

## Pietro Barucci (Italian, 1845-1917), “Stagno Maccarese,” 1897, oil on canvas.

This October, Michaan's is proud to offer *Stagno Maccarese*, 1917, an oil on canvas painting by Pietro Barucci (1845-1917) (\$10,000-15,000). Pietro Barucci was a Roman painter known for his natural ability to capture the essence and beauty of landscapes and marine scenes. He was born in Rome in 1845, and went on to study at the National Academy of San Luca under master artist Achille Vertunni. Barucci's work has won countless awards, first in 1878, and has been featured in multiple international exhibitions. Most notably, Barucci participated in the *Esposizione delle Belle Arti* at the *Palazzo delle Esposizioni* in Rome in 1883, the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago (the Chicago World's



Fair) in 1893, and in 1901 at the *Salon des Indépendants* in Paris. The Chicago World's Fair is especially worth mentioning here, as it was a prelude to San Francisco's own international fair, the Panama-Pacific International Exposition (or PPIE) in 1915. The PPIE was responsible for cementing San Francisco's place as a thriving hub of commerce and culture, and gave our city by the bay its iconic Palace of Fine Arts.

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In a general sense, Pietro Barucci's paintings have been appreciated for his capacity in portraying the 'real essence' of roman countryside. He paints with rich shades of greens, browns, and blues, masterfully varying earth tones to accurately capture not only the visual aesthetics of a landscape, but its ephemeral, affective tone as well. In *Stagno Maccarese*, reddish-gold ferns partially obscure a water buffalo in the foreground, swampland dominating the space around it. The water buffalo gives scale to the painted scene, and conveys a

sense of endlessness, this vast landscape of untouched wilderness extending beyond the viewer's field of vision. This painting makes it clear that Barucci's ability to create such depth on a flat canvas was extraordinary. Despite employing mostly darker colors, *Stagno Maccarese* is far from gloomy. Yes, the scene is dark, marshy, but the light reflecting off the languid water in the background creates a profound sense of serenity. Further, Barucci truly *did* capture the intrinsic nature of a marshland scene: simply by looking at this painting, one can



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practically feel the humid air, hear the buzzing of swamp cicadas and the soft rustle of fluffy reeds kissed by a gentle breeze.

Barucci is a painter of the *Campagna Romana*, a low-lying area in central Italy, essentially Roman countryside. Painters of this area have become desperately sought after by fine arts collectors, because their works are unique for two reasons. First, Italy is simply not typically associated with marshy wetlands and swamps. Italy, Rome in particular, usually evokes images of ancient roman wonders, the coliseum, big white pillars, and domed roofs. Typical artworks of the Italian countryside depict bright greens, lush fields, and sparkling ocean-side towns with winding cobblestone roads. Second, and largely why these paintings' values are so high, is due to their being a historical document of everyday scenes and central Italian landscapes in the

late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Much of this land has since been developed, its natural beauty destroyed for the sake of industrial and residential expansion. In fact, the *Stagno Maccarese* (swamp) pictured in Barucci's so-named painting is now the Roma Fiumicino Airport, one of Rome's three airports. In Barucci's time, this land was undeveloped marsh. It was drained during Mussolini's dictatorship and turned into a model farm, a farm where agricultural techniques are researched, for the state. It



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was later sold to the Benetton family after the airport was built. These paintings act as a glimpse into what the land *used* to look like. They are a snapshot of simple living and natural serenity, painstakingly taken before the hubbub of modern civilization took over.

Michaan's Auctions is incredibly honored to have the privilege of offering Pietro Barucci's masterpiece in our October Gallery Auction, which is set to go live at 10am on Friday, October 18<sup>th</sup>. Michaan's

Gallery Auction catalog will be available on October 3<sup>rd</sup>, and can be viewed on our website: [www.michaans.com](http://www.michaans.com), Live Auctioneers, and Michaan's Live. Join us day-of in our gallery or remotely via online, phone, or absentee bidding.



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