

Museum Planet: Venice / Museum Planet.—New York, NY: Museum Planet (10 Waterside Plaza, New York, NY 10010), 2005.—1 DVD-ROM.—ISBN 0-9742670-2-3: \$300.00 (Library Edition).



Museum Planet: Venice purports to be the most detailed visual representation of the art and architecture of Venice in a single publication. With 1,900 images, this may be true, but quantity does not necessarily translate into quality. This plug and play DVD-ROM for personal computers does not require downloading of software. It is easy to use and its content is simply organized. To orient oneself, the user may choose to follow an audio-visual tour or slideshow. But the user can also choose to visit specific sites, such as Doges' Palace (128 images), Frari (72 images), and San Michele (23 images), which are accessed by clicking on a site name that appears in an alphabetical list at the left of the screen. Upon doing this, one opens the first image in the group of images for that site. A slide bar at the bottom of the screen provides the user options to open a descriptive text box, to zoom into the image once (but not repeatedly), to move forward or back in the group of images, to listen to an audio version of the descriptive text, and to return to the main screen (home), where one finds a map and the opportunity to exit the program. The main screen has a search function that is supposed to permit keyword searching on the entire text; unfortunately, it did not work for this reviewer, even when I accessed the title on different computers. Although many of the images are of good quality, a significant number are also poor in quality. Interior shots present a particular challenge; many are poorly lit, and the spotlights used to illuminate an architectural feature or work of art are visible in many images, like an odd and unwelcome visitor. The text is disappointing, descriptive rather than analytical. It often reads like a bad travel guide; for example, the caption accompanying the image of a Madonna statue in the Church of the Madonna dell'Orto reads, "It's a pity that we do not know who made this work because it is very competent." Because this title lacks significant scholarly commentary, it will have limited appeal among art historians. Art lovers planning a trip to Venice are the likely, but limited, audience for this title.

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