

The Rediscovery of Guido Cagnacci and his Dying Cleopatra

Joelle Grosso (November 30, 2016)



A truly unique masterpiece by one of Italy's most underrated and eccentric painters will be on display at the Italian Cultural Institute from December 2nd until January 19th, 2017.

[Guido Cagnacci](#) [2] was an exceptional artist who was born during the 17th century in a small town in the region of Emilia-Romagna and contributed to the [Baroque](#) [3] artistic movement. His work can be characterized by the bold use of chiaroscuro as well as his overtly sexualized subject matter. Unfortunately, many people don't know of Cagnacci and his name often flies under the radar because his paintings were practically ignored during his lifetime. Being ridiculed by his peers and having no children are just a couple of reasons as to why he has been a forgotten personality in Italian history.



However, it is a special time for Cagnacci admirers in New York because his work will be presented in some of the most prominent art venues in the city. Not only will the painting *Dying Cleopatra* be on view at the [Italian Cultural Institute](#) [4] but *Repentant Magdalene* is currently at the [Frick Museum](#) [5] until January 22nd and *The Death of Cleopatra* will be at the [Metropolitan Museum](#) [6] starting on December 12th. This newfound recognition of Cagnacci's talent will also introduce his paintings to a more diverse audience and to those who were completely unfamiliar with his work until now.

Dying Cleopatra is an oil painting done by Cagnacci which features [Cleopatra](#) [7], a historical figure known for being the Queen of Egypt. As always, the artist portrays her as an overwhelmingly provocative subject with a muted background so that the focus is totally on her. She is topless and slouched down in a big red chair with her head tilted back, hair is let loose, eyes slightly open and lips parted. There seems to be a somewhat erotic connotation as to how Cagnacci treats his version of Cleopatra which makes his paintings all the more intriguing. In this masterpiece, he reaches a sensibility that is way ahead of his time, often being compared by experts to more modern artists including the likes of [Manet](#) [8] and [Renoir](#) [9].

Even though Guido Cagnacci is not an internationally renowned painter, he is still considered a major player in the art world especially within the landscape of Italian 17th century art. If you're interested in viewing his fabulous work, they will be on display all over New York in the upcoming months.

Source URL: <http://www.iitaly.org/magazine/events/article/rediscovery-guido-cagnacci-and-his-dying-cleopatra>

Links

[1] <http://www.iitaly.org/files/cleopatra.jpg>

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

[3] <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Baroque>

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

[5] http://www.frick.org/press/cagnacci%E2%80%99s_masterpiece_repentant_magdalene_comes_frick_fall

[6] <http://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/670765>

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

[8] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/%C3%89douard_Manet

[9] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pierre-Auguste_Renoir