

How Italy's Biggest Energy Company Invests in Culture in the US

Letizia Airos (December 06, 2013)



Interview with the Chairman of Eni USA. Stefano Lucchini explains Eni's model of cultural promotion. After much success all over the world and in the U.S. in 2013, Eni now plans to introduce their innovative formula to the new Mayor of New York Bill de Blasio

Why is Eni such an active participant in cultural promotion around the world? What drives you, an Italian, worldwide energy company, towards culture?

We actively promote artistic, cultural and musical events in Italy and around the world. We invest in culture because culture goes hand in hand with the commercial investments we make in the countries where we operate. This involves a long-term investment in the territory, in international relations, and in spreading the values of sustainability, innovation and efficiency. We place culture at the top of our agenda because broadcasting and supporting culture is a means of operating in a society with which everyone deeply identifies. "Let's give energy a new energy" captures the meaning of all that we're doing for the culture and best describes our commitment to increasingly



energizing the culture, in keeping with our original motto (“culture of energy, energy of culture”) that defines our connections to artistic and cultural endeavors.

What is, then, your formula?

Our reach goes far beyond economic support. The word partnership is apt, given its deeper meaning of working together in a creative and well-organized fashion. It’s a company working with private foundations and public institutions for the greatest benefit of the culture by adopting innovative models and remaining dedicated to quality and accessibility.

We collaborate with the most prestigious museums, special places aiming at sharing their cultural riches with the support of a company like ours.

For example: our collaboration with the Met in New York and our partnership with the Louvre in Paris as well as the Vatican Museums. For us, art means putting unique masterpieces on display and making them accessible and totally free.

In recent years we have developed a formula especially designed for art exhibitions that focuses on finding original ways of reading unique artwork. We thought it important that every masterpiece in an exhibition be accompanied by tools for learning more about it. This formula, proposed in the extraordinary exhibitions at Palazzo Marino – in collaboration with the city of Milan, the Louvre and the Vatican Museums – became a big hit with the public. We’d like to propose this model to Mayor de Blasio, who we know will be an excellent first citizen of New York.

In 2013 Eni was Corporate Ambassador for the Year of Culture in the United States. Any comment on that?

This “Year” succeeded in introducing the American public to various aspects of the richness of Italian culture. There were over two hundred cultural events on the calendar in over fifty US cities. We were the chief partner for *The Boxer at Rest* at the Met in New York (which attracted over ninety thousand people in six weeks). For Eni, American journalist-writer Gay Talese provided his personal take on the statue and discussed his career as a journalist with the *New York Times*. This year we also supported the international *Cameristi della Scala* tour, which recently staged “*Fantasies*” from Verdi’s operas at MIT’s Kresge Auditorium in Boston and New York’s Carnegie Hall.

Now you’re supporting the young architect Antonio Saracino’s “The Guardians” at Bryant Park, featured in this issue. In this case, you backed a work of art that at the time didn’t exist yet. That was bold.

To honor young talents and contribute to their success is a choice Eni has made for a long time now. We believe that new generations can significantly contribute to innovation. Innovating and looking to the future are essential to Eni’s identity, an integral part of the way it operates. We have chosen emerging talents to spread our message since 2010.

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