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**'Canaletto' that was downgraded to £150  
now identified as by Michele Marieschi**

**Painting, which hung on the wall of a Suffolk church, will  
be sold at Tefaf this year**

[MAEV KENNEDY](#)

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This view of a Venetian canal has been identified as by  
Michele Marieschi © Mathew Hollow

A view of a Venetian canal will go on display at Tefaf in Maastricht (March 15-24), newly identified as by Michele Marieschi, after centuries when it was cherished in a small Suffolk town as the work of his more famous contemporary and rival Canaletto.

For more than 200 years parishioners of St Mary's in Hadleigh, believed they had three treasures: the beautiful medieval church, the spectacular towering Tudor brick gatehouse of the Deanery, and the Canaletto on the wall of its dining room.

Their tradition was that during his profitable residence in Georgian England from 1746-55, Giovanni Antonio Canal, known as Canaletto, came to stay with their rector Thomas Tanner, a wealthy patron of the arts who had already commissioned the young Thomas Gainsborough to paint the church. By the time Canaletto left he was said to have sold, or less plausibly presented, three pictures to his host—two over-doors of Italian scenes, and the large handsome canal view teeming with picturesque detail.

By the early 20th century a guide book conceded “only the large dining room painting is by Canaletto”—and half a century later the news was even worse when the scholar W G Constable said it was definitely not Canaletto and valued it at less than £150. There it languished until 2015 when James Glennie spotted it during a routine valuation, and suspected Marieschi, a hunch now confirmed by Charles Beddington, a dealer specialising in Venetian painting.

Marieschi and Canaletto both came from relatively humble Venetian craft working families, and both are believed to have worked first as stage scenery painters. Canaletto, born in 1697, continued working until his death in Venice in 1768, though many critics believe he lost the sparkle of his early works in churning out pictures for the aristocratic end of the 18th century tourist trade. Marieschi never got a chance to demonstrate how his talent would develop: he died in 1744, aged just 33, according to one contemporary worn out by “excessive application to work and study”.

Visitors to Tefaf may compare the work of the artists who competed for the lucrative patronage of the wealthy Grand Tour collectors. Beddington will show the Marieschi with works by Canaletto himself, and his nephew Bernardo Bellotto. The painting is being sold by Hadleigh PCC to raise funds for urgently needed work on the church and the tower, both now listed Grade I.