



Tafelmusik Salutes: Claudio Buziol Foundation

Claudio Buziol Foundation

The Claudio Buziol Foundation, which has a special mandate for youth creativity, occupies two beautiful buildings in Venice – the Abbey of San Gregorio, next to the Madonna della Salute, and the Palazzo Smith Mangilli-Valmarana, former residence of the bibliophile, art collector and music lover, Consul Joseph Smith.

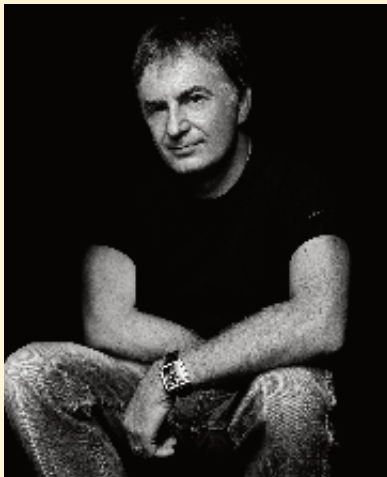


Photo by Thierry Le Gouss

Established in 2006 in memory of the famous Italian designer and industrialist Claudio Buziol, who sadly died in 2005 at the age of 47, the Foundation was created by his family to support projects in the area of design

and education. Young musicians, photographers, graphic and fashion designers, writers and filmmakers are invited to develop their ideas in workshops and residency programmes.

Special exhibits are displayed in the Abbey and the Smith Palazzo, which may be visited at certain festival times such as the Venice Biennale.

Joseph Smith's house, a famous meeting place of artists, writers and musicians in the 18th century, is still alive with visual art, music and film.

Recent projects include:

FUTURE PASS – FROM ASIA TO THE WORLD (Venice Biennale, 2011)

Over 100 artists, Asian and non-Asian, explore the relationship of Eastern contemporary art with the rest of the world. In the Palazzo Smith Mangilli-Valmarana, new art works interact with the historic building in which they are installed.



Photo by Francesco De Luca

ATELIER RWANDA (Venice Biennale, 2010)

Exhibits of jewellery and building materials created from vegetable fibres are presented in collaboration with the Kigali Institute of Science and Technology. This project is the result of two years of experimentation by 42 young Rwandan designers and architects.

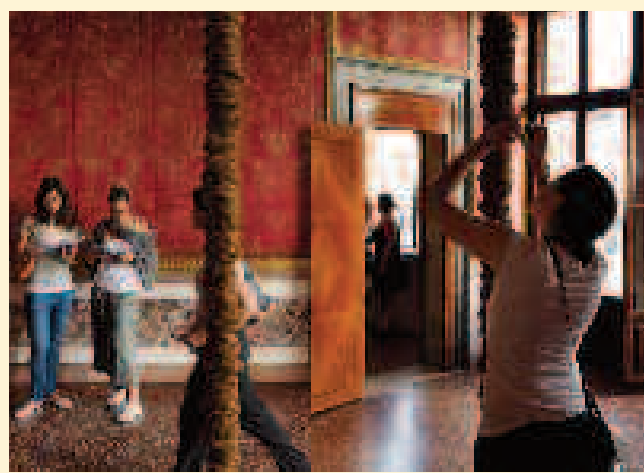


Photo by Francesco De Luca

The House in the 18th Century

Joseph Smith bought the house, then known as the Palazzo Balbi, on April 20, 1740. By this time he had been working for 40 years in Venice as a merchant banker and in the import-export trade of dried fruits and fish, wine and olives. The house on the Grand Canal became a major destination for cultured Italians and for visitors on the Grand Tour, who experienced delightful house concerts, scholarly conversation, and a view of the most important collection of modern art in Venice.



Joseph Smith was married to a famous opera singer, Catherine Tofts, the highest paid English soprano of her time, who moved to Venice upon her retirement from the London stage. Though pictured here by Marco Ricci singing with a dog at her feet, she was a cat person. She was reported to have had 20 cats in the Venice house.

He also produced many beautifully printed volumes from his own printing press, run by the Venetian scholar and printer Giovanni Battista Pasquali. The Pasquali Press published a 900-page catalogue of Smith's own library called *Bibliotheca Smithiana*.

Consul Smith was anxious that his collections be kept intact after his death. In 1765 he sold his book collection to the young George III for 10,000 pounds. It became the central collection of the King's Library, and thus a nucleus of the early British Museum Library.



For another 10,000 pounds the King also bought the magnificent art collection that was in the Venice house. For 30 years Consul Smith had been buying paintings by old Italian masters and commissioning new works from the most important modern artists in Venice, including Marco Ricci and Giovanni Antonio Canal, known as Canaletto ("the little Canal" to distinguish him from his father, the painter Bernardo Canal).

Most of Canaletto's most famous views of Venice would have been on display when visitors came to the house for musical evenings.



Joseph Smith was almost 95 when he died and was buried in the protestant cemetery on the Lido.

The Collections

The cats shared the palazzo with one of the most important private libraries in Europe. Smith had a collection of rare manuscripts and books which he had acquired from Italian monasteries and Venetian households. The earliest extant manuscripts containing more than a few fragments of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* date from the 11th century, and Consul Smith owned one of the most complete of these.



Marble floors of the Smith Palazzo

Photos by Elizabeth Giammarco and Raha Jaramila



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