

Spectacular View of Verona worth £11 million at risk of leaving UK

- Export bar is to allow time for a UK gallery or institution to acquire the painting
- Worth £11 million, the painting is a rare example of one of Bellotto's early masterpieces

A rare early masterpiece by Italian painter Bernardo Bellotto is at risk of leaving the UK unless a buyer can be found.

Dating from the mid-18th century and measuring over two metres wide, View of Verona with the Ponte delle Navi marks an important turning point in the young Bellotto's career as he began a series of journeys around Italy and received his first royal commission for Charles Emmanuel III (1701-1773), King of Sardinia and Duke of Savoy in 1745.

This is the first of Bellotto's paintings to be recorded in Britain and its pair is now at Powis Castle. None of his works currently in this country represent the artist's career so dramatically and beautifully, and the importance of the work to British art cannot be overstated.

Arts Minister Lord Parkinson of Whitley Bay said:

This rare painting is a masterpiece for its impressive scale and striking composition. Bernardo Bellotto's View of Verona with the Ponte delle Navi would make an exceptional addition to any UK gallery and I sincerely hope a buyer comes forward to save the work for the nation.

The minister's decision follows the advice of the [Reviewing Committee on the Export of Works of Art and Objects of Cultural Interest](#). The committee agreed the painting is outstandingly beautiful and innovative and one of the most remarkable of Bellotto's career. It represents a stylistically important moment in his artistic development and plays a highly significant part in the understanding and appreciation of 18th century view painting.

Committee Member Christopher Baker said:

Bernardo Bellotto was one of the greatest vedute (view) painters of the eighteenth century and this ambitious work is among the towering achievements of his early career.

A native of Venice and nephew of Canaletto, Bellotto sought novel subjects beyond his home and here created, when in his early twenties, a remarkably mature study of the heart of Verona, notable

for its bold composition, unifying silvery light and architectural interest, as well as its lively anecdotal details. Painted for an as yet unidentified British patron, 'View of Verona with the Ponte delle Navi' is first recorded in London in 1771 when it was consigned to auction.

It was conceived as one of a pair of pictures (pendants); its companion explores a complementary view of the river Adige, looking in the opposite direction, and hangs in the collection of Powis Castle (National Trust). Because of the aesthetic pre-eminence of Bellotto's work and its fascination in terms of future research around such paintings and their patronage, it would be highly desirable if this wonderful picture could find a permanent home in a British public collection.

The committee made its recommendation on the grounds that the departure of the painting from the UK would be a misfortune given its outstanding aesthetic importance and outstanding significance for the study of view painting in this country.

The decision on the export licence application for the painting will be deferred for a period ending on 3rd August 2022 inclusive. At the end of the first deferral period owners will have a consideration period of 15 Business Days to consider any offer(s) to purchase the painting at the recommended price of £11,244,000 (including VAT). The second deferral period will commence following the signing of an Option Agreement and will last for six months.

ENDS

Notes to editors

1. Organisations or individuals interested in purchasing the painting should contact the RCEWA on 0845 300 6200.
2. Details of the painting are as follows: Bernardo Bellotto, called il Canaletto (Venice 1721–1780 Warsaw)
A View of Verona with the Ponte delle Navi, about 1745–47
Oil on canvas, 133.3 x 234.8 cm On the whole the condition is very good. There is a marked degree of drying cracking across much of the surface, exposing the lighter underlayers; this is a little distracting in the darker areas of foreground water and boats, but could easily be addressed in a campaign of restoration. There are also scattered local retouchings in the sky, which have significantly discoloured. A pronounced pattern of more widely spaced vertical cracks across the surface may be the result of the painting having been rolled some time well after its execution.
3. Provenance: Anonymous sale, Christie's, London, 30 March 1771, lot 55, as 'Canaletti', sold for 250 gns. to 'Fleming'; Gilbert Fane Fleming (1724–1776), Marylebone; his sale, Christie's, London, 22 May 1777, as

'Canaletti. A view of the city of Verona, esteemed the chef d'oeuvre of the master', sold for 205 gns. to 'Ld Cadogan'; Charles Sloane Cadogan, 3rd Baron, from 1800 1st Earl, Cadogan (1728–1807), and presumably by inheritance to his son, Charles Henry Sloane, 2nd Earl Cadogan (1749–1832); (probably) acquired by the Hon. George James Welbore Agar Ellis, from 1831 1st Baron Dover (1797–1833), Dover House, Whitehall, and thence by inheritance to his daughter-in-law Eliza Horatia Frederica (1833–1896), widow of Henry George, 2nd Baron Dover and 3rd Viscount Clifden (1825– 1866); by descent to their son Henry George, 4th Viscount Clifden and 2nd Baron Dover (1863– 1895); his posthumous sale, Robinson and Foster, 25 May 1895, lot 784, as 'Canaletto', for 2,000 gns to Agnew's; acquired by Agnew's on behalf of Walter Hays Burns (1838–1897), North Mymms Park, Hertfordshire; thence by descent to his grandson Major-General Sir George Burns (1911–1997), North Mymms Park, Hertfordshire; his sale, Christie's, London, 26 November 1971, lot 30, sold for £300,000 to Cyril Humphris, London; by whom sold to a private collector, thence by descent to the previous owner until sold ('Property from a Distinguished Private Collection'), Christie's, London, 8 July 2021, lot 9, for £10,575,000 (including buyer's premium).

4. The Reviewing Committee on the Export of Works of Art and Objects of Cultural Interest is an independent body, serviced by Arts Council England (ACE), which advises the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport on whether a cultural object, intended for export, is of national importance under specified criteria.
5. [Arts Council England](#) is the national development agency for creativity and culture. Its strategic vision in [Let's Create](#) is that, by 2030, England should be a country in which the creativity of everyone is valued and given the chance to flourish and where everyone has access to a remarkable range of high-quality cultural experiences. ACE invests public money from the government and the National Lottery to support the sector and deliver the vision. Following the [Covid-19 crisis](#), ACE developed a £160 million Emergency Response Package, with nearly 90 per cent coming from the National Lottery, for organisations and individuals needing support. It is also one of the bodies administering the government's unprecedented £1.96 billion Culture Recovery Fund.