



## **Record number of visitors attend Eni's "Cupid and Psyche" exhibition**

### **Over 225 thousand visitors admire the Masterpieces of Canova and François Gérard**

*San Donato Milanese (Milan), 14 January 2013* – More than 225,000 visitors attended the traditional exhibition organized by Eni at the Palazzo Marino, in collaboration with the Louvre Museum and the Council of Milan. The great success of "Cupid and Psyche" (which opened on December 1 and ended Sunday, January 13) confirms the validity of the formula proposed by Eni, which for five years has given the city of Milan extraordinary exhibitions masterpieces including *The Conversion of Saul* by Caravaggio (2008), *St. 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).

Part of the success of the most recent show was due to the unique comparison between painting and sculpture. *Cupid and Psyche* by Canova and standing *Psyche et l'Amour* by Gérard, have never before been presented side by side, inspiring reflections on all fronts: from the comparison between two different artistic techniques, to the eighteenth-century reinterpretation of the classic myth and the philosophical duality of spirit and matter.

What made the formula for the exhibition, created in 2008, so original, were several aspects including: the ability to enhance the uniqueness of the works, free access to the exhibition, the particular attention given to the needs of the public, the research and study entrusted to art historians and young scholars; visits for schools; innovative digital teaching tools for schools and web space, including access to apps, games and trivia.

The substantial and increasing number of visitors (210 thousand in 2011) shows the appreciation of quality and the diverse cultural offerings. Thanks to the sophisticated critique of each work and the support of experts in the gallery, the exhibition highlighted

the value of two masterpieces with the analysis focusing not only on the comparison between the works, but also on the study of each of their aspects.

Free access for schools and study characterized the event. 10,000 students from 400 schools attended the show, and 55 other schools including primary and secondary schools from the suburbs, who don't usually benefit from the activities provided by the Palazzo Marino, were offered, in collaboration with the Municipality of Milan, workshops at their own premises.

The exhibition, designed by Elisabetta Greci with lighting by Paolo Pollo Rodighiero, focused on the inspiration from the story of Apuleius, reinterpreted by neoclassical aesthetics. Here, the representation of the garden was enhanced, and became an ideal scenery for which to place the works. The hedges of a maze in the neoclassical room, Sala Alessi, created ideal open spaced areas to exhibit the works. Subtle aromas and muffled garden and night time sounds accompanied the visitors on an emotional and sensory discovery of the two works of art.

The open dialogue with the city, whose center and periphery are of equal importance, have been highlighted in the conferences on insights into Neoclassicism and the works of Canova and Gérard, which are housed in public libraries.

Conferences on the theme of Cupid and Psyche moderated by Lella Costa, where held at the Palazzo Reale: Giulia Carcasi, Paolo Virzi, Natalia Aspesi, Giulio Giorello and Lorenzo Jovanotti spoke at the events, sharing new ways of interpreting the story of Apuleius with the public.

The show, curated by Valeria Merlini and Daniela Storti, offers educational initiatives, video material and digital aids; including the website [www.amoreepsicheamilano.it](http://www.amoreepsicheamilano.it), a free app, and videos and insights on YouTube, Facebook, Twitter, Google+ and Foursquare. The catalogue is published by Rubettino Editore and edited by Vincent Pomarède, Valeria Merlini and Daniela Storti.

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