

## **The Theatre of History**

The exhibition allows us to compare for the first time three works by an anonymous painter working in the circle of Niccolò dell'Abate. Like Caron's *Massacres of the Triumvirate* (Paris, Musée du Louvre) they show a similar contrast between the delicacy of the style used and the violence of the actions depicted.

The painting is learned, nurtured by a love of archaeology and antiquity. Caron is acting as a stage director in the spectacular theatrical decors and in grandiose reconstructions of Paris under the Valois. The precious and minute technique of his "faire petit" long fascinated his contemporaries and followers.

The innovative presentation of the painter's final masterpiece also helps us to appreciate what Caron contributed to the generations that followed him. The choreographed ballet of the figures, in majestic nature, relates to the later developments of grand French history painting which, in the following century, would recall this lesson of classicism and the ideal.