

Tintoretto

Tintoretto (Jacopo Robusti) 1518-1594

1518 - Born in Venice the eldest of 21 children. His father, Giovanni, was a dyer, or tintore; hence the son's nickname of Tintoretto, little dyer. The family originated from Brescia, in Lombardy, then part of the Republic of Venice. In childhood little Jacopo began daubing with dye on his father's walls.

c.1533 - His father takes him to Titian's studio to see if he can be trained as an artist. According to legend he was sent away 10 days later, after Titian noticed and disapproved of the rapidity of his drawings. From this time Tintoretto studied independently retaining his admiration for Titian though their relations remain distant. He famously placed over his studio door the inscription: *Il disegno di Michelangelo, il colorito di Tiziano* (the drawing of Michelangelo and Titian's color).

He studied from models of Michelangelo's famous sculptures from the San Lorenzo sacristy Dawn, Noon, Twilight and Night, and became expert in modelling in wax and clay figurines which he set up in wooden boxes and then lit with candles to provide him with a staged space, figures and shadows to transpose onto canvas, working as much at night as in the day. He developed a method of painting very quickly by priming his canvases in flat dark tones (gray-green, brown, slate gray), dividing the composition into basic tonal areas. Upon these he rapidly sketched his figures in lighter tones and bright colors using the background to provide him shadows and relief. He used a wide square brush introduced into Venetian painting by Titian for painting draperies, leading the English 19c art critic John Ruskin to accuse him of painting with a broom.

1548 - Commissioned to paint four pictures for the Scuola di San Marco illustrating episodes from the life of Saint Mark including Saint Mark Freeing the Slave.

1550 -

Married Faustina de Vescovi (or Episcopi ?), daughter of a Venetian nobleman and a prominent member of the Scuola di San Marco. Faustina bore him several children, probably two sons and five daughters. The mother of Tintoretto's favorite daughter Marietta, who became a painter herself, was probably a German woman, who had an affair with Jacopo before his marriage to Faustina.

1560 – Next great commission were the three great rooms of the Scuola San Rocco started in 1560 and finally finished in 1587. Asked to send in a study for San Rocco received into Heaven along with other Venetian painters, Tintoreto quickly came up with a complete picture to the fury of his competitors. To counter their protests he made a gift of his painting to the Scuola who by its by-laws could not refuse it, receiving thereby the rest of the commission for the walls and ceilings of the 3 rooms. At this time he was also commissioned to paint the great historical pictures for the halls of the Doge's palace.

1565 – Paints the vast Crucifixion, for the Scuola for the sum of 250 ducats. was paid.

1576 - Presents gratis another centre-piece - that for the ceiling of the great hall, representing the Plague of Serpents. By the end of the commission he received the great sum of 2447 ducats.

1588 – Receives the commission to paint one of the largest paintings in history the Paradise for the Council chamber of the Doge's palace.

1592 – Becomes member of the Scuola dei Mercanti.

1594 – Dies and is buried in church of the Madonna dell'Orto by the side of his favorite daughter Maria who had died young at 30. Through his life he had scarcely travelled outside his beloved native city.

