

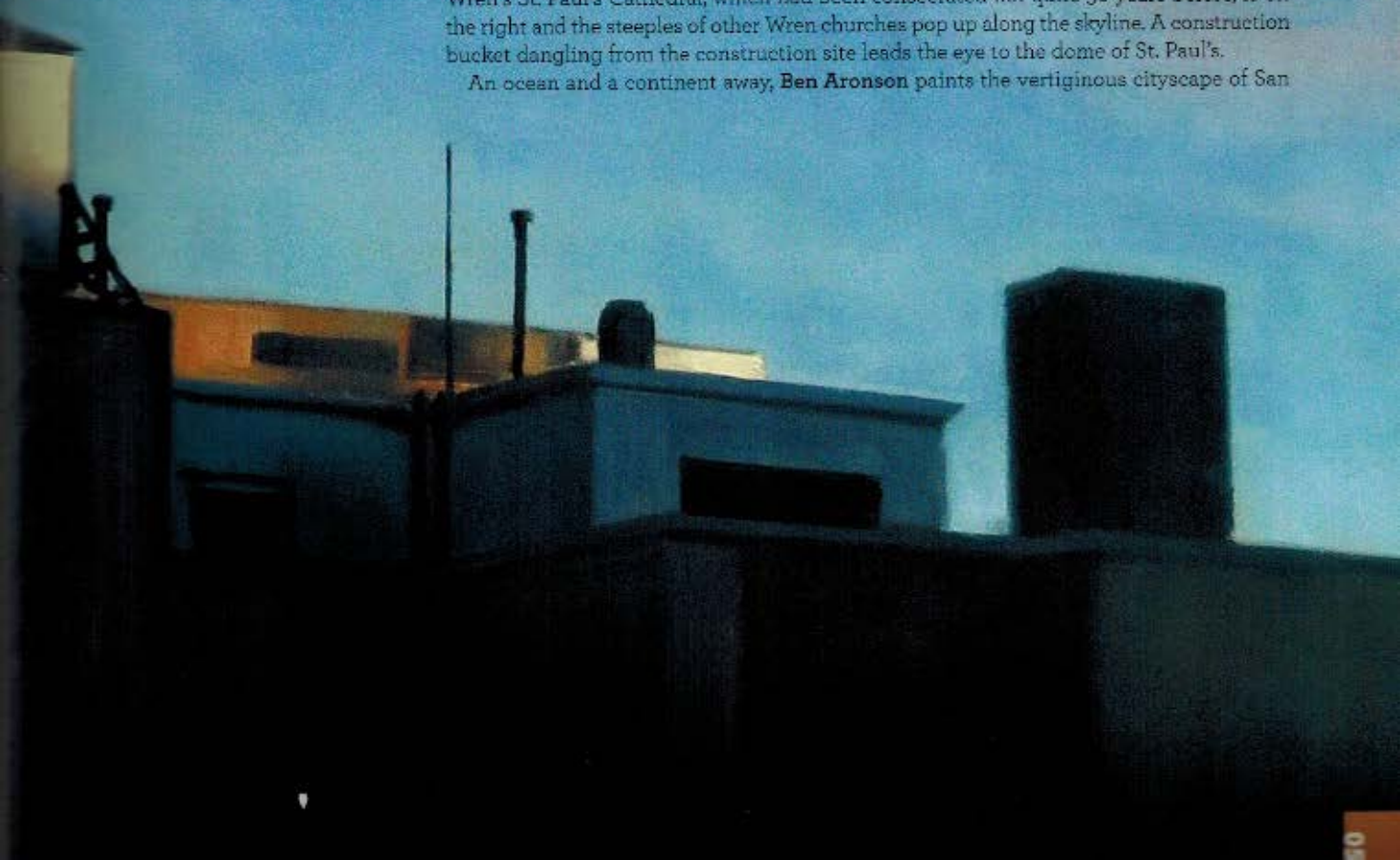
# ENERGY *of the* CITY

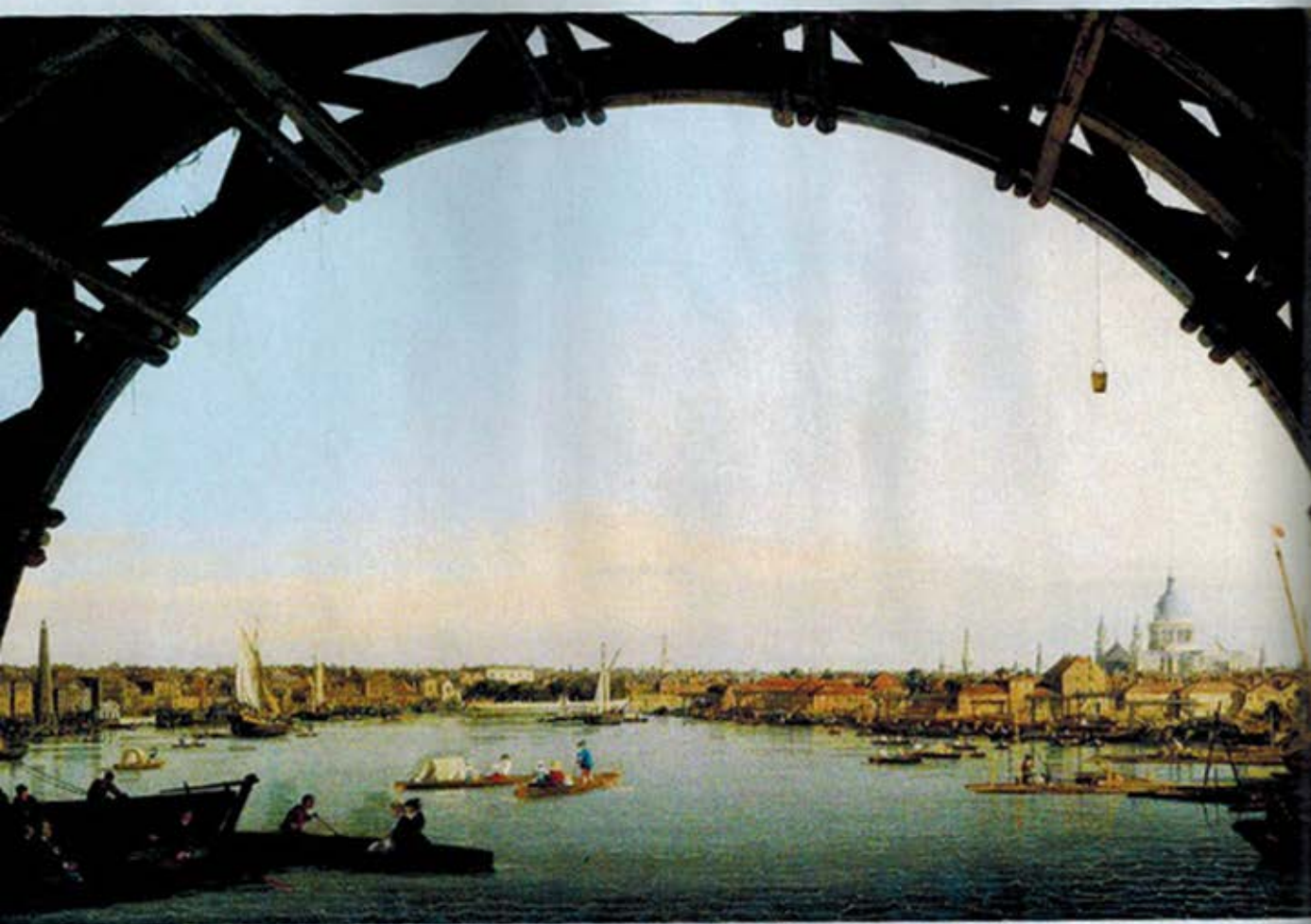
BY JOHN O'HERN

**G**iovanni Antonio Canal, better known as **Canaletto**, accompanied his father to Rome in 1719-1720 to help him paint the scenery for the performances of two operas by Alessandro Scarlatti. He soon turned to topographical paintings, especially of Venice, the images that often come to mind when we think of "cityscapes." In 1746 he moved to London where he painted for 10 years.

*London: Seen Through an Arch of Westminster Bridge, 1746-47*, is an unusual view of the city from beneath the first Westminster Bridge, then under construction. Christopher Wren's St. Paul's Cathedral, which had been consecrated not quite 50 years before, is on the right and the steeples of other Wren churches pop up along the skyline. A construction bucket dangling from the construction site leads the eye to the dome of St. Paul's.

An ocean and a continent away, **Ben Aronson** paints the vertiginous cityscape of San





2. Canaletto (1697-1768), London: Seen Through an Arch of Westminster Bridge, 1746-47, oil on canvas, 22 x 37". Private collection. 3. Lisa Breslow, Spring Reflections, oil on panel, 40 x 40". Courtesy Kathryn Markel Fine Arts, New York, NY. 4. Ben Aronson, Where Mason Meets the Bay, oil on panel, 12 x 12". Courtesy LewAllen Galleries, Santa Fe, NM. 5. LewAllen Galleries, Mirrored Street on the Riviera, oil on panel, 26 x 18 1/2", by Ben Aronson. 6. RJD Gallery, Corner Building on Prince Street, oil on linen, 23 1/2 x 49", by Marco Martelli. 7. George Billis Gallery, Near Columbus Circle, oil on canvas, 24 x 56", by Steven Katz.

Francisco and the dramatic shadows cast by the hills and the city's architecture. His intimate 12-by-12-inch vignettes capture the energy of the city in the almost abstract brushstrokes that often only suggest the architecture and the landscape.

On the East Coast, Stephen Magsig and Lisa Breslow each approach the city differently. Breslow often turns her back to the hustle and bustle of the streets of New York and seeks refuge in Central Park.

Frederick Law Olmsted, who designed Central Park with Calvert Vaux, wrote, "The enjoyment of scenery employs the mind without fatigue and yet exercises it, tranquilizes it and yet enlivens it; and thus, through the influence of the mind over the body, gives the effect of refreshing rest and reinvigoration of the whole system."

*Spring Reflections* is a meditative

*"A love of creative expression focusing on cityscapes and street scenes calls to memories of traveling or longing to travel and a desire see the world. For some it is collecting experiences, for others it's collecting art."*

— Christina Franzoso, director, Lotton Gallery

painting of Central Park. Breslow seeks a balance between abstraction and representation that she calls "an intuitive and exciting process."

She says, "Sometimes the ever-changing city streets can be disconcerting and yes, there is a steadiness in Central Park. I keep revisiting the park because it's one of the few places in which I can feel close to nature and get out of the hub with/at leaving town. I never seem to tire of Central

Park as a subject. I am always rediscovering and finding new vantage points. It is the perfect place to experience all of the seasons at different times of day and in varying weather conditions. I am obsessed with the reflections of buildings and trees in the lakes and ponds."

Magsig revels in the details of cast-iron storefronts and the structural intricacy of New York City, often based on photographs from the late '90s and early 2000s. He



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