

CLASSIC BEAUTIES



ARTISTS, ITALY, AND THE
ESTHETIC IDEALS
OF THE 18TH CENTURY

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Around the middle of the eighteenth century, Europe was enthralled by the archaeological excavations then taking place in Italy. Artists and young aristocrats from across the continent travelled there to see the country's classical Roman and trendsetting contemporary art for themselves. The 'Grand Tour' often lasted many months. Among those who made it were Goethe and the 'Count and Countess of the North' (the later Russian Tsar Paul I and his wife). In Rome, they met renowned artists like Pompeo Batoni, Anton Raphael Mengs, Hubert Robert, Angelica Kauffmann and – most famous of all – Antonio Canova. In short, all the great names of eighteenth-century Neoclassicism.

Classic Beauties allows readers to share the adventures of the 'Grand Tourists' and meet the leading Neoclassical artists of the day. Their accounts and the book's many illustrations, both of works of art and of contemporary tourist attractions, paint a vivid picture of a period in which the quest for classical beauty and the ideal nude was at the forefront of people's minds.

ISBN: 978-90-78653-74-5



HERMITAGE  AMSTERDAM