

Take One... Lagoon View

ASHMOLEAN

Francesco Guardi 'Venice: the Fondamenta Nuove with the Lagoon and the Island of San Michele.'
Oil on canvas Dimensions: 72 x 120 cm
On display in Gallery 49, Britain and Italy

A zoomable image of this painting is available on our website to use in the classroom on an interactive whiteboard or projector
www.ashmolean.org/learning-resources



These notes are designed to help you use this painting as a focus for cross-curricular teaching and learning. A visit to the Ashmolean Museum to see the painting offers your class the perfect 'learning outside the classroom' opportunity.

Starting questions

Questions like these may be useful as a starting point to develop speaking and listening skills with your class.

- What is the first thing that catches your eye?
- What colours stand out most?
- How many different kinds of boats can you see?
- What time of year do you think it might be? What clues are there to help you?
- Where in the world do you think this might be?
- If you could step into the scene what would you feel/smell/hear?
- Where would you like to be in the painting and why?
- If you could travel under the bridge on the left what adventures do you think you might have?

Background Information

The Painting

'Venice: the Fondamenta Nuove with the Lagoon and the Island of San Michele' was painted by Francesco Guardi around 1758. It was painted for a British visitor to Italy taking part in the Grand Tour when Guardi was first establishing his reputation in the market. It is one of a group of early lagoon views by Guardi that are entirely original rather than being based on earlier works by Canaletto and other artists.

It is a sparkling scene with lots of detail of life in a city built on water. Different kinds of boats and people carrying out everyday activities are featured. In the foreground gondolas and other craft are ferrying people around and workmen on a raft appear to be builders at work.

On the left, buildings run along a quayside known as the Fondamenta Nuove, and on the right lies the church and cemetery island of San Michele. In the background the snow-capped peaks of the Dolomites are visible. The painting is striking for the attention given to sky, atmosphere and water, and for its setting in a quiet part of the city, rather than featuring the splendours of Venice's more famous sights.



This detail from 'Lagoon View' shows the variety of boats and men at work on a pontoon or raft.

subjects often in collaboration with his older brother, Gianantonio. Francesco turned to view-painting in the late 1750s, around the time of his marriage in 1757, moving into the market created by the ageing Canaletto. His paintings gradually became more sketchy and impressionistic in style. Guardi died in Venice on January 1st 1793.

The Historical Background

Guardi's work was aimed at the Grand Tourist market. Well-off travellers at this period would look for souvenirs to send back home from their travels in Italy, and would build up art collections as a sign of social status. They were on the hunt for classical art such as copies of famous Greek and Roman sculpture, or newly-excavated antiquities, coins and gems. Many of them also wanted to buy landscape paintings to remind them of the picturesque places they had visited. Most travellers would spend a few weeks in Venice as they arrived in Italy or on their way home. As a sea-faring Republic whose wealth had derived from maritime trade, Venice had special resonance for British visitors.



'View of the Dolo on the Brenta Canal,' by Giovanna Antonia da Canal, or Canaletto was probably painted in the early 1730s. The Brenta Canal, lined with elegant villas, was the gateway to Venice for visitors arriving from the north. Guardi also painted a version of this scene.

The Artist

Francesco Guardi was born in Venice on October 5th 1712. He is, arguably, the best known landscape or 'view' painter after Canaletto. He came from a family of artists and produced work on a variety of

Ideas for creative planning across the KS1 & 2 curriculum

You can use this painting as the starting point for developing pupils' critical and creative thinking as well as their learning across the curriculum. You may want to consider possible 'lines of enquiry' as a first step in your cross-curricular planning. Choosing a line of enquiry area may help you to build strong links between curriculum areas.

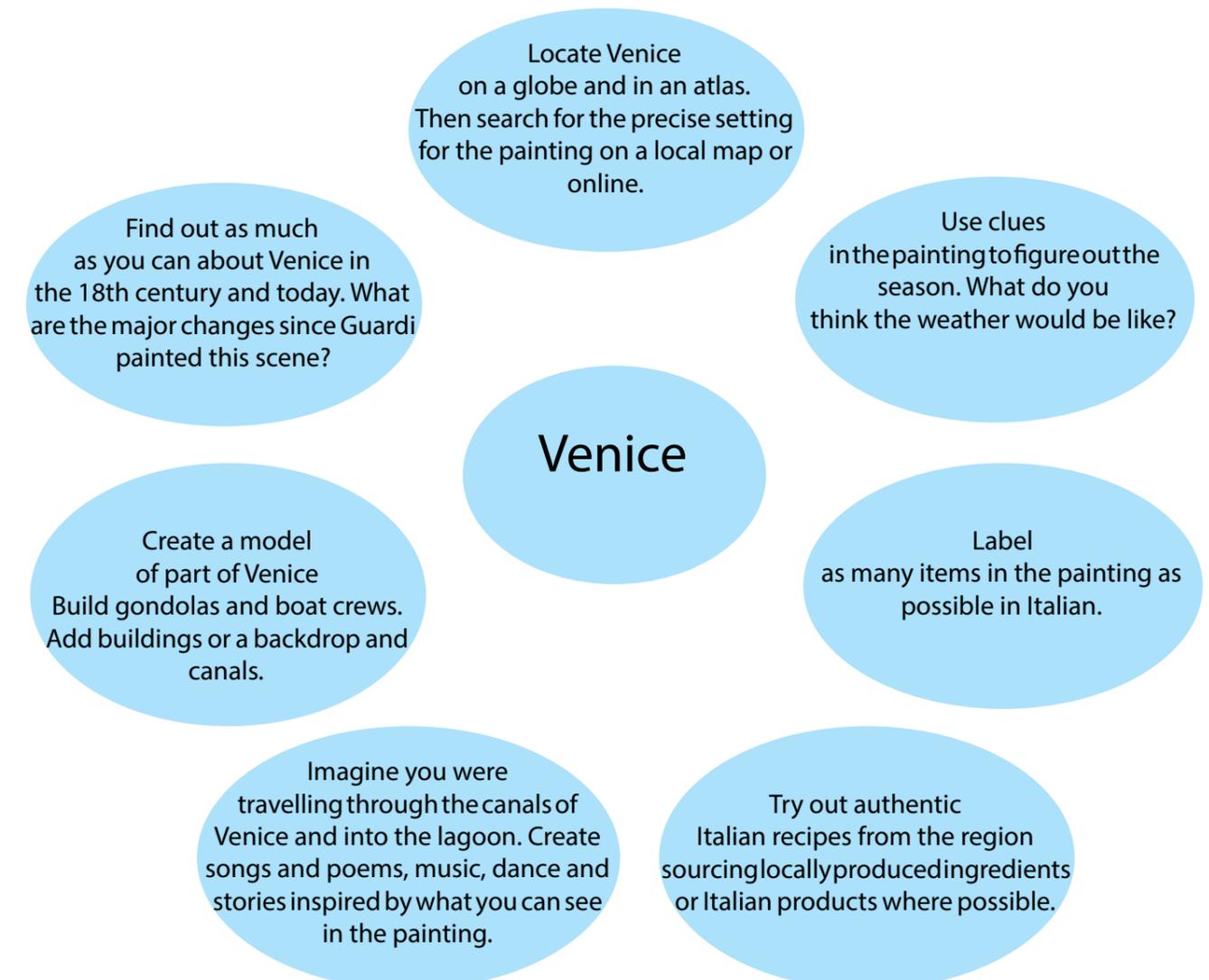
Here are a few suggestions of possible 'lines of enquiry' using this painting:

- Venice
- Contrasting landscapes
- Italy - including language
- Painting techniques
- Living and working by the sea

After using strategies to encourage looking and engagement with the painting and by using questions to facilitate dialogue about the painting you can work with the children to develop lines of enquiry that will interest them.

Using Venice as an example of a line of enquiry

Here are a few ideas of how you can develop a range of learning opportunities to engage pupils with this line of enquiry. Each activity can link with the others to build on pupils learning across the chosen theme.



Tips for introducing paintings to a class

- Reveal a painting section by section over a number of days. Each time a new detail is revealed the children can make predictions about what might be in the rest of the picture based on what they can see.
- Display a painting in the classroom for a number of days with a tape recorder or 'graffiti wall' for children to add comments or questions about the painting. Once the pupils' comments and questions have been gathered a class discussion can follow on.
- Introduce a painting to the whole class in a question and answer session designed to take the pupils into the paintings as outlined on page one.
- Show a painting to the class for a minute or so and then cover it up or take it away. Ask the children to remember what they could see.
- Show a painting to one or two willing volunteers. They should then describe what they have seen to the rest of the class. Pupils could draw what they have heard described to them and then see how well the versions match up.
- Play 'painting eye spy' using a painting.

"The training I received at the Ashmolean has really opened my eyes on how much learning can come from just one item. I'm really looking forward to applying what I've learned with my new class, developing their thinking and understanding in a cross-curricular and creative way."

Yr 3 ITE student, Oxford Brookes, after a recent TOP course.



This wonderful collaborative response to Guardi's 'Venice: the Fondamenta Nuove with the Lagoon and the Island of San Michele.' was created during an Easter family drop in activity led by Oxford artist Francesca Shakespeare.

Take One...Inspires...

Take One...encourages teachers to use a painting or object imaginatively in the classroom, both as a stimulus for artwork, and for work in more unexpected curriculum areas. Work in many curriculum area can be inspired by using a single image as a starting point.

The challenge is for teachers to use the painting to develop culturally enriching, relevant and practical learning opportunities across the curriculum.



Inspired by the National Gallery's
Take One Picture programme

Please contact us or visit our website for more information about our programmes including training opportunities

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