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approach, focusing on just twelve artists, the great reformers driven by a philosophical quest for ideal beauty, the importance of which he emphasised by providing descriptions of a few selected works. However, it was Baglione's book that provided the most widely copied model for local chronicles – not only in Rome, where it was adopted by Giovanni Battista Passeri (1610–79) and by Leone Pascoli (1674–1744), but also in Venice, Florence and Bologna, as well as many other European artistic centres.

Each of the artists' lives included in this edition is preceded by a brief introduction highlighting its contributions and shortcomings as well as any errors. Most important are the copious annotations that accompany each life, which are remarkably well balanced throughout the book. Based on a wealth of bibliographical references, they reflect the formidable historiographical effort made by scholars from the second half of the twentieth century onwards in Italy and elsewhere, who were interested in the fact that, during the period covered by Baglione, Rome saw not only the latest developments in the Mannerist tradition, but also the affirmation of naturalism and the Classical and Baroque movements. A previous attempt to edit Baglione's work had remained incomplete.[1] With contributions from around a hundred authors, this substantial work finally provides a definitive critical edition of Baglione's text.

1 G. Baglione: *Le vite de' pittori, scultori et architetti, dal pontificato di Gregorio XIII del 1572 in fino a' tempi del papa Urbano Ottavo nel 1642*, ed. J. Hess and H. Röttgen, Vatican 1995.

Beyond the Fringe: Painting for the Market in 17th-Century Italy

Edited by Nicholas Hall. 206 pp. incl. 32 col. ills. (Nicholas Hall, New York, 2025), $58. ISBN 978-1-7326492-8-6.

by **ERIC M. ZAFRAN**

Once again, a New York art dealer has presented a significant exhibition with a scholarly catalogue. For the exhibition (23rd April–24th May), Nicholas Hall brought together twenty-nine paintings that throw light on the ways in which seventeenth-century Italian artists produced a wide variety of works outside the conventional channels of church and aristocratic patronage. As Hall writes in his introduction to the compact catalogue, there was 'a complex world' of

3. *Still life with melon, watermelon, pomegranate, grapes and other fruits*, by Pensionante del Saraceni. c.1615–20. Oil on canvas, 56 by 72 cm. (Kimbell Art Museum, Fort Worth).

'well-connected middlemen' who played an important role in helping artists, particularly young ones, find buyers (p.14). The skeleton of this project, to which the two major essays in the catalogue have added much new flesh, is Francis Haskell's *Patrons and Painters* (1963). Although that book is mostly devoted to religious and other wealthy patrons, in the section 'The Wider Public' Haskell observed that the art dealers of the period 'usually combined their business with some other activity on the fringes of art such as selling colours or gilding. But they also included barbers, tailors, cobblers and so on [. . .] There were also sellers of rosaries and other religious goods who dealt only in small devotional pictures'.[1] This has been the jumping-off point for much recent research into the phenomenon, and it is fitting that in this exhibition and its catalogue it is explored by an art dealer.

In the first essay, 'On some aspects of the Roman art market', Patrizia Cavazzini points out that in Rome the crux of the issue was that the Accademia di San Luca forbade its members to display their works in public or to sell them from shops (*botteghe*). This made little difference to established artists of high standing, but others, both Italian and foreign, who flooded the city, were forced to seek more immediate means to find buyers, and thus despite the rules a great many *botteghe* were established to sell both original works and copies. Some were run semi-clandestinely by painters, such as Cavaliere d'Arpino and Antiveduto Grammatica, both of whom employed the young Caravaggio for a time. As she notes, other painters who were later to achieve renown, such as Jusepe de Ribera and Mattia Preti, also worked for this market in their youth.

Cavazzani has unearthed some notable examples of the middlemen running these enterprises, who were known as *bottegari*. One was a barber, Paolo Guerra, who, while living in the home of a cardinal, dealt in paintings by Spadarino. Another was the woodcarver Giovanni Battista Galante, who dealt in more expensive works by the Flemish artist Michael Sweerts, Pietro Testa and Michelangelo Cerquozzi; his customers included Cardinal Federico Cornaro. Others sold pictures from their home 'collections', most notably Ferrante Carli, who lived in the Palazzo Borghese, where his *studio di pitture* displayed prized pieces by older artists as well as a changing array of works by the current generation. One of the most significant and better-known middlemen was the Genoese-born Giovanni Stefano Roccatagliata, a member of the papal court. He provided assistance to the young Nicolas Poussin, who is represented in the exhibition by a

depiction of *Midas, Pan and shepherds* set in an arcadian landscape (c.1625; private collection; cat. no.10).

The second essay, 'Painters, poets, musicians, merchants and chamberlains: a look at mid-seventeenth century Rome' by Caterina Volpi, approaches the question more from the perspective of the painters. Focusing on artists who 'were at the mercy of variable fortunes on account of their dependence on the market and its changing laws' (p.123), such as Pietro Testa, Pier Francesco Mola, Salvator Rosa and Giovanni Benedetto Castiglione, she delves into the intriguing relationships between artists and the city's poets, musicians and scientists. One of the most significant poets in this regard was Sebastiano Baldini, to whom many artists 'gravitated' (p.135). He was secretary to Cardinal Francesco Rapaccioli, notable for his patronage of both Michelangelo Cerquozzi and Giovanni Battista Salvi, known as Sassoferrato, described here as 'a painter, copyist and "forger"' (p.136). Volpi's essay concludes with interesting comments on the close relationship between the works of Cerquozzi and Sweerts, both of whom painted genre scenes of Roman life set among the city's monuments. She groups them with such artists as Rosa and Mola who sought out 'the novel and the exotic' (p.140), as embodied in Rosa's *Witchcraft* (c.1645–47; private collection; no.21).

The catalogue contains numerous well-chosen colour illustrations as well as entries on the individual works by noted scholars, of which fuller footnoted versions are available on the gallery's website (an index would have been a helpful addition).[2] The choice of paintings gives some idea of the dizzying variety available in seventeenth-century Rome. Among the religious works are paintings by Nicolas Régnier, Bartolomeo Cavarozzi, Dirck van Baburen, Orazio Riminaldi, Angelo Caroselli and Artemisia Gentileschi, the sole woman in the exhibition. She is represented by a large and beautifully restored version of a favourite subject of hers, *Susanna and the elders* (c.1644–48; private collection; no.23), which combines sexuality and morality in what the Artemisia expert Sheila Barker describes as 'a graceful paragon of feminine virtue' (p.187). Among the genre and landscape subjects, there is most notably an early *Landscape with the Holy Family and St John the Baptist* on copper by Claude Lorrain (c.1629; private collection; no.14). The one erotic subject, an *Allegory of Love with a singing violinist and a courtesan with coins in her palm*, painted on slate (private collection; no.16), was formerly given to Caroselli but is here attributed to an unidentified close follower known as Pseudo-Caroselli, whom Hall in his catalogue entry prefers to designate 'Amico di Caroselli' (active c.1625).

The major work in the exhibition, and the one that, according to Hall, inspired it, is the grand *Still life with melon, watermelon, pomegranate, grapes and other fruit* (no.1; Fig.3). It is by an unidentified painter known as Pensionante del Saraceni on the grounds of the debt he clearly owes to Carlo Saraceni. Its dimensions are very similar to Pensionante's *Still life with fruit and carafe* (c.1610–20; National Gallery of Art, Washington), which was once attributed to Caravaggio. Although it does not include the flies (symbols of death or evil) seen in the Washington painting, *Still life with melon* shares the motif of an illusionistic nail, here placed on the upper right side of the wall. Perhaps intended for hanging a household item, a rosary or a small religious painting, this contributes to the painting's remarkable sense of subtle mystery. Religious subjects, still lifes and genre scenes have been attributed to this artist, whom Pierre Rosenberg, together with other art historians, believes to have been French, although the National Gallery of Art catalogues its painting as Italian.[3] Despite their matching sizes, the paintings do not appear to be pendants but are rather (in keeping with the exhibition's thrust) variations on a theme produced to feed the hungry picture market.

A similar question about the origin of an anonymous artist is raised by the one museum loan to the exhibition, the recently restored *Head of a boy* by the so-called Master of the Open-Mouthed Boys (c.1620–25; Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art, Hartford; no.6). This artist has also been repeatedly identified as French, although he could just as well be an Italian or northern follower of Caravaggio. Over half a century ago Donald Posner published an article on Caravaggio's homoerotic early works, and although there is continuing debate about the artist's own sexuality, there is little doubt as to the proclivities of some of his patrons.[4] A number of the Caravaggisti went on to cater to their tastes, as illustrated by a *Sacrifice of Isaac* by Cavarozzi (c.1615–17; private collection; no.4) and a small *Martyrdom of St Lawrence* on copper by Jan Miel (c.1650; private collection; no.25). There was clearly a market for these well-formed, nearly nude youths. What to make of the multitude of *testacce* (character heads) of sympathetic boys or young men, however, is harder to know. In addition to the *Boy* from the Wadsworth Atheneum, examples in the exhibition included Theodoor Rombouts's *A young soldier* (c.1624; private collection; no. 9) and Rosa's recently attributed *Portrait of a young man in oriental dress* (c.1650–55; private collection; no.26), but there are, as Volpi notes, countless others by a great range of artists. It remains open to question who wanted to display these ostensible genre subjects in their intimate interiors. Whatever the answer, and as with all the subjects represented by the works in the exhibition, the market rose to fill the demand.

1 F. Haskell: *Patrons and Painters*, London 1986, p.121.
2 Available at www.nicholashall.art/exhibitionchecklist/beyond-the-fringe-painting-for-the-market-in-17th-century-italy, accessed 29th July 2025.
3 P. Rosenberg: exh. cat. *France in the Golden Age: Seventeenth-century French paintings in American collections*, Paris (Grand Palais), New York (Metropolitan Museum of Art) and Chicago (Art Institute) 1982, p.298.
4 D. Posner: 'Caravaggio's homo-erotic early works', *Art Quarterly* 34 (1971), pp.301–24. See also B. Nicolson and L. Vertova: *Caravaggism in Europe*, Turin 1990, I, pp.87 and 228, reviewed by Michael R. Waddingham in this Magazine, 133 (1991), p.462.

Artists' Things: Rediscovering Lost Property from Eighteenth-Century France

By Katie Scott and Hannah Williams. 374 pp. incl. 50 col. + 140 b. & w. ills. (Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles, 2024), £50. ISBN 978-1-60606-863-2.

by **COLIN B. BAILEY**

This is one of the most stimulating surveys of eighteenth-century French art and artists to have appeared in decades. Impressive in its depth of research into primary and secondary sources, the volume is engaging and erudite, as well as a model of clarity.[1] The authors, Katie Scott and Hannah Williams, have compiled a catalogue of fifty-five objects owned and used by fifty-one artists – painters, sculptors and printmakers – all of whom were affiliated with the Académie royale de peinture et de sculpture, Paris. The entries are ordered alphabetically and most if not all of the objects have been examined by the authors first-hand. In the introduction, Scott and Williams admonish art historians for their lack of interest in the wills, estate inventories and financial documents available in the notarial archives in Paris; they rather overlook the contribution of the monographs published by Arthena (Association pour la