



NEWSLETTER

Summer 2022



VENICE IN
PERIL

DEAR FRIEND AND SUPPORTER

Venetian tourism is back. That was my strong impression after a recent week spent there as your incoming Chair of Venice in Peril. The main canals are choppy with water traffic; the chief thoroughfares are overcrowded; and there are long queues for the Biennale hits. After the protracted absence forced on us by the pandemic, Europeans and North Americans are returning to Venice as a high priority. And before long, Asians will follow.

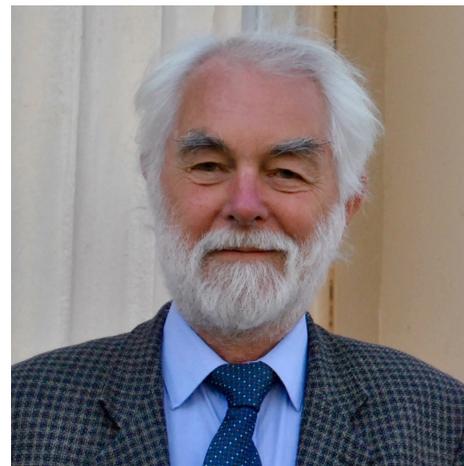
Restoration and conservation is widespread, numerous palaces and churches being shrouded in scaffolding. Off the tourist beat, it is as always quieter, more beguiling. While some of our projects are in prominent places of need such as the Frari or the Correr, we have also long supported churches like San Niccolo dei Mendicoli, which are harder to find. Here a dedicated team is reinforcing flood defences at the doors and under the floors. Everywhere it was a privilege to see the important work which Venice in Peril has done over the years, and is still doing.

Since starting this job, I have been asked, is Venice still in peril? The answer is yes. Many buildings and works of art may look brighter and safer than they did in the 1970s. Technology has advanced. But a glance towards numerous campanili, with their alarming tilt, hints at the permanent threat to the city's integrity. The water problem, always there, is worsening. Salt is seeping into, crystallizing and crumbling the stones of Venice. This is what we are tackling, for example, in the restoration of the Canova monument in this, the 200th anniversary of his death.

A change of the guard is under way at Venice in Peril. I have succeeded Jonathan Keates, who has been such a notable chairman over the last decade. He remains a Trustee. Anthony Roberts has joined the board as Vice Chair, with the great advantage of living part-time in the Veneto. John Millerchip, who has tirelessly shepherded our projects for many years, is stepping down. Susan Steer will take on his responsibilities in Venice.

The mission of Venice in Peril has not diminished in importance. Of course we must consider which activities have the highest priority. But with the terrific support which continues to come from our friends and patrons, we will carry on the work to preserve the city we all love.

Guy Elliott
Chairman



John Millerchip



Susan Steer



Anthony Roberts with Giovanni Giannelli at the Canova Monument in June

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NEW PROJECT

Conservation of a Celestial Globe, Museo Correr

The studio of Lucia and Andrea Dori in Florence is about to start work on the conservation of a celestial globe made between Paris and Venice in 1687-93. It is known as a Coronelli/Nolin or Gallic Society globe and was designed by the Venetian friar Vincenzo Coronelli and engraved in Paris by Jean-Baptiste Nolin. This project will be an opportunity to find out about a complicated and colourful Venetian business enterprise, some extraordinary craftsmanship and the figure of Vincenzo Coronelli (1650-1718), a Franciscan cosmographer who rose to become Vicar General of his order and whose globe laboratory and publishing venture was located in the convent of the Frari.

The high point of Coronelli's career came in 1681 when he was invited to Paris to construct a terrestrial and a celestial globe for Louis XIV in collaboration with French court artists. At four metres in diameter the huge Marly globes can still be seen in the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris.

After his return to Venice he planned an edition of printed globes (of 108 cm diameter) for sale, using engraved reductions of the king's globes.

As prestigious luxury objects that expressed their owner's interest in scientific enquiry, globes also added glamour to a library and Coronelli sought funding to satisfy the demand he foresaw.

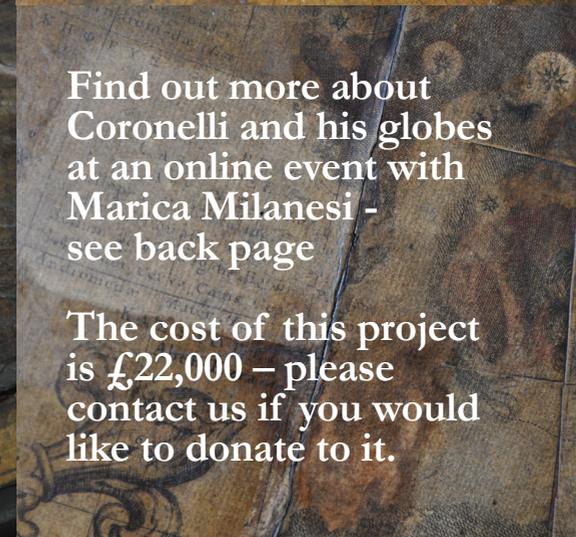
He was a prolific and ambitious editor and publisher, always keen to incorporate as much contemporary and historical information in both his printed books and his globes as possible. Despite his dynamism and learning his

career ended in ignominy, it was simply too difficult to stay abreast of the gathering pace of scientific knowledge and to find the financing for such costly production.

The printed editions of the celestial globe were also problematic. Coronelli commissioned the French engraver, Nolin, to produce the gores (the pointed segments that are pasted onto the sphere) and polar 'caps' for the celestial globe, but work stalled and he had to make his first Venetian globe (1688-89) using proofs sent from Paris by Nolin, supplemented with manuscript additions. To keep his customers satisfied Coronelli commissioned new engraved plates for a celestial globe in Venice, which were very different from those engraved by Nolin. Meanwhile Nolin completed his own plates, which are still in the Bibliothèque Nationale, adding text and details that were missing from the proofs. In 1693 Nolin began to sell his globe in France and also in Italy. Coronelli subsequently commissioned Alessandro della Via to engrave a close copy of Nolin's globe (called the 'Ottoboni globe', 1699).

The gores and caps of the Coronelli/Nolin globe reproduce with Parisian elegance the figures of the constellations invented by the painters of the king's celestial globe, as well as its scientific content. The terrestrial globe, its pair, has recently been restored by the Dori studio, funded by Intesa Sanpaolo bank, so the globes will eventually be displayed together in the Museo Correr.

Details show patch cleaning which reveal glimpses of celestial figures
Photos: L'Officina del restauro, Florence



Find out more about
Coronelli and his globes
at an online event with
Marica Milanese -
see back page

The cost of this project
is £22,000 – please
contact us if you would
like to donate to it.

NEW PROJECT

Funerary Monument of Admiral Angelo Emo, Museo Storico Navale di Venezia

In 1792, the Serenissima commissioned Antonio Canova to create a monument celebrating the military genius of the Republic, as represented by its last admiral Angelo Emo (1731-92). It shows the kneeling figure of 'Immortality' poised to inscribe the word 'Fame' on a column surmounted by the bust of the glorious hero Angelo Emo.

Originally intended for the Sala delle Quattro Porte in the Doge's Palace, it was eventually erected in 1795 in the Arsenale but is now on display in the adjacent Museo Storico Navale. This was the first commission given by the Republic to Antonio Canova and he threw himself into the task producing drawings, plaster models and compositional studies. It is interesting that at the same time as working on this memorial to the last hero of the Republic, he was also working on another project of symbolic and political significance, his Monument to Titian for the Frari church, both projects expressive of the myth of the Serenissima. The latter, which was never realised, was later adapted as the monument to Canova himself and is a current Venice in Peril project. To commemorate Angelo Emo, Canova chose to use the form of a funerary 'stele' derived from classical models, an upright slab with sculpture and inscriptions, which he later reworked for thirteen other commissions.

Today the three metre high 'stele' is in need of conservation having suffered surface damage and staining caused by the oxidation of the metal dowels inside. Dirty deposits caused by the application

of various wax-based protective agents, have altered the intended effect of the surface finish, lessening the impact of the monument's sculptural quality and modelling.

A project of conservative repair, funded by Venice in Peril, will now be undertaken by student restoration technicians from the Istituto Veneto per i Beni Culturali in Venice to restore the appearance of the tombstone.

The IVBC has had a long association with Venice in Peril since it was founded in 1995 by the Architect Renzo Ravagnan. Frances Clarke was involved from the outset as a signatory and then as its President and Honorary President.

The £3,000 cost of this project has been generously met by the Drapers' Company in the City of London, which has its own confraternal and naval heritage, and whose members recently visited Venice.



VISUAL ART IN VENICE, 2022

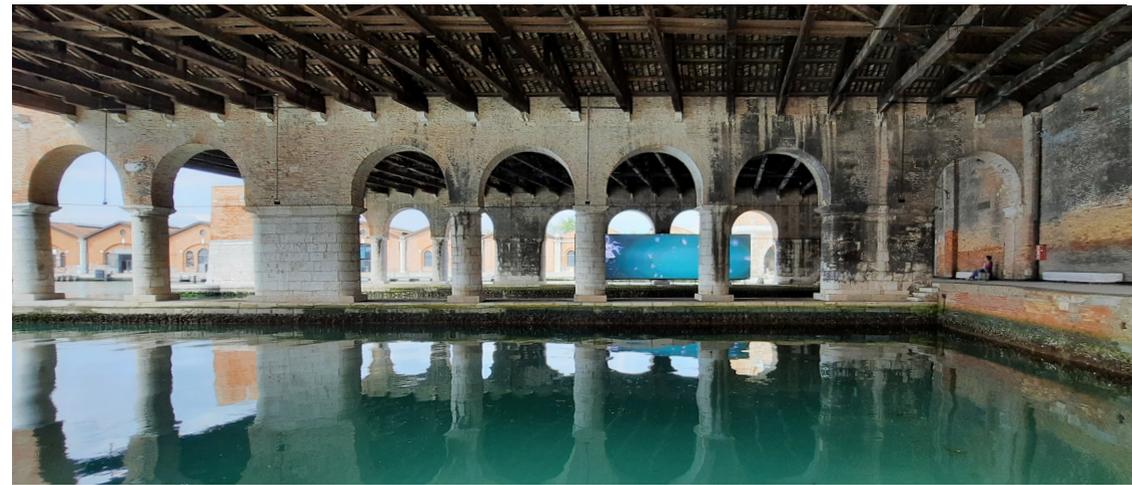
Contemporary art opens historic buildings

This spring saw the Venetian cultural lion come back with a roar. Venice's museums returned to pre-pandemic opening hours, and a dizzying number of visual arts events, many long-postponed, finally opened – not only the Venice Biennale with its numerous "collateral" exhibits, but many non-Biennale events too – making Venice, for a few months, the world's contemporary art capital.

The first Art Biennale since 2019 kicked off in April with curator Cecilia

Alemani's *Milk of Dreams* highlighting women artists and others who have been under-represented in the past. British Afro-Caribbean artist Sonia Boyce achieved the top Leone d'Oro prize with *Feeling her Way* in the British pavilion.

As well as the Giardini, the main Biennale event is staged in the Arsenale, providing a unique opportunity to wander the vast, haunting spaces where the Republic constructed and repaired its galleys.



Away from the principal Biennale sites, many art exhibits are found in historic buildings which are usually closed to the public. For instance, opposite the Fenice theatre, the sixteenth-century church of San Fantin is the setting for *Field*, an installation by Portuguese artist Pedro Cabrita hosted by the Venice Patriarch's Office. Close by is the Scuola San Fantin or "dei Picai" ("The Hanged"), formerly the meeting rooms of the charitable confraternity whose members accompanied the condemned to their execution.

Like most of Venice's scuole, the **Scuola San Fantin** was suppressed in the upheavals of the early nineteenth century, but remarkably the building's internal decorations remain in situ, thanks to the establishment here in 1812 of the **Ateneo Veneto** (1) cultural institute. Until 25 September, the Ateneo Veneto presents *Limbo* by German artist Daniel Richter, whose ghastly figures seem to have evolved from Bosch's tormented souls, set fittingly below Palma Giovane's Purgatorial scenes on the ceiling (2).



Another usually inaccessible church is **San Giovanni Evangelista** (3) part of the historic complex of the eponymous Scuola Grande, which is showing *Burn, Shine, Fly* by Swiss-born Ugo Rondinone.

The early Renaissance church of **S. Maria della Visitazione** on the Zattere is open for glass sculptor Rony Ples's *Trees Grow from the Sky*. Whilst there you can enjoy the handsome coffered ceiling with 58 roundels depicting apostles and martyrs by Umbrian artist Pier Paolo Agabiti, restored by Venice in Peril in 1993-95.

In Cannaregio the **Scuola Grande della Misericordia** (4) is host to *This is Ukraine: Defending Freedom* until August 7. Begun in 1532 by Sansovino, the imposing scuola building became so ruinously expensive it remained unfinished, its brick facades bare of their intended stone dressing and statuary, a testimony to the folly and ambition of the defunct confraternity.

Among rarely-opened palaces is the gothic **Palazzo Bembo** close to the Rialto Bridge, reputedly the birthplace of Renaissance humanist and prelate Pietro Bembo, where the European Cultural Centre is showing *Personal Structures*.

But perhaps the most impressive palace to visit is **Palazzo Pisani** (5) near Campo Santo Stefano, first constructed in the early 17th century and enlarged a century later by Girolamo Frigimelica, who also designed the magnificent Villa Pisani at Stra. Both buildings speak of the political success and great wealth of the Pisani, although the Stra property was eventually sold to Napoleon following the squandering of the family fortune by an errant heir. The palazzo is now home to Venice's Benedetto Marcello Music Conservatory, and during the Biennale visitors are free to wander through the courtyards and the splendid *piano nobile* to a glorious cacophony emanating from the practice rooms. Until November 27 the palace is showing *Uncombed, Unforseen, Unconstrained*, the work of eleven artists, presented by London-based *Parasol Unit Foundation for Contemporary Art*.

At the **Accademia Galleries** a comprehensive survey of the work of Anish Kapoor has opened to an enthusiastic public. This is complemented with a show at **Palazzo Manfrin** (6) on the Cannaregio Canal, now home to the Anish Kapoor

Foundation. Both exhibitions run until October 9.

In recent years it has become customary for Venice's museums to host contemporary shows at the same time as the Biennale. Most high-profile this year is Anselm Kiefer's site-specific installation *Questi scritti, quando verranno bruciati, daranno finalmente un po' di luce* (*These writings, when burnt, will finally cast a little light – from Andrea Emo, Venetian philosopher*) in the Sala dello Scrutinio of the **Doge's Palace**, curated by director Gabriella Belli. Kiefer's powerful, monumental images respond directly to the history of Venice, the historical vicissitudes of the magnificent chamber of the Scrutinio itself, the story of Faust, modern philosophy, and – by chance – the horrors of modern warfare. Media include molten lead poured over the canvasses, recalling the catastrophic 1577 fire when lead poured through the chamber from the melting roof, destroying precious book and manuscript collections housed here. Over the place of Vicentino's triumphalist *Battle of Lepanto*, Kiefer has installed an image of the burning palace below a ragged Venetian standard, and above it a battlefield of empty uniforms and scythes, recalling Europe's twentieth-century killing fields. Over Palma Giovane's *Last Judgement* is a Jacob's ladder emerging from the primordial marshlands of Venice, from which worn shoes cascade.

For the first time the palazzo of the **Procuratie Vecchie** (7), which stretches along the north side of Piazza San Marco, is accessible to the public after remodelling by David Chipperfield. Constructed in the early sixteenth century for the Procurators of St Mark, senior dignitaries who administered estates, charitable funds and the San Marco treasury, the property now belongs to insurance company Generali whose social foundation Human Safety Net occupies the top floor.

And finally there is a small but attractively staged Renaissance sculpture exhibition at the Ca d'Oro *From Donatello to Alessandro Vittoria, 1450 - 150 Years of Sculpture in The Republic Of Venice* – until October 30. Cunningly timed and named to coincide with the big Donatello show at Palazzo Strozzi in Florence, it mainly focuses on work by other Renaissance sculptors working in Venice.

Susan Steer

BASILICA DI SAN MARCO

An extraordinary laboratory of conservation is awarded the Premio Pietro Torta per il Restauro di Venezia

Pictures of the Basilica of San Marco underwater in winter 2019 are sadly familiar to us all but the work of repairing the damage is less visible.

The huge ongoing task of conservation and maintenance is carried out by the Fabbriceria, directed by the Procuratoria and the Proto, the Basilica's architect Mario Piana, it is a small specialist team. With its roots in a centuries-old ecclesiastical model for caring for the fabric part of the church's heritage, the Fabbriceria has the responsibility, since legislation in 1931, for caring for the buildings and enabling its religious life as a place of worship, open to everyone, to continue.

San Marco is an extraordinary laboratory of conservation given the challenges it faces, which include planning the work precisely so that the 3.5 million visitors a year can continue to circulate.

New methods and approaches are constantly being developed. They include the floor mosaic conservation, wall mosaic conservation, the repair of the columns in the narthex and the very complex drainage in front of the basilica.

After the 2019 floods, the mortar bed of the floor mosaics expanded and crumbled leaving the tesserae like loose teeth. So sections are cut out and secured on a temporary surface, then flipped so that the old mortar can be knocked off. Using blown-up photographs of the original, the old tesserae are reset in their original positions and a new bed of mortar is applied before the section is flipped again, ready to be laid. While this fine work is being undertaken in the historic mosaic workshop, equipped with libraries of colour samples of the basilica's tesserae, the floor is prepared

with layers of brick and a waterproof sheath to receive the repaired section.

For the wall mosaics, fibre-glass sections moulded to the shape of the wall provide a new bed for the tesserae and a barrier against moisture.

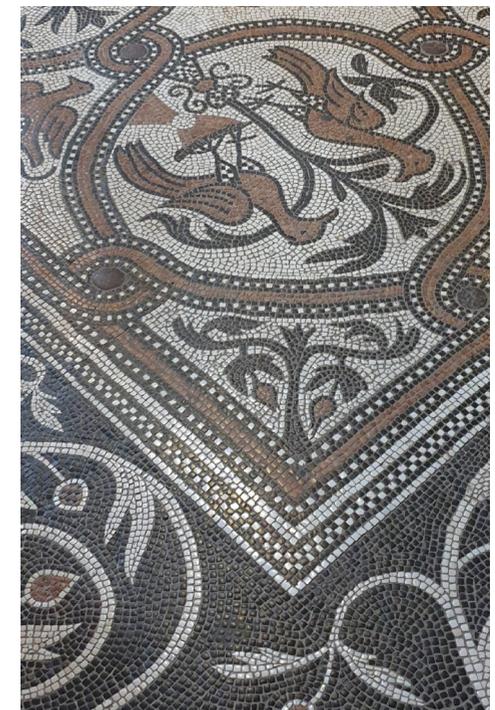
In the narthex where the four Aquitaine marble columns flanking the main door have been destabilised by rusting dowels and crumbling mortar, a special crane was devised to lift the columns to restore the shafts and dowels, all in an extremely confined space with a continuous stream of visitors passing by.

In front of the basilica a complex engineering challenge has been tackled to ensure much more effective drainage. Crucially it is the length of time that fabric is exposed to salt water that is key to conservation.

In recognition of the scale, complexity and quality of its work the Basilica di San Marco received the Premio Pietro Torta per il Restauro di Venezia last year. Awarded biennially by the professional engineering body of Venice under the auspices of the Ateneo Veneto, the prize dates to 1974 when the founder of Venice in Peril, Sir Ashley Clarke received it.

The Ateneo Veneto has kindly made a number of its Premio Torta 2021 illustrated booklets available to Friends of Venice in Peril, write to info@veniceinperil.org if you would like one.

Photos: Silva Menetto



VENICE AND THE V&A

The 15th Kirker Lecture with Tristram Hunt

Venice in Peril was delighted to welcome Tristram Hunt, director of the V&A, to give the 15th Kirker Spring lecture returning to the Royal Geographical Society after two years on 17 May.

Venice in Peril and the V&A have a long history which began with John Pope-Hennessy, director of the V&A, and an early trustee of Venice in Peril, and Ken Hempel, conservator in the early 1970s (see obituary page 15). Tristram Hunt adeptly wove the strands that bind the museum to Venice by illustrating his talk with objects including a marble tomb from a Venetian church and Renaissance

glass goblets to casts of the Ducal Palace capitals. The capitals represent a 19th-century example of copying which is now being given broader scope with 3D replicas in case of loss or destruction or even, in the case of the 'Marriage of Cana' by Veronese in the Giorgio Cini Foundation, a facsimile when the original has been removed. The V&A has a permanent exhibition space at the Biennale where these ideas and others are explored.

Here are a few of the highlights from the museum which Tristram Hunt's talk illustrated.



Top left: Goblet, glass, unknown maker, 1475-1500

Bottom left: Self-portrait as a Young Man, by Jacopo Robusti Tintoretto, (1518-94) oil on canvas, c.1548

Centre: The Three Graces, by Antonio Canova (1757-1822), marble sculpture 1814-17

Above: carving by Grinling Gibbons (1648-1721), a cravat of Venetian lace, 1690

All images ©Victoria and Albert Museum, London



NEW PROJECT

Cabianca Altar - Investigative Survey



Venice in Peril has commissioned a report into the state of repair of the Cabianca altar in the Sacristy of the Frari church. The altar is showing signs of movement and parts of the marble facing are coming loose. Investigations will be carried out by the firm of

Ottorino Nonfarmale, which has been working on the Canova Monument. This reliquary altar of 1711 includes three spectacular bas-reliefs in Carrara marble, carved by Cabianca who was also responsible for the Trinity Wellhead statuary.

PROJECT UPDATES

The **Canova Monument** project is drawing to a close. The film maker Joan Porcel whose beautiful images have been shared via Instagram @corcanovae, was commissioned by Ottorino Nonfarmale to make a film of the different stages of the project which will also be used for teaching purposes. A shorter version for Venice in Peril will be available on the website.

Work on the 13 **Torcello Iconostasis panel paintings** by Zanino di Pietro has been completed and they were reinstalled in the last week of June.

The **Nativity Triptych** is at an advanced stage of its conservation treatment, but another urgent priority has meant this panel painting by Giovanni Bellini and his family workshop has had to wait its turn. An update is expected shortly.

San Nicolò dei Mendicoli is also at an advanced stage of treatment but work in the sanctuary is still ongoing after condensation was found to be causing problems.

Two 16th-17th century **polychrome and gilded wooden statues** of S.Giovanni and S. Marco and an angel candlebearer from San Nicolò are now with the conservation studio MAUVE, after the Fondation Jean-Barthélemy funded the S. Marco to mark Frances Clarke's 90th birthday in 2021. As the Venetian church with which the Clarkes are most closely associated she chose to fund the other two to mark the 50th Anniversary of Venice in Peril.

The Trinity Wellhead in the great cloister of the Archivio di Stato, has recently begun. On 20th June Lares - the conservation firm chosen to

undertake this work - put up scaffolding to enable the cleaning and repairing of the early 18th-century wellhead created by Francesco Penso, known as Cabianca (1665-1737).

This work comes in the context of the state-funded project to extend access to the Archivio di Stato. There will be a new public entrance, the monastery kitchen is to become reception rooms and the winter refectory, where Venice in Peril financed the restoration of the portal, will become an auditorium.

For more information about the Archives visit archiviodistatovenezia.it/it/

BECOME A FRIEND or A PATRON OF VENICE IN PERIL

Venice in Peril Fund offers a unique and worthwhile channel for those who love the city, to discover more about Venice while contributing to its preservation.

For details on how to join as a Friend or Patron, support a project or find out more about legacy-giving, write to info@veniceinperil.org call 020 7736 6891 or visit veniceinperil.org

OBITUARY

Kenneth Hempel

The distinguished stone conservator Kenneth Hempel who died on 23 May, aged 94, was deeply involved with three of Venice in Peril's major restoration projects in the 1970s: the church of the Madonna dell'Orto, the Loggetta of Sansovino and the Porta della Carta of the Ducal Palace. As Head of sculpture conservation at the Victoria & Albert Museum and a specialist in stone, he was sent to Florence by the museum's director, Sir John Pope-Hennessy, following the 1966 floods which had caused terrible damage to archives, monuments and works of art. Hempel's experience was needed to help with the restoration work funded by the Italian Art and Archives Rescue Fund (IAARF), chaired by Sir Ashley Clarke.

Once the damage in Florence had been tackled, attention turned to Venice. There, it was evident that the problems facing the city were serious and long-lasting, and the IAARF was dissolved to become the Venice in Peril Fund. Continually experimenting with new techniques, Kenneth Hempel pioneered and developed new methods for cleaning and conserving stone and trained a number of young Italians to carry out the work. Among these was Giulia Musumeci, whose outstanding work on the Madonna dell'Orto church led to her being chosen to clean the pollution-blackened Loggetta in 1972 — a massive two-year task which she undertook almost single-handed. Her collaboration with Hempel led to their marriage in 1976 and, following his retirement, they lived happily in Alderney until his death in May.

Sarah Quill

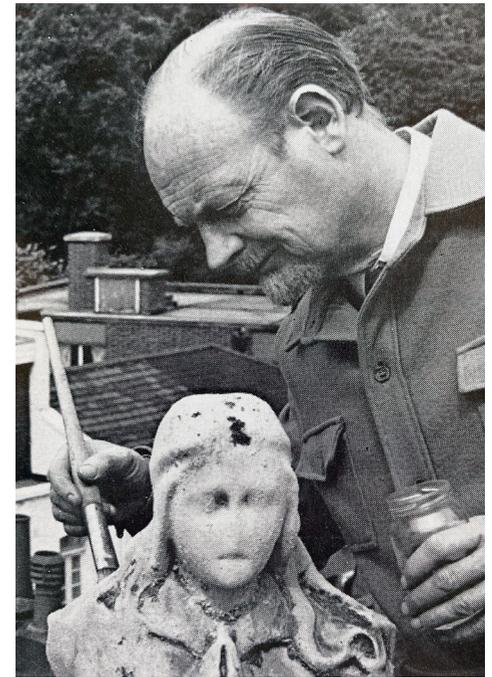


Photo: ©Sarah Quill

AUTUMN 2022 EVENT SERIES

20 SEPTEMBER

Celebrating Antonio Canova At Apsley House

*By kind invitation of the Duke of Wellington in aid of Venice in Peril Fund
and the Georgian Group*

A special event to mark the 200th anniversary of the death of Antonio Canova, sculptor and cultural diplomat who inspired collectors across Europe.

Hosted by the Duke of Wellington this is an opportunity to see Apsley House after hours and hear about the collection. It includes one of Canova's Ideal Heads as well as his huge statue of Napoleon as Mars, presented to the Duke of Wellington after the Battle of Waterloo.

Tickets: Friends of Venice in Peril Fund and the Georgian Group £30 – others £35, 6-8pm

18 OCTOBER

Vincenzo Coronelli And His Venetian Globes

*Marica Milanesi in conversation with Susan Steer
Online event*

Venice in Peril has recently adopted a 1693 celestial globe designed by the Franciscan friar Vincenzo Coronelli who made his name building two huge globes for Louis XIV. Marica

Milanesi, professor of the history of geography at Pavia and author of an acclaimed monograph on Coronelli, will introduce us to the cosmographer and entrepreneur and explain how and why the globe is being restored in the Florentine studio of Lucia and Andrea Dori.

Tickets: £10 (Ticket & registration details are sent out via the VIP e-newsletter), 6.30-7.30pm

ASHLEY CLARKE MEMORIAL LECTURE at the Society of Antiquaries

14 NOVEMBER

Rosalba Carriera: Portraitist Of 18th-Century Venice

Christopher Baker

Christopher Baker traces the extraordinary career of Rosalba Carriera (1673-1757) who established an international reputation for portraits executed in pastel and was feted across Europe.

Christopher Baker is Director of European and Scottish Art and Portraiture at the National Galleries of Scotland and is the 2022 Paul Mellon Rome Fellow. He is curator of an upcoming exhibition on Henri Fuseli in Paris and organising another on Canaletto and his contemporaries for Japan in 2024.

Tickets: £40 Friends, £45 Others – to include a short reception, 6.30-8.30pm

All tickets and timings from www.veniceinperil.org or 020 7736 6891. To find out more about our projects and how you can donate: veniceinperil.org or contact us: info@veniceinperil.org AND +44 (0) 20 7736 6891, Venice in Peril Fund, 11 Hurlingham Studios, Ranelagh Gardens, London SW6 3PA, Venice in Peril Fund CIO No. 1186770

Newsletter edited by Emma-Louise Bassett and Annabel Randall