

Canaletto: Celebrating Britain

Saturday 14 March – Sunday 7 June 2015

This is the first time that these magnificent paintings and drawings by Canaletto have been brought together to provide an overview of Canaletto's work created between 1746 and 1755, whilst he was visiting Britain.

During his nine-year stay in Britain he documented not just traditional or established views and landmarks but also his (and his patrons') latest achievements in architecture and engineering. The depictions of these new building works and projects, whether couched in Palladian, Baroque or Gothic styles, celebrate the new-found wealth and assurance of the British nation, reflecting contemporary developments in popular culture such as the rediscovery of Shakespeare; the success of Handel's *Messiah* and the cult of King Alfred – which in turn spawned Arne's immortal '*Rule Britannia*'.

Set into context, by 1750 the first generation of Palladian architects and patrons (Burlington, Campbell and Kent) were dead, and the nation was ready for a more liberal attitude to architectural design. Britain itself was a more stable and confident place than it had been even thirty years before. During the recent War of the Austrian Succession, the nation had held onto its new colonial gains and had succeeded in forcing Spain to open up South America to its traders. The economy was booming and the Jacobite threat had evaporated. Accordingly, a new, more confident generation, profiting from the 'Georgian Revolution' and increasingly assured by Britain's status as a major world power, was prepared to be less regimented by Palladian rules and more eclectic in its architectural patronage seeking cultural inspiration not just from the Mediterranean but also from their own history.

This new found confidence signalled through the architecture of Baroque masters such as Wren (at St Paul's and St Mary's, Warwick), Hawksmoor (at Westminster Abbey's west towers) and the Gothic revival marks Britain out as the new Venice, which was the real subject of Canaletto's great canvases on display in this exhibition.

The exhibition is accompanied by a fully illustrated publication edited by Dr Steven Parissien and is published by Paul Holberton.

Exhibition organised by Compton Verney.

For public information call +44 (0)1926 645500, visit comptonverney.org.uk, follow @ComptonVerney #Canaletto

This exhibition will be accompanied by

The Canaletto Masterpiece Tour

Saturday 9 May – Sunday 21 June 2015

To accompany our Canaletto exhibition we are delighted to present Canaletto's masterpiece *A Regatta on the Grand Canal* (about 1740) on loan from the National Gallery to promote the understanding, knowledge and appreciation of Old Master paintings to as wide an audience as possible.

This large-scale work depicts the annual carnival regatta in Venice. Some of the figures in the foreground wear the 'bauta', a costume of white mask and black cape which was typically worn during the carnival. The painting shows the one-oared light gondola race. The arms of the Doge Alvise Pisani, who ruled from 1735-41, are visible on the 'macchina della regatta' or floating pavilion on the left, from which coloured flags were presented to the winners. This painting is a companion piece to Canaletto's *Venice: The Basin of San Marco on Ascension Day* of the same date.

This opportunity to bring hugely popular National Gallery paintings to the public's doorstep is being made possible by the generous support of Christie's.

Related events and activities:

Sat 21 March to Sun 14 June, 12 noon	<i>Exhibition Tour</i> Take this 45-minute tour of both exhibitions and find out more about the key pieces, stories, themes and background to <i>Canaletto: Celebrating Britain</i> and <i>The Non-Conformist: Photography by Martin Parr</i> . <i>Included with exhibition admission please sign up on arrival.</i>
Thurs 16 April, 3.30pm	<i>Georgian tea tasting</i> Join Richard Grey, founder of Warwickshire's Grey's teas for a fascinating journey amongst teas from China which have been popular in Britain since Georgian times. Sample high grade teas paired with sweet and savoury foods.
Fri 24 April, 2pm	<i>Talk: Canaletto Celebrating Britain</i> Exhibition curator Dr Steven Parissien looks at the background and ambitions of the works which Canaletto created during his time in Britain in the mid-18 th century. Then leads a tour of the show itself before discussions over

	tea – when he will also be signing copies of the exhibition book.
Fri 1 May, 2pm	<i>Talk: The Cult of Alfred and Canaletto's Britain</i> Dr Oliver Cox (Oxford University) explores how mid-Georgian Britons, looking for a local hero, appropriated and exploited the figure of the great Saxon monarch Alfred, and how this cult was expressed in literature, music, art and architecture.
Thurs 14 May, 5.30pm	<i>Museums at Night</i> For one night only Compton Verney will extend the hours of <i>Canaletto: Celebrating Britain</i> until 8.30pm. Enjoy a variety of Family activities around the exhibition.
Sat 16 May to Sun 14 June, 1.30pm	<i>Daily Masterpiece Talk</i> Take a closer look at Canaletto's Masterpiece <i>A Regatta on the Grand Canal</i> (about 1740) with this daily talk.
Sat 23 May to Fri 29 May, 11am – 4pm	<i>May half term family activity: Collage Your Life</i> Take inspiration from the work of Italian Master, Canaletto and contemporary photographer Martin Parr and create a collage about your life, family and community.
Fri 5 June, 3pm	<i>Canaletto's A Regatta on the Grand Canal</i> Italian expert Dr Lelia Packer from the National Gallery puts Canaletto's great Venetian masterpiece, currently on loan to Compton Verney, in its social and artistic context.

Notes to editors

Compton Verney

- Compton Verney's 2015 season is Saturday 14 March – Sunday 13 December 2015
- The Gallery is open Tuesday – Sunday and Bank Holiday Mondays, 11am – 5pm
- Admission to the exhibitions is £15.00 Adults, £13.50 Concessions, £3.00 Children, £30.00 Family (2 adults and up to 4 children). Under 5s are free. Admission includes entry to the exhibition, the six permanent collections and 120 acres of parkland at Compton Verney. [These prices include a Gift Aid donation]
- For tickets and information see www.comptonverney.org.uk or call 01926 645500

Image information

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Image sheet

Exhibition: *Canaletto: Celebrating Britain*
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Canaletto (attrib.), *A Self-Portrait with Saint Paul's in the background*, 1746 Anglesey Abbey
The Fairhaven Collection (The National Trust) ©
NTPL/Chris Titmus



Canaletto, *London: The Old Horse Guards from St James's Park*
c.1749 ©
The Andrew Lloyd Webber Foundation



Canaletto, *The New Horse Guards from St James's Park*
c.1752-53
Private Collection



Canaletto, *London: The Thames from Somerset House Terrace towards the City* c.1750-51
Royal Collection Trust



Canaletto, *London: The Thames from Somerset House Terrace towards Westminster* c.1750-51
Royal Collection Trust



Canaletto, *A View of Greenwich from the River*
before.1750-2
Tate on long term loan from a
Private Collection since 1997

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Canaletto, *A View of Walton Bridge*
Dulwich Picture Gallery



Canaletto, *London: Westminster Bridge with a procession of Civic barges* c. 1750
Royal Collection Trust



Canaletto, *The Interior of the Rotunda, Ranelagh*
© Compton Verney



Canaletto, *The Grand walk, Vauxhall Gardens* (c1751)
© Compton Verney

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Display: *Canaletto Masterpiece Tour*
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Canaletto *A Regatta on the Grand Canal* about
1740 © National Gallery