

THE  
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On the beach: Eugène Boudin at the Salon in the 1860s

Girolamo da Carpi's drawings | Louis-Philippe at Versailles | Alfred Stevens as a student in Florence  
Titian and his age in Frankfurt | Dorothea Tanning in London | Arp in Venice | Luigi Ghirri in Paris



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first mentioned in a Florentine inventory of 1589, which lists the property Catherine's granddaughter, Christine of Lorraine, brought to the Medici court when she married Ferdinand I, Grand Duke of Tuscany. Catherine must have offered the tapestries to Christine, perhaps in order to ensure they would be displayed in her native city of Florence. Moreover, aware of the declining power of the Valois dynasty – the death of her son Henri III just a few months later brought the reign of the Valois to an end – Catherine may have intended to preserve the set of tapestries, and the powerful image of the family it conveyed, from potential destruction.

In the catalogue essays, Marjorie E. Wieseman discusses Catherine de' Medici as patron and collector and Francesca De Luca summarises the conservation history of the Valois Tapestries since their arrival at the Medici court in 1589. On the whole, they are extraordinarily well conserved, but De Luca lists some of the events that damaged the warp and contributed to the loss of the once vibrant colours, including poor safekeeping, prolonged exposure to direct light and the flood that afflicted Florence in 1966. The original colour scheme is visible on the better-preserved backs. Costanza Perrone Da Zara and Claudia Beyer offer a detailed illustrated account of the recent conservation treatment given to three of the eight hangings and Alessandra Griffio surveys the Florentine tapestry collection from the Medici to the present day.

Elizabeth Cleland adds new evidence in support of Catherine as the main patron behind the set of tapestries, a notion on which recent scholarship has come to agree.<sup>2</sup> Based on her informed knowledge of the field, Cleland estimates that four weavers working simultaneously at four looms could have completed the set in less than a year. Her main contribution is the suggestion that three distinct artists were responsible for transferring the preliminary and smaller designs by Caron to the now lost, large-scale preparatory cartoons used by the weavers. In her view, although all three artists were responsible for introducing to the foreground the life-size figures, which are absent from the Caron drawings, one artist was more skilled than the other two. Interestingly, during cleaning, Perrone Da Zara and Beyer were able to ascertain that the less able weavers were using richer metal-wrapped thread.

Although this set of tapestries has attracted scholarly attention since the beginning of the twentieth century, surprisingly, the exhibition on which the

catalogue is based was the first exclusively dedicated to the subject. A number of publications have examined the scenes represented in the background of the tapestries and attempted to associate them with real events that occurred at the court of the last Valois. Frances Yates's *The Valois Tapestries* (1959) was the first monographic work in which the tapestries were fully assessed and assigned the individual titles by which they are commonly known today. Nonetheless, several points remain obscure. For instance, the exact identity of the Flemish weaving workshops has yet to be firmly identified. Some of the larger figures in the foreground remain nameless and some of the events depicted in the background still lack satisfying identification. As yet no documentary evidence has been found to confirm that Catherine de' Medici commissioned the set, nor do we know of its original location before it reached Florence. Is this group unique or was there a second woven set, as Cleland, and before her Yates, suggests? As symbols of power, status and the strength and legacy of the Valois family, these dazzling tapestries continue to fascinate. This exemplary catalogue will bring renewed attention to them and hopefully spur new research that will pursue the achievements of the book's authors.

1 The six drawings were brought together for the first time in 2018 for an exhibition at the Courtauld Gallery, London; see K. Gottardo, ed.: *exh. cat. Antoine Caron. Drawing for Catherine de' Medici*, London (Courtauld Gallery) 2017; it was reviewed by Erin Griffey in this Magazine, 160 (2018), pp.985–86.  
2 To this reviewer's knowledge, the suggestion was first made by P.-F. Bertrand: 'A new method of interpreting the Valois Tapestries, through a history of Catherine de Médicis', *Studies in the Decorative Arts* 14 (2006), p.40.

### **Il disegno veneziano 1580–1650: Ricostruzioni storico-artistiche**

By Bert W. Meijer. 596 pp. incl. 42 col. + 715 b. & w. ill. (Leo S. Olschki, Florence, 2017), £115. ISBN 978-88-222-6503-6.

by CATHERINE WHISTLER

'*Ci vuol coraggio*' ('it takes courage'), as Giambattista Tiepolo remarked when facing a demanding fresco commission for the King of Spain,<sup>1</sup> and Bert Meijer may well have felt the same in setting himself the challenge of presenting a corpus of late sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century Venetian drawings. Underpinning this new volume is Carlo Ridolfi's pioneering publication on the lives of Venetian artists, *Le Maraviglie dell'Arte ovvero le*

*Vite degli illustri Pittori Veneti e dello Stato* (1648). Meijer's ambitious aim is to investigate the draughtsmanship of the later generations of artists presented by Ridolfi together with those Ridolfi did not examine, who were still alive at the time. Meijer provides updated biographies and in many cases a detailed catalogue of the artist's drawings.

In mapping out this complex area in his introductory essay, Meijer is frank about the aims and limitations of his task. On the one hand, as Marco Boschini explained in *Le ricche Minere della pittura veneziana* (1674), the seven leading artists of the period (he cites Leonardo Corona, Palma Giovane, Sante Peranda, Antonio Aliense, Pietro Malombra and Girolamo Pilotti) were so similar in the way they based their work closely on that of their great predecessors Titian, Tintoretto and Veronese that even connoisseurs had problems in telling their styles apart, something that remains challenging today. On the other hand, the problem of the survival of drawings is acute, and there are few securely identifiable sheets by most of these artists, with the exception of Palma Giovane.

Ridolfi had much to say about Venetian artists' talents and interests in *disegno*, and there is extensive documentary and visual evidence that testifies to the flourishing of Venetian drawing in this period, including the sociable and pedagogical practices seen in informal *accademie* or life classes (*scuole del nudo*), as well as to the appreciation and collecting of drawings in Venice. Nonetheless, the essential connoisseurial work of scrutinising and attributing drawings is difficult since scholarly foundations are constantly shifting with new attributions being made and new archival documents emerging. Therefore, few drawings can be linked to specific paintings; even where there are clear connections, the attributions and dates of the relevant paintings may often be contested.

Meijer provides an extensive and informative introductory essay with detailed references that dig deeply into the secondary literature. In looking across the period 1580–1650, he considers artists' education and training, often making comparisons between Venice and Florence, and noting practices of drawing from life or from sculptural models in workshop-based training. The foundation of the Accademia delle Arte del Disegno in Florence – of which Titian and Tintoretto were elected members in 1566 – was a phenomenon distinct from the many academies embracing literary and scientific interests that appeared in major centres, including Venice, where

there was no formal Accademia for the teaching of fine art until 1750. No doubt it was the association of drawing with knowledge of the human body and the consequent understanding of its expressive potential that gave rise to the use of the term '*accademia*' in Venice in the 1610s and 1620s for communal drawing classes with a posed model. But this was also the age of the art-loving *virtuoso*, in which aspiring gentlemen might emulate the aristocratic accomplishments embedded in Baldassar Castiglione's *Libro del Cortegiano* (1528). They could learn to draw with the help of the innovative manuals compiled by Odoardo Fialetti (1608) and by Giacomo Franco (1612), addressed to '*virtuosi giovani*' ('young art lovers'); Meijer wonders if these manuals, in their presentation of fragmentary parts of the body for copying, reflected actual workshop practice in Venice. He is also concerned with the stylistic and technical considerations involved in distinguishing Venetian drawings from those of other schools, and with examining the role of the extended family workshop, with consequent questions concerning the function and survival of drawings.

The book's structure is complicated. A substantial '*Corpus dei disegnatori*' is arranged alphabetically by artist (thirty-six names in total) with biographical information and a catalogue of accepted and proposed works for most, but it also includes lengthy essays on particular artists in place of a catalogue of their work. The artists dealt with in this way include Pietro Bernardi, the Caliaro family, Antonio Cecchini, Palma Giovane and the Maganza family, with much information on individual drawings incorporated in dense footnotes. The reasons for this difference in approach vary. However, Meijer provides detailed indices of names and of places, which make it possible to locate and read his views on specific drawings. Although the drawings in each catalogue corpus are illustrated, with comparative images nearby, the entries are arranged by current location rather than in approximate chronological order, somewhat disrupting potential visual arguments.

In terms of attribution, Meijer takes an expansive view, including traditional attributions, however remote, and makes tentative proposals with a view to opening up further discussion. In many cases,

4. *Assumption of the Virgin with St Francis*, attributed by Bert W. Meijer to Fra Santo da Venezia. c.1609. Pen, brown ink and wash, squared in black chalk, 39.8 by 21.8 cm. (British Museum, London).



comparisons with paintings provide the basis for new proposals. For example, Meijer points to the close correspondence of an animated compositional drawing in the British Museum, London (Fig.4), hitherto classified as by Andrea Vicentino, to an altarpiece in S. Rocco, Belluno, signed and dated 1609 by the little-known Fra Santo da Venezia (pp.432–33); similarly, many useful comparisons are made in the discussion of Giulio del Moro (pp.168–72). Over the years this method has led Meijer to make many discoveries, such as the attribution of a compositional study for a *Baptism of Christ* to Pietro Mera (p.308) and a finished drawing to Ascanio Spineda (p.437), in each case providing important points of reference since these are artists by whom no drawings were previously known.

Not all of Meijer's arguments will find consensus, such as his attribution of a fine drawing probably by Aliense in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, to the virtually unknown Antonio Foler (c.1536/37–1616), who worked on fresco decoration with Aliense at the Villa Barbarigo, Noventa Vicentina, especially as the quality of the drawing is far higher than that of the painting adduced as a comparison (pp.191–92). In a similar vein, a vigorous, inventive drawing in the Kupferstichkabinett, Berlin, long held to be a key work by Giovanni Contarini because of its evident connection to a battle painting by the artist in the Palazzo Ducale, Venice, is now given to Giuseppe Alabardi on the basis of a rather pedestrian painting in the Convento Antoniani, Padua, probably by Alabardi (pp.35–38). However, the exploratory nature of the Berlin drawing accounts for the many differences between it and Contarini's painting and the Padua painting seems to derive from the drawing or a further development of the same composition. Meijer's attribution of the Berlin drawing to Alabardi is based on a close analysis of the Venice and Padua paintings. As a logical conclusion, he attributes to Alabardi other drawings formerly given to Contarini. However, Meijer notes that as no certain

drawings by Alabardi are known, the group may in fact be by a different hand.

The complications and contradictions inherent in researching and shaping the graphic *œuvres* of little-known draughtsmen are evident throughout this endeavour. As Meijer suggests, his work is open-ended, with new pathways now extending for other scholars to follow. The book is extremely valuable in bringing together an enormous amount of information and in juxtaposing images of drawings and potentially related paintings, thus acting as a stimulus for further discoveries and interpretations. It stands as a monumental testament to Meijer's achievement as a drawings scholar and a historian of Venetian art.

<sup>1</sup> Letter from Giambattista Tiepolo, probably to Francesco Algarotti, probably 3rd March 1762, in A. Bettagno and M. Magrini: *Lettere artistiche del Settecento veneziano*, Vicenza 2002, I, p.314.

### Wallpapers at Temple Newsam 1635 to the Present

By Anthony Wells-Cole and Barbara Walker. 368 pp. incl. 849 col. + 29 b. & w. ills. (*Leeds Art Fund, Leeds, 2018*), £50. ISBN 978-0-9547979-5-9.

by LESLEY HOSKINS

This complete catalogue of the collection of over one thousand wallcoverings at Temple Newsam, Leeds, a historic country house in the care of Leeds Museums and Galleries, is the culmination of more than thirty-five years of house archaeology, collecting and meticulous scholarship by Anthony Wells-Cole, his colleagues and collaborators. The substantial volume is richly illustrated with colour images of almost all the wallpapers discussed, supplemented by black-and-white archival photographs. There are larger collections elsewhere in the United Kingdom, for example at the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, the Whitworth Art Gallery, Manchester, and the Museum of Domestic Design and Architecture (MoDA), London, but the depth and quality of the information presented here bring Temple Newsam's collections to the fore. Moreover, the author's approach takes the British study of wallpapers in a new direction, away from single-minded attention to design and production techniques (although these are well covered) towards questions of function and use. When was the wallcovering installed? By whom and why? What was the space used for? What can it add to the history of the house it came from?

And what does the history of the house add to our knowledge of a particular paper?

The first section – the longest, most detailed and most fascinating – discusses all of the some four hundred wallcoverings known to have been used at Temple Newsam, built in about 1520. Wallpapers were introduced in the early eighteenth century and have formed an important part of its decoration ever since. Wells-Cole outlines some of the reasons for the instigation of new schemes: building modifications and alterations in room use; dry rot or insect damage; royal visits, which occasioned flurries of anticipatory redecoration; and the personal interests and tastes of the successive owners, which sometimes had a particularly strong impact, as in the case of Isabella, dowager Marchioness of Hertford (1759–1834), and Emily Charlotte Meynell Ingram (1840–1904). Both devoted their lengthy widowhoods to fashionable improvements. The house remained in private hands until 1922, when it was sold to Leeds Corporation and, according to Wells-Cole's account, the next sixty years were unhappy ones for its historic wallpapers. All except a spectacular Chinese hand-painted panorama, hung in about 1827, were removed and replaced with finishes that did not always respect historic precedent. That policy went into sharp reverse in about 1980, since when huge curatorial effort has gone into investigating the original schemes and recreating them where appropriate, with ever-growing attention to detail. The book provides a room-by-room and layer-by-layer review of the remaining or known wall-coverings, some of which are represented by only the merest scraps, discovered, for example, behind a nail head or, more often, under the floorboards. Readers need to concentrate in order to follow the train of events and it is essential to refer back to the house plans provided in order to understand the plot. But the effort is merited, as the uncovering of treasures and the examination of dates and patterns, locations, owners and motives is absorbing.

The next three sections catalogue items that originated elsewhere. Sixty-four wallpapers came originally from Ashburnham Place, Sussex. They are predominantly good-sized samples of nineteenth-century hand-printed patterns; some have interesting stamps that provide evidence of their date and manufacturer. A mixed collection of over two hundred wallcoverings, some of them dating back to the dawn of wallpaper production in the sixteenth century, was donated in the mid 1980s by Roger Warner,

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