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EVERY WEEK

Art market



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A LAW unto itself

This year, visitors to London Art Week learn to go slow and appreciate the array of periods and genres on offer

THE Slow Art Workshops, about which I wrote here two weeks ago, will be coming into their own in many of the 50 galleries taking part during London Art Week (LAW) from Friday to July 7. To reiterate, in the organisers' words, the purpose 'is to give people of any age curious about any kind of art, the opportunity of looking at it and, more importantly, handling it, within a small group led by a specialist dealer or curator. These workshops are not talks, or master classes for aficionados, but environments in which anyone can engage with objects first hand, look, think and ask questions. They are as much about passion and pleasure as knowledge; offering a gentle reminder that there is more out there than contemporary art.'

As numbers will inevitably be limited, it is best to apply on www.londonartweek.co.uk and tickets will be on a first-come, first-served basis.

The LAW evolved from specialist drawings, Old Master paintings and sculpture weeks to reinstate London as the marketplace for the best older art and the sculpture component is now more generously defined, to include sculptural examples in other fields, such as armour, shown by Peter Finer in Duke Street, St James's W1. There will be antiquities at Rupert Wace in Crown Passage, off King Street. Rather than a generalist, one might call Sam Fogg of Clifford Street a polymath among dealers, as his specialties include medieval works of art and paintings, Islamic, Indian Caucasian and Ethiopian art and perhaps a few more. Here, he shows paintings, including a gold-ground *St Michael vanquishing the Devil*, of about 1470, by the Maestro



Fig 1: *Jane, Lady Thornagh*. With The Weiss Gallery

de los Florida, an Aragonese painter who may be identifiable as Juan de Bonilla, recorded between 1442 and 1478.

The Weiss Gallery in Jermyn Street is noted for British portraits and, this time, it is concentrating on the Elizabethan and early-Stuart period, including the 45½in by 22½in *Jane, Lady Thornagh* by William Larkin (died 1619) (Fig 1).

Agnew celebrates its bicentenary with six centuries' worth of masterworks, most notably the 45½in by 52in *The Serenade, or The Ambulant Musicians*, by Jacob Jordaens (1593–1678) (Fig 3). The traditional titles for this painting, which once belonged to the Empress Joséphine, do not really explain it.

The musicians are not serenading the girl at her window; she and they are serenading, or seducing, us. The bagpiper and one of the recorder players are looking us in the eye—the other has broken his reed—as is she. Furthermore, she, like the boy, is singing. The onlooking madam seems to approve her tactics. The reactions of the dogs are also instructive.

Moretti of Duke Street offers one of the two surviving frag-



ments of a *Marriage of Bacchus and Ariadne* by Guido Reni.

Stephen Ongpin in Mason's Yard has brought together an impressive group of 22 drawings by Giovanni Battista (Giam-battista, 1696–1770) and Giovanni Domenico Tiepolo (1727–1804), together with nine more that he has recently sold. The father was one of the best 18th-century Venetian draughtsmen, as well as painter of ceilings (Fig 2), carrying his skills to Germany and Spain, and, although Domenico followed in his wake, he had his own rather more relaxed manner. I love the comment of the late-19th-century art historian the Marquis de Chennevières, who called him 'a chatterbox of drawing, the most seductive and tireless of chatterboxes, one might say'.

In less than four years since opening in London as well as Leeds, the Tomasso Brothers have moved galleries twice. Their third southern base is the Jermyn Street space recently vacated by Harris Lindsay and



Fig 2: *G. B. Tiepolo fragment*. With Stephen Ongpin

they have turned it around in just a month to open for LAW with a typically ambitious sculpture show, 'Canova and his Legacy'.

Canova (1757–1822), was the most illustrious sculptor of his age and typifies the height of neo-Classicism. His works, celebrated for their timeless beauty and grace, have inspired generations of artists and collectors. Highlights include a pair of plaster busts by Canova, *Paris* and *Helen*, cast at his atelier in 1812; the graceful *Baccante Cimbalista* (1837) by Cincinnato Baruzzi (1796–1878), one of Can-



ova's leading pupils; and, by the Danish master Bertel Thorvaldsen (1770–1844), a *Cupid with his Bow* (*Amorino*) (**Fig 4**), which has remained in the same Scottish family since its purchase from Thorvaldsen in 1828.

With that in mind, the brothers have no doubt crossed Jermyn Street to their new neighbour



Fig 3 left: Jordaens's *The Serenade*. With Agnew. Fig 4 above: *Cupid with his Bow*. With the Tomasso Brothers

Simon Dickinson, who has an 84½in by 65in *Portrait of Antonio Canova* by Domenico Conti (1742–1817) (**Fig 6**). The master poses by his own version, the 'La Touche' *Amorino*.

Daniel Katz of Hill Street offers French sculpture from 'The Romantics to Rodin', including a bronze first version of *Eternal*



Fig 5: *City of God* by John Martin. With Lowell Libson

Printemps conceived by Rodin in 1884.

Karen Taylor, a survivor from the days when English watercolours were deservedly popular, has recently resumed activity as a dealer and is based at the Illustration Cupboard in Bury Street for the week. Her 20½in by 16½in portrait of the dealer Thomas Emmerson reading a newspaper (**Fig 7**) in an interior by John Frederick Lewis (1804–76) was almost certainly painted in 1829 to celebrate the sale to the Prince Regent of the painting hanging behind him: Pieter de Hooch's *Courtyard of a House in Delft*.

Lowell Libson of Clifford Street has both drawings and oil paintings, including the 18in by 26in *The City of God* (**Fig 5**), a late work of about 1850 by

John Martin (1789–1854). As the gallery points out, it is not only a preliminary work for the great series of the world's end, but a standalone cabinet-size exploration of Heaven as described in the Book of Revelation.

Robilant + Voena of Dover Street is presenting a selection of five landscapes, nine still-lives and a watercolour painted by Giorgio Morandi (1890–1964) between the 1930s and 1960s. Morandi, one of the latest artists on offer during LAW, has long been popular in Britain, perhaps because of his seductive gentleness; his is a Modernism that does not bully or preach. He is the master of the everyday object. His 4½in by 4in *Fiori* of 1950 (**Fig 8**) typifies this. 🐾

Next week Lost love



Fig 6: Domenico Conti's portrait of Canova. With Simon Dickinson



Fig 7: The dealer Thomas Emmerson in an interior by J. F. Lewis. With Karen Taylor



Fig 8: Giorgio Morandi's *Fiori* of 1950. With Robilant + Voena