

**PRESS RELEASE**  
**The Exhibitions at the Venaria Reale.**  
**EGYPT'S SUNKEN TREASURES**  
**February 7<sup>th</sup> – May 31<sup>st</sup>, 2009**

**Only Italian venue: Venaria Reale, Scuderie Juvarriane**  
**By underwater archaeologist Franck Goddio**  
**Exhibition design by Robert Wilson**  
**Music and soundscape by Laurie Anderson**

*Venaria Reale, February 6, 2009* – The international exhibition “Egypt’s Sunken Treasures” will be on display at the Venaria Reale from February, 7<sup>th</sup> to May 31<sup>st</sup>, 2009. This will be the only occasion for the Italian public to see some 500 archaeological finds coming from the ancient cities of Alexandria, Heracleion and Canopus, once situated in the Nile Delta area. The three cities were in parts submerged about six metres beneath the Mediterranean, in the first centuries of the Christian age.

Using sophisticated geophysical technology, **underwater archaeologist Franck Goddio** and his team with the support of the Hilti Foundation have succeeded in uncovering the remains of these sunken sites, with their myths, artworks and everyday objects. Among the finds, a sensual diorite statue representing a queen, the everyday simplicity of some bronze fish hooks, three monumental granite statues, more than 5-metres tall, gold coins, the stela of Ptolemy VIII, weighing 16 tonnes, and a golden wedding ring, engraved with a verse from the Gospel.

Retracing 1500 years of the history of ancient Egypt, from 700 BC to 800 AD, the exhibition covers the periods of the last pharaonic dynasties, the Ptolemies, the Romans, the Byzantines and the beginning of the Islamic era. In many cases, the works on display are unique symbols of the Egyptian culture, characterized by unquestionable beauty and fascination, like the naos bearing an Egyptian calendar inscription. The discovery of some of the objects has unraveled unsolved mysteries: this is the case of Heracleion and Thonis, which eventually turned out to be respectively the Greek and Egyptian names for one and the same city.

In its previous stops in Berlin, Paris, Bonn and Madrid “Egypt’s Sunken Treasures” has met with an overwhelming success. The only Italian venue will be enriched by the **design work of Robert Wilson** and by the **music of Laurie Anderson**.

After having learned the first details about the exhibition, displayed in the prologue section, the visitor walks across a long, dark hallway, reproducing a suggestive underwater environment, leading to the very heart of the exhibition, which starts with a brightly-lit room, the “contemplation space”, dedicated to a single, precious object, and exalting the pleasure of contemplation. Each of the spaces that follow has its own specific setting: Sunken Forest, Treasures Honeycomb, Sphinx Box, Liquid Space, Waves Power. The visit reaches its climax after the passage in a long hallway, recalling a dark tunnel (Coral Tunnel) and ends with the last, magnificent room, dedicated to the most mysterious, sensual, fascinating work of art: a statue of a woman – a goddess, or a queen – looking as if she just came out of the water, leading the visitor towards the end of the exhibition with her utmost grace and beauty.

The exhibition is part of a rich program of cultural events to be held in 2009; Egypt will be one of the main themes, with a dedicated space at Turin International Book Fair as well.

“Egypt. Sunken Treasures” will be on view at the Citroniera and the Scuderia Grande, inside the Venaria Reale: these imposing spaces, designed by architect Filippo Iuvarra (5000 square metres) will be used jointly for the first time. This magnificent setting will enhance the items on display, as well as the visitors’ emotional response and fascination for archaeological expeditions and research, thanks to which the public can now enjoy these marvels.

The exhibition is promoted in Italy by the Compagnia di San Paolo, and has been implemented with the Consorzio di Valorizzazione Culturale La Venaria Reale, in collaboration with the Institut Européen d’Archéologie Sous-Marine (IEASM), the Hilti Foundation and the Supreme Council of Antiquities of Egypt.

At the end of this international tour, the next stop of which is Yokohama, "Egypt's Sunken Treasures" will return to their homeland, where Franck Goddio "hopes they can be brought together on a single site to be shown to the Egyptian public".

The entrance ticket will be 10 Euros (reduced: 7 Euros; school kids: 4 Euros). These prices are in keeping with the standard ones for similar exhibitions, or even lower: this will favour the participation of families, as well as free entrance for children below 12 and reduced tickets for school kids and visitors under 21.

The exhibition will have its own entrance and parking area, in addition to the usually available parking places for Royal Palace visitors.