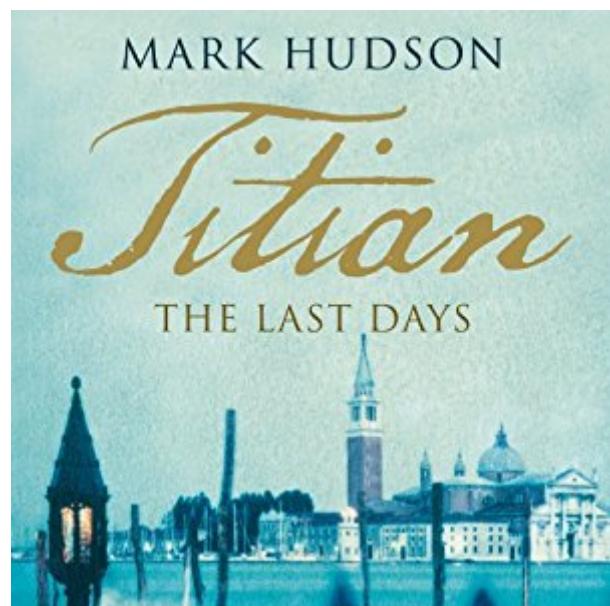


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# Titian: The Last Days



## Synopsis

A compelling portrait of the life, work, and meaning of one of the greatest artists of all time. Toward the end of his long life, Tiziano Vecelli - known to the world ever since as Titian (circa 1488-1576) - was at work on a number of paintings that he kept in his studio, never quite completing them, as though wanting to endlessly postpone the moment of closure. Produced with his fingers as much as with the brush, Titian's last paintings are imbued with a unique rawness and immediacy without precedent in the history of Western art. As if to further cloud their meaning, after the outbreak of plague that took his life, Titian's studio was looted and many canvases were taken; what happened to them is not known. But what did Titian, who had experienced as much in the way of material success and critical acclaim as any artist before or since, mean by these works? *Titian: The Last Days* is a quest through the great artist's life and work toward the physical and spiritual landscape of his last paintings. Vividly re-creating the atmosphere of 16th-century Venice and Europe, Mark Hudson chronicles Titian's relationships with his own mentors (Bellini and Giorgione), rivals, and patrons - among them popes, kings, and emperors - as well as his troubled dealings with his own family. Paralleling this narrative is Hudson's personal journey through Titian's life and career, exploring the relentless formal development that led to the breakthroughs of his last days, and the mystery behind his missing paintings. Moving from Titian's hometown in the Dolomites to the greatest churches and palaces of the age, to Venice then and now, *Titian: The Last Days* is an original and compelling study of one of Europe's greatest artists.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

If I hadn't spent several weeks a year in Venice for the past decade, not having had much training in or knowledge of Renaissance art, I can't imagine finding this book of much interest. But as something of an autodidact when it comes to art and having spent time admiring the work of Titian and others in the scuolae, churches and museums of Venice, I thoroughly enjoyed this exploration of the last days of this genius.

Unexpectedly outstanding. Believing this to be only historical fiction, I found excellent discussions of Titian's paintings, as well as others of his time. Criticism: in a book this detailed, there should have been many more reproductions of the paintings discussed. It's best, though often inconvenient, to read this book with your computer handy so that you can see the paintings described by the author. The prose is easily accessible to lay readers.

Not an art history or even a history book, but rather a travelogue on Hudson's mostly failed attempt to track down facts and place to illuminate a story on Titian's last days during the Venetian plague.

As someone who looks and a picture and rapidly loses interest because it aint moving, it has always been something of a surprise that in days before video a painting could evoke the sort of response amongst the public that say a trip to see Avatar in 3D can nowadays. Fusty old painting hung in gloomy rooms or even contemporary art works hung in garish art centres financed by some arts council or other, have always provoked a rapid movement to the souvenir shop and the tea room and contemplation of my Philistine soul. I'm an arty person, a creative individual, deeply entrenched in esoteric histories, world-cultures, and well dug into the trenches of artistic creation, and yet paintings often seems little more than interior decoration. So it is refreshing to read a work of art criticism and history, that does not just deal with the biographical details, but the response to the art both then and now, along with their own personal relationship with it. It flies in the face of pretension while at the same time maintains their capacity for awe at the achievement and relish at some of the banality of the business of art. *The Last Days Of Titian* gives one another pair of eyes to look at these things and explains why anyone bothers. Art here is both a window into another world and a mirror reflecting oneself in one's own. Multi-point perspective is the term that comes to mind when reading this trip into the renaissance.

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