

<b>Institution:</b> University of Warwick		
<b>Unit of Assessment:</b> D32- Art and Design: History, Practice and Theory		
<b>Title of case study:</b> Supporting the preservation and conservation of Renaissance art in Venice		
<b>Period when the underpinning research was undertaken:</b> 2013-2020		
<b>Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:</b>		
<b>Name(s):</b>	<b>Role(s) (e.g. job title):</b>	<b>Period(s) employed by submitting HEI:</b>
Dr Giorgio Tagliaferro	Associate Professor	January 2013-present
<b>Period when the claimed impact occurred:</b> 2015 - 2020		
<b>Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014?</b> N		
<b>1. Summary of the impact</b> (indicative maximum 100 words) <p>Rising sea levels, exacerbated by global warming, have caused flooding in Venice which threatens the city's unique collection of culturally significant artworks. Dr Giorgio Tagliaferro is a world-leading expert on Titian, Tintoretto and Veronese and the importance of the site-specific, historical context in which their work was created and is viewed today. For the past five years, Tagliaferro has worked with major philanthropic organisation Save Venice Inc to help enable the preservation and conservation of the artwork of some of the world's greatest painters. His research has also helped the historic Gallerie dell'Accademia reimagine its collection of 16<sup>th</sup> century masterpieces for a modern audience of tourists and Venetians alike.</p>		
<b>2. Underpinning research</b> (indicative maximum 500 words) <p>The work of Titian, Tintoretto and Veronese has featured widely in exhibitions in Cologne, London, New York, Paris, Verona and Washington between 2014 and 2020. Tagliaferro's research advances the premise that, although these exhibitions are international in scope, they cannot replace the experience of viewing pictures in their original settings, or within the physical context of Venice. As such, they withhold a factor which is key to their historical understanding and aesthetic appreciation. His research provides new insights into how the canon would have been viewed and understood by the painters' contemporaries. It focuses on understanding how the role of the spectator influenced the manufacture of artworks and its bearing on political, regional and religious discourse in the 16<sup>th</sup> century.</p> <p>Tagliaferro's findings are based on an interdisciplinary approach that combines historical enquiry based on archival research and primary sources, with the material analysis of artworks. He also uses a theoretically-engaged methodology which draws on phenomenology (or what it is <i>like</i> to experience artworks as an embodied viewer). This allows him to analyse how spectators' experience of the objects concerned were shaped by the particular circumstances in which they originated, and by their religious, political and social functions – i.e. the roles they played <i>in situ</i>.</p> <p>For example, Tagliaferro's approach considers the physical setting in relation to the painting design, alongside its historical context. This approach led to not only a socio-cultural analysis but a deeper understanding gained from the position of someone observing it, phenomenological now as of then, to see what in the picture remains which in turn provides insight into the artist's working methods. Exploring the gaze as both the artist and the historical viewers did led to new insights into how differently (or not) it is viewed today. Tagliaferro used this approach to examine how time has affected the experience and meaning of Titian's <i>The Presentation of the Virgin in the Temple</i>. The painting has hung on the same wall since its completion in 1538 but it is no longer part of a lay confraternity, since its incorporation into the Gallerie dell'Accademia in the nineteenth century. The context in which it is viewed has changed over time. Tagliaferro's</p>		

research addresses the implications of this shift within an unchanged physical space from a historically-situated audience with its own 'period eye', to a multi-cultural audience with the diverse expectations and viewing habits of the modern museum visitor (3.1).

Tagliaferro's approach involves analysing the different stages of the artists' workshop and manufacturing process, from a painting's conception in the artist's studio to its installation in a display, with a view to recovering the range of visual, technical, material, and cultural resources an artist mobilises. By using a previously unpublished painting *Agony in the Garden* as a case study, Tagliaferro investigated Titian's workshop practices and visual strategies (3.5). He formulated a new theory on the notions of authorship and originality applied to Titian's art, arguing that, despite the extensive collaboration of assistants to the production of a number of Titian paintings that reproduce identical designs, each was considered to be an original work of art in itself which is connected precisely to the viewers' expectations alongside the visual strategies mobilised by the artist. As such, Titian introduced a new concept of artistic manufacture which celebrated heterogeneity both as a reflection of the variability of his own performance and that of his workshop. The research revealed the way that this encouraged the viewer to engage more deeply with the paintings at a time when artists were widely acclaimed as authors in a modern sense for the first time.

Tagliaferro's findings demonstrate that, in his preliminary sketches for larger compositions, Veronese sought to delineate in a few strokes of pen and ink the movements and poses of the figures so as to capture the action and communicate states of mind to the viewer, with a view to conveying the moral message of the story depicted more effectively (3.4). Tagliaferro has examined how Veronese developed this strategy into a visual rhetoric suitable for representing political ideologies within both secular and religious paintings. In particular, he analysed a number of allegorical paintings commissioned from Veronese by the state, especially the Doge's Palace - the government palace of the former Republic of Venice and Venice's most visited monument today - to demonstrate how this shaped a new public image for the Venetian government (3.6). Likewise, Tagliaferro has examined a body of state paintings painted by Tintoretto for the same building (3.2).

Finally, Tagliaferro has combined his research themes in a study that deals with spectatorship in relation to a painting by another leading artist of late sixteenth-century Venice, Palma Giovane, which is still *in situ*, and examined how this shaped the ambitions of the Venetian ruling class; for instance, this painting is located in a former hospice for destitute women, so through it the ruling class conjured up their virtual presence in the church of the hospice, before the eyes of the destitute, so as to reinforce their own role as funders of the hospice (3.3).

### 3. References to the research (indicative maximum of six references)

Tagliaferro's research has been published in peer-reviewed journals and edited collections, including an exhibition catalogue:

1. **Tagliaferro, Giorgio** (2020) *The "Eternal Mystery of the Picture Plane": Leo Steinberg's Unfinished Study on Titian*. Getty Research Journal, 12. pp. 151-193. doi: 10.1086/708318
2. **Tagliaferro, Giorgio** (2018) *Celebrating the most serene republic*. In: Echols, Robert and Ilchmann, Frederick, (eds.) *Tintoretto: the artist of Venice at 500*, Exhibition Catalogue, National Gallery of Washington. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, pp. 208-217. ISBN: 0300230400
3. **Tagliaferro, Giorgio** (2016) *Procurators on the threshold: sitters and beholders in Palma Giovane's Crociferi Entombment*. *Artibus et Historiae: international journal for visual arts*. 37 (74), pp. 153-176. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/44972575>
4. **Tagliaferro, Giorgio** (2016) *Drafting characters: action and enactment in Veronese's creative process*. In: Aikema, Bernard and Dalla Costa, Thomas and Marini, Paola, (eds.) *Paolo*

Veronese. Giornate di studio. Venice: Fondazione Giorgio Cini; lineadacqua, pp. 102-113. ISBN: 9788895598536

5. **Tagliaferro, Giorgio** (2015) *A new agony in the garden by Titian and his collaborators and the problem of originality in late Titian*. *Artibus et Historiae: international journal for visual arts*, 36 (72). pp. 107-126. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/44082377>

6. **Tagliaferro, Giorgio** (2014) *Veronese pittore di Stato*. In: Aikema, Bernard and Marini, Paola, (eds.) Paolo Veronese: L'illusione della realtà, exhibition catalogue, Verona, Museo di Castelvecchio. Milan: Electa, pp. 164-172; and entries nos. 1.22, 3.8, 3.10-3.15, pp. 84-85, 188-189, 192-203. ISBN: 9788837099480

#### Funding Grants:

British Academy: BA/Leverhulme Trust Small Research Grant: **Tagliaferro, Giorgio (PI)**. Leo Steinberg on Titian: A Method of Seeing Artworks in Their Contexts. Ref: SG142958.1 July 2015 – 31 March 2016. **GBP1,700**

Leverhulme Research Fellowship: **Tagliaferro, Giorgio (PI)**. The Great Council Hall Cycle in the Doge's Palace, Venice (1577-1604). Ref: RF-2016-275\5. 1 October 2016 – 30 September 2017. **GBP38,111**

#### 4. Details of the impact (indicative maximum 750 words)

##### Facilitating conservation projects and supporting major donations

Venice's fragile artistic heritage faces an unprecedented challenge. Since the 1960s, the number of floods in Venice has doubled, culminating in the second highest tide ever recorded in 2019. This flood left 85% of the city underwater, prompting the mayor to declare it a 'disaster zone' with an estimated EUR1,000,000,000 repair cost. Water damage affected buildings, infrastructures and public spaces, including civic museums, galleries and churches, all home to historically significant works of art. Whilst responsive crisis funds have been provided by the state, support by way of donations from private not-for-profit organisations is also vital to protect Venice's cultural heritage for future generations.

Tagliaferro has worked closely with Save Venice Inc., a US-based philanthropic organisation established in 1971 in response to the unique risks posed to Venice by flooding. Since its establishment, it has funded more than 550 conservation projects to protect more than 1,000 artworks.

In 2015, Save Venice approached Tagliaferro to help with their restoration and funding strategy, drawing on his expertise in the materiality, historical significance and aesthetic appreciation of works undergoing restoration in Venetian churches and galleries. Tagliaferro has informed the selection of Save Venice conservation projects by advising the Save Venice Board of Directors and Projects Committee. Projects are chosen on the basis of artistic merit, historical importance and urgency of need.

The Director of the Venice Office of Save Venice confirmed that: 'Dr Tagliaferro's research has had a significant impact on two areas: the conservation practice carried out by Save Venice and the participation of its donors. Dr Tagliaferro's academic expertise has guided and informed our work, making a significant contribution to the preservation of Venice's unique collection of artworks and engaging donors with the importance of this work' (5.1).

Tagliaferro's research enabled Save Venice to explain the importance of at-risk artworks in their original settings to private donors to extend and develop their knowledge 'so that they are more inspired to contribute the essential support for these critical conservation projects' (5.1). As part of this role, Tagliaferro attended onsite visits at historic sites, including San Sebastiano, the

Doge's Palace and villa Barbaro at Maser, during which he informed and educated donors about the artistic and contextual significance of some of Veronese's most valuable masterpieces housed in these buildings.

Tagliaferro has also worked with art restorers, providing research-informed expert knowledge on the original manufacture of works of art, thus informing conservation work. Save Venice commented that 'Dr. Tagliaferro has been instrumental in collaborating with conservators to better understand the artworks undergoing conservation treatment, as well as engaging our donors' (5.1).

In 2018 Tagliaferro was invited by the Chairman of Save Venice to contribute to the intellectual discussion accompanying exhibition 'Tintoretto 1519-1594' held in 2018-19 in Venice (Doge's Palace) and then Washington (National Gallery) to celebrate the 5th centenary of the artist's birth. Save Venice commented that Tagliaferro's expertise was crucial to the exhibition, 'identify[ing] and contextualiz[ing] the works, as well as influenc[ing] major donors, enabling these exhibitions to include the Tintoretto artworks and receive broad press and publicity for its completeness of retrospective' (5.1).

The exhibition brought together international curators and art historians, presenting a complete history of Tintoretto's career in one place and received broad international press coverage. Tagliaferro provided an essay publically available as part of the exhibition catalogue detailing Tintoretto's paintings in the Doge's Palace and the historical and cultural importance of these paintings, drawing on his extensive research and complementing his work with Save Venice donors (3.2).

### **Developing visitor communication and engagement strategies**

Tagliaferro has been an Academic Advisor to the prestigious Gallerie dell'Accademia since 2017. The gallery became independent in 1879 but has an even longer history, growing out of the gallery of the Academy of Fine Arts of Venice which dates back to 1750. Today, it contains the world's largest collection of Venetian paintings from 1200 to 1800, including works by Titian, Tintoretto and Veronese.

Tourism to Venice has more than doubled over nearly two decades, with 5,500,000 tourist arrivals in 2019 compared to 2,300,000 in 2003. The Accademia has been faced with the challenge of an increasingly globalised visitor profile, encompassing varied understandings and appreciations of European Renaissance culture. At the same time, the success of the Venice Biennale and the creation of new museums, such as the Punta della Dogana, have caused an upsurge in interest in contemporary art which has somewhat obscured interest in pre-modern art, which represents the entirety of the Accademia's collections. There have also been increased calls from the Italian community to retain the integrity of Venetian culture.

The Accademia appointed Tagliaferro as their first ever academic advisor to help them meet these challenges by revising their strategies of communication and engagement with these new, global audiences, without compromising the integrity of their cultural context.

As part of this work, Tagliaferro informed the refurbishment of seven rooms in the galleries, which re-opened on 29<sup>th</sup> August 2019. Through 48 new labels, in both English and Italian, Tagliaferro used his expertise to contextualise artworks for diverse visitors who have a range of prior understanding of Italy's artistic heritage. Reviews on Trip Advisor included 'A wonderful refit [for] a collection that is one of the great galleries in the world...A superbly well displayed renovation' (5.4).

Tagliaferro produced new guidance sheets and fixed information panels to accompany the artworks, which enable a deeper connection between how modern audiences view the paintings today and how the paintings were originally seen at their creation.

The Director of the Accademia commented; 'The changes implemented by Dr Tagliaferro have significantly enhanced the visitors' understanding and appreciation of the historical significance and aesthetic qualities of the artworks, and fostered a greater level of engagement on the part of the local community' (5.2).

Tagliaferro has also provided content for the Accademia's website, based around new thematic aspects of the entire collection, such as the original functions of the paintings and the techniques used by painters to create the illusion of a pictorial space. These itineraries enable the visitor to view, experience and engage with the artworks in a new, more involved way, and allow them to structure their visits according to their particular interests. Referring to Tagliaferro's captions for the new rooms and the multiple mobile information sheets, the Accademia stated that these 'are entirely new and offer visitors more ways to engage with the artwork more deeply' (5.2).

As Academic Advisor, Tagliaferro was able to use his research expertise and apply his methodology to develop the Accademia's communication strategy, helping them to raise their profile and to meet the expectations of a modern, global audience. The Accademia commented that: 'these new communication strategies have improved the content, context and scientific approach of the information about the works, adding valuable new insights... [using] his research findings to guide visitors in experiencing the works in a new and original way. The new captions have also increased our ability to communicate to a more diversified, international audience, adding a didactic experience for visitors, significantly progressing the museum's accessibility and visitor ambitions, and improving its practice in the museum sector. The communication strategies... have equipped us with the tools we need to be competitive, helping us to attract global visitors for generations to come' (5.2).

Tagliaferro has also worked with other cultural Venetian organisations, specifically the Fondazione Musei Civici di Venezia (MUVE), the overarching body for a number of Venice's museums and cultural heritage sites including the Doge's Palace, with responsibility for over 700,000 works of art. Tagliaferro worked with MUVE to create new media for their 'Narrated Works Program', an initiative to provide new expert analysis of existing collections. Tagliaferro provided academic insights detailing decoration of two rooms within the Doge's Palace, which was made available on their media channels in order to attract a wider digital audience. The Director of MUVE commented 'We are confident that the "Narrated Works" program has a good response and we are pleased that you have accepted to put your expertise and knowledge at the service of the mission of enhancing the heritage preserved by the Fondazione Musei Civici di Venezia' (5.3).

In summary, Tagliaferro's research and partnerships have contributed to critical initiatives to preserve the artistic and cultural heritage of Venice. By providing invaluable historical and cultural expert insights, Tagliaferro's input has enabled those responsible for preserving and communicating the city's heritage to present it in new ways, demonstrating his invaluable contribution to the future of this unique art centre.

#### **5. Sources to corroborate the impact** (indicative maximum of 10 references)

1. Statement from Save Venice Inc.
2. Statement from the Gallerie dell'Accademia
3. Statement from Fondazione Musei Civici di Venezia (in Italian)
4. Trip Advisor review