



Ida Barbarigo  
*Cafés*

15.01 - 12.03.2022

Axel Vervoordt Gallery Hong Kong

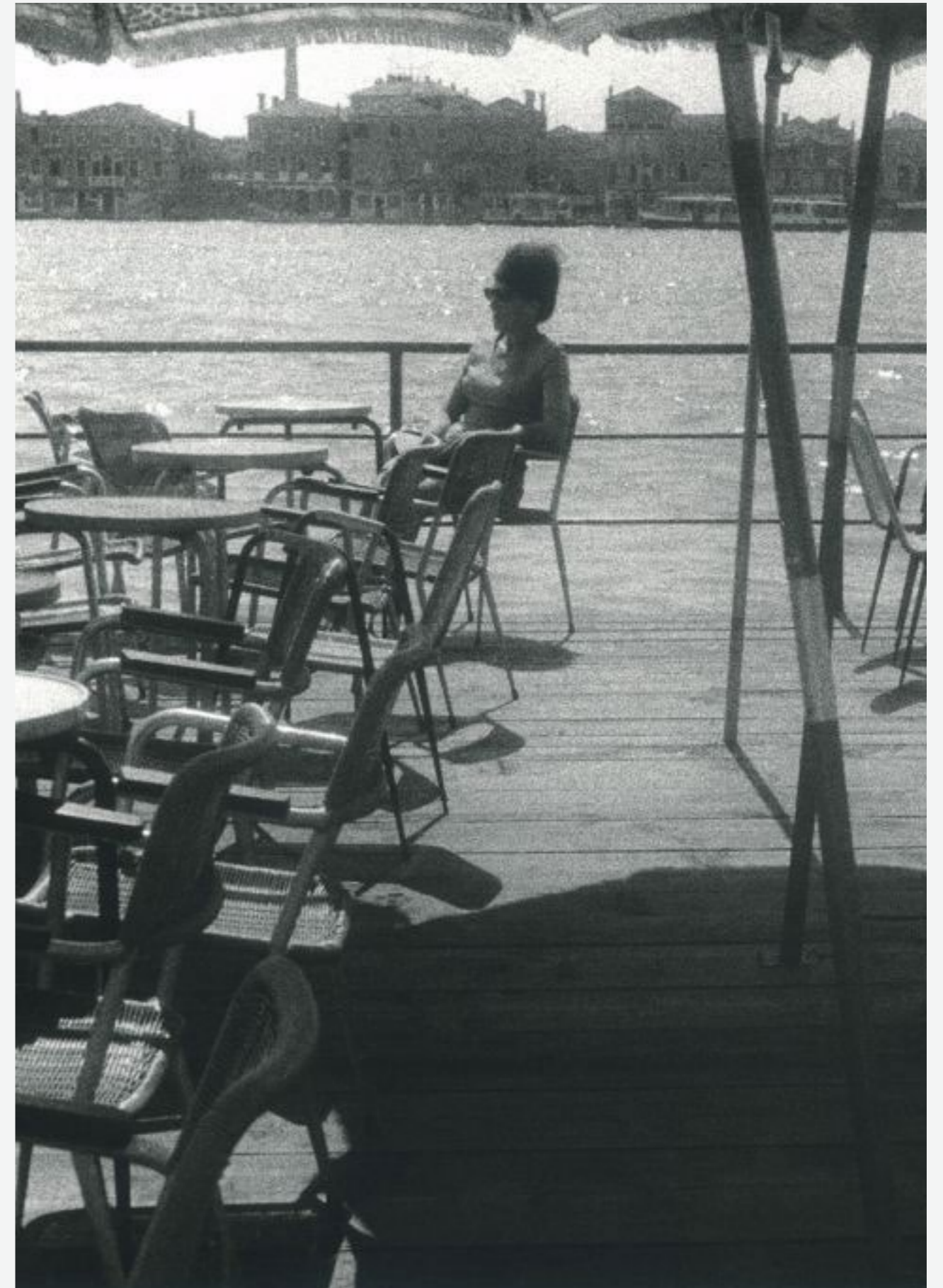
# Ida Barbarigo

## *Cafés*

Axel Vervoordt Gallery Hong Kong is pleased to present the exhibition, *Cafés*, by Ida Barbarigo. The exhibition marks the first presentation in Hong Kong since the artist's passing in 2018 at ninety-seven years old. The exhibition, made in collaboration with the Archivio Barbarigo-Cadorin-Music and with the artist's Estate, includes twenty-two works from the late 1960s and 1970s that were kept in the artist's Venetian home for nearly fifty years, have been recently restored, and are revealed to the public for the first time.

Ida Barbarigo's fascinating oeuvre, which spanned from the mid-1950s until the end of her life, comprises several enigmatic series. The subject of chairs is a prominent feature. Omnipresent in her oeuvre, it remained her leitmotif and became a personal script, a form of handwriting. As in all her series, she worked obsessively for months, sometimes several years. Barbarigo's reproductions of chairs capture the energy of the unseen. In seemingly conscious and unconscious ways, the chairs serve as a primary motive to access deep emotions, only to transform, and evolve into something else entirely. She sensed the atmosphere and vibrancy of life on city squares and aimed to express this materially. Her expressive work gives body to the energy surrounding the chairs at the cafés on the public squares in Venice or Paris, where she loved to sit for hours observing people. The chairs express aspects of melancholy, mystery, or even darker themes when they resemble human skeletons or demons. Life — in all its intriguing forms and figurations — is accessed via the artistry of her paintbrush.

In 1964, at Venice's Galleria Il Tragheto, Barbarigo made her initial attempts to insert personal profiles within the chairs' tight rhythms. She added details, such as the folds of textiles, but also fragments of organs, voided inside. The critic Berto Morucchio presented her work on this occasion, and he arrived with his friend Lucio Fontana who encouraged Barbarigo to continue painting in the same direction. This encounter proved vital and left an important trace throughout her career.



Throughout her life experiences, a sudden revelation was the necessary catalyst that gave birth to new series of work. During a stay in Paris in 1969, she visited an exhibition of Piet Mondrian, which left her flabbergasted. Walking around later, she came across a figure seated on a bench in the Tuileries Garden. The man sat in a particular posture reading a newspaper with his legs crossed, wearing a heavy coat, gloves, glasses, and a hat. Barbarigo was struck by the visual strength and described it as fate: "I drew him all the time, that's how the *Clairvoyants* series was born".

When obsessions took over, she explored her feelings through repetitive drawing and then painting. In this case, she painted the man seated on a chair with drippings of paint running down his face as if seen from a distance through a window while raindrops erase the image. Via these casual encounters and the resulting portraits, she discovered the appearance of mental figures, sometimes predictive of the future.



Once, while strolling on the Boulevard Saint-Germain, she noticed a group of figures amid a series of silver chairs sorted in small groups. The flowing colours used in the paintings give the illusion of a type of disintegration of the characters spread over the chairs on the ground. Symbolically, she titled the works as, *Cain, Cain*, and painted them again and again obsessively.

These striking encounters took root within the artist's imagination, evoking her anxieties, internal tensions, and fears. The dialogue between the artist and her work is that of identification, a sharing of the most essential part of herself. Gustave Flaubert has said once: "Madame Bovary, c'est moi." Importantly, Barbarigo's pursuit of themes arose from the complexity and endless possibilities of human nature. Little by little, her paintings disclosed her personal life in a proliferation of forms animated by multiple colours. From the repetition of themes, just as a musician uses notes, rises a permanent questioning of feelings and sensations whose successive variations constitute an inexhaustible repertoire of ideas.

In each series, Barbarigo used the most knowledgeable techniques she possessed, which may be traced back to her childhood. She overpainted the painted surfaces with a hard brush littered with turpentine to lighten the material. Her canvasses got richer in substances and pigments, without ever being overcharged. The often-violent brushstrokes, placed in all directions reveal random breaks, cuts, streaks of pure colours, bright reds, emeralds, which also sometimes enamel the surface like droplets in relief, a type of ordered chaos, almost like life itself.

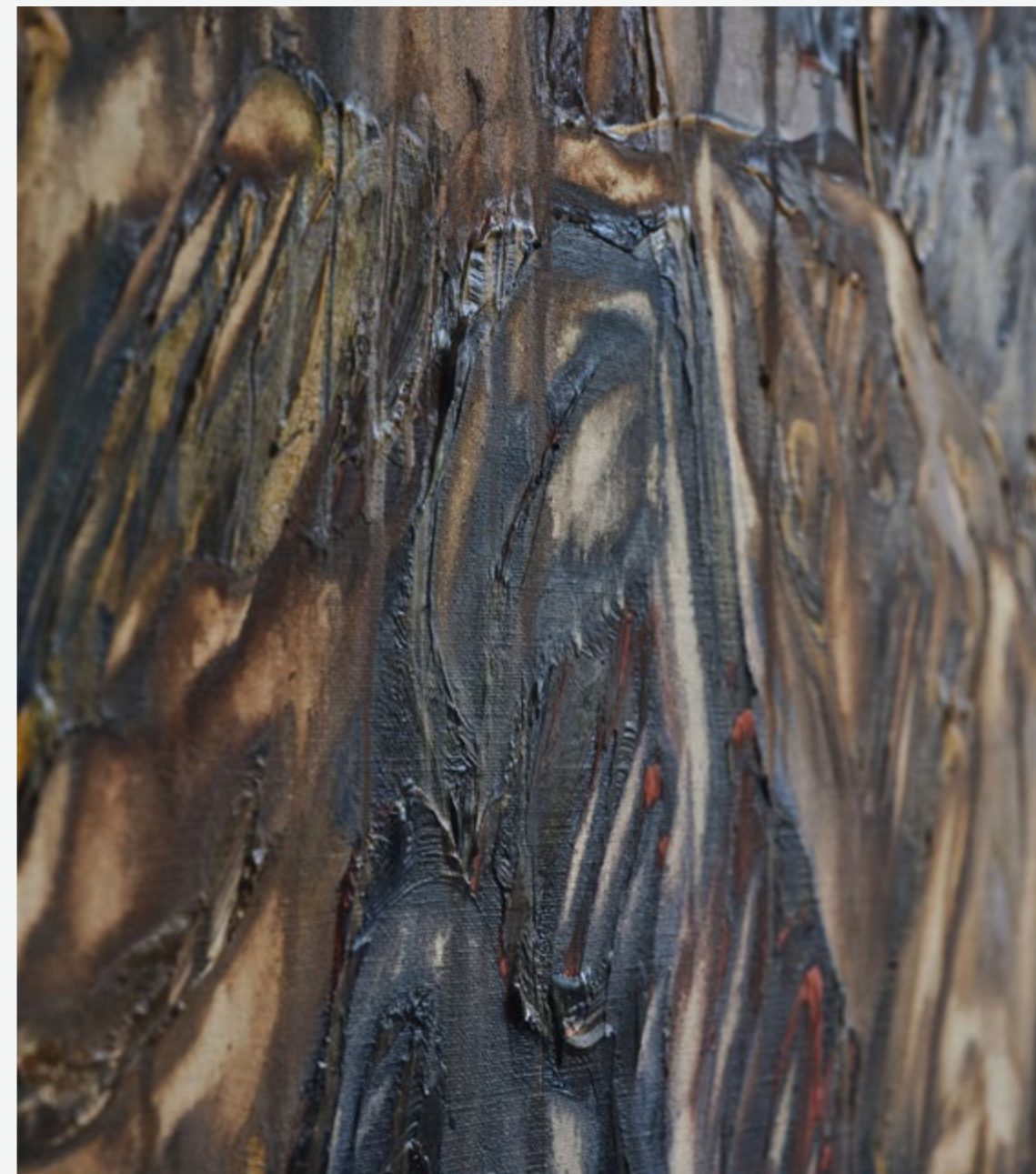




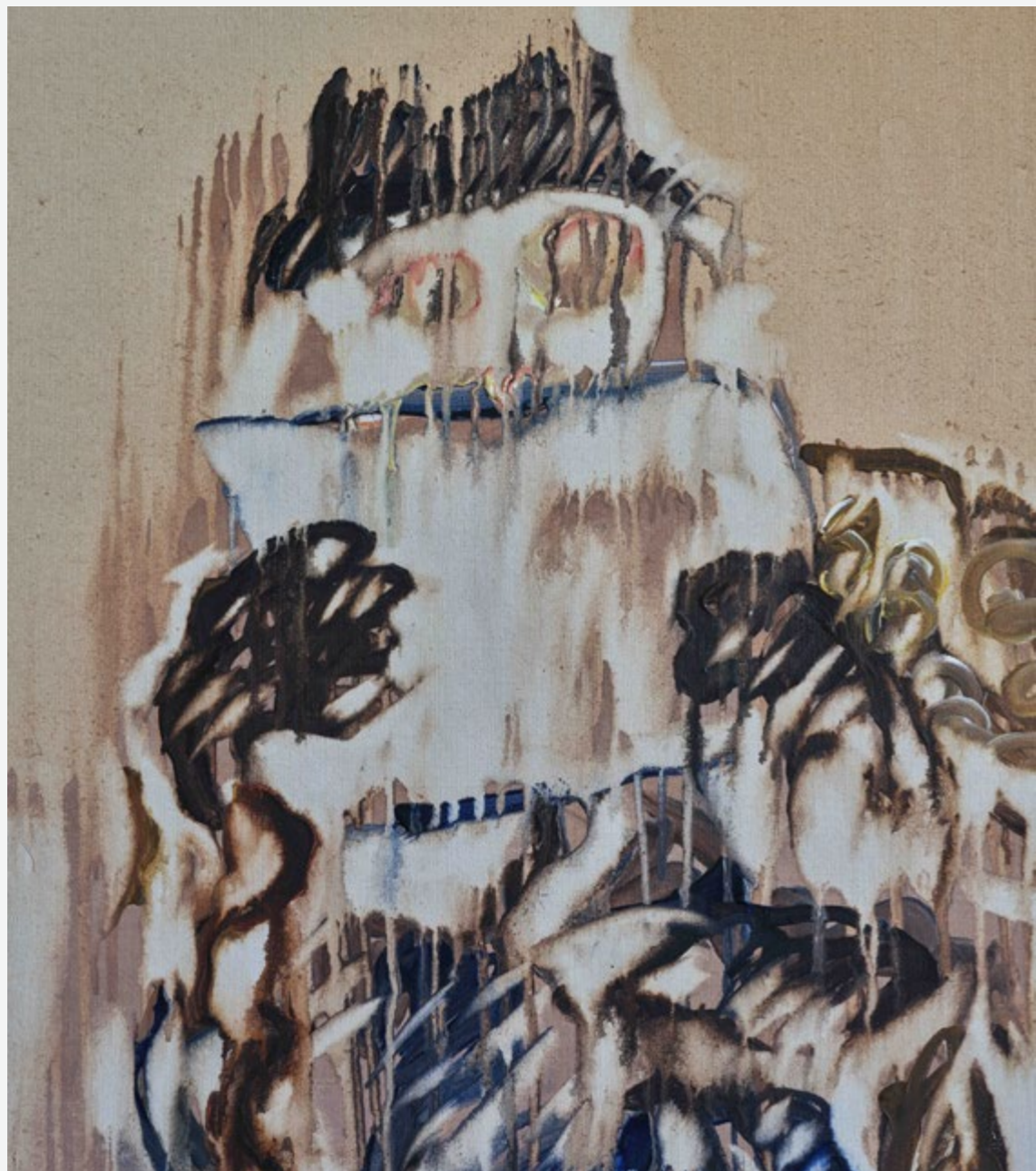
Ida Barbarigo (Venice, 1920 - 2018)  
*Le voyant (The Seer)*  
May 15, 1969  
Oil on canvas  
100 x 81 cm  
A1920.00431







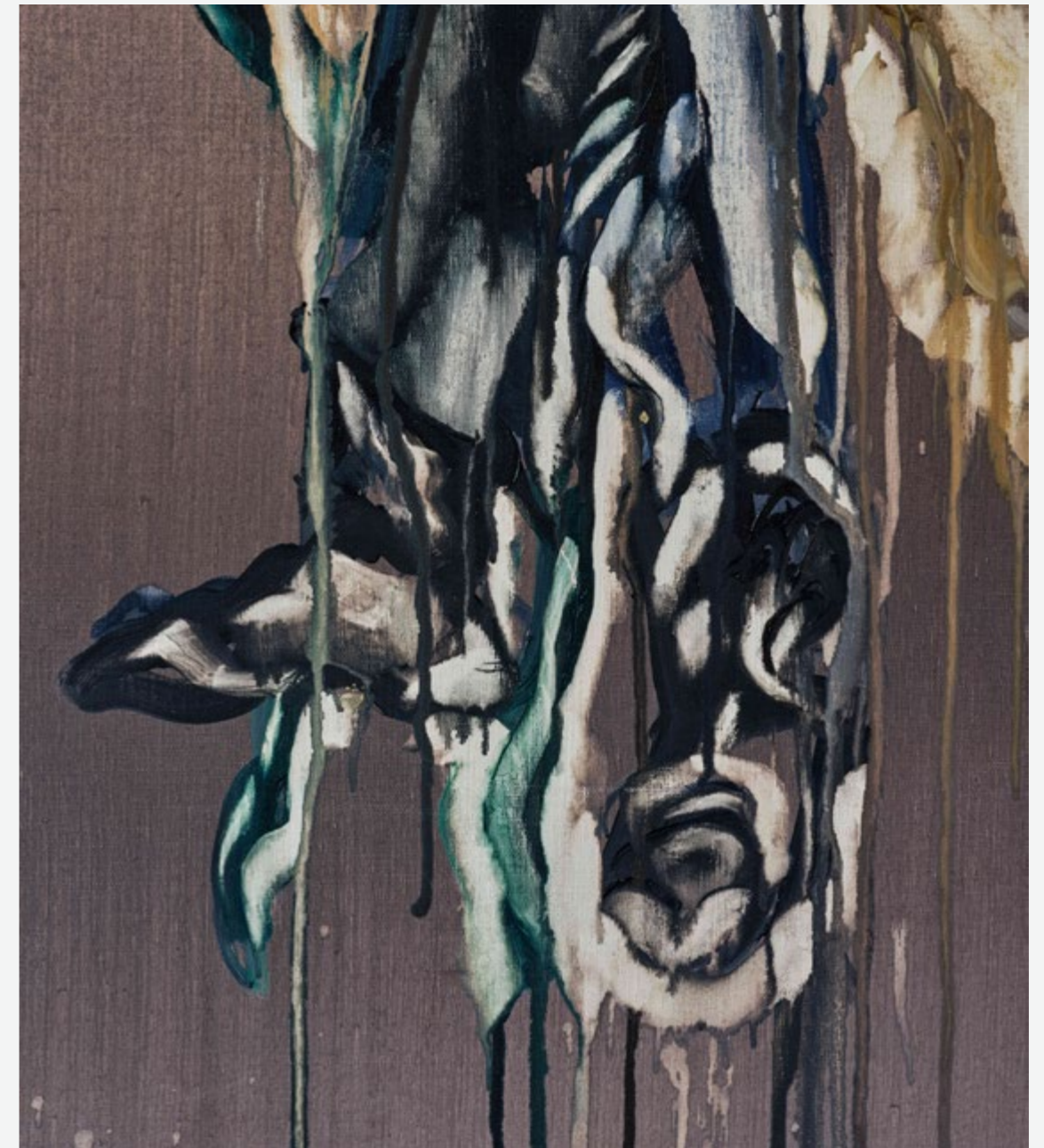
Ida Barbarigo (Venice, 1920 - 2018)  
*Riso di Socrate (Socrates' Laughter)*  
June 12, 1969  
Oil on canvas  
98,5 x 80 cm  
Exhibition: Season of Italian Art, Grosvenor Gallery, London, 1969.  
A1920.00433



Ida Barbarigo (Venice, 1920 - 2018)  
*Riso di Socrate (Socrates' Laughter)*  
April 27, 1969  
Oil on canvas  
100 x 80 cm  
Publication: Exhibition catalogue Fondazione Querini Stampalia,  
Venice, 1975, ill. p. 18.  
A1920.00427







Ida Barbarigo (Venice, 1920 - 2018)  
*Riso di Socrate (Socrates' Laughter)*  
April 14, 1969  
Oil on canvas  
100 x 81 cm  
Exhibitions: Fondazione Querini Stampalia, Venice, 1975;  
IVAM, Valencia, 19.11.2004- 30.01.2005  
Publications: J. Lassaigne, Barbarigo, livre de poche 1972 ill. p. 27;  
Exhibition cat. Fondazione Querini Stampalia, Venice, 1975 ill. p. 12;  
Exhibition cat. IVAM Valencia, 2004, ill. p. 89.  
A1920.00436



Ida Barbarigo (Venice, 1920 - 2018)

*Untitled*

1969

Oil on canvas

100 x 81 cm

Exhibition: Season of Italian Art, Grosvenor Gallery, London, 1969.

Publication: R. de Solier, *Chaises et voyeurs de Ida Barbarigo*,

Venice, 1970, ill. p. 65.

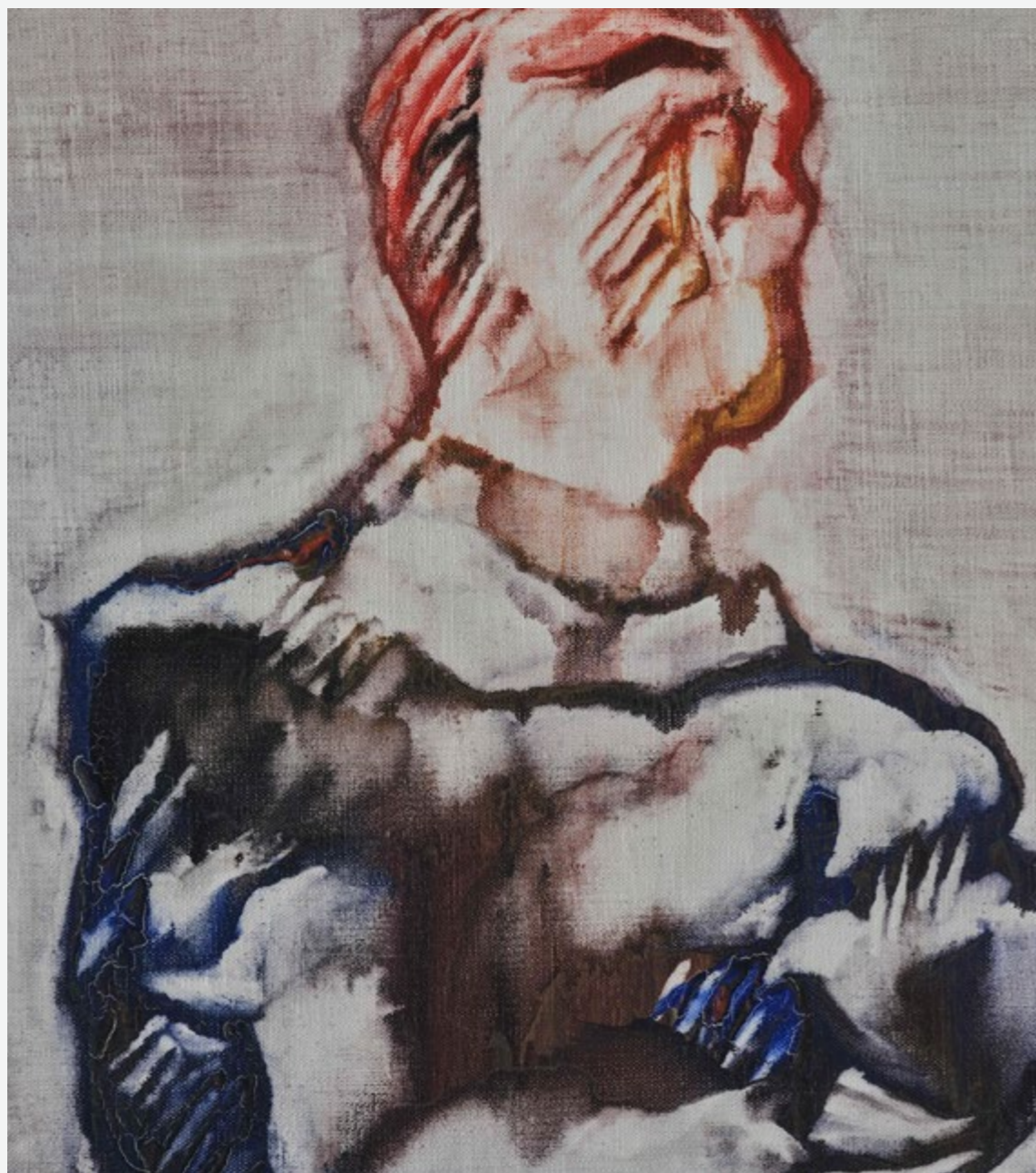
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Ida Barbarigo (Venice, 1920 - 2018)  
*Untitled*  
May 1969  
Oil on canvas  
46 x 37,5 cm  
Exhibition: IVAM, Valencia, 19.11.2004- 30.01.2005  
A1920.00136



Ida Barbarigo (Venice, 1920 - 2018)  
*Caino*  
May 12-13, 1977  
Oil on canvas  
55 x 46 cm  
A1920.00418





Ida Barbarigo (Venice, 1920 - 2018)  
*L'uomo di pietra, le seggiole (Man of Stone, the Chairs)*  
1969  
Oil on canvas  
39,5 x 79 cm  
A1920.00663



Ida Barbarigo (Venice, 1920 - 2018)  
*I ghe dixè tartaruga (They Call Him Turtle)*  
July 6, 1975  
Oil on canvas  
38 x 46 cm  
A1920.00471





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Ida Barbarigo (Venice, 1920 - 2018)  
*Untitled*  
January 23-24, 1970  
Oil on canvas  
61 x 50 cm  
A1920.00141





Ida Barbarigo (Venice, 1920 - 2018)  
*Untitled*  
January 15, 1974  
Oil on canvas  
146 x 96,5 cm  
A1920.00114





Ida Barbarigo (Venice, 1920 - 2018)  
*Seggiole a parte (Chairs Apart)*  
1973  
Oil on canvas  
142 x 93 cm  
Exhibition: Fondazione Querini Stampalia, Venice, 1975.  
A1920.00113



Ida Barbarigo (Venice, 1920 - 2018)  
*Untitled*  
June 8, 1973  
Oil on canvas  
18 x 12 cm  
A1920.00558

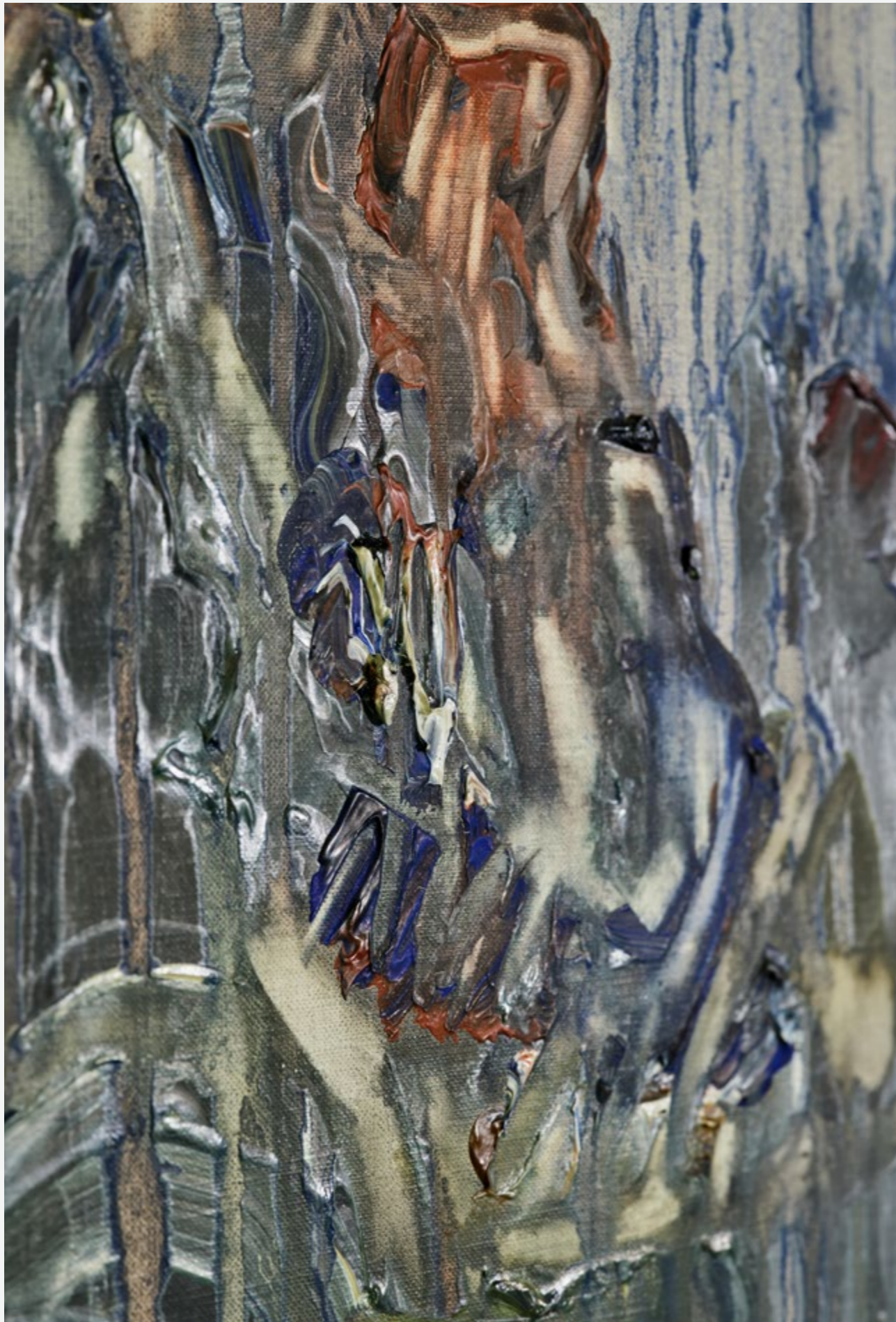


Ida Barbarigo (Venice, 1920 - 2018)  
*Untitled*  
June 17, 1969  
Oil on canvas  
18 x 12 cm  
A1920.00559





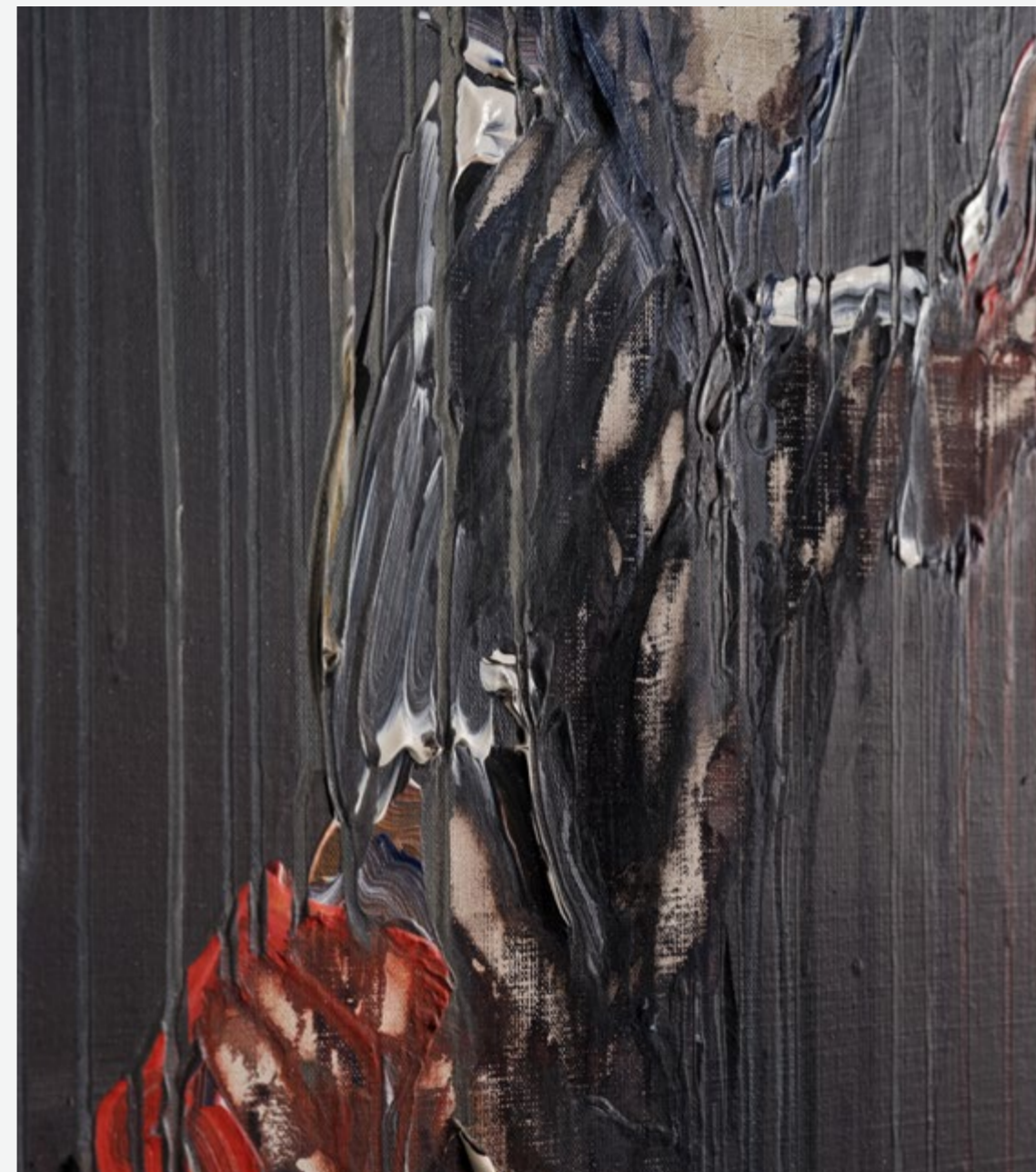
Ida Barbarigo (Venice, 1920 - 2018)  
*Tiene cara de leon (He Has the Face of a Lion)*  
June 24, 1971  
Oil on canvas  
80 x 98,5 cm  
A1920.00907



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Ida Barbarigo (Venice, 1920 - 2018)  
*Laissez parler le philosophe (Let the Philosopher Speak)*  
December 2-4, 1970  
Oil on canvas  
64,5 x 80 cm  
A1920.00415



Ida Barbarigo (Venice, 1920 - 2018)  
*Tiene cara de leon (He Has the Face of a Lion)*  
1979  
Oil on canvas  
54,5 x 45,5 cm  
Publication: Ida Barbarigo, exh. cat. IVAM, Valencia, ill. p. 90.  
Exhibition: IVAM, Valencia, 19.11.2004 - 30.01.2005  
A1920.00420



Ida Barbarigo (Venice, 1920 - 2018)  
*Riso di Socrate (Socrates' Laughter)*  
June 4, 1969  
Oil on canvas  
64,5 x 54 cm  
A1920.00419



Ida Barbarigo (Venice, 1920 - 2018)  
*Tiene cara de leon (He Has the Face of a Lion)*  
November 22-26, 1971  
Oil on canvas  
100 x 80 cm  
A1920.00925



Ida Barbarigo (Venice, 1920 - 2018)  
*Untitled*  
February 16, 1969  
Oil on canvas  
24 x 16 cm  
A1920.00587



Ida Barbarigo (Venice, 1920 - 2018)  
*Untitled*  
February 16, 1969  
Oil on canvas  
33 x 24 cm  
A1920.00763



Ida Barbarigo (Venice, 1920 - 2018)  
*Untitled*  
February 3, 1969  
Oil on canvas  
12 x 18 cm  
A1920.00557





## Biography

Ida Barbarigo was born in Venice in 1920 as Ida Cadorin into a family of artists, architects, and sculptors. Although not encouraged by her father to become an artist, she realised from a young age that she had a gift for drawing and an eye for tones and shades. She wanted to become an artist and work in great freedom, not being obstructed by marriage or children. While attending Venice's Accademia di Belle Arti, she transitioned away from architecture studies to study painting. Her work was influenced by the greats, including Giotto, Cimabue, many Renaissance painters, the art of early civilisations, and modern painters such as Piet Mondrian.

In 1949, she married another artist, Zoran Music, the love of her life, while stubbornly keeping her independence and continuing her artistic path. Her restlessness and curiosity led her to travel. In 1952, she moved to Paris, where she wanted to "unlearn" painting and forget academic teaching to create her reality, valid for itself, and able to communicate its world. Soon, she turned towards abstraction, using sinuous forms skillfully orchestrated against light, airy backgrounds, almost always in tone, and often infused with the rhythm of white brushstrokes suggesting the scintillation of light and the fluttering of leaves on the wind.

From 1959 onwards, she lived in Venice and Paris, where she encountered other artists like Germaine Richier, Vieira da Silva, Léon Gischia, and Hans Hartung but also critics and art historians, such as René de Solier, Jean Bouret, Jacques Lassaigne, and Pierre Francastel. In Venice in 1978, she installed herself in Palazzo Balbi-Valier's piano nobile along the famed Grand Canal. In the palazzo's attic, she re-created the artistic atmosphere of the house where she was born. She stayed there surrounded by hundreds of artworks, which she created as well as those of the Cadorin family while continuing painting.

Barbarigo participated three times in the Biennale of Venice: in 1942 as a "young talent", in 1978 with *I Persecutori*, and in 1995, Jean Clair selected her for the main pavilion, where an entire room was dedicated to the series, *Le Sfingi*. The American dealer Patti Birch brought her work to New York. From 1969, the American collector Eric Estorick was one of the main collectors who bought her work. In 1972, she had a retrospective at Le Musée Moderne de la ville de Paris.

In 1986, she received a special commission to make portraits of Président Mitterand that were shown at the Elysée in Paris. In 2002, she showed her series *Guardando Guardando* in Giulio Romano's magnificent Palazzo Te in Mantua. In 2004, she had a large exhibition at IVAM in Valencia, curated by Kosme de Barañano. Palazzo Fortuny in Venice hosted an exhibition of her *Terrestri* in 2006. Axel Vervoordt presented her work for *In-finitum* in the same Palazzo Fortuny in 2009.

Barbarigo's work is held in museum and institutional collections worldwide, including Tate, London; The Institut Valencià d'Art Modern (IVAM), Valencia; Fondazione Querini Stampalia, Venice; and Musée d'Art Moderne de Paris.

She passed away at the age of ninety-seven in 2018.

## Publications

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Giovanna Dal Bon, *Ida Barbarigo*, Gent (AsaMER), 2013.  
Lydia Harambourg, *Dictionnaire des peintres de l'École de Paris, 1945-1965*, Neuchâtel (Éditions Ides et Calendes), 1993; new edition, 2010.  
Giovanna Dal Bon, *Doppio Ritratto. Ida Barbarigo-Zoran Mušič*, Milan (Johan & Levi), 2008.  
Ida Barbarigo. *I terrestri*, Venice (Marsilio), 2004 en 2006.  
Consuelo Císcar Casabán, *Ida Barbarigo. Donación*, Valencia (Institut Valencià d'Art Modern), 2006.  
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*Ida Barbarigo: 19-XI-2004 30-I-2005*, Valencia (Generalitat Valenciana), 2004.  
Kosme de Barañano, Sabine Schulze, Jean Clair and Michael Peppiatt, *Ida Barbarigo – published on the occasion of the exhibition held at Institut Valencia d'Art Modern*, Valencia (IVAM), 2004.  
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Riccardo Held, *Ida Barbarigo: la cerchia di Saturno e la dimora di Dioniso*, Venice, (Ikona Gallery), 1999.  
Pierre Wat, *Une vie, deux œuvres*, Paris (Galerie Marwan Hoss), 1999.  
*Ida Barbarigo, Alle Zattere 1962-1976*, Venice (Ikona Gallery), 1998.  
Enrico Benaglia and Rossana Bossaglia, *Ida Barbarigo*, Rome (Italarte), 1998.  
Marilena Pasquali, *Ida Barbarigo: la cerchia di Saturno*, Bologna (Grafiche del Sasso), 1998.  
*Ida Barbarigo: peintures*, Neuchâtel (Gallery Ditesheim) 1997.  
Michael Peppiatt, *Ida Barbarigo, 'i volti' 1966-1996*, Venice and Cortina d'Ampezzo (Galerie Contini), 1996.  
Philippe Carteron, *Ida Barbarigo, Les Sphynxes, Les Persécuteurs*, Paris (Galerie Vallois), 1994.  
Nino Frank, René de Solier, Barbara Wright, *Ida Barbarigo: peintures 1968-1991*, Venice (Galerie Contini) and Paris (Salon de Mars), 1992.  
*Ida Barbarigo: Lieux intérieurs*, Paris (Galerie Jan Krugier), 1991.  
Jean Clair, *Ida Barbarigo*, Paris (Galerie atelier Lambert), 1989.  
Paolo Rizzi, *Due artisti a confronto, Tancredi - Barbarigo, 1950-1960*, Venice (Galerie Contini), 1989.  
Silvio Acatos, *Ida Barbarigo : peintures*, Genève (Galerie Kara), 1987.  
Erich Steingraber, Jean Clair, *Ida Barbarigo*, Munich (Bayerische Staatsgemäldesammlungen), 1982.

*Ida Barbarigo: Peintures récentes*, Paris (Galerie de France), 1980.  
Giuseppe Mazzariol, *Flowers and persecutors by Ida Barbarigo*, New York (P. Birch), 1980.  
Jean Bouret, Jacques Lassaigne, Giuseppe Mazzariol, René de Solier and Marco Valsecchi, *Ida Barbarigo*, Paris (Galerie de France), 1976.  
Jean Bouret, *Ida Barbarigo*, Venice (Palazzo Querini Stampalia), 1975.  
Jacques Lassaigne, *Barbarigo*, Paris (Le Musée de Poche), 1972.  
Jacques Lassaigne, *Ida Barbarigo*, Paris (Musée d'art moderne de la Ville), 1972.  
Jacques Lassaigne, *Ida Barbarigo*, Bologna (Galerie La Nuova Loggia), 1971.  
Jean Bouret, *Ida Barbarigo: exhibition of paintings*, London (Grosvenor Gallery), 1971.  
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Marco Valsecchi, *Ida Barbarigo*, Milan (Galerie Bergamini), 1969.  
*Drie italienische Künstler: Ida Barbarigo, Alik Cavaliere, Bruno Pulga*, Nuremberg (Kunsthalle), 1968.  
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*6 Pariser Maler*, Nürnberg (Fränkische Galerie), 1965.  
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