



“Psyche and Cupid”: masterpieces by Antonio Canova and François Gérard on display together for the first time, loaned by the Louvre to Milan’s Palazzo Marino through the intercession of Eni.

(1 December 2012 to 13 January 2013)

San Donato Milanese, 12 November 2012 – The sculpture *Amore e Psiche stanti* (*Cupid and Psyche Standing*) by Antonio Canova and the painting *Psyché et l’Amour* (*Cupid and Psyche*) by François Gérard will be on display together for the first time, through the intercession of Eni and in partnership with the Louvre, in Milan, at what has become an annual exhibition, held, for the fifth year running, by the Milan Council in the Alessi Hall of Palazzo Marino, from 1 December 2012 to 13 January 2013.

This extraordinary exhibition is dedicated to the masterpieces of the greatest exponents of Neoclassicism, both inspired by the myth of Psyche and Cupid, taken from the *Metamorphoses* of Apuleius, written in the 2nd century AD. The myth has been a great source of inspiration in literature and art alike, in particular between the 18th and 19th centuries, when it enjoyed a significant revival due to its affinity with the sensibility of Neoclassicism and Romanticism.

Amore e Psiche stanti, Antonio Canova’s sculpture dated 1797, sets the aesthetic canons for his “divinities”, marked by their tremendous tenderness and sensual beauty. François Gérard’s painting *Psyché et l’Amour*, dated one year later, was considerably influenced by Canova’s work, and reveals an erotic charge that gained him great public acclaim.

Previous editions of the exhibition organised in collaboration with the Louvre (of which Eni is *Mécène Exceptionnel*) have starred the masterpieces *Saint John the Baptist* by Leonardo da Vinci (2009), *Woman with a Mirror* by Titian (2010), and the *Adoration of the Shepherds* and *St Joseph, the Carpenter* by Georges de La Tour (2011).

Eni’s innovative formula for the promotion of art, based on offering visitors free entrance and a range of activities, events and tools designed to provide a better understanding of the works on display, was rewarded by the over 210,000 visitors who flocked to last year’s exhibition.

The show, curated by Valeria Merlini and Daniela Storti, offers educational and video material, digital aids - including a website (www.amoreepsicheamilano.it), a dedicated app, and videos and insights on YouTube, Facebook, Twitter, Google+ and Foursquare - and special workshops aimed at primary and middle schools. The catalogue is edited by Rubettino Editore and cured by Vincent Pomarède, Valeria Merlini and Daniela Storti.

A series of meetings organised by Eni at the conference hall of Palazzo Reale (free entry, subject to booking) and specific material for schools available from the website eni.com, will also contribute to broadening interest in the myth of Cupid and Psyche.

In line with the objective of openness and continual dialogue with the city, this year's edition introduces introductory and in-depth meetings in Milan's municipal libraries, which will host conferences on issues connected with Neoclassicism and the works on display.

The programme of events revolving around the exhibition will be opened at Bookcity, at Milan's Castello Sforzesco (Sunday, 18 November, 15:00). The event will see the involvement of the city's international communities and the participation of the young author, Giulia Carcasi.

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