

Assessing the sheer range of the objects Walpole collected, with their rich contrasts of colour and texture and occasional strangeness, and appreciating the impact of their placement within these striking Gothic rooms as well as the unexpected harmony of the whole, requires that the display be experienced at a slow pace in order to absorb the complicated layering of objects, associations and aesthetics. The real achievement of the exhibition is the way in which it illuminates Walpole's genius for creating antiquarian interiors of great originality, power, beauty and resonance. The furnished interiors of Strawberry Hill were, ultimately, works of art in their own right.

1 Publication: *Lost Treasures of Strawberry Hill: Masterpieces from Horace Walpole's Collection*. By Silvia Davoli. 112 pp. incl. numerous col. ill. (Scala Arts and Heritage, London, 2018), £12.95. ISBN 978-1-78551-180-6.

Romanticism

Gallerie d'Italia and Museo Poldi Pezzoli, Milan
26th October 2018–17th March

by SHARON HECKER

The exhibition under review, the first ever devoted to the art of Italian Romanticism, is a major achievement. The curator, Fernando Mazzocca, has assembled an impressive array of over two hundred paintings and sculptures, introducing audiences to visual art produced in Italy from the early to the mid-nineteenth century. A lavishly illustrated catalogue in Italian accompanies the show.¹

For its novelty alone, the exhibition is timely and welcome. Although individual works of art from this period might be familiar to specialists, Italian Romanticism as an artistic movement is unknown to most native as well as foreign museum visitors. This is because it is omitted from the better-known European movements of French, British and German Romantic art, to which numerous exhibitions have been dedicated. Such exclusion makes it difficult to gauge the

relevance and broader impact of the Italian contribution.

The exhibition is displayed across the Gallerie d'Italia and the adjacent Museo Poldi Pezzoli, just steps away from the Teatro alla Scala, where Italy's greatest Romantic operas were performed. Giuseppe Verdi spent his last years composing operas in a nearby hotel suite. As he lay on his deathbed, the Milanese spread hay on the street so that the noise of carriages would not disturb his final moments. Given that Italy's best-known contribution to the Romantic period is opera, *Romanticism* opens with a series of headless mannequins posing on a staircase in costumes from performances at La Scala. The operatic theme continues throughout the exhibition, with music emanating from a room projecting videos of Italian productions.

The sense of the place's history is further enhanced by the fact that the street upon which both exhibition venues are located is Via Alessandro Manzoni, named after the author whose novel *The Betrothed* (1827) is an emblem of Italian literary Romanticism. Two portraits of

14. *Nocturne in Capri*, by Salvatore Fergola. 1843. Canvas, 106 by 131 cm. (Museo e Real Bosco di Capodimonte, Naples; exh. Gallerie d'Italia, Milan).

Manzoni, one by Massimo d'Azeglio and Giuseppe Molteni (1835; Biblioteca Nazionale Braidense, Milan; cat. no.75) and another by Francesco Hayez (1874; Galleria d'Arte Moderna, Milan; no.76), are installed in the section dedicated to portraiture. The enduring popularity of *The Betrothed* spills into the visual arts in a section devoted to paintings of scenes from the novel.

The twenty-one thematic rooms across both venues create a series of smaller exhibitions within the larger one. The themes suggest that Italian Romantic art shared similar concerns with the movements in other countries: emotion, free expression, intuition over reason, adoration of landscapes and natural phenomena and celebration of past literary heroes and historical characters. In Italy, this took the form of elegies to the Alps, the Roman and Lombard countryside, Milan's Navigli waterways and Venice, as well as views of Naples by artists from the Scuola di Posillipo and Italian renditions of the Parisian Seine. Other sections are dedicated to Romanticism as a window onto the world, with female bodies sacred and



profane, portraits and depictions of Italian literary and artistic heroes such as Leonardo, Torquato Tasso, Raphael and Dante.

Highlights of the show include rugged mountainous landscapes by the Turinese painter Giuseppe Bagetti; Ippolito Caffi's pictures of solar eclipses, snow and fog over Venice and his paintings of the 1849 Austrian bombing of nearby Marghera; Angelo Inganni's scenes of daily hustle and bustle around Milan's Duomo; and Salvatore Fergola's shimmering, melancholic *Nocturne in Capri* (no.25; Fig.14).



Sculpture lovers will be thrilled to find a central space devoted to such works in marble as Vincenzo Vela's robust *Spartacus* (no.146; Fig.15), an allegory of Italy's struggle against its Austrian oppressors. Lorenzo Bartolini's intimate *Faith in God* (1833–36; no.141) depicts a woman seated humbly in prayer. These works encapsulate two aspects of Italian Romanticism: patriotic action and inner contemplation. The sculpture section could have provided an opportunity to examine Italian artists' relationship with France. Bartolini, for example, began his career in Jacques-Louis David's atelier and had his portrait painted by Ingres. Another connection could be drawn with England: Raffaele Monti's stunning 1845 *Veiled Vestal* (no.31; Fig.17) creates the illusion of seeing through a sheer marble veil. This work earned Monti a position as the leading sculptor for William Cavendish, 6th Duke of Devonshire; a version carved in 1846 is at Chatsworth House, Derbyshire. In 1861, the Crystal Palace Art Union issued the work in Parian porcelain and it became one of the most popular Parian busts ever made.

Italian Romanticism's international outlook is hinted at through the inclusions of Jean-Baptiste-Camille Corot's *The Roman campagna, with the Claudian aqueduct* (probably 1826; National Gallery, London; no.21), J.M.W. Turner's *Lake Avernus: Aeneas and the Cumaean sibyl* (1814–15; Yale Center for British Art, New Haven; no.47) and Caspar David Friedrich's sublime *Moonrise over the sea* (1821; State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg; no.1). This is rounded out by quotes on the wall from Giacomo Leopardi, Emily Bronte, Charles Dickens and Victor Hugo.

What most distinguishes Italian Romanticism is its civil and political patriotism. The exhibition exemplifies how a patriotic spirit served to catalyse romantic emotion, creating a common aspiration towards national unification. Many of the artists represented in the show participated in riots and fought in pre-Risorgimento battles. Numerous works scattered throughout the exhibition deal with these themes



Below left
15. *Spartacus*, by Vincenzo Vela. 1847–50. Marble, 206 by 72.5 by 90 cm. (Museo d'arte italiana, Lugano; photograph Museo Vincenzo Vela / Mauro Zeni; exh. Gallerie d'Italia, Milan).

Above
16. *Meditation*, by Francesco Hayez. 1851. Canvas, 92.5 by 71 cm. (Galleria d'Arte Moderna 'Achille Forti', Verona; exh. Gallerie d'Italia, Milan).

Opposite
17. *Veiled Vestal*, by Raffaele Monti. 1845. Marble, 48 by 25.5 by 27 cm. (Castle of Racconigi, Cuneo; exh. Gallerie d'Italia, Milan).

overtly or covertly. The canvas of Molteni's *Daughter of the guardian of the castle* (1844; private collection; no.79) bears a bullet hole from the Five Days in 1848, when Milanese citizens drove Austrian soldiers from the city. A powerful call to arms, Hayez's *Meditation* (no.98; Fig.16), is found in the room devoted to the erotic female nude: a sombre woman with a bared breast holds a book titled *Storia d'Italia* and a cross marked with the dates of the Five Days in red letters, symbolising martyrs' blood. The exhibition closes with dramatic commemorations of the 1849 defence of the Roman Republic: *Trastevere woman struck by a bomb* by the Garibaldian soldier-painter Gerolamo Induno (1850; Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Moderna e Contemporanea, Rome; no.177) and Giovanni Strazza's marble *Audacious Righetto* (1851; Palazzo Litta, Milan; no.178), which portrays a twelve-year-old hero who died with his dog while trying to diffuse a bomb.

Ultimately, the viewer who seeks to discover what Italian Romantic art was will not find a cohesive answer in this exhibition. This may be because the works created during this time are so different from one



Exhibitions

another in subject and style. The exhibition provides a springboard for re-incorporating Romantic art as part of the Italian tradition, as well as a starting point for new discussions about its role on the world stage.

¹ Catalogue: *Romanticismo*. Edited by Fernando Mazzocca. 384 pp. incl. 220 col. and b. & w. ill. (Silvana Editoriale, Milan, 2018), €34. ISBN 978-88-366-4100-0.

Picasso: Blue and Rose

Musée d'Orsay, Paris

18th September 2018–6th January

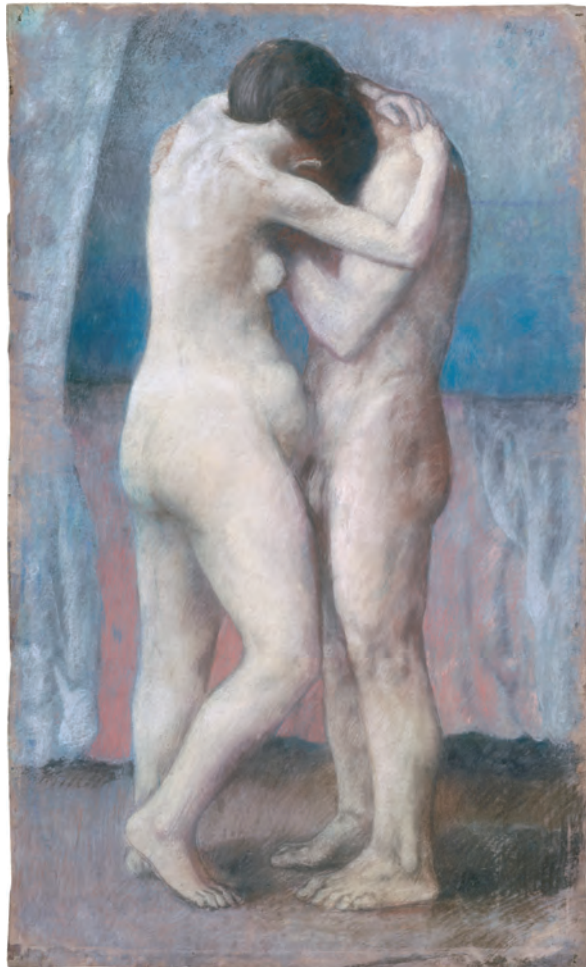
The Young Picasso: Blue and Rose Periods

Fondation Beyeler, Basel

3rd February–26th May

by ELIZABETH COWLING

Picasso's hugely popular early work has been the subject of many exhibitions, but *Picasso: Blue and Rose*,



18. *Woman in blue*, by Pablo Picasso. 1901. Canvas, 133 by 100 cm. (Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid; exh. Fondation Beyeler, Basel).

19. *The embrace*, by Pablo Picasso. 1903. Pastel on paper, 98 by 57 cm. (Musée de l'Orangerie, Paris; exh. Musée d'Orsay, Paris).



which closed at the Musée d'Orsay, Paris, on 6th January, was the first comprehensive survey to be held in France, its array of paintings and drawings fittingly abundant and splendid. Every form of the young artist's work was represented, from planned masterpiece to doodled sketch, moody portrait to obscene caricature, his astounding technical skill and rampant inventiveness on exhilarating display. Almost all the sculptures and prints Picasso produced between 1900 and 1906 were also present, together with a tantalising sample of archival documents and photographs – including some of his first experiments with that medium – and a handful of contextualising works by painters from his circle

in Barcelona. Inevitably there were significant absentees, the most grievous being the fresco-like *Family of Saltimbanques* (1905; cat. fig.222) from the National Gallery of Art, Washington, which cannot be loaned for legal reasons. To make amends, the hefty catalogue includes colour illustrations of the most important missing works, their absence dutifully flagged.¹ In slimmed down form, the exhibition opens this month at the Fondation Beyeler, Basel.²

In their introductory catalogue essay the curators, Claire Bernardi, Raphaël Bouvier, Laurent Le Bon, Stéphanie Molins and Émilie Philippet, debate the legitimacy of the conventional separation of Picasso's early work into successive periods – the method enshrined in Pierre Daix's