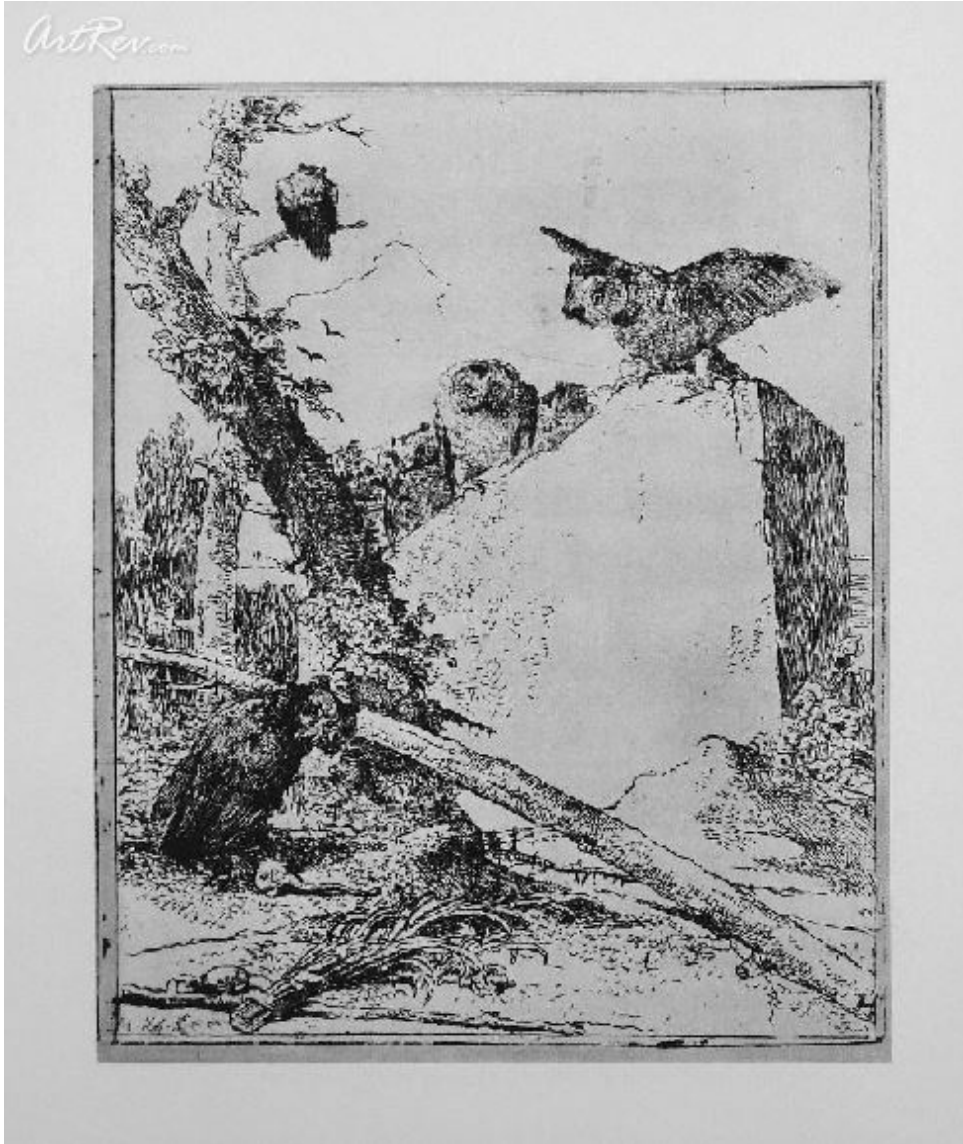


[The Caprices](#) by [Giovanni Battista Tiepolo](#)

Original Lithographic Bookplate - Main Subject: Abstract



Item Number

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Medium

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About Giovanni Battista Tiepolo

Tiepolo was born in Venice, the 6th and last child of sea-captain and marine merchant, Domenico Tiepolo, and Orsetta, whose maiden name is not known, the former of whom left him a considerable fortune. The Tiepolo family is old and distinguished of Venetian patrician families, but Tiepolo's father did not claim noble lineage (though both Tiepolo and some of his siblings gained noble godparents). He was baptised Giovanni Battista, in honour of his godfather Giovanni Battista Dorià, a Venetian nobleman, in the local church and cathedral of Venice, S Pietro di Castello. His father Domenico died a year after his birth, and Orsetta was left to bring up all children in financially difficult circumstances.

He was the pupil of Gregorio Lazzarini, and in the same period he made careful study of the works of Titian, Piazzetta, Ricci, and especially Paolo Veronese. At merely 19, Tiepolo executed his first commission, the Sacrifice of Isaac, (which now lies in the Venice collection). However, he left Lazzarini in 1717, and was received into the Fraglia guild.

In 1719, Tiepolo married the sister of the painters Francesco Guardi and Giovanni Antonio Guardi, Maria Cecilia Guardi, by whom he had nine children. Four daughters and three sons survived childhood, of which two of the latter (Domenico and Lorenzo) became painters and the other a priest.

The Friulan town of Udine played an important role in Tiepolo's formation. From 1726 to 1730 local Patriarch Dionisio Delfino lavished his praise upon the artist. His first major fresco commission for the chapel and palace of Udine (1726-28) was a landmark, with its new pale tonalities and airy handling. Incorporating Ricci's maniera paolesca, Tiepolo moved from the chiaroscuro typical of the Baroque, but keeping the theatrical grandeur of Rubens, Rembrandt and Dürer. He was hence one of the fathers of the Rococo movement of the 18th century. Tiepolo's first masterpiece, arguably, was a cycle of enormous canvases painted to decorate a large reception room in the Ca' Dolfin, Venice (ca. 1726-29), depicting ancient battles and triumph.

With his prolific output, commissions poured in. Commissioners and private patrons demanded paintings, canvases for churches such as that of Verolanuova (1735-40), for the Scuola dei Carmini (1740-47), and the Scalzi (1743-44), ceilings for the Palazzi Archinto and Casati-Dugnani in Milan (1731), decorations of the Colleoni Chapel in Bergamo (1732-3), a ceiling for the Gesuati (S. Maria del Rosario) in Venice of St. Dominic Instituting the Rosary (1737-39), Palazzo Clerici, Milan (1740), decorations for Villa Cordellini, Montecchio Maggiore (1743-4) and for the saloon of Palazzo Labia, Venice, showing the Story of Cleopatra (1745-50).

He is principally known for his fresco work, particularly of ceilings. These attempted to open the closed space to the sky, with a view from below of vast compositions that merged with the delicate ornamentation of the Rococo architecture and sculpture. The earliest example of this is perhaps his canvases in the Ca' Dolfin, which allowed Tiepolo to introduce exuberant costumes, classical sculpture, and action that appears to spill from the frames into the room. Originally set into recesses, they were surrounded with frescoed frames.

His style is a distinct move from the Baroque, where dark, closed spaces illuminated with high contrast were popular; Tiepolo's work is typified with a daylight that illuminates the scene far more gently with a confident, sunny palette. This change can be actively viewed in the progression from his earlier works, which resembled more the former, dark and contrasting, to his later more famous works, in the style of the latter.

The composition of his work is influenced directly by the Baroque. Almost hundreds of figures take place in his canvas space, something that had been tended towards in the 17th century, but he again develops from earlier artists. His use of perspective is especially notable, moving from the use of it in Baroque art as painters gained confidence with it, and noticeable in his ceiling frescos as a central theme. With these, such as those in Palazzo Labia, Venice, he collaborated with an expert in perspective, Girolamo Mengozzi Colonna. The fact that Colonna also designed sets for opera highlights the increasing tendency towards composition as a staged fiction.

His most famous frescos, indeed his works at the pinnacle of his artistic maturity, are those at Würzburg. His Allegory of the Planets and Continents depicts Apollo, embarking on his daily course; deities around him symbolize the planets; allegorical figures (on the cornice) represent the four continents, notably including America.

Original Lithographic Bookplate

Sorry. No information about this medium is available.

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