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Naples 1600-1800 Compton Verney



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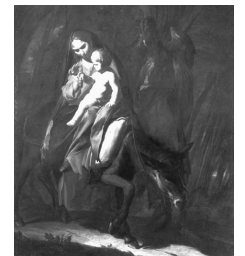


1 & 2. Giuseppe Bonito (1707-1789), Italian: *The Poet and The Music Lesson*. Oil on canvas, about 1742. Both 101.5 x 154 cm
Giuseppe Bonito studied with the influential Neapolitan artist Francesco

Solimena (1657-1747) and was admired for his everyday life or 'genre' scenes, which date primarily from the 1740s. Bonito's innovative subject matter reflected the changing tastes of his patrons. This pair of paintings, recently reunited, represent a cross section of Neapolitan society. The poet is a Bohemian figure surrounded by an admiring audience, one of whom engages the viewer with a sidelong glance. The elegant garments of the figures in *The Music Lesson* are emphasised through a rich colour palette and strong contrast between light and shade. Bonito uses dynamic poses and multiple figures in the compositions to contribute to the atmosphere of daily life.

3. Bernardo Cavallino (1616-56), Italian: *The Flight into Egypt*. Oil on canvas, about 1640-50. 76.8 x 63.5 cm

The flight into Egypt is briefly narrated by St Matthew in the second chapter of his gospel: warned by an angel that King Herod had ordered all infants in Bethlehem to be killed, Joseph 'rose and took the child and his mother by night, and departed into Egypt'. Following the biblical account, Bernardo Cavallino represents the scene at nightfall, in a dense wood, emphasising the hasty and secret nature of the flight. Against the dark background, a narrow shaft of light illuminates the Virgin and Child. This technique had been made popular by Caravaggio (1571-1610) in the 1590s, but remained fashionable in Naples well into the 1650s.





4. Luca Giordano (1634-1705), Italian:
The Holy Family with the Infant Saint John the Baptist. Oil on canvas, about 1675, signed *Jordanus/.F.* 137.2 x 118.1 cm
Luca Giordano trained in the circle of the Spanish artist Jusepe de Ribera (1591-1652) and became one of the most prolific and influential artists of his generation. Giordano

worked not only in Naples, but also in Rome (sometime between 1650-1653), Venice (1667), Florence (1680-82) and Madrid (1692-1702). Encountering the work of artists such as Annibale Carracci, Titian and Veronese led him away from the dark manner of early Neapolitan painting (exemplified by Caravaggio and Ribera), towards a new sense of light, colour and dramatic movement. His distinctive Neapolitan Baroque style can be seen in a vast number of altarpieces, mythological paintings and decorative frescoes in palaces and churches in Naples.

5. Trapani Mirror, Italian. Gilt-copper mounted coral and mother-of-pearl frame, about 1680. H: 76 cm

Produced in Trapani, Sicily, this frame is richly decorated with mother-of-pearl and coral, and is a particularly fine example of the craftsmanship of the region. It is likely to have been produced as a special commission.



6. Paolo Porpora (1617-1675), Italian:
Still Life with Flowers in an Urn, Butterflies and a Snake. Oil on canvas, about 1660. 129 x 98.5 cm

Paolo Porpora was one of the leading Neapolitan still-life painters, and became known as *Paolo dei Fiori* ('of the flowers'). Although born in Naples, the artist moved to Rome in the 1650s where he worked for the powerful papal Chigi family. Here he encountered the work of Dutch flower painters, whose influence can be seen in this rich and exquisitely detailed still life, with its profusion of carnations, tulips, tuberoses, cornflowers, roses and sunflowers.



7. Cabinet, Neapolitan. Hardwood and ivory, with mother-of-pearl inlay, about 1600. H: 52 cm



The exterior of this cabinet features an intricately decorated

scene of a bear hunt, surrounded by a motif of birds and foliage in mother-of-pearl, a decorative scheme influenced by German engravings of the 1590s. The interior, with its numerous compartments and secret drawers, contains scenes relating to the Old Testament story of the Book of Esther, engraved into ivory. The drawers and doors inside are also faced with engraved ivory, a speciality of Neapolitan craftsmen such as Gennaro Piciato and Jacopo de Curtis.

8. Pierre-Jacques Volaire (1729-about 1792), French: *Vesuvius Erupting at Night*.

Oil on canvas. 120 x 73.7 cm

Pierre-Jacques Volaire, a native of Toulon in the south of France, settled in Naples in 1769. Though Volaire's seascapes had established his reputation, soon after his arrival in Naples he turned his attention to painting spectacular views of the eruptions of Vesuvius, a regular occurrence in the 1700s. The discovery of the Roman towns of Herculaneum and Pompeii in 1738 and 1748 respectively – buried in the eruption of AD 79 – reinforced the destructive power of Vesuvius in the popular imagination.



9. Pierre-Jacques Volaire (1729-about 1792), French: *An Eruption of Vesuvius by Moonlight*. Oil on canvas. Signed, dated and inscribed: *Eruption du Mont Vésuve...*

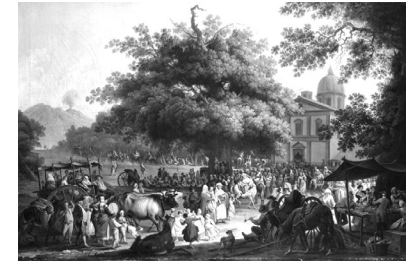
***sur le lieu par le Che. Volaire 1774*. 130 x 260 cm**

Vesuvius erupted several times in the 1770s – including 1774, the year of this painting. Despite the dangers, visits to view the eruptions became a key part of the itinerary for wealthy travellers undertaking the Grand Tour, and Volaire's many views of the subject were popular souvenirs. Volaire's figures bear witness to the contrasts of nature, from the dramatic power of the fiery volcano to the calm sea and silvery moonlight beyond.

10. Pietro Fabris (active 1754-1804), Italian: *The Festival of the Madonna dell'Arco*. Oil on canvas, signed and dated lower left:

***Fabris p.1777*. 102.6 x 153.7 cm**

Pietro Fabris painted this canvas for his patron, the British envoy in Naples, Sir William Hamilton, whose portrait can be seen in this collection (number 17). The festival of the Madonna dell'Arco was held on Easter Monday at the sanctuary seen on the right. The sanctuary housed the miraculous image of the Madonna which was believed to have saved it from destruction during the eruption of Vesuvius in 1631. Hamilton and Fabris collaborated on a number of projects, including the production by Fabris of plates for Hamilton's book on volcanic sites entitled *Campi Phlegraei*, or 'flaming fields'. Both men were interested in Neapolitan costumes and customs, which inspired this painting.



11. Pietro Fabris (active Naples, 1754-1804), Italian: *The Temple of Hera at Paestum*. Oil on canvas.

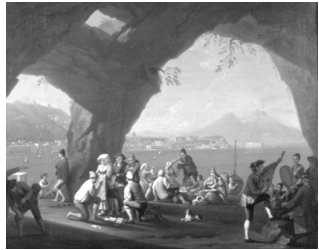
56.6 x 90.5 cm

This view of the Temple of Hera at Paestum near Salerno, south of Naples, reflects the revival of interest in the exceptionally well-preserved Greek temples there. They became popular destinations for Grand Tourists of the day. Fabris depicts the second of two temples at Paestum dedicated to Hera, goddess of fertility, dating from around 450 BC.

12. Gaspar van Wittel (known as Gaspare Vanvitelli) (1652/3-1736), Dutch: *The Grotto of Pozzuoli, with Virgil's Tomb*. Oil on canvas, signed and dated: GAS V W/ 1702. 49 x 64.2 cm



The Grotto at Pozzuoli was a 700-metre-long tunnel built by the Roman emperor Nerva, which linked Naples with nearby Pozzuoli. It was believed to be the burial place of the Roman poet, Virgil, and his tomb can be seen to the left of the entrance to the grotto. Van Wittel produced twelve versions of this composition in order to satisfy popular demand.



13. Pietro Fabris (active Naples, 1754-1804), Italian: *Naples from the West, with Peasants Gaming*. Oil on canvas, about 1760. 71.3 x 98.8 cm

This scene of Neapolitan peasant life includes musicians, card players and a wine seller. Glimpsed through the mouth of the cave is the Bay of Naples with the Castel dell'Ovo and Vesuvius in the distance.

There are a number of different versions of this composition, one of which, signed and dated 1766, is in the Royal Collection.

14. Pietro Fabris (active Naples 1754-1804), Italian: *Peasants Merry-making on the Shore at Posillipo*. Oil on canvas, signed and dated 1777. 104.2 x 157 cm



Pietro Fabris was a prolific painter of scenes of Neapolitan life, which were popular subjects among visitors to Naples. This canvas shows peasants dancing and playing on the shore, with Vesuvius in the distance. Pietro Fabris's origins remain mysterious. He called himself 'the English painter' but his surviving work is wholly Neapolitan in style and subject matter.

15. Carlo Bonavia (active 1751-88), Italian: *A Storm off a Rocky Coast*. Oil on canvas, signed and dated: Bonavia P.A. 1757. 126.5 x 207 cm



The drama of this scene is conveyed through the artist's use of strong diagonals in the composition: from the shipwrecked figures in the foreground to the dark, threatening clouds at the top right; and from the imposing fort and cliffs at the top left, to the boat battling the storm at the bottom right. The proximity of the crashing waves places the viewer at the heart of the action. According to the address on the trunk being pulled ashore, the crew and cargo were bound for Naples. Carlo Bonavia was influenced by the work of the French view painter Claude-Joseph Vernet (1714-89) who visited Naples in 1737 and 1746.



16. Gaspar van Wittel (known as Gaspare Vanvitelli) (1652/3-1736), Dutch: *Posillipo with the Palazzo Donn'Anna*. Oil on canvas, about 1700-02. 72.7 x 170.3 cm

The Dutch painter of views, Gaspar van Wittel, went to Naples in 1699 at the invitation of the Spanish Viceroy, Don Luis de la Cerda, 9th Duke of Medinaceli. The Duke commissioned over thirty view paintings from the artist, including this one of the Bay of Naples. The painting remained in his family until it was acquired for Compton Verney in 2001.

17. David Allan (1744-96), Scottish: *Sir William and the first Lady Hamilton in their villa in Naples*. Oil on copper. Signed and inscribed on the reverse *Sir William and/Lady Hamilton/David Allan printxt/at Naples 1770*. 45 x 57 cm



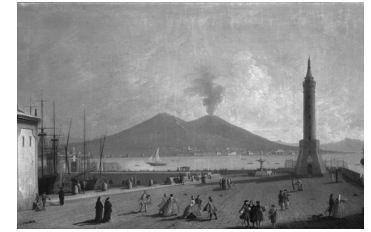
Sir William Hamilton, British Envoy in Naples from 1764, and his wife Catherine Barlow, are seen here in the room off the terrace in their summer villa in Posillipo, surrounded by many of Sir William's favourite items: his violin, a classical bust of Serapis and a small-scale copy of his favourite painting, *Venus Disarming Cupid*. The view of Vesuvius is a reference to Sir William's passion for vulcanology and he frequently accompanied tourists to view the eruptions. He greatly admired Scottish artist Allan, having met him in Naples, describing him as one of the greatest geniuses he had ever known.



18. Tommaso Ruiz (active Naples about 1750), Italian: *The Bay of Naples seen from Posillipo*. Oil on copper, about 1760. 32.2 x 78.5 cm

This small work depicting the Bay of Naples is typical of the *veduta esatta* (accurate view) paintings that flourished in Naples during this period, becoming popular as souvenirs for the many visitors to the city on the Grand Tour of Europe. Painting on copper allowed the artist to use a very fine brush, depicting the topography of the bay in minute detail.

19. Gabriele Ricciardelli (active 1740-80), Italian: *The Lanterna del Molo, Naples*. Oil on canvas. 64.5 x 103.8 cm



This painting depicts the *Lanterna* (lighthouse) and *Molo* (pier) in Naples, set against the dramatic backdrop of Vesuvius, a plume of smoke issuing from its crater. The delicately painted figures who populate the scene represent a cross section of the Neapolitan population, including priests, fishermen and Neapolitan aristocrats in fine costume, the kind of scene that would have appealed to the Grand Tourists of the day.



20. Charles-Francois Grenier de Lacroix (known as Lacroix de Marseille) (1700-82), French: *Vesuvius Erupting*. Oil on canvas, signed and dated *Croix/1761*. 75 x 134.8 cm

Lacroix de Marseille began to build a reputation for himself in Italy and the South of France during the 1760s and painted this work during the 1761 eruption of Vesuvius, which lasted for 13 days. The painting depicts the moment just before the main crater exploded on 5 January 1761.

21. Giuseppe Bonito (1709-89), Italian: *Portrait of a Gentleman Architect*. Oil on canvas, about 1750. 128.8 x 102.5 cm

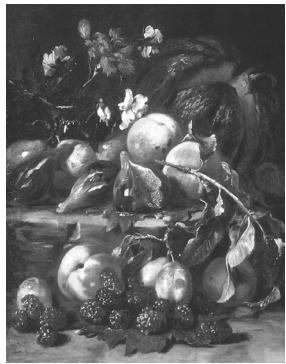
Bonito was known for his portraits of the Neapolitan royal family and nobility. This is thought to be of a gentleman architect as he is dressed in an elaborate silk waistcoat and shows a design for a tomb monument, probably his own. The monument is inscribed "DALLA CUNA ALLA TOBA/UN BREVE PASSO" meaning "from the cradle to the grave – a short step".



**22. Francesco Solimena (1657-1747),
Italian: *Portrait of a Foreign Diplomat*.**

Oil on canvas, about 1732. 128.5 x 102 cm

Although he was the best-known artist in Naples from around 1705 onwards, most of Solimena's portraits date from after 1730. While Naples was under Austrian Habsburg rule from 1717 to 1735, Solimena received commissions from all over Europe, particularly Austria and Germany. In this particular portrait, the diplomat's delicate hand, ostentatious clothing, sword and gloves, as well as the classical column and sweeping drape in the background, symbolise his intellect, wealth and authority. The table on which he leans bears notable resemblance to the console tables in this collection (numbers 35 and 40).



**23. The Metropolitan Master (active
about 1650): *Still Life with Melon, Peaches,
Figs, Mulberries, Plums and Carnations*. Oil
on canvas. 49.8 x 38.4 cm**

This anonymous master takes his name from a still-life painting in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. It is thought that he worked in Naples under the Roman still-life artist Michele Pace (about 1610-70).

It has been suggested that The Metropolitan Master may in fact have been Michele Pace himself, in the early part of his career, due to similarities in the use of colour and shadows.

**24. Luca Forte (about 1615-70),
Italian: *Still Life with Apples, Grapes
and a Dragonfly*. Oil on copper,**

about 1650, signed *I.f.* 15.6 x 20.6 cm

This still life is painted on copper, which was favoured by artists for small-scale works. Its smooth and uniform surface enabled the use of a very fine brush to bring small details into focus, such as the dragonfly hovering above the bunch of grapes in this composition.



**25. Giuseppe Ruoppolo (d.1710),
Italian: *Still Life with Fruit and
Mushrooms*. Oil on canvas,
about 1700, signed *G.R...polo*.**

75 x 101 cm

The still life emerged in Naples as a genre in its own right around 1600, and flourished from the mid-1620s onwards. Giuseppe Ruoppolo belonged to one of the leading families of still-life painters in Naples. He was the nephew of Giovanni Battista Ruoppolo (1629-1693), whose work can also be seen in this collection (numbers 31 and 41). The strong light source against a dark background sets off the luscious grapes, peaches and jasmine flowers, and illustrates the lasting influence of Caravaggio (1571-1610) on Neapolitan artists of the time.

26. Giovanni Battista Recco (about 1615-60), Italian: *Still Life with Apples, Cabbage, Parsnip and Lettuce*.

Oil on canvas. 87 x 109.9 cm

Giovanni Battista Recco's distinctive style was influential in the development of the school of Neapolitan still-life painting. Though little is known of Recco's life, he may well have visited Spain early in his career, as he exhibits many similarities to Spanish painters of the time (so much so that some of his paintings have in the past been mistakenly attributed to the young Velázquez). The strong light source highlights the form and texture of the still life, creating a sense of both ripeness and decay.



27. Lorenzo Vaccaro (1655-1706), Italian: *The Four Continents: America, Europe, Asia and Africa*. Marble, about 1670-90.

America: H: 105 cm, Europe: H: 95 cm, Asia: H: 91cm, Africa: H: 92 cm



Lorenzo Vaccaro worked in Naples as a painter, sculptor, architect and

silversmith. These marble busts show the four continents as female personifications, all adorned with individual headdresses. Europe wears a military helmet, while the bare-breasted figure of America wears a feathered headdress. Both Africa and Asia have flowers and grain intertwined in their hair. In 1692, Vaccaro designed another set of busts of the Four Continents in silver for the Viceroy of Naples, Francesco de Benavides, which were sent to Spain and are now in Toledo Cathedral.

28. Gabriele Ricciardelli (active 1740-80), Italian: *Posillipo from the Riviera di Chiaia*. Oil on canvas, about 1764.

88.5 x 153 cm

Gabriele Ricciardelli, who was born in Naples, was one of a number of painters of this period who specialised in views of his native city. Ricciardelli highlights the beauty of the Bay of Naples and animates his scene with details of local life, among them villagers dancing and washerwomen at a trough.



29. Pietro Fabris (active 1754-1804), Italian: *The Bay of Naples from Posillipo*.

Oil on canvas, about 1770.

75 x 128 cm

This calm view of the Bay of Naples, bathed in the warmth

of the evening light, features several well-known buildings, including the Palazzo Donn'Anna on the left and the Castel Sant'Elmo on the hilltop, with Vesuvius beyond. Fabris is likely to have painted the picture to supply the demand for topographical views of the city.

30. Francesco Solimena (1657-1747), Italian: *The Triumph of King Charles III at the Siege of Gaeta*. Oil on canvas, about 1735. 143.5 x 120cm

Charles III, the son of Philip V of Spain, became King of Naples in 1734, and in the same year won a crucial victory over the Austrian army at the siege of Gaeta, near Naples. This victory cemented his rule over the northern part of his kingdom and is commemorated in this sketch for (or later version of) a now-destroyed canvas painted for the Throne Room at the Royal Palace at Caserta, north of Naples.



31 & 41. Giovanni Battista Ruoppolo (1629-93), Italian, Pair of overdoor paintings: *Still Life with Figs, Cherries, Plums and Two Guinea Pigs* (top) and *Still Life with Watermelons, Plums, Cherries, a Basket of Figs, Pears and a Monkey*. Oil on canvas, about 1685. Both: 57.8 x 131.7 cm

Giovanni Battista Ruoppolo was one of the most sought-after painters of still life in Naples. His paintings were collected by the aristocracy and mercantile élite, and this pair of still lifes, with their long rectangular format, was probably designed to be hung over interior doors in a palazzo.

32 & 33. Luca Giordano (1634-1705), Italian: (pair) *The Brazen Serpent* and *The Judgement of Solomon*. Oil on canvas. 62.5 x 75 cm and 62.5 x 74.5 cm

This pair of paintings depicting stories from the Old Testament date from Giordano's later career when he began to move towards a more expressive use of light and colour. *The Brazen Serpent* depicts the people of Israel being attacked by a plague of serpents sent by God because of their lack of faith. Moses intercedes with God who instructs him to set up a fiery serpent on a pole because "everyone that is bitten, when he looketh upon it, shall live" (Numbers 21:8). The brazen serpent acts as an image of saving faith, prefiguring the Crucifixion. In *The Judgement of Solomon* two women bring one living and one dead child before the King. The first tells Solomon that the second woman accidentally smothered her own child in the night and out of grief swapped their children over. Both women claim to be the living child's mother and appeal to Solomon, who proposes to divide the child between the two women with a sword. The first woman implores him to give the child to the second, while the second approves of the bargain as she prefers that they both end up childless. Thus Solomon identifies the first woman as the child's rightful mother. Giordano captures the dramatic moment of Solomon's proposition, just as the sword is drawn.



34. Basin, Italian. Tortoiseshell, mother-of-pearl and gold inlay, 1725-50. W: 33.5 cm

It is likely that the technique of inlaying tortoiseshell originated in Naples towards the end of the 1500s and, due to the number of surviving pieces which bear signatures of Neapolitan craftsmen, it is thought that Naples was the centre for this type of work, especially in the 1700s. The exotic central scene and elaborate borders of this basin are derived from works by the French painter, engraver and designer Jean Bérain (1637-1711).



35 & 40. Pair of Console Tables, Southern Italian or Spanish, about 1750-70. Both: H: 87.5 cm

This elaborate pair of console tables, decorated in gold, white, green and pink, is reminiscent of the delicate porcelains produced for the court in Naples at the Capodimonte porcelain factory. Below the green granite top, across the 'apron', is the head of a lion holding a garland of roses and acanthus leaves which winds its way around all four legs. A two-headed bird placed across the middle of the leg stretchers flaps its wings, a flower in its beak.

36. Mattia Preti (1613-1699), Italian: *The Incredulity of Saint Thomas*. Oil on canvas. 33.5 x 95.8 cm

Spending his formative years in Rome and travelling throughout Italy in the 1640s, it was in Naples during the following decade that Preti established his reputation, securing a number of lucrative commissions. This powerful painting depicts the moment when the doubting Apostle Thomas is invited by the resurrected Christ to confirm his identity by inserting his fingers into the wounds in His side caused by the centurion's spear.



37. Luca Giordano (1634-1705), Italian: *The Birth of the Virgin Mary*. Oil on canvas, about 1690. 106.7 x 73.7 cm

Giordano dominated the artistic scene in Naples until his death in 1705. This painting is typical of his later work, which became lighter in tone and executed with increasingly sweeping brushstrokes. His use of light for theatrical effect and the dramatic movement of his compositions creates tension in his works. The heavenly light flooding from the top illuminates the newborn child.



38. Corrado Giaquinto (1703-1766), Italian: *The Last Supper*. Oil on canvas, 1740s. 60.03 x 111.8 cm

Born in Molfetta in the south of Italy, Giaquinto was trained in Naples and moved to Rome in 1727 where he became one of the leading painters in the rococo school and gained renown for his large-scale decorative schemes. In this theatrical depiction of the Last Supper, Giaquinto dramatises the spiritual significance of the event through his strong use of light and dark. He captures the moment of Christ's revelation to his disciples that one of them will betray Him; their dismay is evident in their poses and facial expressions. In 1753 Giaquinto travelled to Madrid to become the court painter of King Ferdinand VI, a post he secured due to his growing international reputation. He returned to Naples in 1762, where he died four years later.

39. *Immaculata Pendants of the Virgin*, Italian. Enamelled gold, 1700s. H: 5.7 cm and 6.9 cm

These intricate pendants of the Virgin are made of enamelled gold. The first is enamelled in blue, while the second is enamelled in white and black and features an inscription set with green stones, thought to be emeralds.



40. See 35.

41. See 31.



42. Francesco Solimena (1657-1747), Italian: *Venus with lapyx Tending the Wounded Aeneas*. Oil on canvas, about 1695.

210.8 x 365.8 cm

Francesco Solimena was the most important Neapolitan artist of his generation. This impressive canvas shows a scene from Virgil's epic poem, *The Aeneid*, in which Aeneas's mother, Venus (descending on a cloud), brings lapyx the herbs he needs to heal the wound in Aeneas's leg. It is a magnificent example of the kind of heroic, mythological scene with which the public areas of Italian palaces were adorned in the Baroque era.

43. Lorenzo Vaccaro (1655-1706), Italian: *Saint Michael the Archangel*. Silver and gilt bronze, about 1700. H: 29 cm

This dramatic and delicate statue shows the Archangel Michael, dressed in Roman armour, preparing to slay the small gilded figure of the devil – in the form of a baby – prostrate at his feet. Lorenzo Vaccaro was an influential figure and knew many of the important artists working in Naples at the time – in particular the painter Francesco Solimena, whose compositions influenced the style of Vaccaro's own work.



44 & 45. Francesco Solimena (1657-1747), Italian: *Priam in the Tent of Achilles* (oil sketch) and *Venus with lapyx Tending the Wounded Aeneas* (oil sketch). Oil on canvas, about 1695. Both: 48.9 x 100.3 cm

These two small paintings are oil sketches (known as *bozzetti*) that set out the composition for larger canvases. *Priam in the Tent of Achilles* depicts a scene from *The Iliad* by the Greek poet Homer, in which Priam, the King of Troy, implores the Greek warrior Achilles to return the body of his son Hector. The finished painting has been lost. *Venus with lapyx Tending the Wounded Aeneas* can be directly compared with the larger finished canvas in this room (number 42).

46. Trapani Casket, Italian. Coral and mother-of-pearl inlay, about 1700-50.

H: 20.2 cm

This colourful casket probably comes from southern Italy and was made to contain letters or jewels. It is decorated with many different semi-precious stones, including jasper, agate, lapis lazuli and moss agate. The stones are held in gilt-brass mounts, which are delicately engraved to resemble leaves. Carved mother-of-pearl and red-coral leaves are attached by fine wire all over the casket and its edges are veneered with tortoiseshell.



47. Giuseppe Bonito (1707-89), Italian: *Portrait of a Man Smoking a Pipe*. Oil on canvas, about 1730. 85 x 65 cm

In this early portrait, Giuseppe Bonito skilfully renders the details of the sitter's face, hand and costume against a simple background. Bonito was acclaimed for his portraits, religious painting and everyday life or 'genre' scenes, and in 1751 he was appointed the official painter to the King of Naples.

48. Gennaro Basile (1722-1782), Italian: *Self-Portrait*. Oil on canvas. 63.5 x 48.3 cm

Gennaro Basile was born in Naples, but found fame following his appointment as court painter to the Archbishop of Prague. He later won a number of secular and ecclesiastical commissions in the Austrian territories north and east of Vienna. In this self-portrait Basile presents himself as a skilled portrait painter, looking over his shoulder directly at the viewer as if we have just interrupted him at his work.



49. Trapani Nativity Group, Italian.

Coral, silver, gilt-copper and enamel, 1650-1700. H: 57 cm

The fashion for recreating Nativity scenes reached the height of popularity in Naples and Sicily in the early 1700s. Coral was a popular medium as it was thought to symbolise the blood of Christ.

Red Mediterranean coral was plentiful off the coast of Sicily, and from the 1400s to the 1700s the province of Trapani was well known for coral craftsmanship.



50. Giacinto Diana (1731-1804), Italian: *The Reception of Saint John of God into Heaven*. Oil on canvas, about 1764. 70.5 x 70.5 cm

Giacinto Diana belonged to the generation of painters who succeeded Luca Giordano. He painted in a light, colourful and dramatic style. Diana worked with the artist Francesco de Mura, whom he assisted in painting ceiling decoration in churches in Naples. This painting is an oil sketch showing Saint John of God helping the lame. Saint John was the patron saint of the sick and the founder of an order of hospitallers called the Brothers of St John of God. The painting was commissioned in 1764 for the *Ospedale della Pace* (Hospital of Peace) in Naples.

For further information on the house and the collection,
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