

London Art Week 2020 Exhibition

3-10 July 2020, with a Preview on Thursday 2 July

<https://londonartweek.co.uk/>

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The gallery is open by appointment.

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Galerie Canesso to bring Italian Old Masters in the spotlight at London Art Week 2020

Maurizio Canesso is pleased to participate for the first time at this online event with an exhibition of Italian Old Masters, that will also be presented in real life at the gallery in Paris.

Highlights

Among the ten pictures presented in our exhibition *Caravaggism and Tenebrism in Seventeenth-Century Italy*, we wish to focus on three highlights: Francesco Rustici's *Salome with the Head of John the Baptist*, the *Morra Players* by Pietro Ricchi, and the *Martyrdom of Saint Euphemia* by Francesco Cairo, one of the leading figures of Lombard Seicento art, appreciated for his mordant expressionism.

The three works provide formidable examples of Caravaggesque painting in Italy roughly between 1625 and 1635. The adoption of strong chiaroscuro greatly contributes to the theatrical qualities of these original compositions, each conceived as a true performance. The rare subject of the *Martyrdom of Saint Euphemia* painted by Francesco Cairo expresses dynamic movement and a great sense of energy in the figure of the executioner, seen from behind, as well as in the

lions, who surge forward from the middle ground. These emotion-filled visions of a specific period and artistic movement speak to us directly today, dissolving centuries-old barriers of history.



Francesco Rustici, called « Il Rustichino », *Salome with the Head of John the Baptist*, © Galerie Canesso Paris



Pietro Ricchi, *Morra Players*, © Galerie Canesso Paris



Francesco Cairo, *The Martyrdom of Saint Euphemia*, © Galerie Canesso Paris

Caravaggism and Tenebrism in Seventeenth-Century Italy

At the very beginning of the 1600s Caravaggio revolutionised pictorial approaches to light, adopting markedly chiaroscuro compositions and influencing scores of artists throughout the century and into the 1700s. These forceful contrasts enhanced the sense of drama – a key concept of Caravaggesque naturalism – as seen in the paintings presented here.

The dramatic tonality of Francesco Peruzzini's *Cato*, steeped in shadow, is used to convey an example of noble death in Antiquity – that of a victim refusing to submit to his subjugator. Conversely, the strong light on the face of the *Apostle Paul* by the Genoese painter Bernardo Strozzi emphasises both his vivid physical presence and his importance for Christianity. Another revival of Caravaggism is found in the adoption of alternating light in the audacious and potent *Geographer* by the Ticinese painter Giuseppe Antonio Petrini, or in the meditatively reunited figures in Gregorio Preti's *Return of Tobias*.

But such effects can also further the sense of a photographic snapshot or film still, as perfectly illustrated by our grand *Martyrdom of Saint Euphemia* by the Lombard Francesco Cairo. Finally, they add to the strength of a painting, not just in how it is constructed but in the power of the image itself – as in Vermiglio's *David and Goliath*, where the figure stands out from the dark background it fills completely, often at a dynamic, tilted angle, or tumbling out of the picture space, as seen in the same subject painted by Antonio Zanchi, one of the finest Venetian tenebrists.

Among these followers, some had a penchant for including a candle or a lamp. A flame gives matter to light, as well as adding the notion of the passing of time in nocturnal scenes. This is true of our *Salome with the Head of John the Baptist*, painted in Rome in about 1620 by Francesco Rustici; and, in the middle years of the century, it recurs in the *Morra Players* by the Lucchese painter Pietro Ricchi, in which the men's faces are lit from below, thus enabling us to join their luminous isolation.

These chiaroscuro effects also appear in still life painting, as seen in the Genoese Anton Maria Vassallo's exemplary play on *natura morta* and *natura viva* – inanimate objects combined with living creatures.

Galerie Canesso Paris: a brief biography

Discovering and rediscovering masterpieces of Italian art, from the Renaissance to the Baroque, and giving them new life before they are offered to international clients, both private and public – this has been Maurizio Canesso's path in a career spanning thirty years. He founded his Paris gallery in 1994, in the heart of the Hôtel Drouot neighbourhood.

In 2010, the exhibition on the Master of the Blue Jeans (2010) was one of the gallery's most original contributions, revealing an intriguing painter of reality in late 17th century Europe. The artist remains anonymous, but the paintings provide the first representation of jean fabric, described with indigo blue in varying tones. The awareness of this new body of work prompted widespread interest and appealed to fashion designers worldwide.



Giovanni Peruzzini, *The Death of Cato*, © Galerie Canesso Paris



Bernardo Strozzi, *Saint Paul*, © Galerie Canesso Paris



Giuseppe Antonio Petrini, *A Geographer*, © Galerie Canesso Paris



Gregorio Preti, *The Return of Tobias*, © Galerie Canesso Paris



Francesco Cairo, *The Martyrdom of Saint Euphemia*, © Galerie Canesso Paris



Giuseppe Vermiglio, *David Holding Goliath's Head*, © Galerie Canesso Paris



Antonio Zanchi, *David and Goliath*, © Galerie Canesso Paris



Francesco Rustici, called « Il Rustichino », *Salome with the Head of John the Baptist*, © Galerie Canesso Paris



Pietro Ricchi, *Morra Players*, © Galerie Canesso Paris



Anton Maria Vassallo, *A dog, a cat and a hedgehog surrounded by copper utensils*, © Galerie Canesso Paris