Titian: Sacred and Profane Love

Art Mysteries
Stefano Zuffi

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The Art Mysteries series examines several highly regarded masterpieces in an attempt to unravel the mysteries that surround them. Edited by Marco Carminati and Stefano Zuffi, they present an up-to-date and spectacular reading of famous paintings, investigating key clues to previously unknown background information.

The traditional title of the masterwork painted by Titian in his mid-twenties, Sacred and Profane Love, held in the Galleria Borghese in Rome, is of very little help in solving the mystery surrounding the painting. The subject of the work, executed in 1514 on the occasion of the wedding between the Venetian Nicoló Aurelio, secretary to the Council of Ten of the Serenissima, and the Paduan beauty Laura Bagarotto (which for once, seems to have been a marriage between sweethearts!), is unquestionably the celebration of love. But what is the relationship between the woman dressed in white who is looking at the viewer and the other woman who is looking at her and who is, above all, naked?

Contents: A Priceless Masterpiece; Rivers of learning and centuries of study, but the answer lay at the bottom of a bowl; Nothing could be further from love: It all began with a war and a hanging; An invitation to pleasure and legitimate passion; Splendid Beauty; Moral Ending; Sacred and Profane Love; Titian, His life and Times.

Stefano Zuffi was born in 1961 in Milan. After graduating in History of Medieval and Modern Art at the University of Milan and in Museology and Museography at Milan Polytechnic, he began a career as an editorial and scientific consultant in art history. He has authored over 60 books for various publishers, some of which have been translated into several languages. He also contributes to cultural magazines and radio and is a screenwriter for documentaries.

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