



THE VENICE INTERNATIONAL FOUNDATION

the **SUBLIME CANOVA** *project*

Museo Correr in Saint Mark's Square, Venice



Venus Italica, plaster, 1811.

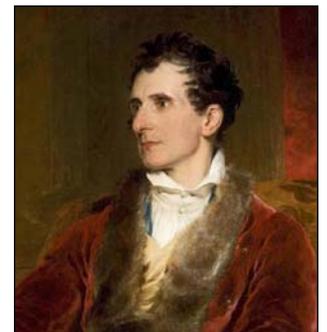
The Venice International Foundation is working alongside the Musei Civici Veneziani on a new project, *Sublime Canova*, focusing on Antonio Canova and the collection of his works at the Museo Correr in Saint Mark's Square. For the first time, this partnership has expanded beyond national boundaries with the involvement of a third partner, Friends of Venice Italy (the U.S. non-profit organization founded in 2012 to offer new ways of participating in and contributing to the enhancement of Venice's cultural heritage), which is actively publicizing and financing the project.

Who, if not Canova – the last great artist of the Serene Republic and the first international genius of

modern art – could be the protagonist?

Born in Possagno in 1757, Antonio Canova is the greatest European artist of the neoclassical period, universally admired and honored by his contemporaries for the aesthetic, poetic and emotional qualities of his art.

Venice was where he trained and worked; here he found both ideas for his new art and the first clients and promoters of



*Portrait of Antonio Canova
attributed to Thomas Lawrence.
Treviso, Musei Civici.*



Model of the George Washington monument, plaster, 1817. Possagno, Gipsoteca.

his successful career. However, he was also admired in the United States: in 1816, he was commissioned to design the George Washington monument in Raleigh, the capital of North Carolina (this work was lost in the fire that destroyed the Raleigh State House in 1831).

THE MUSEO CORRER AND THE CANOVA COLLECTION

Overlooking the most beautiful square in the world and facing Saint Mark's Basilica, the Museo Cor-



rer houses a substantial number of works by Canova representing his diverse creative phases and the various expressive techniques he used. A unique patrimony made up of plaster and marble statues, oil and tempera paintings, sketches and finished drawings.

The collection



The Museo Correr; below, *Orpheus and Eurydice*, 1776.

includes extraordinary marble statues by the young Canova, *Orpheus and Eurydice* and *Daedalus and Icarus*, models of Pope Pius VI and Pesaro family funerary monuments, rough models in terracotta and clay of *Hector*, *The Repentant Magdalene*, *Cupid and Psyche* and the large, original model of *Paris*. Other important



Paris, plaster model, 1807; below, *Herm of Sappho*.

items are the complete series of bas-reliefs including the famous *Dance of the Sons of Alcinous*, the plaster casts



of *Winged Cupid*, *Venus Italica*, *Self Portrait*, the two *Hermes of Sappho* and the *Vestal Virgin Tuccia*. The collection also includes oil paintings, monochrome works in tempera, drawings and sketches by Canova as well as tools, awards, personal

objects and pictures relating to the artist.

The Canova Collection at the Museo Correr is fundamental to the appreciation and study of the artist's work. Above all, it is the greatest and most comprehensive testimony of the relationship between Canova and Venice, particularly in the period in which he was a young artist developing his skills, and is thus essential for an in-depth understanding of his work.



Two rooms of the Museo Correr where the works are displayed.

AIMS OF THE PROJECT

The *Sublime Canova* project aims to expand, enhance and revitalize the section of the museum dedicated to Antonio Canova, reorganizing the layout of the artworks so that they can be viewed as a coherent collection while increasing their emotional impact.

Although many of Canova's artworks are currently on display at the Museo Correr, they do not represent his entire output: a number of works that would 'fill the gaps' in his artistic career are missing. Furthermore, the collection cannot be viewed in its entirety because the sculptures are located in different rooms and, in some cases, are overshadowed by the neo-classical splendor of their surroundings.



Teach the Ignorant, bas-relief in plaster, 1795. Below, study in bozzetto in clay of The Repentant Magdalene, 1794.

Sublime Canova's objective is to reinforce the coherence of the collection, emphasizing its Venetian character and optimizing the relationship with the rooms in which it is displayed, thus allowing visitors and scholars to experience the collection as a whole and acquire a comprehensive knowledge of both the works



and the artist. The artworks will be displayed in sequence to illustrate Canova's creative process: from the initial idea to the finished work via the phases of drawing, rough

modelling, model making and the creation of the full-sized model.

The renovated section will occupy four rooms of the museum. The Ballroom will house the major sculptures – *Apollo and Daphne*, *Daedalus and Icarus*, *Persens* – which require a large, circular space, while the other works will be distributed between the Napoleonic Loggia and the two adjoining rooms. In one of these,

the *Mobile Canova*, commissioned by Domenico Zoppetti, will be assembled. The *Mobile Canova* is a sort of secular 'altar-reliquary', a stage set displaying a collection of items relating to Canova: an eloquent testimony to the cult of the genius of Possagno founded by his Venetian contemporaries.

In addition to the reorganization of the collection, an important phase of the project will be the restoration and conservation of some of the works. Most of them



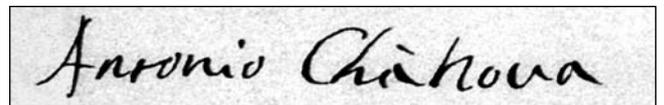
The Mobile Canova and, below, Canova's signature.

are in a good state of preservation; however, inspection, maintenance and cleaning of the sculptures is necessary. A few important works – two wax sculptures, a study model in terracotta, and a number of drawings and prints – require specific interventions, as does the *Mobile Canova* that

will be reassembled with new parts.

The rooms that will house the renovated Canova section, all of which feature neoclassical decorations, require restoration work on the frescoed, vaulted ceiling, the wall decorations, doors and marmorino. The *Sublime Canova* project will also provide funds for the new exhibition systems, such as climate-controlled display cases, which will enhance the viewing experience while ensuring the correct protection and conservation of the artworks.

Sublime Canova is a multi-faceted project conceived to honor both the genius of the great Antonio Canova and the museum where the collection is displayed: the Museo Correr. With its priceless patrimony of artworks, artefacts, manuscripts, documents and books, the museum is the finest expression of the history and the cultural identity of Venice.



SUBLIME CANOVA – Subscription Form

I wish to support the SUBLIME CANOVA project for the Museo Correr in Saint Mark's Square in Venice with a

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* *Donations made by companies to the Venice International Foundation specifically for restoration of art works are tax deductible under Italian law, article 100, comma 2, dlgs nr 344, 12.12.2003; for individuals, donations come under the regulatory norms governing tax deductions.*

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The Ballroom of the Museo Correr, photo Mark E. Smith.