

ART MARKET

DAMS (L-3)

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DIPARTIMENTO DI
SCIENZE DELLA
COMUNICAZIONE

*XXIV LESSON – PROVENANCE,
RESTORATION AND PUBLIC*

The provenance of the artwork affects its commercial value.

Certification and Provenance:

Provenance certification is essential to establish the authenticity and value of a painting. Often, the works were accompanied by documents attesting to their history, provenance and previous owners.

Example: A painting attributed to Titian with a long documented history was considered more valuable than a work of uncertain origin.

Titian, Rape of Europa, 1560-1562, Boston, Isabella Steward Gardner



Noble Families and Collections:

Many works of art came from the collections of noble families, such as the Borghese or the Colonna. These collections not only conferred prestige but also added value to the works.

Example: The sale of a painting from the Borghese collection attracted buyers due to its association with the prestige of the family.

Influence of Exposures:

Works exhibited in prestigious exhibitions and galleries, such as those organized by popes or academies, gained recognition and value.

Example: A painting displayed in a Vatican exhibition was more likely to sell for a high price.



Annibale Carracci, Bean Eater, 1584-1585, Rome, Galleria Colonna

Restoration Techniques: restoration was a common and necessary activity to preserve and improve the appearance of works of art. Common techniques included cleaning, touch-ups, and painting.

Example: the retouching of a Madonna by Raphael could include cleaning the background and restoring the original colors.

Famous Restorers: Carlo Maratti, known for his restoration work on numerous masterpieces.

Example: Carlo Maratti was often commissioned to restore Raphael's works, thus increasing their commercial value.

Impact of Restoration on the Market: a well-executed restoration could significantly increase the value of a painting. However, poorly executed restorations or excessive interventions could reduce the value and perceived authenticity of the work.

Example: a painting by Caravaggio, restored with advanced techniques, could go from an average to a very high value.



PROVENANCE AND RESTORATION OF GOODS

The School of Correggio: painting depicting a Madonna and Child from the school of Coreggio. The provenance from this renowned school increased its value.

Giulio Romano and Cavalier Maratti: two old paintings from the school of Giulio Romano and a painting retouched by Cavalier Maratti are examples of how association with famous artists influenced the perception of value.

Guido Reni and Annibale Carracci: a head of Salvatore attributed to Guido Reni and a small picture of Galatea and Cyclops by Annibale Carracci demonstrate the importance of artistic attribution in determining the value.

Giulio
Romano,
Birth of
Bacchus, c.
1530, Los
Angeles,
Getty
collection
(from the
Gonzaga
collections)



The audience of the painting market in Rome in the eighteenth century was very varied and included aristocrats, clergymen, bourgeois and foreigners. Roman aristocrats were among the main buyers, often commissioning works to embellish their palaces. The clergy also played a significant role, buying works of art to decorate churches and monasteries. The growing urban bourgeoisie began to have a significant presence in the market, demonstrating a growing interest in art as a symbol of social status. Finally, foreign visitors, especially during the Grand Tour, represented an important slice of buyers, attracted by Italian art and the prestige of owning works from Rome.

The motivations for buying paintings varied: in addition to decoration, there was a strong collecting and speculative interest. More sophisticated buyers, such as collectors and art connoisseurs, sought works by recognized masters, while others were attracted by the investment possibilities, hoping that the value of the works would increase over time. This period also saw the emergence of the first forms of systematic collecting, with individuals constructing collections based on aesthetic and historical criteria.



Places of Sale

The paintings were sold in various places: art shops, auction houses and even on the street. Art workshops were spaces where art dealers exhibited and sold works, also offering restoration services. Auction houses began to spread, offering a more formal and regulated place for buying and selling works of art. Street sales were less formal and more accessible to a wide clientele.

Sales Processes

The process of selling paintings could be complex. Often, sellers resorted to brokers (brokers and agents) to find buyers. These intermediaries played a crucial role, connecting sellers and buyers, negotiating prices and ensuring the quality of the works. A significant example is given by the role of matchmakers, who facilitated transactions by providing specific expertise on the value and authenticity of works.



Sales Tools

Among the tools used for the sale were auction catalogs and price lists. The catalogues, often very detailed, described the works for sale, including information about the artist, the size and condition of the painting, and sometimes the provenance. This helped to create transparency and trust in the sales process. Price lists allowed sellers to clearly set and communicate the prices of the works, facilitating negotiations with potential buyers.

Sales and Collector Examples

An example of an important collector of the time was Cardinal Alessandro Albani, known for his extensive collection of works of art. Albani not only bought paintings for his own pleasure and prestige, but also as an investment. He used to use brokers to find valuable works and negotiate prices. Another significant example is that of the Borghese family, who commissioned renowned artists to enrich their collections and decorate family palaces.

In conclusion, the painting market in Rome in the eighteenth century was a complex and sophisticated system, supported by a diversified demand and varied sales methods. Buying and selling practices reflected the social, economic, and cultural dynamics of the time, with art playing a central role in building prestige and social identity.

Carlo Maratta,
Visit to the
Sepulchre with
the Virgin and
the Three
Marys, 1700-
1705, Rome,
Mainetti
Collection



CONCLUSIONS