



29 SUBTERRANEAN FOUNDATIONS OF HADRIAN'S MAUSOLEUM Focillon 341 Coll: Dr W.S. Auburn

The Genius of Giovanni Battista

PIRANESI

1720-1778

65 Etchings

from the collections of Auckland City Art Gallery,
Dr W.S. Auburn, National Gallery Wellington,
Alexander Turnbull Library

AUCKLAND CITY ART GALLERY

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W.S. Auburn

shown as a group in the present exhibition.

which is still one of Rome's principal landmarks today. Some of his prints of this building are made a thorough study of its construction, from the foundations to the crowning tower memorial to the Emperor Hadrian which was later known as Castel Sant' Angelo. Piranesi buildings. Perhaps the most famous of these is the circular monument originally erected as a crippled beggars, hunchbacks and dwarfs to set off the grandeur of the ancient ruins and element is different. Piranesi's large and beautiful prints are peopled with a collection of churches and secular buildings, many of them surviving to our days. Only the human On the other hand the Vedute di Roma show contemporary views of Roman squares, fragments of Roman statuary such as Piranesi may have found and excavated himself.

you might call them an architect's nightmare. The Grotteschi present a fantastic jumble of instruments of torture. They create the impression of a weird mixture of beauty and horror, or crossed by strange systems of staircases and bridges, and they are filled with a variety of are dominated by sets of vaults and arches supported by heavy masonry. Some of them are of sixteen large prints the interiors of vast prisons, from Piranesi's fertile imagination: they *Grotteschi* and *Carceri*. The latter are probably his most famous etchings. They show in a set Rome and its antiquities, and into a series of architectural fantasies that became known as As will be seen from the exhibits, Piranesi's artistic output can be divided into the views of the New Zealand Institute of Architects in Auckland this year.

collections available in New Zealand. It is being shown to coincide with a conference held by today. A cross-section of his life's work can be seen in this exhibition from public and private determination we owe the most comprehensive record of Roman antiquities in existence remained faithful to his grandiose plan for the rest of his life. To his creative energy and of paper without having to pay customs duty. So young Piranesi was in business and he him for years. The Pope who was one of his clients allowed him to import two hundred bales Rome on a scale not previously attempted. He started off by securing a supply of paper to last at that time. It enabled him to start his great enterprise of recording the remains of ancient became his wife with a dowry of 150 plates, the equivalent of \$175, which was a large sum Forum and proposed marriage to her after a short courtship. He was accepted and Angelina the necessary capital. Romance came to his aid when he met a beautiful young girl in the But his consuming ambition was to produce work on a much larger scale for which he lacked Italian provincial towns.

small views of Rome that were later published in guide books. He added to them views of therefore draws these ruins with all possible exquisite details". He started modestly by etching fragments for new buildings, I resolved to preserve them by means of engravings. I have where they dwindle day by day, either weathering away or being quarried into to steal most of the remains of ancient buildings lay scattered through fields and plunged fields unceasing search for Roman antiquities. To quote his own words: "When I saw in Rome how returned there to take up residence for the rest of his life and to devote himself to an not stay in Venice. He must have fallen in love with Rome at first sight, because he soon native Venice where he came under the influence of the painter and etcher Giovanni Battista Tiepolo who made a profound impression on Piranesi's style. However, the young artist did He appears to have had so little success in his first four years in Rome that he returned to Giuseppe Vasi, one of the leading illustrators of his time.

at the age of twenty to try his luck in Rome. There he studied the art of etching under training in architecture from a maternal uncle, Matteo Lucchesi. The young man left Venice village near Venice where his father was a stone mason. He appears to have received his early Little is known about Piranesi's childhood and upbringing, except that he was born in a and Gainsborough and Hogarth in England.

contemporaries were Canaletto and Tiepolo in Italy, Goya in Spain, Claude Lorrain in France

12	RUINS WITH HEAD OF A CORPSE	Focillon 20 Coll: Alexander Turnbull Library
GROTESQUES (1744)		
11	SEPTICHRAL CHAMBER	Focillon 18 Coll: Dr W.S. Auburn
10	GROUP OF COLUMNS SUPPORTING THE ARCHES OF A COURT GARDEN	Focillon 15 Coll: Dr W.S. Auburn
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8	THEATRICAL ROTUNDA	Focillon 10 Coll: Dr W.S. Auburn
7	THE CAPITOL	Focillon 9 Coll: Dr W.S. Auburn
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3	TITLE PAGE	Focillon 2 Coll: Dr W.S. Auburn
THE FIRST PART OF ARCHITECTURE AND PERSPECTIVE (1743)		
2	CATALOGUE OF WORKS UP TO 1767	Focillon 1 Coll: Auckland City Art Gallery
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PIRANESI — CHRONOLOGICAL SURVEY OF MAIN EVENTS	
1720:	Born in Mogliano, near Mestre. His father, Angelo Piranesi, a stonemason and master builder.
1730-1740:	Studied under: his uncle Matteo Lucchesi, an hydraulics engineer and architect (employed on one of the greatest public works schemes in the history of Venice — the rebuilding of the extensive seawalls); Scalfarotto, an eclectic architect; Carlo Zucchi, an engraver and stage designer, from whom Piranesi probably learnt the art of perspective for set design; and possibly the Bibiena family of stage designers. He certainly knew the text-book on architecture and perspective by Ferdinando Bibiena.
1740:	First visit to Rome as draughtsman to Venetian ambassador to Rome.
1740-1743:	Resided in Rome. Probably employed by Domenico and Giuseppe Valeriani, the ruins' painters and stage-set designers. When G. Valeriani left Rome he studied under Giuseppe Vasi, a Sicilian etcher then working on his etched views <i>Magnificenze di Roma</i> . After a quarrel with Vasi, he left to live with fellow Venetian etcher Felice Polanzani — the two spending long days together sketching ruins and monuments. Possibly also studied with Canaletto in Rome about this time.
1743:	Published <i>Prima Parte di Architetture e Prospettive</i> , a collection of twelve etchings of imaginary temples, palaces and a prison.
1744-1745:	Visited Naples to view the excavations and archaeological discoveries at Herculaneum; showed his drawings to Padermi, museum director there, who suggested he make drawings of antiquities of Rome. Returned to Venice where, if he did not study under Tiepolo, he must have at least come into contact with Tiepolo's suite of etchings, <i>Le Capricci</i> , in production at this time. Tiepolo's subject matter in the <i>Capricci</i> and their free style are much evident in the drawings and etched Grotteschi of this period. Possibly also etched the <i>Carceri</i> about this time, although not published until c1750.
1745:	Returned to Rome, possibly because of intensive competition in Venice amongst Veduta artists. Set up as agent to Joseph Wagner, an influential Venetian print-seller.
1748:	Published 47 little views of Rome in <i>Varie Vedute di Roma</i> with those by other artists. Reprinted in guide books. Also published <i>Antichità Romane de' Tempi della Repubblica</i> . Began the series <i>Vedute di Roma</i> which he continued till his death.
1752:	Married Angela Pasquini after five days' courtship and spent dowry on copper plates for <i>Le Antichità Romane</i> .
1755:	Daughter Laura born; she later helped her father as an etcher.
1756:	Published <i>Le Antichità Romane</i> May 9.
1757:	Elected Honorary Member of Society of Antiquaries, London. Circulated a letter to Lord Charlemont who defaulted in his promised patronage for the <i>Antichità</i> and to whom Piranesi had dedicated that work. Subsequently deleted the dedication from several of the plates.
1758:	Birth of son Francesco who later became his father's chief assistant.
1761:	Published <i>Della Magnificenza ed Architettura de' Romani</i> . Established his own publishing business. Published <i>Le Rovine del Castello dell' Acqua Giulia</i> .
1762:	Published <i>Lapides Capitolini sive Faste Consulares</i> and <i>Il Campo Marzio dell' antica Roma</i> .
1764:	Published <i>Antichità d'Albano, Descrizione e Disegno dell' Emissario del Lago Albano</i> and <i>Antichità di Cora</i> .
1764-1765:	Remodelled and redeccorated church of St Maria del Priorato in Rome, after commission from Cardinal Rezzonico, nephew of Pope Clement XIII.
1765:	Published <i>Parere sul' Architettura</i> .
1766:	Decorated apartments of Cardinal Rezzonico in the Quirinal.
1767:	Pope Clement XIII created him "Knight of the Golden Spur".
1768:	Started Vasi Candelabri Cippi Sarcophagi Tripodi Lucerne ed Ornamenti antichi which he continued till his death.
1769:	Published <i>Diverse Maniere d'adornare i Cammini ed ogni altra Parte degli Edifici</i> .
1770:	Etched 17 of 20 plates of <i>Différentes Vues de quelques Restes de trois Grands Edifices qui subsistent encore dans le Milieu de l'ancienne Ville de Presto</i> . Died November 9.

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