

Passion and Commerce
Art in Venice in the 17th
and 18th centuries



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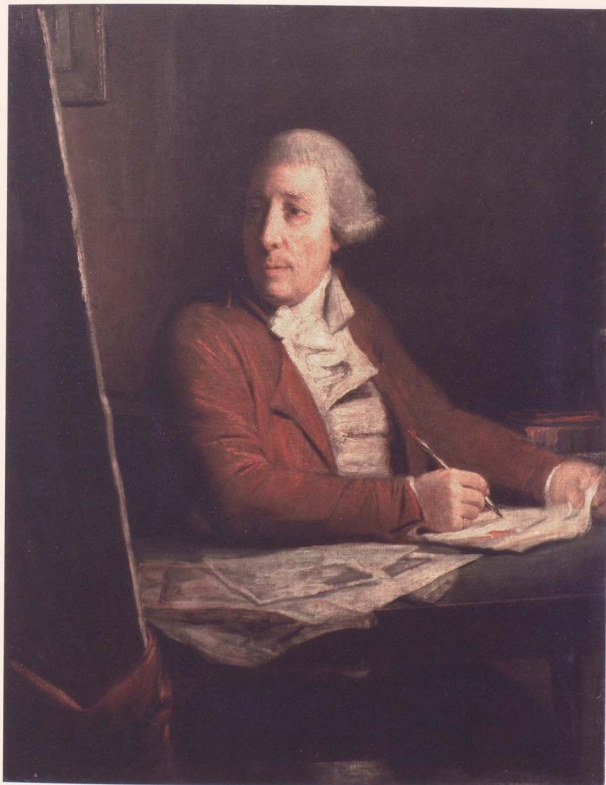
Cover:
Giandomenico Tiepolo. *The Charlatan* (detail)
MNAC, Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya, Barcelona

Portrait of the Engraver Francesco Bartolozzi

Oil on canvas
106 x 88 cm
GALLERIE DELL'ACCADEMIA, Venice
inv. no. 447

In 1834, Pellegrini somewhat reluctantly dispatched to the Accademia veneziana di Belle Arti the canvas of the famous Florentine engraver, who had achieved his first success in La Serenissima. The painter's excellent memory and a letter sent to Canova in April 1794 pinpoint the date of the "portrait of the great Bartolozzi", a modest tribute to the man who had been a good friend and an artistic collaborator of his since 1803, a connection that continued during the artist's long stay in Lisbon. The painting, previously wrongly attributed to Joshua Reynolds and to George Romney, is evidence of Pellegrini's interest in the British tradition of portraiture, which undoubtedly inspired the sensitive and delicate sober colouring, the tendency to give the pigment a pastel-like and evanescent consistency, and the markedly Romantic air that pervades the work. The decorative excesses typical of Ludovico Gallina, Pellegrini's first teacher, are now a dim and distant memory, though he also seems to reject his entire experience in the city on the lagoon, following Alessandro Longhi, who was more instinctive and generalist in his psychological definition of his portraits. The unusual immediacy in the capturing of the engraver, who stands out against a background in half-darkness thanks to the blend of whitish and tobacco red hues, provides an opportunity to study the meticulous practice of the artist, who deemed drawing to be of crucial importance.

P.D.



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