

Taschen  
TIZIANO (D)

Ian Kennedy

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## TIZIANO (D)

### The Venetian virtuoso

A leading artist in the High Renaissance, Titian (Tiziano Vecelli, 1488-1576) was the Venetian school's greatest painter and is one of the best-loved Italian artists of all time. Titian was highly regarded during his lifetime, and his renown has not diminished in the intervening centuries; so great was his ability to manipulate color, texture, and tone that he is still considered to be one of art history's greatest technical masters. The freedom exhibited in his pictorial compositions was unprecedented and greatly influential on later artists, notably Manet, who closely studied Titian's work at the Louvre. This book examines Titian's evolution, from his early years training under Giovanni Bellini to his later mature work, giving a wide perspective on the life's work of this legendary master painter.

### About the Series:

Each book in TASCHEN's Basic Art Series features:

- a detailed chronological summary of the life and oeuvre of the artist, covering his or her cultural and historical importance
- a concise biography
- approximately 100 colour illustrations with explanatory captions

### The author:

**Ian Kennedy** studied art history at Cambridge and at the Courtauld Institute, London University. He worked for nearly three decades in New York at Christies and as a dealer and is now Ward Curator of European Paintings and Sculpture until 1900 at the Nelson-Atkins Museum in Kansas City, Missouri.



Titian, *The Bacchante*, 1523. Oil on canvas, 100 x 130 cm. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

and sense of texture appears to be an attribute. Here too atmosphere seems to be significant, and reveals not only of true flesh and blood whose place in the world it is to define its nature through the games and the cycles of the seasons. It is in this power to transform a scene, the elements of which are altogether familiar into something that strikes as so exotic, that we acknowledge Titian's genius to consist.

The *Bacchante* is, like the last of the Venetian Bacchantes, the subject refers to the arrival of Bacchus on the island of Andros, where his followers must have been wearing diaphanous robes, as they drink from the island's trees flowing not with wine but with milk. The goddess will not permit, for his sleep can be glimpsed in the distance and the Bacchantes' voices to reach in the dark of the forest. The shifting shadows may evoke the dim forest world of antiquity, but there is no mist of the present and the mind to figure and infer, as with The *Boy with a Snake*, the choice of subject may reflect not only

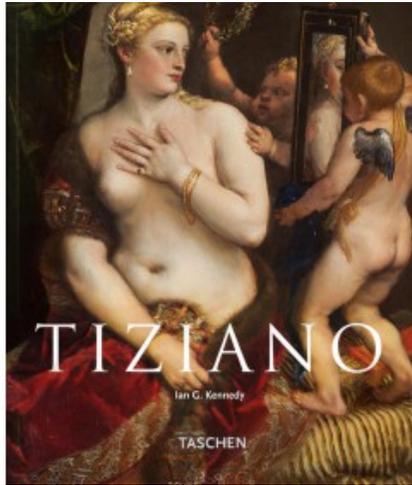


Titian, *The Descent from the Cross*, 1565. Oil on canvas, 100 x 130 cm. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

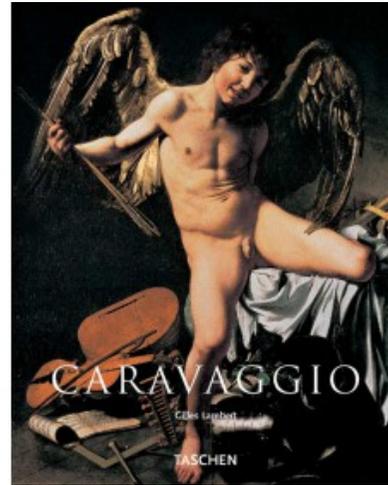
the isolation of the patient but also the agricultural geometry of the Venetian landscape, visible with food and drink.

After the *Assumption of the Virgin*, Titian's most mature religious painting was the *Descent from the Cross*, also painted for the Venetian church. In this work, Titian would take over half a decade to finish. Color and more tightly painted than the composition of the *Virgin*, it has an aura of dramatic privilege and aristocratic grandeur. In the kneeling figures on the right, the same group of figures from the earlier painting in Antwerp (p. 27). In depicting the Virgin in one able, Titian allows Peter to view her directly and thereby combines the six-century-old, drawing the main protagonists facing each other in profile, with the traditional frontal alignment. The receding steps of the stone may be inviting, but the architecture is profile of the body members keep the public at a respectful distance. The Venetian allows himself from the world and a sense of the stability, into the late-sixteenth century, the audience may observe but not participate. In Peter

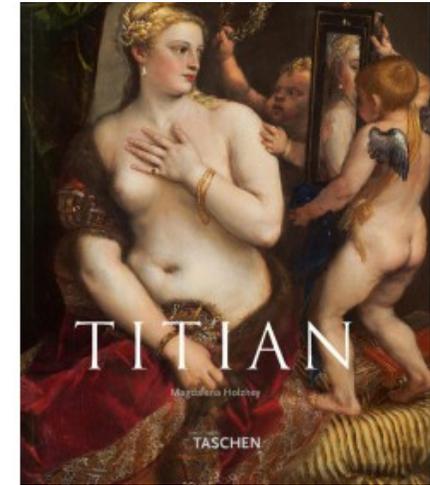
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