like models, even when interpreted through a Raphaelesque decorative design, are also notable in the *Sacra Conversazione* by Polidoro da Lanciano (the end of the 1530s), chosen to represent a genre that had a great success in Venice in the early decades of the sixteenth century, and with which the novice Tintoretto competed in his first dated work, the Molin *Sacra Conversazione* (private collection), 1540.

Another artist who brought new dynamic examples and proposals of innovative dramatic power to Venetian painting in the 1530s was Pordenone, from the Friuli region; he was present on the Venetian scene with a certain continuity from 1527, and was often in competition with Titian for the same commissions. He is represented here by the doors of the large wardrobe of San Rocco depicting *Santi Martino e Cristoforo*: the Michelangelesque gigantism of these saints, their amazing sculptural strength and unusual energy, the views highlighted, and the contrived spatiality are all aspects that must have made a great impression on the young Tintoretto. They show well just how provocative must have been Pordenone's solutions in Venice, the expressions of a firsthand knowledge of Michelangelo. Mainly a figure painter – as Tintoretto was also to be – with a dynamic and monumental emphasis, he was recognised in the written sources as one of the painters most receptive to Michelangelesque culture, inasmuch as he admired the “greatness and divinity of the drawing” of the great Tuscan artist, and he was at once a certain reference point for Jacopo.

Pordenone's central role for offering strong stimuli to the generation of artists who were coming to maturity in Venice in the 1530s can be intuited in *Caino e Abele* (now in the Galleria Palatina in Florence) by the Dalmatian artist Andrea Schiavone; this shows how the new interest in the human figure, influenced by Pordenone's graphic repertoire, is placed within a clearly Giorgione-influenced landscape.

The second section

The arrival in Venice between 1539 and 1541 of such artists educated in the taste of central Italy and the manner influenced by Pope Clement as Francesco Salviati, who came to Venice, where he was to settle, with his pupil Giuseppe Porta, and Giorgio Vasari, was a fundamental moment of confrontation between the Venetian figurative tradition, based on an adherence to reality captured in its atmospheric and luminous values, and this different artistic tradition, one characterised by an intellectual approach, linear abstraction, and sophisticated elegance.

In dealing with both traditional devotional themes, such as in the small altarpiece in Santa Cristina della Fondazza by Francesco Salviati, and those of such Christian histories as the *Resurrezione di Lazzaro* by Porta, these artists left a testimony to the lesson of a precious and highly decorative style. The allegories of Vasari's ceiling-painting for Ca' Corner Spinelli show a new way of laying out the figures in two-dimensions.

The presence of the central part of the ceiling in the school of San Giovanni Evangelista, *San Giovanni a Patmos* (National Gallery of Art, Washington), shows how this flood of new stimuli also upset Titian's Renaissance vision: his usual scaling back in depth of the planes, typical of his works from the preceding decade, has now been replaced by the forms advancing to the foreground, marked by complex formal connections and heightened by the vastness of the atmospheric space at the saint's back.

The spread of Mannerist forms and stylistic features also came about as a result of the engravings by the officina libraria Marcolini. In the sophisticated formal repertoire of the engravings (in part referable to Francesco Salviati, Andrea Sustris and, as has been said, by Schiavone too) that illustrate *Le Sorti intitolate Giardino di Pensieri*, scholars have recognised an important collection of Mannerist types, as also in the *Vita di Santa Caterina Vergine* by Pietro Aretino that contains two woodcuts that are surprising for the exceptionality of their drawing, the elegance of the graphics, and the compositional and stylistic characteristics that are extraneous to the Venetian context.

The third section

In this section are brought together some ten works made by Tintoretto between the end of the 1530s and the first half of the 1540s. They come from important foreign institutions and, in a couple of cases, from private collections. The arrangement of the paintings attempts to take into account the artist's stylistic development in this period, one where the connection between the works is to be found in the continuous experimentation by the artist who, starting from various works, redeveloped and transformed them with great expressive impetuosity.

This argument starts with the surreal and fantastic atmosphere of the large-scale canvas, the *Conversazione di San Paolo*, now in Washington, characterised by brilliant colour, elegant Parmigianino-like stylistic features, and flowing and loose brushwork. It is shown next to a copy of the famous canvas, the *Battaglia di Spoleto*, created for Palazzo Ducale by Titian but destroyed in a fire, which indicates how much this illustrious precedent counted for the *Conversazione's* great impetuosity and its setting of a precise meteorological moment. Instead, the sculptural grouping refers back once again to Pordenone.

The *Sacra Conversazione* painted for the Venetian Molin family in 1540, today in a private collection in America, is the artist's first dated work. It reuses the traditional Venetian scheme of the Holy Conversation but reinvents it by dramatising it through the compression of forms and a new dynamism. By now he had come into contact with Tuscan-Roman Mannerist culture and this is seen in the rarefied cadence of the rhythm and the bright and abstract colour range.

The octagons with mythological stories for the ceiling of Palazzo Pisani in San Paternian, today in the Galleria Estense in Modena, was made on the commission of the great intellectual Vettore Pisani; it is atypical with respect to Venetian tradition and certainly derives from a mixture of Vasari-inspired ideas and a culture inspired by Giulio Romano and Pordenone: this can be the only explanation of the way of bringing the figures to the foreground and of linking them together with a network of interwoven lines. The basic culture now began to be filtered through a Mannerist mentality.

The ceiling with *Apollo e Marsia* from Hartford, originally painted, together with an *Argo e Mercurio* now lost, for the bedroom of Aretino, shows how the painter had now become part of a group of highly placed collectors. This was at the beginning of 1545, as is confirmed by a letter written by Aretino himself.

The Budapest *Cena in Emmaus* redevelops and transforms the traditional Titian-Bonifacio scheme with spatial exaggeration and a dynamic sense: the position of the corner of the table, with the fold of the tablecloth and the bread underlining its eccentric position, the space crowded with figures who are agitated by centrifugal movements with respect to Christ (the keystone of the composition), and the

rods of the two apostles crossing the space diagonally, are all data that testify to how the Venetian tradition was by now filtered through a Mannerist lens.

The room is rounded off by the Milan *Cristo tra I dottori*, an extremely fascinating work where an interest in an architectural spatial layout of a traditional kind is suggested, yet at the same time eluded, by the strong acceleration with which the figures are, so to say, sucked into a bottleneck: all this is found together with a new monumental dimension and a more flowing narrative verve, all undertaken with a looser painting.

Here there is also illustrated the production of painted panels for chests of drawers and furniture, a niche market widespread in Venice at the time (Bonifacio Veronese, Paris Bordon, and Schiavone). According to Ridolfi (1648), as a young man Tintoretto painted furniture for the artisans whose workshops were in Piazza San Marco. The favourite themes were erotic narratives taken from classical mythology or tragic and terrible episodes from the Bible, all undertaken with a loose and free handling. There are here two small panels from Vienna and one, *Ester davanti ad Assuero*, from the Courtauld Gallery in London.

The fourth section

In the years immediately after 1545 Tintoretto was employed in the creation of large-scale canvases, often with a horizontal form, and based on sacred subjects. These are paintings of a notable involvement and that are characterised by a wide-ranging narrative and a more dramatic impulse. In just a few years (1546-48) there was a flood of works that testify to the painter's uncontainable need to experiment with new languages, together with an artistic development so rapid as to have no comparisons.

A fundamental point in a reconstruction of these years is offered by the San Marcuolo *Ultima Cena*, dated August 1547. The theme is treated in an agitated manner and the accent is placed on the intensity of expression and the action of the people, and all related together through the dynamic links between contrasted poses, twisting, and brusque and repeated gestures.

In this room an extraordinary and unrepeatable scenography will be mounted thanks to the juxtaposition of this painting to another two works on the same subject made in Venice in the same period: the *Ultima Cena* by Porta Salviati, painted for the refectory of Santo Spirito in Isola, today in the Salute, and the *Ultima Cena* by Jacopo Bassano (1548) from the Galleria Borghese. What is made clear is the continuous game of allusions between the two, and how Tintoretto, aiming at rivalling the other artists, created a figurative solution of great originality where the excited syntax and the wholly Mannerist formal tension of the people are contemplated with a new power of observation of facts taken from real life, as can be seen in the still-life and the previously unseen frenzied portraiture.

The presence of two examples of the early portraiture of Tintoretto in this room – *Ritratto di gentiluomo*, Stuttgart, and *Ritratto di Nicolò Doria*, private collection – is a reminder of how working as a portraitist came about early in the artist's career. Even though modelled on the example of Titian, his sitters do not have the noble dignity or the interior serenity typical of the older artist but, instead, by emerging from the shadows they seem to interrogate and demand a discussion with the viewer.

The conclusion of the itinerary is marked by the *Miracolo dello schiavo* (1548), a work that was to definitively seal the public renown of Tintoretto.

Curated by Roberta Battaglia, Paola Marini, Vittoria Romani
September 7 2018 – January 6 2019
Gallerie dell'Accademia
Campo della Carità, Venice

Opening hours

Monday: 8.15 a.m. to 2 p.m.
(ticket office closes at 1 p.m.); Tuesday – Sunday: 8.15 a.m. to 7.15 p.m. (ticket office closes at 6.15 p.m.). Closed on December 25 and January 1.

Information and booking

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Inclusive ticket Gallerie dell'Accademia + show

Full price single ticket: €15

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For the owners of the Tintoretto 1519 – 1594 ticket, Palazzo Ducale, Venice

Reduced price ticket: €7.5

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Free:

- tenured teachers not accompanying groups of students
- minors under 18 years old (those under 12 years old must be accompanied)
- EU university students and professors from the faculties of architecture, conservation of the cultural heritage, education, those enrolled for graduate courses in literature and literary subjects specialising in archaeology or in art history, and those studying at art colleges
- workers for voluntary associations undertaking the promotion and diffusion of knowledge of the cultural heritage (on the basis of a convention stipulated with the Ministry for the Cultural Heritage - art. 12, paragraph 8 of the regulations)
- workers for the Ministry for the Cultural Heritage and Activities
- ICOM members (International Council of Museums)
- the disabled from the EU accompanied by a family member or a healthcare operator
- card-carrying journalists
- EU tourist guides undertaking their activity
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Guided tours of the show (departures every 45 minutes)

Guided tours for groups and individuals in Italian, English, and French: €80 per group (10-30 persons)

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Catalogue

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