

Dying Cleopatra lands in New York

Joelle Grosso (December 05, 2016)



The masterpiece entitled "Dying Cleopatra" made by the Italian Baroque artist Guido Cagnacci will be on view at the Italian Cultural Institute until January 19th.

December 2nd marked the opening night of [Guido Cagnacci](#) [2]'s "Dying Cleopatra" at the [Italian](#)



[Cultural Institute](#) [3] on Park Avenue. The painting illustrates how the infamous [Queen of Egypt](#) [4] died which according to legend was a suicide after forcing a highly venomous snake to bite her. The almost erotic “Dying Cleopatra” is easily characterized as one of Cagnacci’s masterpieces given that it’s a perfect example of how the artist would seamlessly combine art and sexuality. Lovers of Italian art will have the fortune of viewing this spectacular piece up close until January 19th, 2017.

This event held at the Italian Cultural Institute was able to come to fruition thanks to the collaboration with the [Pinacoteca di Brera](#) [5] and [FIAC](#) [6], the Foundation for Italian Art and Culture. FIAC is a non-profit organization established in New York City which acts as a bridge between Italy and the U.S. as well as a promoter of Italian cultural and artistic traditions abroad.

We met FIAC's Executive Director, Olivia D'Aponte, who explained to us how the two institutions worked together to transfer Guido Cagnacci’s masterpiece “Dying Cleopatra” from the Pinacoteca di Brera to Park Avenue. The Pinacoteca is located in Milan and is, without a doubt, the biggest public gallery for Italian paintings in the city. At the opening, our very own i-Italy reporter had the opportunity to chat with the new director of the Pinacoteca, [James Bradburne](#) [7].

Bradburne described the “Dying Cleopatra” as a seductive and peculiar painting which contains an expression that’s tied to both pleasure and pain. He remarked that transferring this painting overseas was a tricky task, not only because it’s a masterpiece but because it’s a part of Italian heritage. He was glad that this work of art was able to travel because some paintings are way too fragile to be transported to other countries. Luckily, they were able to restore the piece and make it more stable for it’s journey to New York. Bradburne believes it’s a time for celebration because even though not many know about Cagnacci, three of his masterpieces are on display at three of New York’s most important art venues, all at the same time.

When asked about the reactions of Americans seeing the Italian painting for the first time, Bradburne responds beautifully by saying “Art speaks to everybody. The Cleopatra expresses universal emotions.” This simple phrase encompasses what the entire night was about at the Italian Cultural Institute. An extraordinarily talented artist, Guido Cagnacci, used his expertise to create a masterpiece that would go on to entice and intrigue people all over the world, even centuries after his death.

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Links

[1] <http://iitaly.org/files/guidocagnacciitalianculturalinstitute.png>

[2] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Guido_Cagnacci

[3] http://www.iicnewyork.esteri.it/iic_newyork/en/gli_eventi/calendario/2016/12/guido-cagnacci-cleopatra-morente.html

[4] <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cleopatra>

[5] <http://pinacotecabrera.org/en/>

[6] <http://www.fiacfoundation.org/home.html>

[7] <http://www.bradburne.org/>