



# *From Rubens to Makart*

LIECHTENSTEIN. THE PRINCELY COLLECTIONS

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or diminish the connoisseur's enjoyment of the art. [...] Indeed, it is remarkable that it has never occurred to even one of the owners of such a highly important collection to print a catalogue of this, while in contrast the most insignificant collector regards such as a necessity. [...] While in the stately halls of the first floor the majority of the pictures are well lit and the various schools separated from one another, in the fourteen rooms of the second floor not only is the lighting highly inadequate and some pictures so poorly lit that one cannot even see them, but in other rooms the schools are presented in wild disarray.'

Breaks with the past could also lead to disastrous losses. The decisions of Prince Johann II (1840–1929), which were characterised by his own personal taste – the prince attempted to free the gallery from nudity and violence – led to the sacrifice of Rubens's early works acquired by Johann Adam Andreas I, *Samson and Delilah* (auctioned in Paris in 1880, today in the National Gallery, London; fig. 13) and *The Massacre of the Innocents* (sold in 1921, today in the Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto; fig. 14). Prince Johann II also broke with another continuity, and this break is still decisive today for the acquisition policy of the Princely Collections: the acquisition of contemporary art, which has no longer had any significance in collection policy for nearly a century. With Prince Johann II, the thread that had determined acquisition policy for centuries broke. Princes such as Johann Adam Andreas I had commissioned works by contemporary avant-garde artists; in Naples in 1725, Prince Joseph Wenzel I von Liechtenstein had himself portrayed as a young man by Francesco Solimena (1657–1747; cat. no. 58), as well as, shortly before his death in 1772, by Franz Xaver Messerschmidt (1736–1783; fig. 15). In Rome, with the pair of paintings *Hercules at the Crossroads* and *Venus Presenting Aeneas with Armour Forged by Vulcan*, both signed and dated 'P.B.1748' (cat. nos. 68 and 69), he purchased the most contemporary paintings by Pompeo Girolamo Batoni (1708–1787), and in the Venetian studio of



FIG. 13 Peter Paul Rubens, *Samson and Delilah*, 1609/10, oil on panel, 185 x 205 cm, The National Gallery, London, NG6461

FIG. 14 Peter Paul Rubens, *The Massacre of the Innocents*, 1611/12, oil on panel, 142 x 183 cm, The Thomson Collection at the Art Gallery of Ontario, 2014/1581



FIG. 15 Franz Xaver Messerschmidt, *Bust of Prince Joseph Wenzel I von Liechtenstein (1696–1772)*, 1770/72, tin alloy, remnants of fire silvering, original black marble base, h. 37.5 cm (without the base), LIECHTENSTEIN. The Princely Collections, Vaduz–Vienna, SK 1480

Giovanni Antonio Canal (known as Canaletto, 1697–1768), he assembled one of the most important collections of the works of this painter. In Paris, finally, he acquired three of Jean Siméon Chardin's (1699–1779) most beautiful paintings, and ordered a fourth from Vienna – these works, as well as the fourteen Canalettos previously in the Princely Collections, four monumental examples of which had also been acquired by Prince Joseph Wenzel I von Liechtenstein (fig. 16), were deaccessioned in the period after the Second World War.

The two veduta of the Summer Palace executed by Bernardo Bellotto (1721–1780) during his sojourn in Vienna – commissioned by Joseph Wenzel I – give us an idea of the appearance of the palace and garden complex in the former suburb of Rossau (fig. 17). Joseph Wenzel I was also one of the princes who was greatly interested in books. Many of the cimelia still preserved to this day in the Princely Library were acquired by him, for the most part during his stay in Paris.

Last but not least, Joseph Wenzel I also had the famous *Golden Carriage* (fig. 18) built in Paris. On the one hand because of its artistic quality, on the other hand because of its historical significance, the most technically modern vehicle of its time is today the most important surviving ceremonial carriage from the French Rococo period and the ultimate expression of the artistic taste of its time.

The catalogue of the family gallery by Vincenzo Fanti, commissioned by the prince and published in 1767, was the first of its kind in Vienna. It contains 501 paintings and 186 sculptures; twelve of the paintings are described as new acquisitions by Joseph Wenzel I, the rest of his extensive purchases presumably hung in the prince's own gallery in Herrengasse.

With Prince Johann II von Liechtenstein, the courage to seek the new was superseded by the mission to preserve the old. He donated the best pieces of his enormous



FIG. 16 Giovanni Antonio Canal, known as Canaletto, *The Canal Grande from Ca' Balbi toward the Rialto Bridge*, 1720/23, oil on canvas, 144 x 207 cm, Museo del Settecento Veneziano, Ca' Rezzonico, Venice, 2325

The painting – extraordinary in terms of its detailed painterly execution and pictorial theme – depicts Christ seated on a stone pedestal in a baldachin-like Renaissance structure. On the sides, the view opens onto a spacious landscape. The Saviour wears the coronation robe and crown of thorns, and his features express less suffering than silent, solemn mourning. This type of devotional image, in which the figure of Christ is removed from the scenic representation of the crowning of thorns, is known as *Christ in Repose*. It can be traced in Italian painting to the fourteenth century and in southern German sculpture to the early fifteenth century (Schiller 1968, pp. 83–5). The motif obviously enjoyed great popularity in late fifteenth-century Ferrara, from where this painting also derives. It was acquired by Prince Johann II von Liechtenstein (1840–1929) from the collection of Conte Massa in 1883. In the image of the serene Saviour, patiently facing his destiny, special significance is attached to the crossed hands, in which all vanishing lines of the architectural structure converge (Stockhammer, in: Kräftner 2004, p. 107). The hands are not bound; instead, the rope is slung around the neck as a noose, familiar from depictions of the *Ecce Homo*.

There is another version of this painting with nearly the same dimensions in London (fig. 3.1), in which the composition is identical, but with a different landscape in the background and a variation on the ornamental decoration of the baldachin. Furthermore, the figure of Christ also appears isolated in a landscape in a painting in Athens, Georgia, recently attributed to Antonio Cicognara (Georgia Museum of Art,



### 3 Unknown Master from Ferrara *Christ in Repose*

C. 1480  
Tempera and oil on panel  
54 × 35 cm  
Acquired in 1883 by Prince Johann II  
von Liechtenstein  
LIECHTENSTEIN, The Princely Collections,  
Vaduz–Vienna, GE 860

SELECTED LITERATURE:  
Venturi 1914, p. 86, fig. 57; Longhi 1956, p. 96,  
note 51, p. 101, note p. 140; Volpe 1977, pp. 77–8;  
Tanzi 1988, p. 83, fig. 46; Gregori 1990, pp. 39–  
40 (Marco Tanzi); Kräftner 2004, p. 107

3.1 Master from Ferrara, *Christ in Repose*, late  
15<sup>th</sup> century, tempera on panel, 50.8 × 33.3 cm,  
The National Gallery, London, NG 3069



made of basalt, which are now in the Vatican Museum. Posthumus has, however, also rendered as a beautifully overgrown ruin the mausoleum of the daughter of the Roman Emperor Constantine, which in reality had been preserved almost intact, having been converted into the memorial church of Santa Costanza. Similarly, the *Torlonia Vase*, installed in 1536 in the Cesi Gardens and recorded by Heemskerck as still in one piece, is shown by Posthumus as being broken into several pieces. The picture is inscribed with a centrally placed motto derived from Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (XV, 232, 234–236): 'TEMPVS EDAX RERV TVQVE INVIDIOSA VESTVSTAS O[MN]IA DESTRVITIS' (Oh, most voracious Time, and you, envious Age, you destroy everything). Every human activity, as we are both told and shown here, is at the mercy of transience. When architects and artists measured and drew the ruins of Antiquity, they were also engaging in a vain battle with the evidence of transience and decay. Somewhat like Sisyphus, they slaved away in order to preserve, or at least pass on to posterity, the last of what had survived. Is this perhaps a metaphor for the struggle of the artist, above all of Raphael, who wanted to put a stop to the raids of the plunderers and speculative builders, who in those days enthusiastically undertook to create a new Rome?

J. K.





36

### Frans Pourbus the Elder

(Bruges 1545–1581 Antwerp), attributed

#### *Portrait of an Old Woman*

C. 1570/80

Oil on panel

109 × 84 cm

Acquired in 1696 by Prince Johann Adam  
Andreas I von Liechtenstein  
LIECHTENSTEIN. The Princely Collections,  
Vaduz–Vienna, GE 157

#### SELECTED LITERATURE:

Fanti 1767, p. 55, no. 325; Friedländer 1947;  
Wilhelm 1976, p. 77; Van de Velde 1979/80;  
Baumstark 1980, pp. 135–6, cat. no. 36;  
Brackez 2012; Jonckheere 2012

The lasting interest shown in the work is expressed not least in the fact that it was reproduced in print by the engraver Cornelius Martinus Vermeulen (c. 1644–c. 1708) – probably towards the end of the seventeenth century –, which made it available to a much larger public (e.g. The Albertina Museum, Vienna). Maria's middle name 'Luisa', cited in the caption of the engraving, cannot be corroborated through contemporary sources. The painting was acquired in 1710 by Prince Johann Adam Andreas I von Liechtenstein (1657–1712) for the Princely Collections from the Antwerp-based art dealer Jan Pieter van Bredael (1654–1745). L. R.

The unspecified elderly woman presents herself with a penetrating, almost questioning gaze in a seated position, in slight profile. The greatest pictorial attention has been dedicated to the individual characterisation of the subject's psychological condition. In an upright, nearly static posture, at rest in a sparsely decorated wooden chair with a red satin backrest, the outline of the woman is clearly set off from the dark, rather unelaborate background. The reduced pictorial composition and the absence of further attributes necessitate absolute concentration on the essence of the sitter. The light entering from the top right is reflected to great effect from a revealed fold of her garment and submerges the right section of the painting in shadow. Characterised by a consistently warm colouring, some extremely fine and detailed sections, such as the face, contrast with notably loosely painted zones, such as the subject's greenish skirt. Her dark garb, with white frills at the sleeves and collar, as well as her light bonnet identify her as a member of the upper-middle class that played such a central role in the fortunes of the Netherlands at the time when this work was created. Over the course of the sixteenth century, Antwerp advanced to become one of the most important economic and political centres of Europe. Its inhabitants profited from the ascension of the Netherlands to a globally active commercial power, and fulfilled their need for representation and the reinforcement of their social ranking with commissioned likenesses. The confidence linked with the new status of the bourgeoisie expresses itself not least in the direct eye contact of those portrayed with the beholder.

The painting was already acquired for the Princely Collections in 1696 by Prince Johann Adam Andreas I von Liechtenstein (1657–1712), through the Vienna art dealer Ferdinand Renato, together with the *Portrait of an Old Man* (fig. 36.1), which has nearly identical dimensions. Originally acquired as works of Antonis Mor (1516/19–1575), Vincenzo Fanti attributed them for the first time in 1767 to Frans Pourbus the Elder. In contrast with that of his father, Pieter Pourbus (1523/24–1584), and of his son, Frans the Younger (1569–1622), the work of this artist has been notably neglected by research to date, with the exception of the master thesis by Gaëlle Brackez from 2012. Max Friedländer and Carl van de Velde respectively suggested the attribution of further paintings to Pourbus's surviving oeuvre on the basis of signed and dated

The Italian veduta and landscape painter Giovanni Antonio Canal, known as Canaletto, became famous for his many views of his home city of Venice, which were distinguished by nearly photorealistically precise and detailed representation, and were created with the help of a camera obscura. The views of Venice executed during the late years of Canaletto's life, following a ten-year stay in England, are distinguished from his early works by a darker pallet.

Four important, early vedutas of the large Canaletto collection, which have with certainty been part of the Princely Collections since at least 1806, and possibly even since the reign of Prince Joseph Wenzel I von Liechtenstein (1696–1772), as well as several smaller settings, had to be sold in 1953 and 1956. These works are today found in the major museums of the world and in private collections. All the more gratifying is the fact that the losses could at least be partially compensated for through the acquisition of two important works of the artist: in 1997, the painting *The Saint Mark's Square in Venice looking West with the Campanile* was acquired, and in 2007, the painting *Canal View with the Ponte delle Guglie, the Palazzo Labia and the Campanile of San Geremia* (cat. no. 66). The Venetian veduta school is in this way once again present in the Princely Collections, especially in the case of the motif of Piazza di San Marco, which Canaletto repeatedly documented in his paintings in different variations and from various perspectives. The work of art originally belonging to the Princely Collections, with the representation of Saint Mark's Square, was executed significantly later than the painting being presented here, and is today found in the Museo Thyssen-Bornemisza in Madrid (fig. 65.1). When comparing these works with the new acquisition of the Princely Collections, it is conspicuous that the view of the square, the heart of the lagoon city, has been rotated by 180 degrees. The colour pallet and the light appear significantly more moderate and subdued in the newly acquired work. Looking out from the Palazzo Ducale, the scenery in the present painting

extends, starting from the left, over today's Biblioteca Marciana, the architectural link between the Piazzetta and Saint Mark's Square, and the Procuratie Nuove toward the western end, with the Procuratie Vecchie represented extending deep into the background of the painting. The south façade of San Marco is also shown truncated, while the giant Campanile, the city symbol of the Serenissima and at the same time the highest building in Venice, ascends with all its monumental height in the left third of the pictorial space. Stalls, tents, and colourful human and animal figures, including, for example, a seller of squash blossoms, representing a special feature in Canaletto's oeuvre, not only enliven the piazza, but also



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**Giovanni Antonio Canal,  
 known as Canaletto**  
*The Saint Mark's Square in  
 Venice looking West with the  
 Campanile*

Before 1723  
 Oil on canvas  
 75 × 97 cm  
 Acquired in 1997 by Prince Hans-Adam II  
 von und zu Liechtenstein  
 LIECHTENSTEIN. The Princely Collections,  
 Vaduz–Vienna, GE 208

SELECTED LITERATURE:  
 Links 1997, p. XI, 6, no. 36\*, fig. pl. 242,  
 no. 36\*; exhib. cat. Venice 2001, pp. 23–4, 120,  
 cat. no. 45; exhib. cat. Treviso 2008, pp. 120, 254,  
 cat. no. 23, fig. p. 126; exhib. cat. Vienna 2010,  
 pp. 68, 207, cat. no. 23, figs. 69, 206; exhib. cat.  
 Aix-en-Provence 2015, pp. 72–3, 206, cat. no. 6

65.1 Giovanni Antonio Canal, known as  
 Canaletto, *The Piazza San Marco in Venice*,  
 1723/24, oil on canvas, 141.5 × 204.5 cm, Museo  
 Nacional Thyssen-Bornemisza, Madrid, 1956.1



Two worlds collide in the stone walls of the window; the real world outside and the contemplative cell of the monk. The window towards the world at this side forms the threshold, and the small birds fluttering in and out are the messengers. Calmly contemplating, the monk sits on his chair in front of the opening between these two worlds, elbows supported on an armrest, head pensively positioned in one hand. He has just finished his frugal meal, the remains of the bread, the knife, and two jugs are still standing on the table. Extreme simplicity pervades the whole scene, not even a glass or beaker is in view. On the floor, on the broad floorboards, is a small tub filled with apples. The window has no casements, one simple shutter can close up the opening and finally separate the two worlds from each other. The cross behind the monk is also simple, a plain beam cross without a body with a crown of thorns hangs before the shabby wall. The only comfort – here almost with a feeling of luxury – is a small oven to warm the Spartan cell. Besides the birds, the clock is the second ‘direct connection’ to the outer world; at least the hour strikes for the hermit in his bare walls at the same time as for the people outside. And yet this picture is filled with life, filled with an astonishing cheer. Here, too, it is the small joys that are celebrated; in these animals, the human being is fused into a felicitous unity with creation, when the monk picks up the crumbs left on his table and feeds the birds. Hence the picture gives an impetus for us to think about life and its meaning, to speculate whether we really need money and power, palaces and whatever else, in order to catch a glimpse of this small joy for ourselves. J.K.

The influence of historical role models from genre painting in the Netherlands and France become apparent in Peter Fendi’s painting *The Cautious Parlourmaid*. Like Jean Siméon Chardin (1699–1779) in his enchanting genre paintings, still part of the core stock of the Princely Collections in the nineteenth century, Fendi takes a simply clad servant girl as his theme. The easy-going, free and casual method of painting is also reminiscent of the French role model. Here, the representation of the simplest content continues without interruption from the genre painting of the seventeenth into the first half of the nineteenth century.

One does not really know why the girl with the hair tightly combed back is very curiously attempting to catch sight of the person outside the door. Is it merely caution, or is it the secret visitor she hopes to grant entry to waiting out there? Here too, like so often, ambiguity is the bearer of tension in the painting. The ambivalence between the virtue of caution and the thought of illicit vice that might be found in the background carries the painting.

The objects Fendi positions throughout the painting also seem like a realisation of the decorative objects in the paintings of the Frenchman Chardin, from the bowl with the sponge through the whiskbroom leaning against the wall to the glass carafe

81

Peter Fendi

(Vienna 1796–1842 Vienna)

*The Monk at the Window*

1832

Oil on panel

28 × 32 cm

Signed at bottom left ‘Fendi. 1832.’

Acquired in 1987 by Prince Franz Joseph II von und zu Liechtenstein

LIECHTENSTEIN. The Princely Collections, Vaduz–Vienna, GE 2114

SELECTED LITERATURE:

Exhib. cat. Vienna 2010, p. 204



82

Peter Fendi

(Vienna 1796–1842 Vienna)

*The Cautious Parlourmaid*

1834

Oil on panel

23.4 × 19.8 cm

Acquired in 1984 by Prince Franz Joseph II von und zu Liechtenstein

LIECHTENSTEIN. The Princely Collections, Vaduz–Vienna, GE 2387

SELECTED LITERATURE:

Inv. cat. Österreichische Galerie 1992, vol. 2, p. 15; exhib. cat. Vienna 2010, p. 215, fig. 215







III

### Hans Makart

(Salzburg 1840–1884 Vienna)

#### *A Nubian*

1875/76

Oil on canvas

272 × 155 cm

Signed at bottom right 'H. Makart'

Acquired in 2005 by Prince Hans-Adam II  
von und zu Liechtenstein

LIECHTENSTEIN. The Princely Collections,  
Vaduz–Vienna, GE 2392

#### SELECTED LITERATURE:

Frodl 1974, cat. no. 280; exhib. cat. Vienna 2000,  
pp. 128–9, cat. no. 7.5; exhib. cat. Vienna 2010,  
p. 215, fig. p. 214

work was also recently acquired for the Princely Collections. From the same period comes the elegant full-length portrait of Princess Hanna Liechtenstein-Klinkosch (1891–1922), like the artist a figure at the centre of high society in the Vienna of the time. Equally elegant is the recently acquired painting *Woman Praying – A Beautiful Woman of Viennese Society* from 1880 (cat. no. 112).  
J. K.

Together with Franz von Lenbach, Leopold Carl Müller, and other fellow artists, Hans Makart travelled to Egypt in 1875/76. The group took up residence in an abandoned palace called Musaffir Chan, which the viceroy Ismail Pascha had placed at their disposal. At that period, journeys to the land of the Nile were almost de rigueur, quenching the artists' longing for new and exotic subjects as well as satisfying the demands of their customers for unusual depictions of the oriental lifestyle and foreign luxury goods. Then as now, these paintings achieved top prices on the international art market. Entitled *A Nubian* and signed 'H. Makart', this is one of the paintings executed during Makart's journey. It was acquired for the Princely Collections by Prince Hans-Adam II von und zu Liechtenstein in 2005. In this painting, Makart has created a balance between the figure of the Nubian, which is rendered slightly from below, and the surrounding architecture. Clad in light-coloured robes and a red turban, the dark-skinned man stands out against a gloomy corner of a wall belonging to some unidentifiable architectural structure. On his left he carries a richly bejewelled sword. In one hand he clasps a string of beads while the other hand is draped over his thigh. Makart's portraits are distinguished by a combination of generous sketch-like brushwork and a particular intensity of colour. The way in which Makart held court at his studio in Gußhausstraße in Vienna earned him the epithet of 'prince among painters'. He is regarded as one of the most outstanding artists of the Historicist period, whose art paved the way for painting around 1900.

A. H.