

Fondazione
Musei
Civici
di Venezia



Sublime Canova
Project for the new layout
of the Museo Correr's
Canova Collection in Venice





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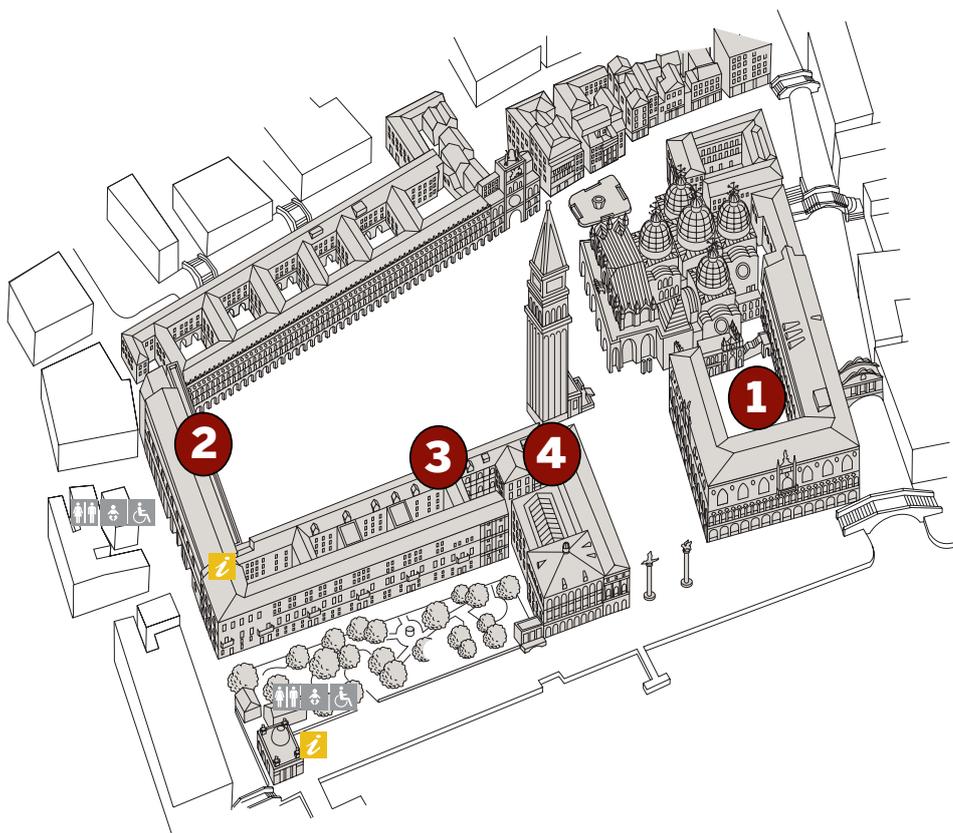
Andrea Bellieni
Curator of
the Museo Correr

The Correr, in the heart of Venice



The Correr, in the heart of Venice

The **Museo Correr** – correctly called “il Correr” – is historically the ‘parent’ institute of the Musei Civici Veneziani (Civic Venetian Museums), and has its origins in the exceptional collection donated to the city by Teodoro Correr in 1830. With its rich heritage of works of art, antiques, documents and books, it is one of the main centres for the conservation, study and reproposal in the present of the historic memory and cultural identity of Venice, an outstanding fulcrum of Western civilisation. Moreover, the Correr occupies an extraordinary architectural and spatial complex in one of the finest locations in the world, right at the heart of the most evocative, symbolic and architecturally impressive heart of the city of Venice. With its splendid entrance in the **Ala Napoleonica** (formerly Palazzo Reale), opposite the wonderful facade of the Basilica, the museum stretches through the neighbouring complex of 16th and 17th-century buildings of the **Procuratie Nuove**, which frame the southern side of **St Mark’s Square**, with the Giardini Reali on the other side and overlooking the **Basin of St Mark’s**. Forming a part of the “**Area marciana**”, the Correr constitutes a single entity with the **Doge’s Palace**, the **Museo Nazionale Archeologico** (National Archaeological Museum) and the **Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana** (Marciana National Library): a cultural and touristic centre that annually attracts almost 2 million visitors.



1. Doge's Palace
2. Museo Correr
3. Museo Nazionale Archeologico *
4. Monumental halls of the Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana**

In collaboration with
MINISTERO PER I BENI E LE ATTIVITÀ CULTURALI
*Soprintendenza Speciale per il Polo Museale Veneziano
**Direzione Generale per i Beni Librari, le Istituzioni Culturali e il Diritto d'Autore

“Grande Correr”: the project



“Grande Correr”: the project

The Museo Correr – which first opened on this site in 1921, and was then laid out anew in the 1950s and 1960s – now needs profound renovation, both as regards the museological layout and displays, and in terms of the architectural structure itself, the technological and functional plant, including services for the public, scientific and educational activities and for the conservation and promotion of the holdings.

The **Fondazione Musei Civici di Venezia** has decided to launch this demanding project, which will be implemented in collaboration with the Comune di Venezia, Direzione Regionale per i Beni Culturali e Paesaggistici del Veneto, Soprintendenza per i Beni architettonici e paesaggistici di Venezia e Laguna and the Soprintendenza Speciale per il Polo Museale di Venezia. It will lead to the realisation of what the international press has already defined the “Grande Correr”; not only for the considerably expanded area it will encompass, including spaces that are as yet unsuitable, but above all because it will be at the centre of an enlarged system able to pull together and coordinate the entire historic and cultural area gravitating around St Mark’s Square (Area Marciana), one of the most packed and important spaces of its kind in the world from a thematic, topographical, functional and symbolic point of view.

The goals of the refurbishment are to assure new functionality to the structures, stress the magnificence of the site and exceptional nature of the collections, and broaden the range of services offered to meet the cultural requirements of a numerous and varied public in one of the most best-loved cities in the world.

The overall guideline project has already been drawn up and will be implemented in successive step-by-step integrated phases in accordance with a precise programme over several years, based on priorities and investments (Comune and Fondazione), as well as on external backing.

After having terminated the restoration of 13 rooms in the Royal Apartments, the first phase in a new historic layout, **the next concrete objective is a new layout of the Canova Collection in conformity with the project illustrated below.**

The Grande Correr in numbers

3052 mq - display of permanent collections

816 mq - apartments of the Royal Palace

244 mq - services for the general public

The Museo Correr's Canova Collection



The Museo Correr's Canova Collection

Antonio Canova (Possagno 1757 – Venice 1822) was the greatest European artist of the neoclassical period, the last great artist to emerge from Venice and the first international genius of modern European art. Universally admired and honoured by his contemporaries, Canova's fortune critique underwent an eclipse during much of the 20th century – during the periods of realism, the avant-gardes and rationalism – but has undergone progressive renewed acclaim in recent decades thanks to a recognition of the true aesthetic, poetic and sentimental values of his œuvre; this appreciation is at last full, generalised and international. Venice is the city in which the artist trained and where he found the fundamental stimuli of his new art, together with his first supporters and patrons, and it remained fond of it throughout his life. The Correr boasts a significant corpus of works covering the different creative phases of his career and all the media and methods of work practised. The collection has been built up thanks to important donations and acquisitions; some of these have been of exceptional single works, and others of coherent holdings originally from Venice (the Zulian bas-reliefs / Giustinian and Correr; the Zoppetti collection of Canova works; the Cicognara drawings, etc.). The important collection includes autograph marbles, plaster works (life-size original models, reproduction bas-reliefs with variants, casts), sketches (in terracotta, unfired clay, plaster or wax), paintings in oil or tempera, studies and 'finished' drawings. Among these works are the astonishing early marbles of Orpheus and Eurydice and Daedalus and Icarus; the models for the funeral monuments of Pesaro and for Pope Pius VI; the sketches for Hector, for the Penitent Magdalene, Amor and Psyche and more; the large original life-size model of Paris; the numerous series of bas-reliefs including the famous ones of the Dance of Alcinous and The death of Priam, the plaster casts of the Winged putto, of the Italic Venus, the Self-portrait and hermes of Sappho and Vestal Tuccia. There are also oil paintings and tempera grisailles (dancers), drawings and original studies by the artist. The collection also includes other materials of especial interest, such as studies, drawings and paintings from his studio, prints, and tools such as chisels and rasps, awards, personal objects, iconographic documents belonging to the artist and more.

Overall, the Correr's Canova collection is fundamental for any study of the artist's œuvre; in this, it is perhaps second only to the collection at the Gipsoteca of Possagno, in the artist's birthplace. Above all, it is the largest and most comprehensive proof of the fruitful relationship between Canova and Venice, especially during his formative and early professional years.

The “Sublime Canova” project



The “Sublime Canova” project

Problems and general plan for the project

In its present state, a sizeable part of the Correr’s Canova collection is on public display, but not all of it. Above all, it is not possible to see it as an organic whole, in line with a clearly intelligible order. Indeed, the works are dotted around the various neoclassical rooms without any explicit links, even though the settings are sometimes extraordinarily apt, as in the case of the “Napoleonic rooms” at the start of the museum layout (ballroom, Napoleonic gallery overlooking St Mark’s Square, Rooms 4 (‘throne room’) and 5 (‘dining room’)). Moreover, in comparison to the museum’s general themes (Venetian culture / Museum of the city and Art collections up to the 16th century), the Canova section appears only to have a weak connection. At times it seems as though the works have been placed in a neoclassical setting to blend in with the background, to the detriment of an appreciation of the single works and as an overall group. And, finally, there are problems of conservation, display and observation associated with the lighting, integration with captions and so on.

Apart from resolving these critical points, **an essential goal of the project is the recovery, promotion and relaunching of this fundamental section as regards its international significance and the critical and artistic appreciation of Canova’s oeuvre**; this can be done by organically regrouping works and materials (sculptures, models, sketches, drawings, studio materials, personal items, etc.) and by enabling a unified, inter-related vision, thereby assuring visitors and scholars a sufficiently comprehensive knowledge of the artist’s work, as well as essential visual emotion. The Museo Correr will thus be known in the world also for this fundamental collection of absolute value, dedicated to beauty and art.

The “Sublime Canova” project

Museological criteria, concepts, spaces and itineraries

The museological plans for the renewed Canova section foresees the display of the works in accordance with a flexible order that places a chronological, evolutionary overview above a simply ‘typological’ one, thereby highlighting Canova’s creative processes, from idea to finished work, passing through the stages of drawing, sketch, model and life-size model. At the same time, thanks to effective yet unobtrusive multimedia and interactive captions and displays, the iconographic and semantic references can be stressed, together with the links with the Antique, and the links between contemporary art and Canova, not forgetting the various processes of actual production of the works. Other aspects to be stressed are the unity and “Venetianness” of some clearly defined holdings; above all, that put together by Domenico Zoppetti, which includes documents, objects and personal items (the large ‘**Canova cabinet**’, an astonishing ‘lay altar’ and eloquent testimony to the ‘cult’ of Canova practised by the Venetians; this piece was already present in earlier layouts of the museum and is for this reason an important 19th-century ‘museographical’ article).



The “Sublime Canova” project

Considering the nature and value of the Canova collection with regard to the thematic and chronological settings of the museum, it is inevitable that a non-consequential approach be adopted; indeed, it is almost a self-standing and complete monographic section, to be included in the layout of the ‘museum of Venice’ par excellence. In order to limit the perception of this break, it is considered necessary to recover the unitary, ‘monographic’ character of the collection, highlighting in particular the intrinsic ‘Venetianness’ in the single works and holdings.

Included as part of the general plan for the refurbishment of the museum – in which the itineraries and associated flows of the public will be richer and more varied than the present ones – the renewed Canova section will be located in the **Ballroom, Napoleonic Gallery and in Rooms 4 (Throne room) and 5 (Dining room)**.

The Ballroom will be used to house the largest and most demanding sculptures



(Apollo and Daphne, Daedalus and Icarus, Perseus), which require the space to enable an an observer to walk around them. This room may also be used occasionally for other purposes. From this room, some 'visual vanishing points' will lead both to the adjacent Napoleonic Gallery and, above all, to rooms 4 and 5. In the first of these (room 4) the 'Canova cabinet' will be re-assembled and most of the large bas-relief plaster works will be displayed here, together with the drawings and sketches; in the second (room 5), the display will be of some minor sculptures and prints.

As a result of the above distribution of works, when the general project will have been wholly implemented after the public's first and impressive 'encounter' with Canova in the Ballroom, the normal itinerary on the 'way in' will tend to usher the visitor first towards the Royal Apartments and then to the Venetian History and Civilisation sections and on to the Art Collections (2nd floor). Then the larger and more explanatory part of the Canova Collection will be met on the 'way out' (rooms 4 and 5), towards the end of the normal itinerary, acting as an introduction into the re-admission into neoclassical art in the Napoleonic loggia, which will house the reception and services area (ticket office, cloakroom, cafeteria).

This will give greater justification – including a 'chronological' one – to the presence of the monographic Canova section within the museum's other themes.





Antonio Canova
at Museo Correr

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Works



Sculptures



Sculptures



Cl. XXV n. 0033
Canestro di frutta
Carrara marble, 36 x 39
1774



Cl. XXV n. 0139
Paride
Plaster, 201 x 105
1807



Cl. XXV n. 0034
Canestro di frutta
Carrara marble, 34 x 35
1774



Cl. XXV n. 0014
Geni funerari con ritratto femminile
Plaster, 43 x 40
1817



Cl. XXV n. 1073
Euridice
Carrara marble, 203 x 54
1776



Cl. XXV n. 0015
Giovinetta piangente
Carrara marble, 132
1800



Cl. XXV n. 1072
Orfeo
Carrara marble, 203 x 85
1776



Cl. XXVI n. 0184
Venere Italica
Plaster, 172
1811



Cl. XXV n. 1060
Dedalo e Icaro
Carrara marble, 182 x 95
1778-1779



Cl. XXVI n. 0183
Amorino alato
Plaster, 142
1818-21

Busts



Busts



Cl. XXV n. 0177
**Erma della Vestale
Tuccia**
Plaster, 51 x 30
sec. XIX



Cl. XXV n. 0024
Busto della Religione
Plaster, 113 x 116
1787-1792



Cl. XXV n. 0176
Erma di Saffo
Plaster, 47 x 25
sec. XIX



Cl. XXVI n. 0028
**Busto di papa Clemente
XIII Rezzonico**
Plaster, 113 x 116
1787-1792



Cl. XXV n. 0052
**Busto ritratto di
Madama Recamier**
Plaster, 51 x 24
sec. XIX



Cl. XXV n. 0182
Autoritratto
Sculpture, Plaster, 70 x 50
1812

Bas-reliefs



Bas-reliefs



Cl. XXVI n. 0047
La morte di Priamo
Plaster, 110 x 210
1787-1792



Cl. XXVI n. 0033
Ecuba offre il peplo a Pallade
Plaster, 118 x 260
1787-1792



Cl. XXVI n. 0046
Briseide consegnata agli araldi
Plaster, 110 x 210
1787-1792



Cl. XXVI n. 0043
Ritorno di Telemaco in Itaca
Plaster, 115 x 217
1787-1792

Bas-reliefs



Cl. XXVI n. 0050
Socrate congeda la famiglia
Plaster, 110 x 210
1787-1792



CL. XXVI n. 0048
La danza dei figli di Alcinoos
Plaster, 136 x 264
1787-1792



Cl. XXVI n. 0027
Critone chiude gli occhi a Socrate
Plaster, 119 x 249
1787-1792



CL. XXVI n. 0025
Socrate beve la cicuta
Plaster, 118 x 258
1787-1792

Bas-reliefs



Cl. XXVI n. 0030
Dar da mangiare agli affamati
Plaster, 115 x 127
1795-1796



Cl. XXVI n. 0029
Insegnare agli ignoranti
Plaster, 121 x 111
1795-1796



CL. XXVI n. 0023
La Speranza
Plaster, 116 x 126
1787-1792



CL. XXVI n. 0022
La Carità
Plaster, 122 x 120
1787-1792

Sketches and models



Sketches and models



Cl. XXVII n. 0118
Eteocle e Polinice
Terracotta, 17 x 40
1757-1822



Cl. XXVII n. 0361
Eteocle e Polinice
Terracotta
sec. XVIII-XIX



Cl. XXVII n. 0116
Amore e Psiche giacenti
Unfired clay, 25 x 42
1787-1793



Cl. XXVII n. 0120
Gruppo di figure per il monumento a Tiziano
Terracotta, 16 x 8,5
sec. XVIII-XIX



Cl. XXVII n. 0115
La Beneficenza
Unfired clay, 23,5 x 21
1757-1822



Cl. XXVII n. 0120
Maddalena penitente
Clay, 22 x 20
1794 -1796



Cl. XXVII n. 0114
Il Leone e il Genio
Clay, 14 x 19
1757-1822



Cl. XXVII n. 0117 a
La Carità
Unfired clay, 21,5 x 19
1757-1822



Cl. XX n. 0010
Ercole saetta i figli
Wax, 72 x 28,5
1799



Cl. XXVII n. 0117 b
La Carità
Unfired clay
1757-1822

Sketches and models



Cl. XXVI n. 0016
Ettore
Unfired clay, 60 x 22,5
1816



Cl. XXV n. 0057
La Pietà
Sculpture, Plaster/ Base in
legno, 72 x 94
1820



Gessi SN. 35
Pio VI
Sculpture, Plaster
1818-21



Cl. XX S.N.
**Modellino per
monumento funerario**
Wood / wax, 34 x 51
sec. XIX



Paintings and drawings



Paintings and drawings



Cl. I n. 0343
**Venere pudica,
La sorpresa**
Oil on canvas, 96 x 73,5
1798-1822



Cl III n 1798
Studio per le grazie
Pencil on paper 17,2 x 9,2
1812



Cl. I n. 0344
Perseo e Medusa
Oil on canvas 96 x 73,5
1798-1799



Cl. I n. 1130
**Autoritratto di Antonio
Canova**
Oil on canvas, 35 x 27,5
1812-1819



Cl. I n. 0345
Perseo e Medusa
Oil on canvas, 24 x 73
1798-1799



Cl. I n. 0341
**Compianto sul Cristo
morto**
Oil on canvas, 94 x 67,5
1799



Cl. I n. 2195
Danzatrice
Oil on canvas, 51 x 34
1790-1800



Cl. I n. 1062
**Ritratto di Amedeo
Svayer**
Oil on canvas, 106,5 x 86,5
1791-1822



Cl. I n. 0786
**Studio per il monumento
a Nelson**
Oil on canvas, 64 x 59
1700-1799



N. 5934
Pugilatore (Creugante)
Ink on paper 45,4 x 31,5
1794

Suggestions





Museo Correr, Canova Room - 1921



Museo Correr, Canova cabinet (Zoppetti collection) - 1921