



Exhibition «Canaletto, an Imaginary Venice»

20/02/2001 - 13/05/2001

Without tautology

The CCCB continues to investigate the relationship between artists and cities. A relationship which always offers surprises, opens up horizons and generates responses. At times, this relationship is very explicit, very direct, as was the case with George Grosz's Berlin, where the artist assembled a tableau of social characters, collective fantasies and the ideological impositions which warmongering and nazism danced on triumphally. At others, it seems that the relationship has scant significance, revealing little due to its indulgent and homogeneous nature. In the case of Canaletto and Venice, this relationship seems, at first glance, a mere tautology.

But this is not the case. Canaletto does not portray Venice, he is not a famous photographer of that city: he invents it. Over the Venice he experiences, he builds a city—in a certain sense, an ideal city—which, with the passage of time, has become blurred, in the collective imaginary, with the real Venice. The shared perception is that Venice and Canaletto are the same thing. Canaletto has come to be understood as a pioneer of advertising, a propagandist for the city of Venice. In reality, Canaletto painted another Venice: his own. The power of creation has made the mirage: nobody has stopped in order to distinguish one Venice from the other, everybody took it for granted that they were one and the same thing. Canaletto's power lies in the fact that his Venice is so strong—and so true-to-life—that he has become an icon of the real Venice. The best advertising proposal ever imagined. The terrain between the ideal and the real, between the imaginary and the experienced, between what is thought and what is built, has vague boundaries. In this regard, Canaletto's work is also related to contemporaneity. Professors Dario Succi and Annalia Delneri have built this exhibition around this thesis developed by Professor André Corboz. When we return to Venice, after visiting *Canaletto, an Imaginary Venice*, we will see it in a different, perhaps better, way.

This exhibition gives us the opportunity to continue our collaboration with the Thyssen-Bornemisza Museum. We hosted the exhibition *George Grosz, the Berlin Years*, which the museum had produced and developed; now the museum is hosting this exhibition, produced by us. The series will continue.