

AGE OF SAIL



1

Alberto Pullicino (1719–1765)

Malta

***Valletta from the Countryside in front of Floriana* 1750s**

from: *Views of Malta*, 1750s
oil on canvas
Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki
Restoration sponsored by ART 50 Trust

Alberto Pullicino painted his original series of eight *Views of Malta* for the Chevalier Turgot in 1749 and subsequent versions for the French knights of the Order of Saint John. There are only six in the set at Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki. This view of the fortified town of Floriana focuses on the agricultural hinterland, where smallholders had their walled fields and gardens.

4

Alberto Pullicino (1719–1765)

Malta

***Valletta from Castel St. Angelo with the Galleys of the Order and Small Craft alongside the Barriera* 1750s**

from: *Views of Malta*, 1750s
oil on canvas
Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki

The significance of the large white flags flying on the ship in the left foreground is unclear. Traditionally a sign to request a truce or communicate with the enemy, they might allude to an event in 1748, when Christian slaves aboard an Ottoman ship, known as the 'Rhodes Wolf', overpowered their masters and brought the galley into Valletta.

7

Leonardo Coccorante (1680–1750)

Italy

***Landscape with Roman Ruins and Figures* 1740s**

oil on canvas
Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki, purchased 1961

As the sun sets over a once-grand seaport, it briefly illuminates a derelict arch still standing on a much-eroded coast. Leonardo Coccorante specialised in creating architectural *capricci* (imaginary compositions combining aspects of different places) that deliciously evoked his birthplace of the Bay of Naples. Eighteenth-century Italian artists were only too pleased to cater to acquisitive well-heeled British travellers who craved mementos of their 'Grand Tours'. Charming pastiches like this would later inform how their British owners re-modelled their estates upon returning home.

2

Alberto Pullicino (1719–1765)

Malta

***Marsamxett with Fort Manoel and Dragut Point, across St Andrew's Bastion from the Auberge of Germany in Valletta* 1750s**

from: *Views of Malta*, 1750s
oil on canvas
Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki

Dubbed the 'Canaletto of the South', Maltese topographical artist Alberto Pullicino not only meticulously portrayed the many types of ship that sailed into the Grand Harbour of Valletta, he also depicted the many types of people who gathered to watch their arrival. Identifiable by their clothing, they include nuns, soldiers, ragamuffins, French aristocrats, English gentlemen, turbaned Ottomans, and the Knights of Malta in red mantles.

5

Alberto Pullicino (1719–1765)

Italy

***View of a North-Easterly Gale Beating Against the Grand Harbour Entrance* 1750s**

from: *Views of Malta*, 1750s
oil on canvas
Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki

As lightning flashes and the seas grow rough, three galleons flying the red and white ensigns of the Maltese navy struggle through the gale to reach harbour. Their gunports are closed, their crews below deck. Formerly respected as the police of the Mediterranean, by the 18th century the Maltese Order of Saint John lacked funds and resorted to piracy, raiding Ottoman ships to enrich itself and finance its heavily armed vessels.

8

Attributed to Gaspard Dughet (1615–1675)

Italy

***Trees and Rocks* 17th century**

oil on canvas
Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki, purchased 1962
Frame sponsored by David Kisler

This close-up view of tree trunks, leaves and rocks is a fragment from a larger landscape. A constant interplay of light, shadow, solid density and breezy movement charges every inch of the surface with living drama. Covering the imperfect, bumpy weave of the canvas like moss, Gaspard's paint becomes an element of the nature he depicts.

3

Alberto Pullicino (1719–1765)

Malta

***View of the Left Side of the Grand Harbour, Taken from Valletta, from Fort Ricasoli to the Heights of Corradino with All the Cities and Creeks between* 1750s**

from: *Views of Malta*, 1750s
oil on canvas
Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki

Ruled between 1530 and 1798 by the Catholic military order of the Knights of Saint John, the island of Malta had its own naval fleet to defend itself against Ottoman aggression and to protect Christian pilgrims on their journeys to and from the Holy Land. In this scene, boats carry people, possibly pilgrims, to ships that fly the order's famous flag, which is red with a white cross.

6

James Pyne (1800–1870)

England

after Joseph Mallord William Turner (1775–1851)
England

***The Wreck of a Transport Ship* circa 1849**

oil on canvas
Mackelvie Trust Collection, Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki, purchased 1956

In the centre of this turbulent shipwreck scene (based on a 1810 painting by JMW Turner), a sailcloth wraps, shroud-like, around a drowning mast. In the 18th century, long-haul ships carried their own sailmakers and bolts of cloth to make sails for all weather conditions. Linen was traditionally used, but as ship and sail sizes increased in the 19th century it was replaced by cotton.

9

Marco Ricci (1676–1729)

Italy

A Rocky Landscape with Figures
circa 1700

oil on canvas
Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki, purchased 1961
Restoration and framing sponsored by Deborah and Mike Whale

The dark and brooding landscapes for which the volatile painter Marco Ricci was renowned deviated from the polite codes of the patron class, which no doubt formed part of his edgy appeal. Said to have murdered a gondolier in a tavern brawl, Ricci established himself as a landscape painter for theatre sets. His intense little paintings, which convey a passion and sinister force akin to a thrilling opera, function as stage sets, writ small.

AGE OF SAIL



10

Joshua Reynolds (1723–1792)

England

Portrait of Fifth Viscount Allen, Named Joshua (1728–1816) in the Uniform of a Lord Lieutenant 1762

oil on canvas
Mackelvie Trust Collection
Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki, purchased 1975

Noted in Joshua Reynolds's 'sitter book' of 1762, this painting of Joshua Allen is one of many military portraits that the artist painted in this period. The five sittings that Viscount Allen attended at the studio of England's leading portrait painter between February and March 1762 must have been fraught with unease, as the viscount had no means of paying for the completed painting and never collected it. Soon after its completion, Allen was called to Portugal as quartermaster in the Anglo-Spanish War of 1762–63, where he was credited with saving British troops from starvation in the dire winter of 1762.

11

John Callow (1822–1878)

England

A Calm Morning on the Suffolk Coast
circa 1860

oil on canvas
Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki, purchased 1955

This nostalgic scene probably depicts an episode from the Anglo-Dutch Wars fought off the Suffolk coast in the 17th century. A British fleet of warships that has sustained damage has limped to shore for urgent repairs. While the tide remains out, two soldiers drag a sail onto the sand for inspection. Cannon holes in sails could be patched on board; complete replacement was a last resort.

12

Louis Gabriel Blanchet (1705–1772)

France

Portrait of William Rouet (1714–1785), Scholar and Tutor to the Hope Family in Italy 1763

oil on canvas
Mackelvie Trust Collection and Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki, purchased with assistance of the Lyndsay Garland Trust, 2022

Surrounded by symbols of his superior classical learning, the distinguished Glasgow scholar and connoisseur Dr William Rouet is shown as an Enlightenment gentleman on his Grand Tour. While technically a tutor to young Scottish aristocrats, Rouet had personal connections to the Stuart court in Rome and dresses accordingly. With easy assurance he wears a gold-embroidered silk velvet suit over his well-filled grey waistcoat and lace-trimmed white shirt.

13

William Hodges (1744–1797)

England, New Zealand, India

A View in Dusky Bay, New Zealand 1773

oil on panel
Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki, purchased 1961

A solitary Māori figure is framed against a romanticised view of local bushland with a setting sun. This famous image is one of a handful of oil paintings in New Zealand collections made by 18th-century artists who travelled here. Painted by William Hodges after his return to London, it is based on sketches he made in April 1773 after arriving at Tamatea Dusky Sound as the official artist on James Cook's second voyage (1772–75).

14

Tilly Kettle (1734–1786)

England

Portrait of Anne Howard-Vyse (1754–1784)
circa 1777–80

oil on canvas
Mackelvie Trust Collection
Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki

The young woman in this portrait stares directly at the artist, a surprising intimacy which suggests the two are close. She wears an enormous lightweight bonnet, known as a 'calash', and a voluminous white satin pelisse or cape over a lace bridal gown. Against this symphony of white, an ungloved left hand reveals a wedding ring. Originally thought to be a member of the Howard-Vyse family, who were executors of the artist's widow's estate, the sitter may in fact be Mary 'Polly' Paine (1753–1798), whom the painter married in 1777 after his return from India.

15

George Chambers (1803–1840)

England

Fishing Boats off Ramsgate 1830s

oil on canvas
Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki, gift of Mr Henry Shaw, 1916

Applying oil paint with a light hand, George Chambers endows his frothy waves and clouds with the delicacy of a watercolour. The son of a mariner, Chambers was born into poverty on the Yorkshire coast and went to sea at the age of 10. Always small and frail, he was protected from heavy labour by being encouraged to draw and paint, eventually becoming a leading marine artist.

16

Richard Wilson (circa 1713–1782)

Wales

Hadrian's Villa circa 1775

oil on canvas
Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki, purchased 1957

With shameless indifference, ragged laundry dangles from a railing above the former country palace of Emperor Hadrian near Tivoli, outside Rome. For some dewy-eyed grand tourists with a shopping list of 'must-see' icons of Italy, the proximity of modern squalor with decayed antiquity must have come as a shock. Artists such as Richard Wilson and his French counterpart Hubert Robert relished those very contrasts, however.

17

Bartholomeus van Hove (1790–1880)

Netherlands

Canal Scene in Holland mid-19th century

oil on panel
Mackelvie Trust Collection
Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki, bequest of James Tannock Mackelvie, 1885
Conserved and reframed 2017

Expert at creating cityscapes which recall 17th-century Dutch topographical paintings, Bartholomeus van Hove adapted famous viewpoints and changed key motifs. This scene, for example, evokes – without exactly reproducing – the Binnenhof, the ancient parliament buildings in the centre of the Hague. Such jewel-like conceits, which are confected from the imagination, achieve a sentimentality that was valued by patriotic Dutch audiences in the Romantic era.

18

Andrea Locatelli (1695–1741)

Italy

A Classical Landscape 1730s

oil on canvas
Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki, purchased 1954

Roman painter Andrea Locatelli portrayed many aspects of wool production in his popular classical landscapes. The freshly shorn sheep shown here may be on their seasonal journey between the alps and valleys, known as the *transumanza*. For centuries the shepherds of Abruzzo were said to have taken their wool to Rome and returned with saddlebags filled with gold, but English competition eventually destroyed Italy's wool-based textile industries.

19

After Aelbert Cuyp (1620–1691)

Netherlands

River Scene with a Ferry Boat 19th century

oil on canvas
Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki, gift of Sir George Grey, 1887
Conserved 2021

Dubbed 'the Dutch Claude [Lorrain]' on account of his grand and airy skies, Aelbert Cuyp loved painting the activities on the river Maas, a wide inland waterway flowing between his hometown of Dordrecht and Rotterdam. He particularly admired the 'wijdschips', a type of large ship also known as 'de Zwanen' or swans, which gracefully plied the Maas with commuters, like cygnets, between their wooden wings.

20

William Hodges (1744–1797)

England, New Zealand, India

Sawrey Gilpin (1733–1807)

England

Two Tigers in a Rocky Landscape

circa 1785

oil on panel
Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki, purchased 1957

By far the most impressive proof of distant travel was to return with living exotic trophies. Many plants, birds, beasts and even humans were displaced to Europe during the Age of Sail (circa 1550–1850) as specimens of curiosity. This painting depicts the young Bengal tiger that was sent to the 4th Duke of Marlborough in 1762 by the British Governor of Bengal, Robert Clive. Kept in a menagerie at Blenheim Palace, the 'royal tigress' was painted by many artists.