

Gallery

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Painting in Italy, 1700-1800

The death of Gian Gastone de' Medici, the last Medici Grand Duke of Tuscany, in 1737, signaled the end of the dynasties that had dominated the Italian political landscape since the Renaissance. Florence, Milan, and other cities fell under foreign rule. Venice remained an independent republic and became a cultural epicenter, due in part to foreign patronage and trade. Like their French contemporaries, Italian artists such as Giovanni Battista Tiepolo, Francesco Guardi, and Canaletto, favored lighter colors and a fluid, almost impressionistic handling of paint. Excavations at the ancient sites of Herculaneum and Pompeii spurred a flood of interest in classical art, and inspired new categories of painting, including *vedute* or topographical views, and *capricci*, which were largely imaginary depictions of the urban and rural landscape, often featuring ruins. Giovanni Paolo Pannini's paintings showcased ancient and modern architectural settings in the spirit of the engraver, Giovanni Battista Piranesi. Music and theater flourished with the popularity of the piano and the theatrical arts. The *commedia dell'arte*, an improvisational comedy act with stock characters like Harlequin and Pulcinella, provided comic relief in the years before the Napoleonic War, and fueled the production of Italian genre painting, with its unpretentious scenes from every day life.



Francesco Solimena

Italian, 1657-1747, active in Naples

The Virgin Receiving St. Louis Gonzaga,
c. 1720

Oil on canvas

Bequest of John Ringling, 1936, SN 165



Giovanni Antonio Pellegrini

Italian, 1675-1741, active in Venice

The Entombment, 1719

Oil on canvas

Bequest of John Ringling, 1936, SN 176

Amid the rise of such varieties of painting as landscape and genre scenes, which previously had been considered minor categories in academic circles, history painting continued to be lauded as the loftiest genre. Academicians in particular claimed that religious, literary, or historic paintings required a particularly elevated level of technical skill and intellectual acumen. Pellegrini displays his virtuosity in this religious work by combining vibrant tones (inspired by Veronese) with difficult poses, such as the foreshortened figure in white in the foreground.



Sebastiano Conca

Italian, 1680-1764, active in Naples and Rome

The Vision of Aeneas in the Elysian Fields,

c. 1735-40

Oil on canvas

Bequest of John Ringling, 1936, SN 168

This work depicts a passage from Virgil's *Aeneid*, the epic story of the Trojan warrior Aeneas whose descendants would found Rome. The helmeted hero descends to Elysium, the part of the underworld reserved for heroes whose souls will be reborn. Surrounded by future Roman leaders (including Emperor Augustus on horseback), Anchises, Aeneas' deceased father, tells his son of the grandeur Rome will enjoy. Venus, Aeneas' mother, and Mercury hover above the central figures in a chariot, while Virgil plays a lute on the left.



Francesco Zuccarelli

Italian, 1702-1788, active in Venice, Paris, and London

An Idyllic Landscape with Shepherd, 1744

Oil on canvas

Bequest of John Ringling, 1936, SN 174

Though he began his career in portraiture and history scenes, Zuccarelli specialized in the burgeoning genre of landscape painting almost exclusively by 1730.

Known for his bucolic scenes of frolicking shepherds and peasant girls, he gained renown in England due to his friendship with Joseph Smith, the British Consul to Venice. Upon relocating to England in 1752, he rose to fame with his popular landscapes, several of which were owned by King George III. A founding member of the Royal Academy, Zuccarelli established himself as a master abroad and in his native Italy.



Marco Ricci

Italian, 1676-1730, active in Venice and London

***Landscape with Ruth and Boaz*, c. 1715**

Oil on canvas

Bequest of John Ringling, 1936, SN 180

Though popular in England (King George III owned over 40 of his paintings), Marco Ricci painted with an unmistakably Venetian style. A combination of *impasto* (thick layers of

paint built up on the canvas) and the soft, Venetian light resulted in wonderful atmospheric effects in his landscapes. The texture of the paint is clearly visible in the voluminous, peach-tinted clouds and the golden shafts of wheat symbolic in the biblical story of the meeting of Boaz and his future wife Ruth. The staccato brushstrokes of thick oil paint, called *macchie*, or marks, were a trademark of Venetian painting since the 15th century.



Marco Ricci

Italian, 1676-1730, active in Venice and London

***Landscape with Tobias and the Angel*, c. 1715**

Oil on canvas

Bequest of John Ringling, 1936, SN 179

The cosmopolitan artistic community of early 18th-century Venice included Marco Ricci, a

landscape specialist who often collaborated with his uncle, Sebastiano Ricci. Like other Venetian artists such as Francesco Zuccarelli and Canaletto, Marco traveled to London early in his career, observing the naturalism of Dutch landscape painting en route. The earthy palette suggests the Dutch influence in this work. Depicted here is a scene from the apocryphal book of Tobit in which the Archangel Raphael appears to Tobit's son, Tobias, instructing him to catch the fish whose organs would restore his blind father's sight.



Giovanni Battista Piazzetta
Italian, 1682-1754, active in Venice

A Young Girl with a Spindle, c. 1735-40
Oil on canvas

Bequest of John Ringling, 1936, SN 183

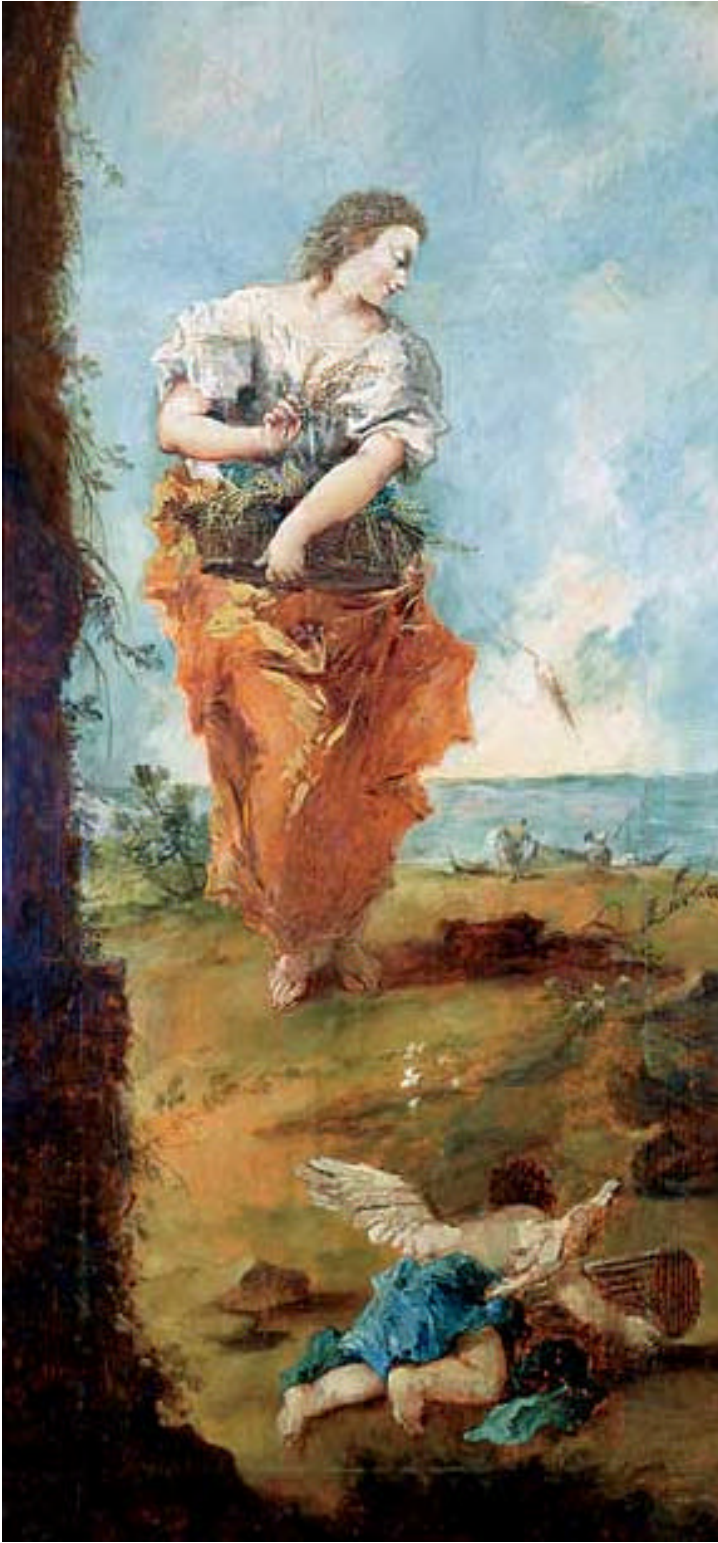


Italian, 19th century

Pair of Louis XVI- style Console Tables,
c. 1800

White and gold wood with fluted supports

Museum purchase (Estate of A. Everett
Austin), 1957, SN 1795 and SN 1796



Francesco Guardi

Italian, 1712-1793, active in Venice

An Allegorical Figure of Abundance, c. 1747

Oil on panel

Bequest of John Ringling,
1936, SN 190

Before becoming a popular *vedute* or view painter in Venice, Francesco Guardi collaborated with his brother Antonio on a number of projects, including the decorative program for the organ in the Venetian church of San Raffaele Arcangelo. This panel, representing the allegorical figure of Abundance, and its pendant, depicting Hope (also displayed in this gallery), may have covered the organ pipes, and are attributed solely to Francesco. The paintings are landmarks of the Rococo style, and their free brushwork and bright tonalities foreshadow the Impressionist movement of the following century.



Francesco Guardi

Italian, 1712-1793, active in Venice

An Allegorical Figure of Hope, c. 1747

Oil on panel

Bequest of John Ringling, 1936, SN 189

This allegory of Hope, and its pendant figure of Abundance (also displayed in this gallery), are loosely based on descriptions of the virtues in Cesare Ripa's *Iconologia*, a 17th-century handbook cataloguing various personifications and allegories. The anchor that Hope grasps symbolizes strength and steadfastness, while the plentiful wheat shafts in the arms of the companion figure represent abundance. The loose, rapid brushstrokes and palpable texture of the paint – especially visible in the folds of the figure's drapery – are hallmarks of Francesco Guardi's style.



Giovanni Domenico Tiepolo,
attributed to
Italian, 1727-1804, active in
Venice, Germany, and Spain

Aurora, c. 1750-60
Fresco (later transferred to
canvas)

Bequest of John Ringling,
1936, SN 184

These imposing life-size figures represent Dawn chasing away Night (represented by the bat in flight). The painting was part of a ceiling fresco, probably made for bedroom in a Venetian villa. Giovanni Domenico Tiepolo specialized in depicting abstract concepts and themes with believable personages. His artistic personality tends to be more subdued than the bravado of his father, Giovanni Battista, whose work (the large ceiling fresco fragment) is also displayed in this gallery.



Giovanni Paolo Pannini

Italian, c. 1692-1765, active in Rome

Hermes Appears to Calypso, c. 1718-19

Oil on canvas

Bequest of John Ringling, 1936, SN 171

As an architect and stage designer, Pannini acquired advanced skills in perspective, as evidenced in his specialized paintings of simulated, illusionistic architecture known as *quadratura*. Through his work and

teaching at the French Academy in Rome, Pannini dominated the Grand Tour market with his painted *vedute* which were popular among tourists. The elegant figures enliven the architecture, and the bright colors and idyllic mood are characteristic of the Rococo period. In this passage from Homer's *Odyssey*, Hermes rescues the hero Odysseus from the island of Ogygia where he stayed for seven years with the nymph Calypso.



Giovanni Paolo Pannini

Italian, c. 1692-1765, active Rome

Circe Entertaining Odysseus at a Banquet,

c. 1718-19

Oil on canvas

Bequest of John Ringling, 1936, SN 172

In this pendant to *Hermes Appears to Calypso* (also displayed in this gallery), the figures of Circe and Odysseus (taken

from Homer's *Odyssey*) are seated under the portico while Hermes drops to Odysseus the magic flower that protects him from her spell. Odysseus' men, victims of the enchantress, are seen at the left as the creatures with dog-like heads and a swine. The ghostly outline of the architecture through the semi-transparent bodies of the figures in the painting gives insight into Pannini's inventive work process.



Michele Rocca

Italian, c. 1670-c. 1751, active in Rome and Parma

***Saint Cecilia at the Organ*, c. 1715-20**

Oil on canvas

Bequest of John Ringling, 1936, SN 167

This image of Saint Cecilia, patron saint of music and the blind, with its luminous pigmentation and decorative sensibility, demonstrates the elegant style that defined Rocca's oeuvre. The richly-colored painting is in some ways more closely aligned with the emerging style of French Rococo than with the Roman neo-Baroque. Rocca's small-scale cabinet pictures of mythological and hagiographical subjects earned him the reputation of *petit maître* in early 18th-century Rome. Saint Cecilia

was a 3rd-century Roman noblewoman who, along with her husband, suffered martyrdom under Emperor Alexander Severus.



Italian, 18th century

Signed with Monogram *J.O.B.*

***Two-Drawer Commode*, c. 1775**

Wood, marquetry work

Gift of Mrs. William Sisler/Mary Sisler
Foundation, 1977,
MF 77.3



Giovanni Battista Tiepolo
Italian, 1696-1770, active in
Venice, Germany, and Spain

*An Allegory Representing the
Glory and Magnanimity of
Princes*, 1758-60

Fresco (later transferred to
canvas)

Museum purchase, 1951, SN
652

These imposing life-size figures were likely part of a large fresco decoration for a room in a Venetian villa, and the decorative scheme appears to have been a series of imaginary sculptures integrated into the painted architecture of the space. In this portion of the work, we are presented with two bronze sculptures standing in front of an obelisk. The figures likely stood over a doorway of a mantel and were meant to be viewed from below. The sculptural treatment of the figures and the obelisk impart a sense of monumentality to the work.



Giovanni Domenico Ferretti

Italian, 1692-1768, active in Florence

From *The Disguises of Harlequin*, c. 1730

Harlequin as Beggar (upper left)

Pulcinella with a Cooking Pot (upper right)

Harlequin as Crippled Soldier (lower left)

Harlequin as Scholar (lower right)



Oil on canvas

Museum Purchase, 1950, SN 641, SN 651,
SN 637, SN 639

These paintings are part of a large series probably painted for a Florentine academy of drama. They later belonged to Max Reinhardt, the famous 20th-century German stage director, from whose estate they were purchased for the museum.





Giovanni Domenico Ferretti
Italian, 1692-1768, active in Florence

From *The Disguises of Harlequin*, c. 1730

- Harlequin as Lacemaker* (upper left)
- Harlequin as Clever Valet* (upper right)
- Harlequin Attacked* (lower left)
- Harlequin as Brigand* (lower right)



Museum purchase, 1950, SN 650, SN 640,
SN 642, SN 645

These paintings are part of a large series probably painted for a Florentine academy of drama. They later belonged to Max Reinhardt, the famous 20th-century German stage director, from whose estate they were purchased for the museum.





Malvica factory

Italy (Palermo), 18th century

Bust of Tragedy, c. 1750

Tin-enameled earthenware (faience)

Museum purchase, 1962, SN 5021

These rare busts from a little-known provincial factory in Southern Italy are made of earthenware decorated to resemble expensive jasper, a red quartz gemstone. Designed to imitate classical models such as imperial busts, the subjects of tragedy and comedy are treated with a solemnity that belies their stereotyped subject matter and the inherent silliness of such humanized allegorical figures.



Malvica factory

Italy (Palermo), 18th century

Bust of Comedy, c. 1750

Tin-enameled earthenware (faience)

Museum purchase, 1962, SN 5022



Michelangelo Pergolesi

Italian, active 1777-1801, in Venice and London

Suite of Fantastically Carved Furniture, c. 1780

Carved, painted, and lacquered wood

Museum purchase, 1949, SN 1533

The suite is composed of two settees and two chairs that mix Neoclassical, oriental, and animal motifs in an extravagant way meant to be amusing and highly decorative.



Etruscan

4th century B.C.

Equestrian Figure, 4th century B.C.
Bronze

Gift of Joseph and Jacqueline Corben,
2001, SN 11048.3



Etruscan

4th century B.C.

Balsamarium (ointment container),
4th century B.C.
Bronze

Gift of Joseph and Jacqueline Corben,
2001, SN 11048.1



Greek
4th century B.C.

*Cover for a Mirror with the Head of
Athena,*
4th century B.C.
Bronze

Gift of Joseph and Jacqueline Corben,
2001, SN 11048.2