

Souvenir versus Reportage

Canaletto's crystalline depiction of the Grand Canal (left) is a prime example of a picture produced for travelers wishing to take home a souvenir of what they saw. The painting was not intended to record a particular moment in time but concentrated on a virtuoso display of the city's distinct topography. A low building in the distance marks the location of the Campo di San Marcuola, close to the site of the fire depicted in the painting by Guardi (right), which documents a specific, highly dramatic event. After the oil leaking from a nearby depot ignites on the water, the canal appears to be ablaze. As one of the horrified onlookers, the viewer watches the inhabitants of the neighboring houses, up on the rooftops, desperately trying to stop the flames from spreading. Their efforts were futile and 60 houses were destroyed.

Canaletto (Giovanni Antonio Canal)

Italian (Venice), 1697–1768

The Grand Canal in Venice from Palazzo Flangini to Campo San Marcuola, c. 1738

Oil on canvas

Minneapolis Institute of Art; Bequest of Miss Tessie Jones in memory of Herschel V. Jones 68.41.11

Francesco Guardi

Italian (Venice), 1712–1793

The Fire at San Marcuola, c. 1789–90

Oil on canvas

Lent by Sammlung Hypovereinsbank, Member of Unicredit

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When a new patriarch (the equivalent of an archbishop) of Venice was appointed, he made his official entry into the city via the Grand Canal, arriving at the Rialto Bridge. The opulent state barges in the foreground of Michele Marieschi's recording (left) are accompanied by the imperial ambassador's gilded parade gondolas, the first of which bears the imperial double-headed eagle on the cabin roof. In order to show more of the Grand Canal, Marieschi deliberately manipulated the site's topography: he fused views in two different directions into a composition suggesting that the waterway makes a 180-degree turn, when in reality it does not. By contrast, Francesco Guardi's late afternoon view on the Grand Canal (right) looking northeast toward the Rialto Bridge is, like Canaletto's *The Grand Canal in Venice from Palazzo Flangini to Campo San Marcuola* nearby, a more accurate rendering of the topography. It too was produced as a souvenir for the tourist trade.

Michele Marieschi

Italian (Venice), 1710–1744

The Rialto Bridge with the Festive Entry of the Patriarch Antonio

Correr, c. 1735

Oil on canvas

Lent by the National Trust, Osterley Park

Francesco Guardi

Italian (Venice), 1712–1793

View on the Grand Canal, the Rialto Bridge in the Distance, 1785

Oil on canvas

Minneapolis Institute of Art; The William Hood Dunwoody Fund and a gift of Mr. and Mrs. Theodore W. Bennett 56.41