

Laura Abate, Independent Researcher, Rome (Italy)

Negotiating the autobiographical self: Postcolonial memory in Guadagnino's *Inconscio Italiano* (2011)

While recent scholarship on Italian media has largely focused on export-oriented auteur cinema, heritage branding, and nostalgic reworkings of national identity, less attention has been paid to films that operate outside circulation and visibility, and that engage Italy's past through subjective, affective, and autobiographical modes rather than marketable narratives. This paper addresses such a gap by examining Luca Guadagnino's *Inconscio Italiano* (2011) as a case study of autobiographical documentary functioning as a tool for identity negotiation and social belonging. Rather than offering a linear historical account, Guadagnino's documentary mobilises interviews with intellectuals and archival LUCE footage to construct a space of psychological safety in which the director can confront a fragmented identity shaped by displacement, postcolonial amnesia, and exclusion. Particular attention is paid to the use of censored archival images, sound replacement, and dialogic interviewing as formal strategies that transform historical material into a process of autobiographical meaning-making. This paper argues that *Inconscio Italiano* does not simply revisit Italian colonial history in Ethiopia, but stages a therapeutic and dialogic process through which personal trauma, collective memory, and national identity are renegotiated. Methodologically, the research is carried out by combining close textual analysis, and psychoanalytic and narrative theory, drawing on concepts such as screen memory, abreaction, and self-narrative (Freud, Spence, Bruner), alongside cultural theories of Italianity and otherness (Barthes, Said). More broadly, the paper proposes autobiographical documentary as a critical site where Italian media can challenge dominant narratives of national identity and articulate alternative modes of belonging in contemporary Italy.

Laura Abate is an Independent Researcher based in Rome. She holds an MA in Italian Studies from Boston College (2025), and her research focuses on contemporary Italian cinema and documentary, with particular emphasis on the work of Italo-Algerian director Luca Guadagnino. Her interests include autobiographical cinema, memory and trauma studies, and the use of documentary film as a site of identity negotiation, self-actualization, and political critique. Her fiction writing, which further explores these themes, has been published by Mondadori (2022), Neo Edizioni (2020), New Press Edizioni (2019), and Corrimano Edizioni (2019).

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Alfonso Amendola, Università degli Studi di Salerno (Italy)

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Pop Platform Seriality. Nuove Esperienze di Fruizione Audiovisiva
(Martin Eden Edizioni 2025)

Partendo dalle riflessioni sulla serialità legata al modello di produzione-consumo e di riproducibilità, oggi tema centrale per la nostra contemporaneità (Ragone - Tarzia 2023; Brancato - Cristante - Ilardi 2024; Boccia Artieri - Fiorentino 2024), recuperando l'intuizione del racconto seriale come procedimento narrativo aperto di Allen (1995) e al concetto di post-

serialità di Brancato (2011), questo libro corale intende raccontare le nuove prospettive culturali e sociali offerte dal processo di produzione e fruizione seriale contemporaneo nell'epoca delle piattaforme. Sospese tra reticolarità e dinamismo cognitivo, le narrazioni in piattaforma, oggi, rappresentano dei fondamentali spazi di sperimentazione e di studio delle (nuove) pratiche sociali. La serialità - immersa in uno spazio rinnovato vicino alla cultura convergente (Jenkins 2007) dei soggetti che la producono, la consumano, la vivono (Amendola-Barone-Troianiello 2019) – sta vivendo profonde trasformazioni: dai processi di consumo al superamento del canone seriale, dal ripensamento delle audience al ripiegamento sui dispositivi come spazi di costruzione identitaria, dall'estetica Netflix alla narrazione in frammenti offerta dai social network fino alla definizione di un nuovo possibile attraversamento della contemporaneità post-mediale e post network (Lotz 2017). Se la narrazione delle piattaforme si pone oggi come la dimensione ideale per quella idea di «realtà espansa» (Prattichizzo - Gentile 2016) che rappresenta la nuova frontiera della serialità, è possibile tracciare e definire un concreto e sistemico passaggio da post-serialità a pop platform seriality che ripensa ulteriormente gli spazi della fruizione e adatta i modelli del passato alle estetiche ultra-pop (Bowman 2007, 2008; Reynolds 2011) della contemporaneità?

Alfonso Amendola è Professore di Sociologia dei Processi Culturali presso l'Università di Salerno, dove coordina il laboratorio permanente “Open Class. Ateneo & Territorio”. Le sue ricerche si concentrano su studi visuali e culture d'avanguardia, consumi generazionali e mediologia della letteratura. Tra le sue ultime pubblicazioni in volume: “*Sed non satiata est*”: *The spleen of Paris by Charles Baudelaire*, in A. Rafaele- G. Ragone (ed.) *Mediology of Literature: Theory and Essays of an Italian Experimental Movement* (London, 2026); *Sul cambiare il mondo! Una lettura metadisciplinare di Guy Ernest Debord* (con A.P. Di Tore, Napoli, 2025).

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Martina Masullo è Dottoranda in Politica e Comunicazione (Policom) presso l'Università degli Studi di Salerno. Collabora con le cattedre di Sociologia dei processi culturali, Media classici e media digitali e Sociologia dell'immaginario tecnologico. Le sue ricerche si focalizzano sugli *audience* e i *television studies*, su serialità e post-serialità e sui consumi generazionali. Fa parte del comitato di redazione della collana di “Scienze dei media e Sociologia della cultura” La sensibilità vitale (Edizioni Rogas, Roma), del Comitato Editoriale della collana Nautilus (Meltemi) e della direzione organizzativa del laboratorio di progettazione culturale Open Class dell'Università di Salerno. Ha pubblicato il libro *Pop Platform Seriality. Nuove esperienze di fruizione audiovisiva* (Martin Eden Edizioni, 2025).

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Rocco Anelli, The American University of Rome (Italy)

Queer emergence: Aesthetics beyond identity

Queer representation in contemporary Italian cinema follows identity-based storytelling, which privileges conflict or explicit visibility. Drawing from Sedgwick's theory (1990) of “queer

legibility” and Doty’s (1993) studies of queer reception, this paper argues that queerness in film could and should operate as an emergent aesthetic. Rather than spelling out characters as queer, in my directorial practice, I employ cinematic tools to make queerness perceivable without being an explicit narrative declaration. The paper examines four of my short films using them as examples of “queer emergence.” In *Animalia* (2025), two male leads show the interplay of vulnerability through nudity and corporeal discovery. While there is no outright queer story, audiences often read the film as queer, adhering to Doty’s queer reading hypothesis. *Vivremo nelle pareti* (2024) tackles stories about same-sex relationships from the 1700s and 1800s, handling queerness not only as mere identity, but as a mystical metaphor: a haunted house, representative of the total acceptance and release of oneself. Temporal disjunction, nudity, and sound are used to create a queer atmosphere. *Pier Paolo morto e risorto* (2022) has its protagonist queer-coding ritualistic actions of care toward a homeless man, while *Se fossi uomo* (2021) examines bourgeois boredom, manifesting queerness through autoeroticism, coercion of intimacy, and the destabilization of gender roles, while the setting functions as a reflective and sensorial vessel for self-discovery. Throughout these films, Halberstam’s theory (2005) of queer temporality and Muñoz’s (2009) queer potentiality, or futurity, materialize in subtle aesthetic approaches that provide an alternative to identity-based representations, making queerness atmospheric and structurally embedded.

Rocco Anelli is an Italian filmmaker, novelist, and Adjunct Professor of Film at The American University of Rome. His research focuses on queer authorship and alternative ways of integrating queerness in contemporary narratives. He is the founder of *Intermezzo*, an independent production company whose productions have circulated within international film festivals, including Biennale di Venezia, Cannes, and Rome. His short films explore queer emergence through atmosphere and non-linear storytelling. He is the author of *La costruzione triadica dell’immagine* (Florestano Edizioni, 2024), a study on body, matter and sound within images, and *I bagnanti* (Les Flaneurs, 2021), a queer coming-of-age novel.

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Emily C. Antenucci, Vassar College (USA)

The Italian South as setting for marital crisis: *Viaggio in Italia* (1954) and *The White Lotus* (2021)

This paper considers two media products that depict Southern Italy as the setting for the marital crises of foreign Anglophone visitors: Rossellini’s *Viaggio in Italia* (1953) and season two of the HBO series *The White Lotus*. I interrogate the roles of environment and location, tracing the depiction of Italy from its romanticized figuration in *Viaggio* as sensual, earthbound, and intimately connected to the realities of life and death, to its transformation into what Stephanie Malia Hom calls “destination Italy”, “an idealized land of leisure”, a playground where sex, secrets, and intrigue unfold in front of a spectacular backdrop. In *Viaggio*, it is the exterior world—the hot sun, ancient statuary, and local passions—that urges the protagonists towards the film’s climax. By contrast, the environment in *The White Lotus* is either constructed for visitors or conspicuously absent: the troubled couple encounters Italy as a brand, a simulacrum, in which its inhabitants are savvy participants. *The White Lotus* is a notably intertextual media product: it

references *L'Avventura*, *The Godfather*, and *Roman Holiday*, films that contributed to early and enduring images of Italy as a modern tourist destination. A comparison with *Viaggio* reveals the mediated transformation of the *bel paese* into “destination Italy”, an imagined location held together by performances and commodification of longstanding stereotypes and romanticizations. This transformation references the media products that shaped it and made it possible, and demonstrates how the international dissemination of audiovisual media has built on and supplanted other markers to construct an Italian imaginary.

Emily C. Antenucci is a Visiting Assistant Professor of Italian at Vassar College. A scholar of modern and contemporary Italian culture and literature, her work uses feminist thought to read the critical intersections between historical moment and cultural production. She has published on feminism and literature in journal *The Italianist* (2023, 2024) and in the volume *Italian Feminisms: Transnational Praxes for Today and Tomorrow* (edited by G. Parati) (SUNY Press, 2026) and on ecocinema in the volume *Reframing Souths. Ecological Perspectives on the South in Literature, Film, and New Media* (edited by C. Concilio and A. Baracco) (Milano University Press, 2025).

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Pieter (Pia) Aquilia, Australian Film Television and Radio School, Sydney (Australia)

Netflix, female rage and Italian cinema: The impact on Italo-diaspora female identity in Australia 1940-2026

Following the success of *There's Still Tomorrow* (Cortellesi 2023), which won the prestigious 2024 Sydney Film Festival Prize, Italo-Australian women have found a new voice and narrative understanding of their mothers and grandmothers who migrated to Australia after the Second World War, before the right to vote in 1948. Born into an ideology largely based on post-war female migration from Southern Italy, these Australian-born daughters and granddaughters of Italian female emigrees, are now embracing contemporary Italian cinematic feminism rapidly disseminated via streaming technology. This paper aims to explore how current representations of Italo-Australian female characters and stories can be renewed by this contemporary feminist cinema from our mother's homeland. Australia is in one of the most populous Italian migrant communities globally and stereotypes have appeared on our screens since 1950. Marchetta's watershed feature film *Looking for Alibrandi* (1999) celebrated the first authentic Italo-Australian feminist protagonist. Critically acclaimed, it confronted what it meant to be growing up Italian in Australia. Two decades later, this sub-genre needs a cinematic revisioning. The rise of female rage as a genre in Europe, the screen adaptations of expatriate feminist writer Elena Ferrante are reshaping a new understanding of the Italo-Australian female protagonist. Ferrante's fiction explores dissolving margins of the mythical female protagonist, slowly “shattering” new boundaries (Sarnelli 2020). Barthes (1985) argued “Italianicity is not Italy” but a cultural construct in another place than Italy. Likewise, this paper aims to interrogate this “Italianicity” of feminist characters and narratives in diasporic cinema.

Pieter (Pia) Aquilia is Associate Professor and Discipline Leader (Creative Development) in the Department of Screen Business at the Australian Film Television and Radio School in Sydney. Her research publications cover Ethnic and Gender Representation on Screen, International Television Drama, the Globalization of Screen Education and the Media in South East Asia. She is on the editorial committee of *Sightlines: Filmmaking in the Academy Journal* and co-authored, with K. Dooley et al., a chapter for *Critical Filmmaking: Creative Practice Research in the Screen Industries* (edited by C. Gough-Brady) (Intellect, 2027).

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Biagio Aulino, University of Toronto Mississauga (Canada)

L'uso del dialetto in *La grande bellezza* (Sorrentino 2013)

L'intervento affronta le varietà linguistiche usate da Paolo Sorrentino nel film: *La grande bellezza* (2013), analizzate attraverso il framework sociolinguistico proposto da Gaetano Berruto (2006, 2012). Con attenzione alla dimensione cinematografica e all'uso nei diversi contesti comunicativi, in questa presentazione vengono considerate le varie forme utilizzate di Italiano standard, di dialetto e di italiano regionale. Il modello di Berruto (2012) aiuta a spiegare come nel film il linguaggio può variare a seconda dei principali assi di variazione linguistica: diatopica, diastratica, diafasica, diamesica e diacronica. Nel film, Sorrentino evidenzia come il code-switching tra l'italiano standard e il dialetto rappresenta uno strumento per mettere in risalto i contrasti culturali e sociali. Attraverso l'analisi di sequenze significative, il presente intervento cerca di spiegare l'uso delle diverse varietà in relazione ai personaggi cinematografici, evidenziando come usi linguistici diversi alterano in maniera significativa non soltanto la lingua, ma anche la capacità stessa del film di essere strumento rappresentativo della comunicazione dell'Italia contemporanea. Questa relazione, inoltre, spiega come Sorrentino, tramite i suoi personaggi, adotta una nuova dialettalità cinematografica, mirata a restituire prestigio sociale al dialetto, che rappresenta un idioma capace di articolare identità, memoria, appartenenze e dissonanze interne alla realtà sociale e culturale contemporanea.

Biagio Aulino è Research Assistant nel Dipartimento di Lingue Moderne all'Università di Toronto Mississauga. Si occupa di sociolinguistica, linguistica del contatto e linguistica migratoria. Ha pubblicato articoli nelle riviste accademiche: *Journal of Worldwide Forum on Education and Culture* and *The International Journal of Humanities*. I suoi saggi compaiono in numerose pubblicazioni, fra cui: *L'Italiano fuori di Italia. La situazione in Canada, USA e nel Mondo Anglofono* (a cura di S. Bancheri) (Legas Publishing, 2012); *Cultura e Comunicazione*, X:17 (Guerra Edizioni, 2020) e di recente, *Italiese and Its New Developments: From Endangered to a Global Language* (a cura di S. Bancheri) (Legas Publishing, 2026).

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Arianna Avalle, Southern Methodist University in Dallas (USA)

From Naples to HBO: Adapting Ferrante's *My Brilliant Friend* for global screens

This paper analyzes the televisual adaptation of Elena Ferrante's *My Brilliant Friend* (HBO, 2018–2024) as a case study in how Italian narratives are reframed within the global streaming economy. My aim is to examine how the series negotiates the balance between cultural specificity and transnational accessibility, thereby illuminating the processes through which Italian literature and history are repackaged for international audiences. Building on scholarship in adaptation studies, gender studies, and media circulation, I pursue three goals. First, I show how the series foregrounds Neapolitan identity—through local casting, dialect, and postwar urban landscapes—while simultaneously accommodating Anglophone production and reception frameworks. Second, I investigate how the representation of Elena and Lila's intertwined subjectivities aligns with contemporary feminist discourses but attenuates Ferrante's sharper critique of patriarchy and class oppression. Third, I situate *My Brilliant Friend* within the broader trend of “export-oriented” Italian seriality, arguing that its success illustrates how global platforms participate in rebranding the nation through narratives that appear both authentic and universal. By positioning *My Brilliant Friend* at the intersection of Italian cultural history and contemporary media industries, I argue that the adaptation enriches debates across the humanities and social sciences on the circulation of culture, the politics of representation, and the globalization of media. Finally, I suggest that the series offers valuable pedagogical opportunities: it can introduce students to Italian history and gender relations while encouraging critical reflection on how national stories are mediated, translated, and commodified in the streaming era.

Arianna Avalle is a Visiting Assistant Teaching Professor of Italian at Southern Methodist University in Dallas, Texas. In August 2024, she completed her PhD in Italian Studies and a portfolio in Arts Management and Cultural Entrepreneurship from the University of Texas at Austin. Her research interests include media convergence, cultural tourism, and women and gender studies. She has published academic articles in *Italian Culture* (2021), *American Culture* (2023), and *Simultanea* (2025). In January 2021, she started collaborating with the Austin Florence Alliance, a nonprofit organization promoting cultural, economic and educational exchanges between Italy and America.

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Wanda Balzano, Wake Forest University (USA)

From Minerva to Partenope: Queer diaspora and cinematic embodiment in the Italian South

This paper offers a film-theoretical analysis of *Summer Within* (2023), an autobiographical documentary by Italian American LGBTQ+ filmmaker Summer Minerva that traces a return journey to Southern Italy in search of belonging, memory, and embodied identity. Situating the film within transnational Italian cinema and diaspora studies, I argue that *Summer Within* mobilizes cinematic space, movement, and sound to construct a fluid geography where

queerness, migration, and cultural memory intersect. Rather than treating the Italian South as a static homeland, the film renders it as an active cinematic agent that shapes subjectivity through embodied experience. Drawing on theories of embodied spectatorship and cinematic peripheries, the paper examines how Minerva's use of transit spaces—ferries, bridges, stairways, and pilgrimage routes—visually encodes diasporic and gender fluidity. The film's opening sequence at Baia, invoking the myth of the siren Partenope, establishes a visual and sonic grammar that merges mythology with autobiography, situating the queer body within a Mediterranean imaginary defined by liminality and transformation. Key sequences filmed in Campania, including Mount Vesuvius and the Sanctuary of Montevergine, foreground ritual and performance—particularly the pilgrimage of the *femminielli*—as cinematic practices that reframe Catholic traditions through queer embodiment. I contend that *Summer Within* challenges center-periphery models in Italian cinema by foregrounding porous landscapes, embodied movement, and non-normative identities. Through its hybrid aesthetics, the film articulates a queer diasporic visual language that reimagines the Italian South as a site of alternative modernities and cinematic resistance.

Wanda Balzano is the founding Chair of the Department of Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies at Wake Forest University. Her scholarship spans the work of Samuel Beckett and James Joyce, women's writing, art, and film. With Anne Mulhall and Moynagh Sullivan, she co-edited *Irish Postmodernisms and Popular Culture* (Palgrave, 2007) and, with Sullivan, a special issue of *The Irish Review* on Irish feminism (35, 2007). Her recent research extends to Italian Studies and she is editing a collection on Maria Orsini Natale while completing a manuscript on women and religion in Irish literature.

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Enrico Barsotti, Università di Pisa (Italy)

Mapping *Mare Fuori*: A computational analysis of digital news ecosystems

The global success of *Mare Fuori* (Rai Fiction, 2020–present) marks a paradigm shift in Italian Public Service Broadcasting, representing a cornerstone in the transition from linear television to a platform-centred distribution model. While existing scholarship has focused on its transmedia storytelling and youth crime narratives, this paper introduces a computational methodology to analyze the series' resonance within the digital public sphere (2020 – 2025). Leveraging the open-source platform Media Cloud (MediaCloud.org), this study examines the evolution of the series' media coverage through a multi-dimensional analysis of online news ecosystems. This study tracks fluctuations in "attention over time" to identify critical spikes in visibility, such as the move to Netflix or international festival appearances, that pushed the series beyond domestic borders. Furthermore, through the analysis of "top sources" and "word framing", the paper explores how *Mare Fuori* has been discursively constructed as a cultural brand, comparing the focus on local realism in Italian media with the "Netflix aesthetic" and global teen drama tropes prevalent in international outlets. Aligning with the conference themes of "Rebranding the nation" and "export-oriented seriality," this contribution aims to illustrate how the series' global impact is intrinsically linked to its "mediacloud" existence. The research suggests that digital news ecosystems actively shape its status as a premier cultural export, demonstrating how

computational tools can unveil the complex synergy between algorithmic circulation and the construction of a contemporary Italian media identity.

Enrico Barsotti is a PhD student in the Department of Political Science at the University of Pisa. He also serves as a Research Assistant at MediaLaB | Big Data in Social & Political Research Lab. His research interests lie at the intersection of media ecosystems, social media dynamics, and the evolution of contemporary teen drama. His doctoral thesis explores the transmedia circulation of *Mare Fuori*, with a specific focus on the role of music as a key driver for the series' success across digital platforms, in particular on TikTok. He has published a chapter in *Orizzonti democratici. Crisi della rappresentanza e nuove forme di partecipazione*, edited by J. Bernardini et al. (Carocci, 2024).

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Rebecca Bauman, Fashion Institute of Technology, SUNY (USA)

Refashioning the nation: Historical costume in Italian television series

In her study of British costume films, Pam Cook explains that period dramas must use visible means to communicate national identity to an international audience and argues that costume design is central to this project (Cook 1996). In recent years, Italian period dramas have been influential in increasing the impact of Italian seriality in international television, and the costuming in these series holds a privileged place in articulating Italian history and its relation to the present day. This paper analyzes costume design in recent Italian period series as one of the most visible means by which Italian television seeks to rebrand national identity. Looking at series that span a century of Italian history, I analyze the costuming in *Il Gattopardo* (2025); *La legge di Lidia Poët* (2023-present), *M. Il figlio del secolo* (2025), and *Cuori* (2021-present), all series that foreground period dress in a way that demonstrates contemporary perspectives on *italianità*. Utilizing Andrew Higson's (2012) theories on postmodern nostalgia and the heritage film, I discuss how costuming in Italian series invokes problematic aspects of nostalgia to align Italian series with larger trends in international period dramas. At the same time, my analysis will investigate how costuming in these series can be read as a disruptive articulation of Italian identity that serves as both a revision of and a resistance to inherited narratives of nation formation and national identity. In this way, we can see how costume is essential to activating historical memory in ways that speak to our contemporary moment.

Rebecca Bauman is Professor of Italian in the Department of Modern Languages and Cultures at Fashion Institute of Technology, SUNY, where she is affiliated faculty in the Department of Film, Media and Performing Arts. She is Film and Digital Media reviews editor for the journal *Italian American Review* and has published articles in such publications as the *Journal of Italian Cinema & Media Studies*, *Italian Studies* and *Film, Fashion & Consumption*. She is currently working on a monograph on the role of fashion in Italian and Italian American representations of organized crime.

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Juliette Bellacosa, The American University of Rome (Italy)

Fad, foe or friend: Where does AI fit into adaptation of the Italian Renaissance?

Building on Anaïs Aguerre’s *ReACH Declaration* (2017), which calls for new methodologies to reproduce, store and share cultural heritage through digital technologies, this paper explores how artificial intelligence is reshaping modes of engagement with Italian Renaissance (Lowe et al., 2020, 43–47). While digital tools have expanded access to Italy’s artistic patrimony, the rise of generative AI, algorithmic recommendation systems, and machine-learning–driven visual culture raises pressing questions about spectatorship, authorship and aesthetic experience. In an era in which AI promises instantaneous knowledge and automated interpretation, how do viewers meaningfully encounter Art—particularly canonical works of the Italian Renaissance? As the basis for my analysis, I draw on discussion prompts and student observations from two iterations of an undergraduate course on Italian Renaissance Art in contemporary media culture, which I developed for the Italian Studies Programs at the University of Pennsylvania and Temple University in Spring 2023 and Spring 2025, respectively. The course explored the role adaptation and intermediality play in establishing a visual *lingua franca* between past and present. Classroom discussions and student engagement serve as a lens through which to assess whether technologies foster critical, embodied interaction or encourage passive consumption mediated by opaque algorithms and data biases. The advent of AI brings this discussion to another level by positing the possibility of ‘original’ AI generated works that are in their very essence adaptations. Where does this fit into the field of adaptation studies? How is this different from the adaptations of Andy Warhol’s or Cindy Sherman’s photographs? And how should we think of these so-called ‘original’ works that are in fact derivations?

Juliette Bellacosa is Adjunct Professor of Italian Studies at The American University of Rome. Her research examines the interactions between cinematic and pictorial modes of spectatorial engagement in new media adaptations. Her scholarly interests include Renaissance Art, Cinema and Media Studies and Adaptation Studies. She has published in the *Journal of Italian Cinema & Media Studies* and has presented papers at the Modern Languages Association Convention, the Society for Cinema and Media Studies conference, and at the Northeast Modern Languages conference, among others.

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Cullan Bendig, Charles University in Prague (Czech Republic)

Digitizing Made in Italy: Heritage play and the global reception of cultural memory in digital games

This paper aims to analyze how digital games produced by Italian studios that represent local sites of memory contest the traditional, tourist-oriented construction of Italy in the global gaming industry. Recently there have been efforts to consider how digital gameplay can function as heritage-like experiences. These can project previously-unfamiliar narratives into the Anglo and Japanese-centric digital game milieu. However, more work must be done to understand how those experiences confront established sites of memory. This paper addresses that gap by

considering representation of Italian spaces in digital games as a contested site of memory with global perceptions of places, history, and culture on the one hand and local lived experiences on the other. Historically, this contest has been one-sided in favor of global perceptions that overpowered the representative power of the small domestic gaming industry. Over the last decade, this trend has begun to change as new games focusing on local places and themes are gaining traction and some commercial success, including receiving support from regional film commissions. Starting from the history of Italian representation in digital games, the paper combines a comparative close reading of recent domestic and international games that depict Italian sites of memory with analysis of digital play as a space capable of affording authentic heritage experiences. It finds that developers are situated within culture industry and policy contexts that present unique opportunities and challenges in Italy, which carries disproportionate cultural weight globally relative to the impact of its semi-peripheral domestic game production industry.

Cullan Bendig is a PhD student in Media Studies at Charles University in Prague (Czech Republic). His research interests include play as a medium for cultural memory, cultural geography, and digital game production. He is a researcher with the Prague Game Production Studies research group's GAMEINDEX project where he studies how Southern European digital games (re)produce local spaces, cultures, and histories, with an emphasis on the role of regional culture policy regimes and indexical production practices.

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Giorgio Bertellini, University of Michigan (USA)

Opening Keynote Address:

“A Crucible of Sorrow”: The Question of Pain in Italian Americans’ Screen Life

For over a century, Hollywood has portrayed Italian-American characters as both inclined to perform violent acts, as mainstream criticism has regularly stressed, but also to endure violence. Recognizing this second, no less common, representational strand has significant consequences. In contrast to the notion that immigrants are a problem in need of a solution according to the familiar formula of "crime and punishment," Italian- Americans’ repeated portrayal as “wounded characters” has, since the silent era, addressed one of Hollywood's more troubling needs — showcasing experiences of pain, anguish and defeat.

Giorgio Bertellini is Professor in the Department of Film, Television and Media at the University of Michigan and member of the Advisory Board of *JICMS*. He is the author and editor of the award-winning volumes *Italy in Early American Cinema: Race, Landscape, and the Picturesque* (Indiana University Press, 2010), *Italian Silent Cinema: A Reader* (John Libbey/Indiana University Press, 2013), and *The Divo and the Duce: Promoting Film Stardom and Political Leadership in 1920s America* (University of California Press, 2019; Italian trans. Le Monnier, 2022). His other books include a monograph on Sarajevo-born film director Emir Kusturica, published in Italian, English, Romanian and Persian.

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Andrea Bini, The American University of Rome e Temple University-Rome (Italy)

La rappresentazione delle teorie del complotto su internet e new media

Questa relazione affronta un tema delicato e controverso, e cioè: come spiegare l'apparente esplosione delle cosiddette teorie del complotto nella società di massa contemporanea? Tentare di rispondere a questo problema significa includere un'analisi di pregi ed (eventuali) limiti della spiegazione che in questi anni va per la maggiore, ovvero quella che mette in relazione le *conspiracy theories* con la diffusione esponenziale dei *new media* a partire da internet, *Facebook*, *Twitter* (ora divenuto X), fino ai *social media network* più recenti come: TikTok, Instagram, Reddit, Snapchat. Tutte queste piattaforme sono caratterizzate da una comunicazione "in pillole" immediata ed irriflessiva che sfrutta ed amplifica l'analfabetismo funzionale dei loro fruitori, al contrario dei media "tradizionali" come libri, giornali e settimanali, le cui vendite sono crollate ai minimi termini negli ultimi anni. Internet e la comunicazione online, difatti, sarebbero responsabili per la moltiplicazione del fenomeno delle *echo chambers* che irrigidisce i pregiudizi rendendo impossibile il confronto dialettico fra opinioni. Tuttavia queste spiegazioni spesso tendono a rimanere nel vago ed a dare per scontato le conclusioni a cui vogliono arrivare, dimenticando le trappole della fallacia euristica del *post hoc ergo propter hoc*. Quindi in questo paper si cerca una risposta alle seguenti domande: 1) cosa caratterizza esattamente una teoria del complotto rispetto ad altre spiegazioni?; e 2) in passato ci sono stati periodi caratterizzati da "febbre complottista" (almeno limitando il nostro *case study* alle società occidentali), e, in caso positivo, cosa le distingue dalle teorie complottiste recenti? Rispondere a queste domande può rivelare sorprese, mostrando che la suddetta correlazione è molto più ambigua di quello che sembra.

Andrea Bini è Adjunct Professor presso The American University of Rome e Temple University-Rome. I suoi campi di interesse accademico comprendono: Media e Cultural Studies, Filosofia e storia della scienza. Ha pubblicato tre libri: *Kant e Carabellese* (Luiss University Press, 2006); *Male Anxiety and Psychopathology in Film. Comedy Italian Style* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2015) sulla commedia all'italiana; e *Jaws-Lo squalo - La forma della paura* (Rubbettino, 2024). Ha inoltre pubblicato diversi articoli e capitoli sul cinema, teatro e letteratura italiana tra cui due capitoli nel volume collettaneo *Popular Italian Cinema: Culture and Politics in a Postwar Society*, curato da Flavia Brizio-Skov (Tauris, 2011).

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Claudio Bioni, Università di Bologna (Italy)

Le politiche DEI e la produzione televisiva italiana: Il caso dei *Diversity Media Awards*

Da diversi anni il sistema dei premi ha attirato l'attenzione degli studiosi delle industrie culturali. I premi funzionano come network di forze in competizione tra loro e operano come dispositivi di valorizzazione/gerarchizzazione sia degli oggetti culturali sia dei produttori culturali. In questo intervento viene studiato una di queste istituzioni: il *Diversity Media Awards (DMA)*. Il premio, ispirato ai nord-americani *GLAAD Media Awards*, viene consegnato ogni anno durante una cerimonia che coinvolge, in qualità di presentatori od ospiti, personalità, celebrities, semplici

simpatizzanti del mondo LGBTQIA+ nazionale, tra i quali Drusilla Foer, Paola Turci, Tiziano Ferro e Vladimir Luxuria. La serata è andata in onda su Real Time e, più recentemente, su Rai 1/RaiPlay. Il premio promuove le politiche DEI (Diversity, Equity, Inclusion) nel campo della produzione televisiva italiana, si misura con il marketing culturale e l'economia del prestigio. Allo stesso tempo, i *DMA* contribuiscono a diffondere gusti e giudizi con cui attribuire capitale culturale a serie tv e show televisivi. L'intervento persegue tre scopi principali: 1) analizzare l'idea di valore culturale che il premio promuove, considerando i giudizi con cui premia i prodotti ritenuti più meritevoli; 2) studiare in che modo il premio collabora a una diffusione dell'importanza di rappresentazioni e narrazioni rispettose dei valori DEI; 3) proporre, a cavallo tra sociologia della cultura e media studies, una critica di alcuni aspetti problematici dei *DMA*, in particolar modo: l'ideale della diversità, il rapporto con istituzioni-guida simili come l'associazione nord-americana GLAAD, il tema degli stereotipi, il contenutismo ideologico.

Claudio Bisoni è Professore Ordinario presso l'Università di Bologna. I suoi interessi di ricerca riguardano le relazioni tra critica, estetica e modi di ricezione, come il cinema italiano e nord-americano degli anni Sessanta e Settanta. Tra le sue pubblicazioni: *La critica cinematografica. Metodo, storia e scrittura* (Archetipo Libri, 2006); *Gli anni affollati. La cultura cinematografica italiana (1970-1979)* (Carocci, 2009); *Elio Petri. Indagine su un cittadino al di sopra di ogni sospetto* (Lindau, 2011), *Cinema, sorrisi e canzoni. Il cinema musicale italiano degli anni Sessanta* (Rubbettino, 2020).

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Paola Bonifazio University of Texas at Austin (USA)

Buffalo Bill was an Italian emigrant: Western movies and their audiences under fascism

The absence of Italian made western movies on the market in the 1930s and 1940s is evident, by contrast to a substantial corpus (around forty reels) between 1910-1926. Extant scholarship on Italian cinema under fascism claims that the *western* as a genre was not part of “the cultural knowledge of Italian audiences” (Steven Ricci 2008) and thus marginal to the national film industry; or that Italian directors and screenwriters had subsumed the American genre into the new Italian epic of colonial cinema (Giovanna Trento 2016; Ruth Ben-Ghiat 2015). Yet, American westerns continued to circulate widely in Italian theaters until the early 1940s. *B-westerns* were a daily presence in second- and third-run cinemas, while big budget Hollywood movies received raving reviews in film journals. Further, the same viewers regularly consumed images of American cowboys in newsreels and comics. Among the latter, *Buffalo Bill: The Italian Hero of the American Prairie* (published by Nerbini) made claim that the celebrity frontiersman was in fact an Italian emigrant to the United States, thus bridging the fantasy of the American West to the reality of Italian workers. It is on these premises that I will frame, in my presentation, the conspicuous absence of cowboys from the Italian film sets of the Fascist era and the contemporary enduring fandom of the *western* in Italian society. The goal is to reconstruct a history of consumption of western narratives in Italy, and to demonstrate its relevance to Italian film historiography and to readings of postwar *spaghetti westerns*.

Paola Bonifazio is Professor of Italian Studies and Chair of the Department of French and Italian at the University of Texas at Austin. She is author of two books: *Schooling in Modernity: The Politics of Sponsored Films in Postwar Italy* (University of Toronto Press, 2014) and *The Photoromance: A Feminist Reading of Popular Culture* (MIT Press, 2020). She is currently working on a book manuscript on the reception and appropriation of the American western in Italian media and is co-Principal Investigator with Valerie McGuire of the oral history project “Italians in Texas”. With Ellen Nerenberg and Nicoletta Marini-Maio, she is a founding editor of *gender/sexuality/italy*. She is also co-editor of *Italian Culture*, the official publication of the American Association for Italian Studies, with Guido Capaccioli and Valerie McGuire.

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Glen Bonnici, University of Malta (Malta)

Framing the self across metareferential spaces in contemporary Italian cinema

Recent Italian fiction films increasingly present identity not as a stable essence to be uncovered, but as a construction comparable to cinema itself, shaped by images, memory, and narrative self-awareness. Focusing on *È stata la mano di Dio* (Paolo Sorrentino 2021), *L’immensità* (Emanuele Crialesi 2022), and *Mi fanno male i capelli* (Roberta Torre 2023), this paper examines how contemporary Italian cinema articulates the self through spatially grounded forms of metareferential fiction. Released within a narrow time frame, these films share a heightened awareness of framing and representation, while assigning a decisive role to cinematic space. In *È stata la mano di Dio*, Naples emerges as a space shaped by the cinematic gaze, where personal experience and urban imagery converge to produce an identity formed through looking and being looked at. *L’immensità* situates gender identity within the stratified landscape of Rome and the imaginative realm of the media. *Mi fanno male i capelli* shifts the focus to an abstract and archival space, constructed through screens, texts, and filmic fragments, where subjectivity takes shape as an assemblage of borrowed images and cinematic references. Across these works, space functions as a metareferential device that actively participates in the construction of identity. Cinema is not merely a theme or setting, but a spatial practice through which the self is staged, negotiated, and imagined. Fiction, rather than obscuring truth, becomes the condition through which identity is rendered visible and meaningful.

Glen Bonnici is Lecturer at the Department of Italian at the University of Malta, where he teaches Italian studies and film studies. He completed his Ph.D. on post-Fellinian metareferential Italian cinema in 2025. His research interests include metareference, Anglo-Italian studies, film adaptation and spatial representation in fiction. He has authored and translated articles published in the *Journal of Italian Cinema & Media Studies* for which he has been an Editorial Assistant since 2019.

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Edward Bowen, University of Kansas (USA)

Persistent attachments to Rome's movie theaters in the age of streaming and overtourism

Recent scholarship has examined the phenomenon of cinema closures in Rome (Curcio 2024) and efforts by grassroots activists to revive these spaces with the goal of fostering social cohesion (Di Grazia et al., 2025), yet a systematic study on residents' views of these matters is lacking. This paper examines the results of a survey conducted with residents in Rome at two points in time to gauge their opinions regarding cinema closures, transformations into other establishments, and protests to save the spaces. The first iteration of the survey was conducted with 288 residents in fall 2014, shortly after an occupy movement in Rome to save cultural spaces reached its apex and the government responded by evicting the occupiers. The majority of respondents had significant attachments to cinemas, viewed them as important for quality of life, expressed disapproval with commercial conversions, and were largely in favor of protests to save them. One might expect residents' attachments to cinemas to decrease in the wake of the pandemic with expanded streaming services and further cinema closures. However, in the second iteration of this survey conducted in June 2025 with 796 residents, 87% (up from 85% in 2014) affirmed that, in regards to quality of life, it was either "important" or "very important" for them to have cinemas in their neighborhoods. Qualitative responses suggest that attachments to cinemas have persisted despite changes in viewing habits, largely because of drastic changes to neighborhoods in an age of overtourism and numerous losses of cultural and social spaces.

Edward Bowen is Assistant Professor of Italian at the University of Kansas. His research focuses on Italian film history, film exhibition, and urban studies. He has co-edited and contributed to two volumes: *Film Exhibition: The Italian Context* (Legenda, 2024) with Damien Pollard and *The Cinema of Ettore Scola* (Wayne State University Press, 2020) with Rémi Lanzoni. He has also published articles in *The Italianist*, *Comunicazioni sociali*, *Bianco e nero*, *Cinema e storia*, *Journal of Italian Cinema & Media Studies*, *Textual Cultures*, and *Studies in Documentary Film*.
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Nick Brattoli, Cornell University (USA)

Transportation in three contemporary Italian films

Italian cinema has long depicted means of transportation—cars, buses, trains, boats—as symbols for social, moral, and national problems confronting Italy. From neorealism's bicycles and careening trams of an indifferent society, the relentless and anxious mobility offered by cars in economic boom era *commedia all'italiana* films, and the traffic gridlock and urban destruction lamented by 1970s political films, cinematic vehicles have symbolized the dilemmas encountered by Italy on its path to modernity. Today, several internationally successful Italian directors continue to pose questions about the nation, the environment, and contemporary economic and social problems, innovating while remaining influenced by Italy's cinematic past. This paper compares, through close reading and textual analysis, how transportation appears in such contexts in three recent Italian films: Matteo Garrone's *Io capitano* (2023), and Alice Rohrwacher's *Lazzaro felice* (2018), and *La chimera* (2023). *Io capitano*'s careening trucks and

shoddy boats speak to unstable but systemic migration networks, highlighting the extranational reach of Italian modernization in the contemporary era. In *Lazzaro's cars and buses*, Rohrwacher gestures to an arriving modernity whose promises and hopes ultimately remain illusory, as symbolized by the broken-down car pushed by former sharecroppers at the film's end. In *La chimera*, the abandoned train station continues to highlight the disappointments of modernizing efforts in Southern Italy. Yet, it is ultimately reclaimed as a potential site of communitarian renewal that, read alongside with *Io capitano's* focus on extranational networks, charts a path forward for Italy beyond modern nationalism and its relentless movement.

Nick Brattoli is a PhD student in Italian Studies at the Department of Romance Studies at Cornell University. His research interests include Italian political cinema, the 1960s and 1970s extraparliamentary left, and Italian workerist and post-workerist theory.

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Simonetta Buffo, IULM University (Italy)

Italianità: From icon to cliché. How fashion houses reframe cinematic Italian style

This paper explores how Italian fashion houses have codified fashion imagery over time by drawing on the historical and cultural heritage of *Italianità*, conceived as a cultural construct articulated through a system of iconographic signs. This evolution raises a central question: does an authentic and original imagery of Italian style still persist in contemporary fashion communication? In post-Second World War Italian cinema, film stars such as Massimo Girotti, Anna Magnani, Marcello Mastroianni, and Sophia Loren established enduring visual and symbolic codes, translating the idea of an Italian lifestyle grounded in beauty, elegance, style, and emotional expressiveness. Since the 1980s, fashion imagery has drawn on stereotypes that nevertheless retained an indexical connection to these imaginaries, which had become cultural symbols embedded in collective memory. From the early 2000s onward, however, representations of Italian style in fashion imagery have appeared increasingly less distinctive. Although traces of *Italianità* persist at both the levels of signifier and signified, the analysis of fashion imagery reveals a simplified representation of Italian identity that flattens cultural plurality and reduces the complexity of brand storytelling. Recurrent visual elements have undergone semiotic ossification, crystallizing into clichés detached from their historical referents and largely emptied of symbolic value. It is therefore pertinent to question the role of contemporary Italian cinema in shaping these perceptions and to ask whether it is still contributing to the emergence of iconic imagery capable of redefining the Italian style today.

Simonetta Buffo is Adjunct Professor at IULM University and Catholic University of Milan. Her research interests lie in semiotic studies of visual language, with a focus on fashion images. Her latest volume is *Fashion Film. L'immaginario della moda nell'era digitale* (Franco Angeli, 2025). She has authored chapters in the volumes: *L'influenza digitale* (Guerini Scientifica, 2021) (edited by Polesana and Vagni) and *Pubblicità e Cinema* (Carocci Editore, 2020) (edited by Federico and Ragonese, 2020). She has written articles published in *OCULA- Occhio semiotico sui media*; *Micro&Macro Marketing/ilMulino*; *Convegno FACTUM23: Digital fashion Communication/Springler*; *Convegno FACTUM19: Digital fashion Communication/Springler*.

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Milly Buonanno, Sapienza Università di Roma (Italy)

Crossing the boundaries: Le donne come cultural translators nella storia dei media

Il concetto di *entanglement*, il cui prezioso contributo epistemologico si estende a una pluralità di ambiti scientifici, è entrato da alcuni anni nel campo in rapida evoluzione dei *media history studies* (Cronqvist e Hilgert 2017). Scaturito da una emergente insoddisfazione per i limiti conoscitivi della tradizionale prospettiva mono-mediale, il recente approccio *entangled* alla storia dei media sceglie di focalizzare sull'importanza delle interazioni trans-mediali e trans-nazionali del presente e del passato. Fin dagli inizi, tuttavia, la voce autorevole di Michele Hilmes (2017) suggeriva di dedicare attenzione anche alle figure individuali dei “cultural translators”, coloro che nel loro percorso professionale hanno attraversato e in vario modo messo in relazione media diversi. La sollecitazione è stata accolta anche dai *feminist media studies*, in crescente vitalità negli ultimi anni, e già familiarizzati con l'approccio *entangled* - si pensi alla intersezionalità. Questo intervento si colloca in questo quadro. Intendo ricostruire il percorso trans-mediale di due figure femminili cui si addice pienamente il riconoscimento di “cultural translator”: Laura Toscano e Lucia Drudi Demby. La prima è oggi ricordata soltanto per alcuni grandi successi di fiction televisiva degli anni Novanta, la seconda - pur trovando posto nella Enciclopedia delle donne - resta una presenza opaca e sfuggente nella storia della stessa televisione a cui pure ha contribuito per quasi un ventennio (1971-1989). Entrambe hanno dispiegato quello che negli studi letterari si definisce “autorialità polimorfica” in contesti diversi di produzione testuale - cinema, televisione, narrativa, giornalismo - e ne hanno attraversato i confini, creando connessioni.

Milly Buonanno è stata Professoressa Ordinaria di Television Studies presso La Sapienza Università di Roma dove ha fondato l'unità di ricerca Ge.M.Ma.- Gender and Media Matters. Co-editrice di *The Sage Handbook of Television studies* (Sage, 2014) Buonanno ha svolto ricerche e pubblicato numerosi studi sulla teoria e la storia della televisione, tra cui *The Age of Television* (Intellect, 2008), *Italian TV drama and beyond* (Intellect, 2012) - ed è stata pioniera degli studi di genere e media in Italia. Tra le sue opere figurano le collection: *Il prisma dei generi* (FrancoAngeli, 2014), *Television Antiheroines* (Intellect, 2017), *Genere e media* (con F. Faccioli) (FrancoAngeli 2020), e il numero speciale *Gender Issues on the Italian mediascape* del *Journal of Italian Cinema & Media Studies* 11:2, 2023 (con F. Faccioli).

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Frank Burke, Queen's University (Canada)

Closing Keynote Address

“Like Being in a Fellini Movie”: An Exploration of Altered States in and Around the Work of the Italian Director

The discussion will move through childhood fantasy and Fascist gaslighting to the altered state of Fellini's reputation today and possibilities for Fellinian reinvention via the challenging “alterity” of AI. The concept of “altered state” will function as an umbrella term to engage biography, history, and Fellini's work, as well as various and often contrasting inflections of the “altered” such as numinosity, transformation, visionary insight, disfigurement, dissociation, sublimation. “Like being in a Fellini movie” will also embrace what ultimately became Fellini's two most self-absorbingly altered states: dream (*Il libro dei sogni* and various films) and death (various films, “Il viaggio di G. Mastorna,” et al.).

Frank Burke is Professor Emeritus from Queen's University (Canada). He has published five books on Fellini, including *A Companion to Federico Fellini* with M. Waller and M. Gubareva (Wiley & Sons, 2020), and *Fellini's Films and Commercials: From Postwar to Postmodern* (Intellect, Chicago UP, 2020). He has provided the audio commentary, along with the late P. Brunette, for the Criterion Collection's *Amarcord*, as well as solo commentaries for Criterion's *Roma* and *Il bidone*. He has also published *A Companion to Italian Cinema* (John Wiley & Sons, 2017) and (with A. Hough-Dugdale and M. Gubareva) a special issue of the *Journal of Italian Cinema and Media* (11:1, 2023) on Tonino Guerra. He has also published on numerous Italian and American directors, horror cinema, experimental cinema, the *peplum* and Canadian cinema.

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Leonardo Campaner, New York University (USA)

In search of ‘Total Man’: Gillo Pontecorvo's unrealized film on magic

Best known as a political filmmaker deeply invested in class struggle and anticolonial liberation movements, Gillo Pontecorvo remains scarcely studied beyond the impact of his incendiary classic *The Battle of Algiers* (1966). Pontecorvo's personal archive, preserved in the Archivio Storico of the Museo Nazionale del Cinema in Turin, hosts, however, a trove of documents which reveal an artist with a diverse range of interests and orientations, as attested especially (and unfortunately) by his many unrealized projects. This paper aims to shed light on one of these projects: a film on magic (provisionally titled *La Magia*) which was to document a number of cultural practices across both modern and traditional societies, and on which the director worked for nearly two decades, collecting extensive material and interviewing some of the most important anthropologists and ethnologists of the time. Among these was Ernesto De Martino, whose friendship with Pontecorvo may have been the originating factor for the latter's interest. Through an analysis of Pontecorvo's plans for the film, I investigate the director's ideas on folklore and ethnography in relation to De Martino's theories and the ‘Demartinian’ school of ethnographic documentary – which included films like *Stendali* (Cecilia Mangini, 1959) and *Magia Lucana* (Luigi Di Gianni, 1958) –, thus situating *La Magia* in the context of the broader intellectual engagement with traditional societies, especially in Southern Italy, that characterized much of the cultural debate of the 1950s and ‘60s.

Leonardo Campaner is a Ph.D. candidate in the Department of Italian Studies at New York University. His research interests span Italian cinema and twentieth-century Italian literature, including silent cinema, documentary ethnography, Italian colonial and postcolonial cinema, and the political cinema of the 1970s. Most recently, he has authored an article on the cinema of Vittorio De Seta for the *Journal of Italian Cinema & Media Studies* (2026).

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Elena Caoduro, Queen's University Belfast (Northern Ireland)

Speculative nostalgia: Remembering Berlinguer in contemporary Italian screen culture

This paper examines how contemporary Italian cinema and documentary revisit the political past through a form of speculative nostalgia, understood as an affective engagement with the past that opens space for imagining futures. It focuses on three films centred on Enrico Berlinguer: Walter Veltroni's *Quando c'era Berlinguer* (2014), Samuele Rossi's *Prima della fine* (2024) and Andrea Segre's *La grande ambizione* (2024). Taken together these works reveal a renewed cultural investment in the ethical and emotional legacy of the Italian left and show how different film forms construct the past as a site of mourning, inquiry and anticipation. The paper's original contribution lies in demonstrating how these films transform nostalgia into a forward-looking sensibility that reshapes the relationship between cinematic memory and political imagination. The analysis brings the documentaries and the biopic into dialogue to examine how each mode engages the past. The documentaries privilege commemoration and collective memory through archival material and testimony, while *La grande ambizione* uses fiction to explore uncertainty and unrealised political possibility. It is suggested that these works frame the memory of Berlinguer not as closure but as an open question shaped by present concerns. The argument draws on work by Svetlana Boym, Alison Landsberg and Marianne Hirsch to show how the cinematic return to Berlinguer functions both as cultural memory and as an invitation to imagine new forms of ethical and collective life.

Elena Caoduro is Senior Lecturer in Film and Media at Queen's University Belfast in Northern Ireland. Her research interests include European cinema and documentary, engaging with gender, authorship and labour. She has published on political violence, vintage culture, cultural memory, as well as fashion, costumes and the body in screen cultures. She's the co-editor with K.A. Ritzenhoff and K. Randell of *Mediated Terrorism in the 21st Century* (Palgrave, 2021), and with B. Ulfsdotter of *Documenting Fashion* (Edinburgh University Press, 2023). She is currently completing a monograph entitled *Retro Terror: Memory, Nostalgia and Left-wing terrorism in German and Italian Cinema*.

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Rosalba Carrino, Universidad de Cádiz (Spain) and Università degli Studi Suor Orsola Benincasa, Napoli (Italy)

Dal cinema alla pubblicità e ritorno: *La dolce vita* (1960) come mito transmediale e generatore di rappresentazioni del femminile

Questo contributo analizza *La dolce vita* (1960) di Federico Fellini come uno dei testi-madre più influenti nella costruzione dell'immaginario visivo italiano del secondo Novecento, mostrando come il film abbia fornito alla pubblicità uno “*script visivo*” straordinariamente fertile, soprattutto nella rappresentazione del femminile (Codeluppi 2020; Eugeni 2015; Gundle 2007). Attraverso un approccio interdisciplinare che integra media e gender studies con un'analisi semiotico-intermediale di una selezione di spot e campagne internazionali (2008–2024) – tra cui Dolce & Gabbana, Campari, Maserati e Dior – la ricerca indaga le modalità con cui alcune icone felliniane (la diva, la seduttività performativa, la Roma notturna, la scena della fontana) vengono riattivate e trasformate in repertori visivi di sensualità, glamour e stereotipizzazione. Lo studio evidenzia come la pubblicità non si limiti a citare Fellini, ma rielabori selettivamente i tratti del film, convertendoli in strumenti narrativi e commerciali che spesso ripropongono modelli femminili tradizionali (muse silenziose, figure decorative, icone sensuali), contribuendo alla persistenza di specifici stereotipi di genere (Goffman 1979; Butler 1993). L'obiettivo è dimostrare che l'eredità felliniana, pur celebrata come patrimonio estetico, esercita ancora un impatto critico sulla rappresentazione del femminile nella comunicazione contemporanea: un immaginario potente che la pubblicità continua a riattivare, riprodurre o parodiare, rivelando la continuità fra narrazioni culturali del passato e forme attuali di visibilità e identificazione delle donne.

Rosalba Carrino è docente di Materie Letterarie al Liceo Statale “Gandhi” di Casoria (Napoli) e dottoranda nel Programma di Dottorato Interuniversitario in Comunicazione presso il Dipartimento di Marketing e Comunicazione dell'Università di Cadice (Spagna), in cotutela con l'Università Suor Orsola Benincasa di Napoli (Italia). La sua ricerca si concentra sul sessismo e sugli stereotipi di genere nella pubblicità audiovisiva e sullo sviluppo di un modello di analisi delle rappresentazioni femminili nelle campagne italiane e internazionali. I suoi interessi accademici includono i gender e media studies, la cultura visuale e le relazioni intermediali tra cinema e pubblicità, con particolare attenzione alla circolazione contemporanea dell'immaginario italiano.

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Jim Carter, Boston University (USA)

Olivetti and the Cultural Politics of Italian Industry, 1930s-1950s
(Intellect, forthcoming)

From the 1930s through the 1950s, the Olivetti typewriter and calculator company recruited a generation of independent artists and put them to work in an industrial factory. This book explores the contributions of these artists to the construction of a national business culture in Italy between fascism and democracy. Founded in 1908, Olivetti was the first Italian company to

make a substantial investment in the skills of painters, filmmakers, architects, curators, editors, poets and novelists. It was followed by other companies, like Fiat cars, Pirelli tires and Eni oil. Together, they created an Italian business culture that fused historical heritage, industrial production, consumer lifestyle and national identity into what is today called *Made in Italy*. What sets the Olivetti artists apart is that they wrote about their experiences in private correspondence or otherwise represented them in creative works beyond the company purview. Thus, the book is able to offer not only a comprehensive account of cultural production inside the factory, but also a behind-the-scenes look at the motivations, anxieties and critiques of the artists themselves. The conclusions challenge the top-down narrative of a happy and successful partnership between artists and industrialists by telling the story from the bottom-up perspective of the artists themselves, who often struggled against the instrumentalization of their craft.

Jim Carter is Lecturer of Italian and Associate Director of the Program in Cinema & Media Studies at Boston University. He is the co-editor of two books about the culture of labor in twentieth-century Italy: *Italian Industrial Literature and Film: Perspectives on the Representation of Postwar Labor* (Peter Lang, 2021) and *Ecologia e lavoro: Dialoghi interdisciplinari* (Mimesis, 2023). He is also the co-editor of a forthcoming special issue of *The Italianist* titled *Labouring Bodies in Italian Cinema & Media* and the author of the *Olivetti and the Cultural Politics of Italian Industry, 1930s-1950s* (Intellect, under contract). In 2019 he won the Rome Prize in Modern Italian Studies.

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Achille Castaldo, Emory University (USA)

Ascetic Images. Anna Maria Ortese and Roberto Rossellini in the Underworld
(SUNY Press, 2026)

The product of centuries of systemic violence and active marginalization, the lumpenproletariat haunts modernity and its afterlives, from the dark corners of the industrial metropolis to present-day slums. *Ascetic Images* explores the Neapolitan version of this enigmatic social group as it enters the works of writer Anna Maria Ortese and filmmaker Roberto Rossellini in the post-Second World War era. An exercise in critical narratology of film and literature, the book reconstructs the “ascetic images” inscribed in their texts—the traces of the traumatic experience of the urban underclass, obscured by dominant discourses. Looking especially at Ortese’s *The Silence of Reason* (1953) and Rossellini’s *Journey to Italy* (1954), the book proposes a method of close reading that reveals the narrative articulation of social invisibility and gestures toward the political crises of the present as marginalized groups are increasingly pushed beyond the limits of our fragile social awareness.

Achille Castaldo is Assistant Professor of Italian Studies in the Department of French and Italian at Emory University, and Associated Faculty in the Department of Film and Media. He works at the intersection of narratology and aesthetics, focusing on literature and cinema. His first monograph, titled *Ascetic Images: Anna Maria Ortese and Roberto Rossellini in the Underworld* (SUNY Press, 2026), examines the narrative articulations of social invisibility produced by dominant ideological discourses.

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Chiara Checcaglini, Università di Urbino Carlo Bo (Italy)

Desiring women: Female subjectivities and dynamics of attraction in Italian TV workplace narratives

In line with international trends, Italian television seriality has shown a growing interest in complex and nuanced representations of adolescence that foreground the exploration of sexuality and sexual identities. By contrast, the representation of adult desire and sexuality in the Italian context appears more frequently anchored to recurring relational pattern. This paper addresses the portrayal of adult female desire in contemporary Italian television series, with particular attention to workplace narratives, situated between postfeminist pushes (Gill 2007, 2017) in the construction of female subjectivities and persistent heteronormative delimitations. As a privileged site of power relations, gender dynamics and identity construction, the workplace is a central setting in many TV series, where professional, romantic and sexual relationships intertwine. Within these contexts, adult female characters are defined through their professional roles, often departing from traditional representations centered on care. Instead, they are framed as figures of independence and empowerment, with implications that frequently include the sphere of desire and forms of sexual agency. This paper draws on case studies from both generalist and pay television to investigate which forms of female desire are granted narrative space, exploring potential assimilations and asymmetries between male and female characters' desire. Focusing on a range of female characters, such as the women doctors in *Doc – Nelle tue mani* (Rai, 2020–), the title character in *Blanca* (Rai, 2021–), and Lea and Sofia in *Call My Agent – Italia* (Sky, 2023–), it examines how female desire is articulated, framed, and made visible in contemporary Italian serial narratives.

Chiara Checcaglini is a Postdoctoral Research Fellow at the University of Urbino Carlo Bo. Her main research interests focus on serial narratives, representation, and audiences. Her recent work has examined medical dramas and teen dramas, with particular attention to their reception dynamics, including online and offline audience practices. Among her recent publications are a chapter in S. Antonioni and M. Rocchi (eds.) *Investigating Medical Drama TV Series. Approaches and Perspectives* (Media Mutations, 2023), and an article on Italian Girlhood (with S. Antonioni) in *Participations* (2025).

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Paolo Chirumbolo, Louisiana State University (USA)

Un ritorno al passato: Il calcio italiano nel cinema documentario contemporaneo

Uno dei fenomeni cinematografici più interessanti e rilevanti degli ultimi dieci anni, sia in Italia che all'estero, è il proliferare di documentari dedicati a imprese ed eventi sportivi. Dalla boxe all'alpinismo, dal ciclismo agli sport estremi, il numero di opere disponibili sulle varie piattaforme (Netflix, YouTube, Vimeo) è oramai considerevole e meritevole di uno sguardo

critico attento e approfondito. Nel contesto italiano, lo sport cui viene dedicata più attenzione è, pare scontato, il calcio, l'attività sportiva nazional-popolare per eccellenza, praticata e seguita da milioni di persone. L'arcipelago è ampio e vario, e comprende film su campioni leggendari (Gigi Riva, Armando Picchi, Agostino Di Bartolomei, Gigi Meroni), allenatori carismatici e vincenti (Carlo Mazzone, Marcello Lippi, Tommaso Maestrelli, Sergio Vatta), squadre che hanno segnato un'epoca (il Milan di Sacchi, l'epica nazionale italiana del 1982, la Sampdoria degli anni d'oro targata Vialli-Mancini), piccole squadre di provincia caratterizzate da un profondissimo legame con la propria città, la propria gente e il proprio territorio. Per questa relazione ci si soffermerà su quei documentari: *Mi chiamo Francesco Totti* (Alex Infascelli 2020); *Armando Picchi. Un uomo libero* (Roberto Davide Papini 2021); *Nel nostro cielo un rombo di tuono* (Riccardo Milani 2022) che, ricordando le gesta eroiche di personaggi e squadre del passato più o meno recente, intendono rileggere in chiave più o meno nostalgica non solo la storia del calcio ma anche gli usi e costumi della società italiana, i loro cambiamenti e la loro in/evoluzione.

Toxitaly

(Toronto UP, 2025)

The book examines the emergence of Italian ecodocumentaries, addressing urgent global issues such as industrial decay, environmental pollution, waste management, and food and water poisoning. The rise of Italian ecodocumentaries represents a significant cultural response to urgent environmental issues, reflecting a growing ecological awareness in contemporary Italian society. *Toxitaly* presents comprehensive scholarly analysis of these films, exploring their portrayal of key regional and national environmental events and concerns. Paolo Chirumbolo discusses the impact of these documentaries on Italian culture, highlighting how they depict industrial landscapes and articulate the emerging ecological consciousness. The analysis is structured around four main narratives: "Petronarratives," "Steel Narratives," "Chemical Narratives," and "Waste Narratives." Each ecodocumentary is examined thematically and formally, with Chirumbolo employing Bill Nichols's theories on the various modes of representation in documentary film to define the relationships between subject matter, filmmaker, and viewer. In a time of increasing public interest in environmental issues and the growth of grassroots movements, *Toxitaly* illuminates how ecodocumentaries can shape public discourse and inspire ecological awareness both in Italy and beyond.

Paolo Chirumbolo è Professore Ordinario di Italiano e Screen Arts presso la Louisiana State University, dove è il Direttore del Programma di Italiano. Collabora con *Rivista di Studi Italiani*, *Quaderni di Italianistica*, *Annali di Italianistica*, *Forum Italicum*, *Parol e Incontri* su cui ha pubblicato saggi sulla narrativa e sul cinema contemporanei. Ha pubblicato i libri *Tra coscienza e autocoscienza. Saggi sulla narrativa degli anni sessanta. Volponi – Calvino – Sanguineti* (Rubbettino, 2009); *Letteratura e lavoro* (Rubbettino, 2013); e *Il gioco delle sedie. Saggi sulla narrativa e il cinema italiano sul lavoro nel ventunesimo secolo* (Morlacchi, 2022). Il suo ultimo libro è *Toxitaly* (UTP Press, 2025).

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Carolina Ciampaglia, Cornell University in Rome (Italy)

La vittima, la mistica e la padrona: *L'arte della gioia* (Golino 2025)

La presentazione si propone di analizzare la recente trasposizione televisiva dell'omonimo romanzo *L'arte della gioia* di Goliarda Sapienza, diretta da Valeria Golino (2025), come esempio di riscrittura intersemiotica che riesce preservare la carica espressiva dell'opera originaria. In tale trasposizione la regista non si limita a una mera operazione di adattamento, ma attraverso rimandi letterari e cinematografici, costruisce un linguaggio visivo idoneo a restituire la complessità della protagonista, Modesta. La serie si apre con immagini sfuocate, immerse in una penombra che gradualmente si dipana per "mettere a fuoco" la storia di Modesta, venuta al mondo il 1° gennaio 1900 in una Sicilia feroce e impoverita. Attraverso le sue memorie di violenza e desiderio, si snoda il racconto dei suoi rapporti prima con la madre e la sorella, assoggettate alla miseria, poi con Eleonora, la madre superiora repressa e tormentata, infine con la madre di quest'ultima, la principessa Brandiforti, che la accoglie in un gioco perverso di seduzione e scalata sociale. Modesta agisce una radicale rottura dell'ordine simbolico e patriarcale. La sua assenza di rimorso e di moralità convenzionale, unita a un'irriducibile pulsione verso la libertà e il sapere, la configura come un'antieroina moderna, non priva di risonanze con la Bella Baxter di *Poor Things*. Golino interpreta questa tensione verso la conoscenza e il piacere come gesto di emancipazione e di autodeterminazione. Ne scaturisce una narrazione viva che conserva la vitalità anarchica e la tensione erotica e mistica del testo di Sapienza.

Carolina Ciampaglia è Visiting Lecturer presso la sede romana di Cornell University dove insegna Storia del Cinema Italiano. È anche docente e coordinatrice del Cinema Studies Summer Program di DePaul University di Chicago. Si occupa di cinema italiano contemporaneo, con un'attenzione particolare rivolta al lavoro di autrici e registe, nonché alle rappresentazioni urbane e al rapporto tra cartografia e cinema. È co-autrice con Federica Capoferri e Flaminio Di Biagi di *Badlands, il cinema dell'ultima Roma* (Ledizioni, 2022).

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Matteo Ciccognani, University of Leicester (UK)

Wandering through habitable worlds: Magical realism in contemporary Italian films

In this article, I explore how wayfaring and habitability intersect in contemporary Italian cinema, particularly in the magical realism of Alice Rohrwacher and the duo Alessio Rigo de Righi and Matteo Zoppis. Inspired by my explorations of Northern Lazio through Etruscan necropolises, *vie cave*, and abandoned villages, I trace how movement through landscapes awakens sensitivity to spaces, histories, and traces of the dead. These journeys reveal the tension between stable dwelling and unrestrained wandering, opening a space for imaginative inhabitation where life and mortality intertwine. In *La Chimera* (2023) and *Re Granchio* (2021), protagonists traverse fragile territories, encountering dilapidated houses, liminal ruins, and social constraints. Their quests highlight the precariousness of life and the ethical, emotional, and mortal stakes of inhabiting a world that is historical, social, and magical. Through abductive reasoning, I argue

that cinematic wayfaring mirrors real-world exploration, allowing unexpected connections between memory, environment, and imagination, revealing latent structures of dwelling and human attachment to place, always in the shadow of mortality. Magical realism blurs boundaries between past and present, life and afterlife, the mundane and extraordinary, inviting audiences to inhabit thresholds where death and habitation coexist. By juxtaposing corporeal wandering in Etruria with cinematic journeys, contemporary Italian cinema fosters an embodied and imaginative mode of knowledge in which wandering becomes a way to apprehend habitability, belonging, and engagement with the living and the dead. Ultimately, these films offer a poetic meditation on the human need to dwell meaningfully while embracing movement, negotiating rootedness, mortality, and the freedom to roam.

Matteo Ciccognani is a Lecturer in Management and Organisation at the University of Leicester. His research spans film theory, organisational performance in narratives and cinema, the use of film in teaching, self-reflexivity in figurative art and media, the evolution of language in corporate-sponsored films, and cinema examining local and regional territories. He co-edited *Image Worlds: A Brief History of Corporate Cinema* (Kappabit, 2024) with Giulio Latini and has published articles in *CINEJ: Cinema Journal*, the *Journal for Cultural Research* and the *Journal of Italian Cinema & Media Studies*.

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Elisabetta Sanino D’Amanda, Rochester Institute of Technology (USA)

Valerio Ciriaci *Elvira Notari – Beyond Silence* (2025): Transgressions in early cinema
Elvira Notari: Beyond the Silence, directed by Valerio Ciriaci (2025), revisits the life and legacy of Elvira Notari, widely recognized as the first female film director in Italian cinema. Active in the early decades of the twentieth century, Notari directed and produced dozens of films through the Naples-based company Dora Film. Her works—often shot on location—depicted everyday urban life and popular Neapolitan culture, combining melodramatic storytelling with striking elements of documentary realism. Despite her pioneering contributions, most of her films were lost and her role in film history remained marginalized for decades. Ciriaci’s documentary approaches this historical absence as both a historiographical and aesthetic problem. Drawing on archival fragments, film stills, and interviews with scholars, archivists, and filmmakers, the documentary reconstructs Notari’s cultural significance while reflecting on the fragility of cinematic memory. In doing so, it situates Notari within broader debates about the marginalization of women in early film history and the cultural transformations that shaped the disappearance of much silent-era cinema. Through feminist, postcolonial, decolonial, and subaltern interpretive frameworks, the film also reconsiders the social and spatial dynamics represented in Notari’s narratives. Her heroines inhabit and claim the public spaces of the city—streets shaped by Catholic morality and patriarchal surveillance—while negotiating forms of agency that blur the boundaries between victimhood and rebellion, virtue and sensuality, and domesticity and autonomy. By foregrounding archival recovery and contemporary reinterpretation, *Elvira Notari: Beyond the Silence* positions documentary practice as a critical tool for rethinking film historiography and restoring visibility to neglected cinematic pioneers.

Elisabetta Sanino D’Amanda is Coordinator of Italian Studies in the Department of Modern Languages and Cultures at the Rochester Institute of Technology. Her scholarship focuses on Italian cinema, women filmmakers, documentary practices, and visual culture, bridging post-colonial research and contemporary media analysis. She has authored ‘*Porpora* (2021) e l’altra. Porpora Marcasciano si racconta’ (Metauro Editore, 2023) and ‘Darsi a *La Pazza Gioia* (2016) o della solidarietà come percorsi di liberazione dalla realtà’ (Casa editrice Aonia – Lulu Press, Raleigh, 2018). She has directed several documentaries, including *Silent Flame* (2009) and *Torino Is My Town* (2015), and produced Election Day 2016 (2017.) Her films *As Good As Bread* (2008) and *Astrodance: Dances Through the Wonders of the Universe* (2015) have received awards and have screened internationally and earned awards. She is currently in post-production of *Astrodance 2* and in pre-production of *Rochester, NY Italian Americans*.

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Maria Elena D’Amelio, Università di San Marino (Italy)

Reframing Italian crime television: Gender, marginal landscapes and justice in *Imma Tataranni*

My contribution analyzes the Italian television series *Imma Tataranni – Sostituto Procuratore* (2019 -) as a significant case study for contemporary Italian media studies, focusing on the intersection of crime seriality, gender representation, and spatial imagination. Situated within the framework of Mediterranean noir, the series offers a distinctive reworking of the crime genre that departs from both Anglo-American and Nordic noir traditions by foregrounding historically marginal geographies, embodied female authority, and layered cultural memory. The analysis centers on the relationship between the protagonist and the landscape of Matera, a city long associated with poverty and peripheral status, which the series transforms into a symbolic and narrative center. Rather than functioning as a neutral backdrop, the territory operates as an active agent that shapes subjectivity, justice, and affect. Drawing on Jungian archetypal theory, the paper proposes an interpretation of *Imma Tataranni* as a contemporary incarnation of the Mediterranean Great Mother: an ambivalent figure that combines care and control, fertility and severity, emotional intensity and ethical rigor. This archetypal reading allows for a deeper understanding of how femininity, authority, and justice are visually and narratively negotiated in the series. Through close textual and spatial analysis, the paper argues that *Imma Tataranni* articulates a specifically Italian response to global crime television, one that exposes structural corruption, patriarchal power, and environmental exploitation while resisting victimizing or stereotypical representations of Southern Italy and its women. Ultimately, the series exemplifies how contemporary Italian television mobilizes myth, landscape, and genre to rethink cultural identity, marginality, and forms of visual justice in the present media landscape.

Maria Elena D’Amelio is Associate Professor at the University of San Marino. She is deputy director of the BA in Communication and Digital Media. Her main research interests focus on Italian stardom and celebrity, gender and motherhood studies, transnational cinema and serial dramas, memory and media. Among her publications are *La Diva Madre. Saggi su maternità e divismo nel cinema italiano* (Meltemi, 2024), and *Media and Gender: History, Representation,*

Reception (Bologna University Press, 2023). She is Delegate of the Rector for International Relations.

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Luciana d'Arcangeli, The American University of Rome (Italy)

Laura Lori, University of Melbourne (Australia)

Evolving portrayals of Italian-Australian identity in cinema (1960-2025)

This paper examines the shifting representations of Italian-Australian identity in cinema from the 1960s to the present day, focusing on four key works spanning over five decades. By comparing the classic comedies *They're a Weird Mob* (Powell 1966) and *Bello onesto emigrato Australia sposerebbe compaesana illibata/A Girl in Australia* (Zampa 1971) with the contemporary drama *Little Tornadoes* (Wilson 2021) and the documentary *Signorinella: Little Miss* (McFadden, Pricolo, Swan 2025), we explore how the portrayal of Italianness in Australia has evolved, particularly in relation to women's experiences. The analysis reveals a transition from broad stereotypes and comedic cultural misunderstandings in the earlier films to more nuanced explorations of identity, belonging, and intergenerational conflict in recent productions. While *They're a Weird Mob* and *Bello onesto.../A Girl in Australia* often relied on exaggerated cultural differences for humour, *Little Tornadoes* and *Signorinella: Little Miss* offer more complex narratives that challenge these stereotypes. This paper argues that contemporary cinema reflects a maturing understanding of the Italian-Australian experience, acknowledging the multifaceted nature of cultural identity and its impact on Australian society at large. By examining these films, we gain insight into the changing perceptions of Italianness in Australia and the ongoing negotiation of cultural identity in a multicultural society. The research contributes to the broader discourse on representation in cinema and the role of film in shaping and reflecting cultural narratives.

Luciana d'Arcangeli è Docente presso il Dipartimento di Italian Studies dell'American University of Rome e docente onoraria della Flinders University, Australia, dove era Professore Associato Cassamarca fino al 2021. Saggista, traduttrice e curatrice di vari volumi collettanei e numeri speciali di riviste sul teatro e cinema italiano, ha pubblicato la monografia *I personaggi femminili nel teatro di Dario Fo e Franca Rame* (Cesati, 2009); *Staging Violence Against Women and Girls: Plays and Interviews* con D. Cavallaro e C. Kennedy (Bloomsbury, 2023), e il numero speciale "Indelible: Violence Against Women and Their Resistance to It in the Visual and Performing Arts in Italy and Beyond" della rivista *Violence Against Women* con S. Hill (2:8, 2023).

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Laura Lori is Lecturer in Italian Studies at the University of Melbourne, as well as researcher and translator. She has published studies in literature, cinema, and theatre, with a special interest in the potential of literature and performing arts as tools to promote social inclusion and equality. Her publications include the monograph *Inchostro d'Africa. La letteratura postcoloniale somala fra diaspora e identità* (Ombre Corte, 2013). She is also the editor of the volume *Antigone Power da*

Palermo: Trasformazioni per l'epoca globale (Mimesis, 2026), which examines the representation of female agency and intersectionality through the myth of Antigone, applying both feminist and transcultural perspectives.

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Massimiliano Luca Delfino, Northwestern University (USA)

Tonino Guerra, Andrei Tarkovsky and *Nostalghia*: The role of *Tempo di viaggio* (1983)

In 1979, Tonino Guerra invited Andrei Tarkovsky to Italy to introduce the Russian director to key Italian locations and seek inspiration for a joint film project. The feature film *Nostalghia* (1983) was the ultimate product of this collaboration. However, before releasing *Nostalghia*, the two artists co-produced an hour-long documentary titled *Tempo di viaggio* (edited in 1980 and released only in 1983). The documentary captures a series of meaningful moments and dialogues between the two artists during their trip and in Guerra's home in Rome. This paper examines *Tempo di viaggio* beyond its commonly recognized value as a documentation of Guerra and Tarkovsky's collaboration. While often described as a "visual diary" (Pelo 2010, 117), I argue that it should instead be considered an "audiovisual notebook" that allowed the authors to find, create, and filmically rehearse the narrative conflicts that would later appear in *Nostalghia*. In this way, *Tempo di viaggio* functioned as an audiovisual "scripting" material, serving as a conceptual, emotional, and narrative blueprint for the 1983 film. To support this argument, the presentation offers a close reading of the documentary's structure, visual motifs, and thematic content, with a particular focus on the sequence set in Guerra's apartment that bookends the film. Ultimately, this presentation demonstrates how the making of *Tempo di viaggio* became a means of dramatizing *Nostalghia*'s "screen idea" as defined by Macdonald (2004, 90), namely a singular concept intended to become a screenwork.

Massimiliano Luca Delfino is Associate Professor of Instruction in the French and Italian Department at Northwestern University. His research focuses on post-Second World War Italian political cinema and literature. He uses film theory, literary theory and critical theory to shed light on the nexus between the aesthetic and the political. His articles have appeared in *Annali d'italianistica* (2017), *Italica* (2021), and *The Italianist* (2023). He is currently working on a book manuscript that analyses representations of terrorism in Italian films and novels of the 1970s and their relationship to the concept of "civility."

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Ilaria A. De Pascalis, Università Roma Tre (Italy)

Queer desire is a lopsided triangle: The representation of sapphic attraction in *Prisma*

In the last few years, serial narratives in the Italian audiovisual industry have increased their focus on LGBTQIA+ youth, addressing issues such as visibility, identification and representation (Griffin 2023). This paper addresses in particular the visibility of female queer desire (de Lauretis 1991, Sedgwick 1993) in *Prisma*, written by Ludovico Bessegato and Alice Urciolo,

and featuring, among others, the character of Nina (Caterina Forza), at first rival of the main character Andrea (Mattia Carrano), then friend and enabler of Andrea's complex gender identification and desires, and, finally, reclaiming her own agency and desires as a co-protagonist. The love triangle is the recurring geometry of her disorienting desire (Ahmed 2006): in the first season, her involvement both with Micol (Elena Falvella Capodaglio) and her former partner Andrea disrupts the binarism of gender identification and normative desire (de Lauretis 2011); in the second season, her relationship with Micol is undermined by the mutual attraction with the younger Akemi (Elisa Qiu Tian Scenti), and challenges the parameters and stereotypes of the age gap in a sapphic relationship. In both scenarios, the representation of Nina's desires and responses to attraction defies the cultural categories for love and identification, and the serial repetition, mingled with the anachronic time that characterizes Prisma, opens up new possibilities (Halberstam 2005, Muñoz 2009). Through visual analysis, particularly focused on the representation of teen bodies in space and time, and queer theory, the paper focuses on the queer disorientation produced by the role of Nina in the triangles and how female desire can contribute to the disruptive temporality of serial narratives.

Ilaria A. De Pascalis is Associate Professor at Roma Tre University. Her research interests address contemporary narratives, in particular serial forms, and globalization; the configuration of subjectivities in film and series through the lens of Feminist Film Theory, Gender Studies and Queer Theory; and contemporary European cinema from a transnational perspective. Among her publications: *Commedia nell'Italia contemporanea* (il Castoro, 2012) and *Il cinema europeo contemporaneo: scenari transnazionali, immaginari globali* (Bulzoni, 2015), and her edited collections: *Reading Contemporary Serial Television Universes: A Narrative Ecosystem Framework* (with P. Brembilla) (Routledge, 2018); *Transatlantic Visions. Culture cinematografiche italiane negli Stati Uniti del secondo dopoguerra* (with E. Carocci and V. Pravadelli) (Mimesis, 2023); and *Kathryn Bigelow* (Marsilio, 2023).

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Valerio Di Paola, Sapienza Università di Roma (Italy)

Populismo in streaming: Netflix, l'uomo comune e l'outsider come strategia narrativa

L'obiettivo del paper è analizzare come Netflix ha contribuito alla circolazione del populismo, con particolare attenzione al contesto italiano. Questo intervento prende in esame il periodo compreso tra il 2010 e il 2020, segnato dal consolidamento della piattaforma e dall'ascesa del populismo in diversi contesti geopolitici. Il populismo è inteso come logica di produzione di senso, che unifica domande eterogenee attraverso l'opposizione tra "popolo" e "potere" (Laclau 2019), e come stile performativo (Moffitt 2016): la produzione audiovisiva seriale come spazio in cui tali discorsi diventano forme narrative (Coladonato; Sangiovanni 2019). Nel catalogo Netflix circolano modelli ricorrenti, l'outsider, l'autenticità e l'ordinarietà rivendicata, l'opposizione alle élite, attraverso strategie che combinano standardizzazione globale e specificità locale (Lobato 2020): dinamiche risultano evidenti nelle produzioni statunitensi, incentrate sullo svelamento dei meccanismi del potere, quanto in quelle europee, più corali, che mettono in scena soggettività antagoniste. L'istituzione del polo locale Netflix nel 2019 si colloca in un decennio di consolidamento del populismo in Italia: dal 2013, con l'ascesa del

M5S, al 2018, con il populismo al governo. Nel contesto i Netflix Originals locali rielaborano il topos dell'outsider mediando l'antagonismo tra soggetti marginali: una forma di "populismo all'italiana", con un conflitto depoliticizzato, narrato attraverso traiettorie individuali ed emotive, configurazione estetica più che logica politica capace di articolare domande sociali.

Valerio Di Paola è Professore a Contratto di Promozione e Marketing dello Spettacolo presso Sapienza Università di Roma. Coordina il Diploma triennale in Videomaking presso l'Accademia AANT di Roma. I suoi ambiti di ricerca includono i transmedia studies e le strategie di comunicazione per l'intrattenimento. Collabora al progetto PRIN 2022 *Circulating Populist Sentiments in 21st Century Film and TV Fiction in Italy*.

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Rap, race and resistance in Antonio Dikele Distefano's *Autumn Beat* (2022)

Antonio Dikele Distefano's *Autumn Beat* (2022) reworks classic tropes of Italian cinema while introducing urgent themes of race, masculinity, and disability. Echoing Ettore Scola's *C'eravamo tanto amati* (1974) and Marco Tullio Giordana's *La meglio gioventù* (2003), the film spans decades and explores fraternal bonds in an Italy undergoing cultural transformation. Structured around chapters titled "fratelli," "figli," and "padri," Distefano updates these narratives to foreground second-generation Black Italians and their negotiation of identity. This paper argues that the convergence of rap, race, and disability in *Autumn Beat* functions as resistance to dominant Italian narratives. Drawing on Black disability studies, I show how protagonists Paco (Abby 6ix) and Tito (Hamed Seydou) inhabit social and economic margins: they are second-generation Black Italians disconnected from biological parents, raised by an African immigrant mother who faces systemic discrimination and untreated mental illness. Tito, injured in a car accident, develops a neurological disability that causes him to stutter. After examining how race and disability intersect to produce layered marginalization, I integrate scholarship on hip-hop and resistance to demonstrate how *Autumn Beat* rewrites scripts of masculinity and belonging. Echoing hip-hop's collaborative ethos, Tito crafts lyrics that Paco performs, using rap as a vehicle for survival and self-definition. The soundtrack—dominated by rap and hip-hop—binds the narrative and amplifies its political charge. Featuring second-generation rapper Abby 6ix, Distefano's film positions hip-hop as a revolutionary force that challenges exclusionary notions of Italian identity and imagines a more inclusive cultural future.

Lisa Dolasinski is Senior Lecturer of Italian and Italian Language Supervisor in the Department of Romance Languages and Literatures at the University of Georgia, where she also serves as Affiliate Faculty at the Women's Studies Institute. Her research and teaching interests include masculinity, representations of aging, and migrants and second-generation Italians in contemporary media, literature and culture. Her publications include articles in *California Italian Studies*, *The Italianist*, *Gender/Sexuality/Italy*, *L'avventura: International Journal of Italian Film and Media Landscapes*, *Journal of Italian Cinema & Media Studies*, and a special issue of *NeMLA Italian Studies* on "Masculinity." She also serves as Managing Editor of film and tv reviews for *Gender/Sexuality/Italy*.

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Adam Domalewski, Adam Mickiewicz University, Poznań (Poland)

Laughing after Vatican II: Catholic priests in 1970s Italian popular cinema

Until the early 1970s, Catholic priests in European cinema rarely functioned as genuinely comic figures. The transformations initiated by the Second Vatican Council, combined with rapid social and cultural change, created new conditions for satirical and comic representations of the clergy. This paper examines a critically marginalised body of Italian popular films from the 1970s that place a Catholic priest at their narrative centre, including Dino Risi's *La moglie del prete* (*The Priest's Wife*) (1970), Marco Vicario's *Il prete sposato* (*The Swinging Confessors*) (1970), and Pier Francesco Pingitore's *Scherzi da prete* (*Priest Jokes*) (1978). Drawing on theoretical frameworks developed in literary studies of comedy, satire, and the grotesque, and applying them to film analysis, the paper offers a generic and contextual reading of these portrayals. It argues that these films articulate a multifaceted critique of Catholic institutions by oscillating between farce, satire, and melodrama. Recurring motifs include celibacy, erotic temptation, and sexual unease, with priests depicted as figures torn between desire and religious duty. Humour functions as a means of exposing psychological repression and institutional rigidity embedded in the discipline of celibacy. At the same time, these narratives frequently combine satirical attacks on clerical conformism and hypocrisy with melodramatic resolutions that cast priests as victims of ecclesiastical strictures. A further recurrent theme is the tension between traditionalism and progressivism in the post-Vatican II Church. While bishops and popes are often portrayed satirically, the figure of the 'ordinary priest' emerges as morally uncorrupted and emotionally authentic.

Adam Domalewski is Assistant Professor at the Film, Media and Audiovisual Arts Institute at Adam Mickiewicz University, Poznań (Poland). His research interests include the intersection of film and religion, film comedy, and European cinema, especially works addressing issues of migration and diaspora. He is co-author (with A. Skweres) of the book *Homo Viator in Contemporary European Comedy Movies* (Springer, 2025).

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Hilary Emerson, University of Rhode Island (USA)

Promoting a politics of joy and inclusion in Lina Mangiacapre's films

In recent years, the artistic prowess of understudied directors has become central to Italian film and media studies. While interest in underrepresented voices is building, the work of self-reflexive avant-garde filmmakers who advance a politics of joy and inclusion still merits more critical attention. Because films that promote diversity and inclusion foster an antiracist, antisexist, antihomophobic, antitransphobic, antixenophobic, antiableist, antiageist society, a more in-depth examination of feminist and other counterhegemonic films in the Italian context will stimulate debate on how to practice a politics of equity and care. With my paper, I bridge the

gap between Italian avant-garde, feminist, and film studies through an examination of Naples-based painter, philosopher, and filmmaker Lina Mangiacapre's (1946-2002) cameo appearances in her short and feature films. After elucidating Mangiacapre's radically inclusive theory and praxis, I will argue that her appearances in *Cenerella* (1974), *Follia come poesia* (1979), *Didone non è morta* (1987), and *Faust/Fausta* (1991) serve to advance a new, more inclusive way of being in the world. I will focus my analysis on Mangiacapre's surprise cameo as an unnamed dancer who gets her groove on with diverse members of the cast in *Didone non è morta* and her appearance as a Christ figure who chases a group of predatory artists out of a church and off screen in *Faust/Fausta*. In sum, by closely examining scenes in which Mangiacapre pops on screen and promotes inclusive artmaking, my paper will shed light on the potential for the cinema to be a site of feminist joy.

Hilary Emerson is an Associate Teaching Professor of Italian at the University of Rhode Island, where she is Coordinator of the Beginning and Intermediate Italian Language Program. Her research interests include: Mangiacapre's avant-garde films, transnational feminist cinema, girlhood in European cinema, film theory, ecofeminist theory, and mad studies. Her current book project, *Breaking the Rules with Lina Mangiacapre: Feminist Joy and Modernity on the Italian Screen*, is under contract with Intellect/University of Chicago Press. She presents Mangiacapre as an avant-garde filmmaker who practiced radical inclusivity and challenged dominant culture by making films featuring Black, queer, and trans characters.

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Monica Facchini, Colgate University (USA)

“Something Is Wrong Here:” Ghostly past and haunting present in *This Must Be the Place* (Sorrentino 2011)

A ghostly voice from the past haunts and guides the journey of a retired goth-punk musician, Cheyenne (Sean Penn), in the second half of the 2011 film by Paolo Sorrentino, *This Must Be the Place*. It is the deep and soothing voice of Cheyenne's estranged father, a Holocaust survivor who spent his life chasing the SS commander that humiliated him in the camp. At his death, Cheyenne decides to take on his chase, and in his journey he will learn more about his father and his past, while also facing his own ghosts. However, the film does not just portray the personal journey of a man in search of his past and true identity, but rather attempts to draw parallels between a heinous past and a shallow present. By following the abulic life of a fallen rockstar, I contend, indeed, that Sorrentino's film explores personal, transgenerational and historical trauma to reflect on old and new forms of violence and dehumanization in society. It is specifically through a unique employment of sound and the acousmatic voice against the deceiving and at times violent nature of images, that the film succeeds in pulling the mask off of the heavily made-up face of an old music star and of the alienating society of the spectacle.

Monica Facchini is an Associate Professor of Romance Languages and Literatures and Film and Media Studies at Colgate University. Her research interests focus on Italian cinema with an interdisciplinary approach, engaging with film theory, literature, post-colonial and subaltern studies, trauma and memories studies, and sound. Her publications include essays on Pier Paolo

Pasolini, Francesco Rosi, Gillo Pontecorvo, and Paolo Sorrentino, and the role of sound and soundtrack in Italian cinema. She authored the book *Spettacolo della morte e “tecniche del cordoglio” nel cinema degli anni sessanta* (Bulzoni, 2027). Her new book project is tentatively titled *The Voice and the Wound: Acousmêtre, Trauma and the Holocaust in Italian Cinema*.

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Franca Faccioli, Sapienza Università di Roma (Italy)

Donne che sorridono. Percorsi intrecciati tra media, narrazioni e impegno civile

In un contesto sociale attraversato da guerre e conflitti violenti, dal prevalere di rapporti sociali in cui il dialogo con l'interlocutore è una gara tra chi grida più forte, nel discorso pubblico si afferma un linguaggio sessista più o meno esplicito e stereotipi sui ruoli maschili e femminili che ricordano vecchie etichette e ne propongono di nuove. Alla luce di alcune analisi nell'ambito dei media studies che usano la chiave di lettura dell'ironia per denunciare e decostruire stereotipi (Gill 2007; Bono, Crispino 2020; Melis, Fresu 2021; Minor 2024), la mia ricerca considera i monologhi di alcune attrici comiche che affrontano con ironia problemi complessi e si distinguono per un significativo impegno civile. In questa sede, si esaminano i casi di Lella Costa e Paola Cortellesi. La ricerca muove dallo studio della televisione pubblica per il suo ruolo “formativo” di garantire informazione, consapevolezza e intrattenimento, per ampliare lo sguardo agli altri media. Le attrici considerate, oltre alla televisione, usano media diversi e costruiscono percorsi di comunicazione articolati a cui corrispondono diverse prospettive e interpretazioni. Nel quadro teorico la ricerca tiene conto dell'approccio intersezionale e di quello *entangled* che si incrociano con la chiave di lettura dell'ironia. Sullo sfondo, il richiamo alla “comunicazione gentile” (Colombo 2020) e al “disarmo della comunicazione” (Papa Bergoglio 2024), al rispetto dell'altro e delle differenze, ma in un contesto più ampio che comprenda il valore di “fare comunità” per obiettivi condivisi nella prospettiva di costruire spazi per la creatività e la socievolezza.

Franca Faccioli è stata Professoressa Ordinaria di Sociologia dei processi culturali e comunicativi presso La Sapienza Università di Roma. Temi di ricerca: la comunicazione pubblica; i processi di civic e public engagement; genere e media studies. Tra le pubblicazioni: *Prendre soin de la nature urbaine en tant que bien commun: le cas de Bologne in Espaces et sociétés* (con R. Bartoletti) (2024); *Gender Issues: Trajectories of Change in The Italian Mediascape*, special issue *Journal of Italian Cinema & Media Studies* (con M. Buonanno) (2023); *Genere e Media. Scenari in movimento*, special issue *Sociologia della comunicazione* (con P. Panarese) (2022).

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Antonio Falduto, UNINT University of Rome (Italy)

Roberta Waldbaum, University of Denver (USA)

High, popular and mass culture in the analysis of diegetic and non-diegetic music in Italian period films

The classical distinction between elite, popular and mass culture must take into account many new factors and circumstances after the advent of tv platforms and new media. Consumers have become producers; therefore, we must analyze not just distinctions, but connections among hybrid cultures. Our research cannot focus solely on the content and the means of the message, but also on the social, economic, political and cultural contexts in which they interact. This paper considers how Cinema, which by its omnivorous nature, incorporates and encompasses all other arts and languages, perfectly represents the complex relationship amongst various typologies of culture. Can we eventually draw a taxonomy of cultures in films? And can we consider the functions and forms of music in film scores as key elements? Antonio Falduto will focus on the films *Gloria* (Vicario 2024) and *Primavera* (Michieletto 2025) comparing their similar "corpus," meant as a unity of place, time and action. Roberta Waldbaum will analyze film music in Latin and Hebrew texts in memorial prayers of mercy for the souls of the departed with case studies from *La notte di San Lorenzo* (Taviani Brothers 1982), and *Il Giardino dei Finzi-Contini* (De Sica 1970).

Antonio Falduto is Lecturer in Film Studies and Organization Techniques at UNINT University in Rome. He is also the scientific director of the Master Program TeA (Traduzione e adattamento per il doppiaggio e sottotitolo). An assistant director to Steno, Fellini and Scola, he is a member of the ANAC board and the assembly of the *Giornate degli Autori* at the Venice Film Festival. He has been a visiting professor and an artistic consultant to Yale University, Wellesley College, Boston University, The Graduate Center NY, The University of Denver and Dickinson College. As founder of the film authors' association *Controluce*, he promotes Italian cinema and training in audiovisual languages in emerging countries including Addis Ababa, Ethiopia; Cape Town, South Africa; and Maputo, Mozambique.

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Roberta Waldbaum is Emerita Teaching Professor of Italian at the University of Denver in the Department of Languages, Literatures, and Cultures where she held the Anna Maglione-Sie Endowed Professorship in Italian Culture. The recipient of three university teaching awards, her research focuses on language pedagogy, media and cinema studies, and international intercultural education. She has published essays on cinema and Italian culture, critical analyses of film and literary texts, the Grand Tour and cultivating learning landscapes, and international service-learning and civic engagement. Elected to membership in the Denver Woman's Press Club in 2025, she published her debut historical fiction novel, *The Color of the Dreams: An Umbrian Tale* (Mascot Books, 2024).

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Gianluca Fantoni, Nottingham Trent University (United Kingdom)

Tears and transition: Italian family melodrama and the crisis of masculinity in the age of divorce

This paper reconsiders a group of Italian ‘tear-jerker’ films from the early 1970s, including *L’ultima neve di primavera* (Raimondo Del Balzo 1973), *Il venditore di palloncini* (Mario Gariazzo 1974), *L’albero dalle foglie rosa* (Armando Nannuzzi 1974), *La bellissima estate* (Sergio Martino 1974), *Bianchi cavalli d’agosto* (Raimondo Del Balzo 1975) and *Piange il telefono* (Lucio De Caro 1975). Traditionally seen as derivative of *Incompreso* (Luigi Comencini 1966) and dismissed as sentimental melodramas aimed at the popular market and possessing limited cinematic merit, these films have rarely been studied as a coherent *filone*. This paper argues that they in fact respond to deeper cultural and social anxieties of 1970s Italy, particularly the redefinition of gender roles and the crisis of the patriarchal family in the wake of the divorce law (1970) and the emerging second wave of the feminist movement. By situating these films at the intersection of melodrama and social change, I contend that they articulate a profound unease surrounding the perceived ‘loss’ of paternal/male authority and the rise of the emancipated woman. Their narratives of bereavement, separation and domestic breakdown translate collective anxieties about modernity and masculinity into a highly charged emotional spectacle, aided by unapologetically sentimental musical scores. The distinctly bourgeois settings of these films are also examined in relation to the social transformations of the 1970s and to the symbols of bourgeois masculinity so frequently displayed on screen — cigarettes, whisky, and masculine professions such as airline pilots, among others. Finally, the paper discusses the enduring appeal of these films for contemporary audiences.

Gianluca Fantoni is Senior Lecturer in Modern History at Nottingham Trent University. His work focuses on the public use of history and the relationship between cinema, politics and society. He is the author of *Italy Through the Red Lens: Italian Politics and Society in Communist Propaganda Films (1946–79)* (Palgrave, 2021), the first comprehensive study of the PCI’s cinematic production. He co-edited, with A. Rotondi, *Perfect Adaptations. Perfetti sconosciuti Across Remake, Translation, and Tradaptation* (Intellect, forthcoming). He has published in *Journal of Modern History*, *Contemporary History*, and *Contemporary European History*. He is also the General Editor of *Modern Italy*, the journal of the Association for the Study of Modern Italy (ASMI).

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Gianluca Fantoni, Nottingham Trent University (United Kingdom)

Armando Rotondi, Institute of the Arts Barcelona (Spain)

Paola Mammini, Screenwriter and novelist (Italy)

Perfect Adaptations. Perfetti sconosciuti Across Remake, Translation, and Tradaptation
(Intellect, forthcoming)

This volume explores the extraordinary global afterlife of *Perfetti sconosciuti* (Paolo Genovese, 2016), a film that has become the most remade in cinema history. What initially appeared as a modest, single-location ensemble drama rapidly evolved into a transnational phenomenon, adapted across dozens of cultural contexts. This book investigates the reasons behind such unprecedented reproducibility, arguing that the film functions less as a fixed original and more as a flexible narrative format. At the core of its success lies a deceptively simple premise: a group of friends agree to share all messages and calls received on their phones during a dinner party, unleashing hidden tensions and secrets. This structure combines production economy with thematic universality, making the film easily adaptable while resonating with contemporary anxieties surrounding intimacy, technology, and trust. The volume moves beyond traditional distinctions between original and remake, proposing instead a framework that integrates adaptation, translation, and what it terms “tradaptation”. Drawing on international and interdisciplinary framework, the contributors analyse how each remake negotiates local cultural norms, industrial conditions, and identity formations, while preserving the narrative engine of the original. Through perspectives spanning film studies, translation studies, psychology, and cultural theory, the essays demonstrate that the global circulation of *Perfetti sconosciuti* is not a process of simple replication, but one of continuous cultural re-signification. The film’s portability, far from erasing difference, amplifies it, producing a series of culturally specific yet structurally connected texts. The volume includes an introduction, eleven chapters discussing ten versions of the film, and an interview with the film’s co-screenwriter Paola Mammini.

Armando Rotondi is Full Professor of Performance Theory and Storytelling and has led the MA Creative Performance Practice at the Institute of the Arts Barcelona. His work focuses on performance, translation, and cultural studies. He has published extensively, including *La Romania di Ceaușescu tra farsa e tragedia* (Mimesis, 2020), *Eduardo De Filippo tra adattamenti e traduzioni nel mondo anglofono* (ESI, 2012), and *Roberto Bracco e gli -ismi del suo tempo* (ESI, 2010). He also serves as convener at the *European Journal of Theatre and Performance* (University of Groningen Press). He co-edited, with G. Fantoni, *Perfect Adaptations. Perfetti sconosciuti Across Remake, Translation, and Tradaptation* (Intellect, forthcoming).

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Paola Mammini is an Italian screenwriter and novelist known for her work across film and television. She gained wide recognition as part of the writing team behind *Perfetti sconosciuti* (2016) by Paolo Genovese, film which won the David di Donatello for Best

Screenplay and became the most remade films in cinema history. Trained as an actress, she later shifted toward writing, developing a strong focus on character-driven storytelling. Her credits include *Tutta colpa di Freud* (2014), *Immaturi – La serie* (2018), *Zamora* (2024), and several popular films and TV productions. Alongside screenwriting, she has published fiction, combining sharp observation with humor and insight into contemporary relationships.

Luana Fedele, Sapienza Università di Roma (Italy)

Tra cinema politico, strategie industriali e memoria storica: *Kapò* (Pontecorvo 1960)

L'intervento propone una rilettura di *Kapò* (1960) di Gillo Pontecorvo attraverso l'analisi congiunta dei processi di produzione, promozione e ricezione del film, collocandolo al crocevia tra ambizione autoriale, logiche industriali e nascente cinema politico italiano. Generalmente ricordato come uno dei primi tentativi del cinema italiano di confrontarsi con la rappresentazione della Shoah, *Kapò* occupa in realtà una posizione ambigua: il film combina un forte impulso etico e politico con codici melodrammatici e strategie narrative pensate per il mercato internazionale, anticipando al contempo alcune caratteristiche del futuro "Holocaust film". A partire da un'estesa ricerca d'archivio – che include materiali produttivi e distributivi Cineriz, documenti di censura e certificazione, rassegne stampa e materiali paratestuali dell'Archivio Pontecorvo – il contributo ricostruisce le tensioni che hanno attraversato la genesi del film, in particolare il confronto tra Pontecorvo e Franco Solinas sull'introduzione di un subplot sentimentale finalizzato ad ampliare il pubblico. L'analisi si concentra poi sulle strategie promozionali, oscillanti tra retoriche di impegno civile e forme di spettacolarizzazione emotiva della sofferenza, e sulla ricezione critica italiana e internazionale, segnata da giudizi contrastanti sul rapporto tra realismo, pathos e risoluzione narrativa. Attraverso il caso di *Kapò*, l'intervento sostiene che il cinema di Pontecorvo vada compreso anche come spazio di negoziazione tra istanze ideologiche e compromessi produttivi. In questa prospettiva, il film emerge come un esempio paradigmatico di cinema politico capace di interrogare la rappresentazione della storia entro i vincoli dell'industria culturale e del mercato globale all'inizio degli anni Sessanta.

Luana Fedele è Assegnista di Ricerca presso La Sapienza Università di Roma, nell'ambito del progetto PRIN 2022 *Survey on the Community of Screenwriters in the Italian Audiovisual Industry: Writing Practices, Training Models, Gender Dynamics*, e dal 2022 project manager in ANICA Academy ETS. I suoi interessi riguardano i *media industry studies*, la storia culturale e sociale del cinema e dei media. È coordinatrice del progetto didattico e di ricerca *Romarcord. Ricerche di storia sociale del cinema a Roma* e co-curatrice, assieme a Damiano Garofalo e Samuel Antichi, del libro omonimo (Bulzoni, 2023). È membro della redazione della rivista *Imago. Studi di cinema e media*.

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Manuela Filomena, Florida Atlantic University (USA)

Beyond the Eternal City: Reimagining genre in *They Call Me Jeeg Robot* (2015)

This paper examines *They Call Me Jeeg Robot* (2015) by Gabriele Mainetti as an innovative work in contemporary Italian cinema, showing how the film challenges traditional industry models and creative conventions by introducing a new approach to genre filmmaking. The aim is to demonstrate that the film is not only a successful example of superhero cinema but also a point of intersection between media studies, reflections on urban space, and the redefinition of cultural archetypes within a national context. From this perspective, Rome is not merely a backdrop but an active narrative agent. The image of the “Eternal City” appears in the opening and closing sequences before giving way to a lesser-known, fragmented, and chaotic geography in which the outskirts become the true focus of the story. Periphery mythologized. Moving beyond a detached or bourgeois gaze, the film fosters a strong sense of empathy for its characters and places dynamics of marginality and redemption at its core. The transformation of the main character, Enzo Ceccotti, occurs only through his encounter with otherness, embodied by Alessia, his acquaintance. Her presence reveals how identity and ethical responsibility arise from a profound human relationship. Particular attention is given to the Tiber River’s symbolic role as a site of passage and transformation. The protagonist’s rebirth unfolds in the polluted waters. The Tiber is no longer a historical or decorative image but the physical space where the global superhero tradition meets the Italian context, creating a distinctly national version of the contemporary myth.

Manuela Filomena is a PhD candidate in Comparative Studies at Florida Atlantic University. Her research focuses on the dialogue between Literature and Cinema. She is also interested in investigating the methods and evolution of the representation of Italian-American identity within film production. She worked with Paolo Sorrentino on *Loro*, Johan Soderberg for MTV, and Franco Ferrini on *Black Love* as film editor and assistant director. Her films include the short *Goodbye Agnes* (2017) and the feature documentary *My FlorÌta* (2025). She has also authored the illustrated book *Rahul* (Bordighera Press [in English and CAA], 2024).

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Francesco Finocchiaro, ‘G. Rossini’ Conservatory of Pesaro (Italy)

Elvira Notari and Italian popular migration in the early twentieth century

Elvira Notari was a pioneering figure in Italian cinema. Set in and around Naples, her films incorporate natural landscapes and authentic sequences of street life, developing them into scenic-narrative forms enhanced by music. The subjects are mostly inspired by the songs of the Piedigrotta festival, from which the films borrow their titles: e.g., *‘A Santanotte* (1921), *È piccerella* (1922). Rejected in Italy under fascism, Notari’s films found great resonance overseas among Italian emigrant communities in America. In the mid-1920s, however, the audiences of Notari’s films turned from spectators to patrons. Italian-American communities commissioned Notari to shoot short documentaries in their hometowns, tasking her with portraying their familiar surroundings. By 1930, Notari produced approximately 200 films commissioned by

Italians living in the United States. My paper will focus on the socio-cultural values of Notari's cinema, in the context of the history of Italian emigration in the early twentieth century. The surviving films, recently restored by the Cineteca di Roma, shed light on the role of entertainment culture as a factor of ethnicity. My cultural-historical investigation will highlight how film and music contributed to the definition of ethnic identity and the delimitation of the Italian ethnic group in the context of multiethnic American metropolises. Within the emigrants' imagination, marked by the existential rupture of the loss of home and family, cinematic depictions of the homeland provided emigrants with a recognizable representation of the Self. The films of the emigrants acted as a collective archive of a community's memory and preserved its existence.

Francesco Finocchiaro is Professor of Music History at the 'G. Rossini' Conservatory of Pesaro and Adjunct Professor at the Universities of Padua and Innsbruck. His research interests cover the areas of composition, theory, and aesthetics in twentieth-century music. He edited the Italian edition of Arnold Schönberg's treatise *Der musikalische Gedanke* (Astrolabio-Ubaldini, 2011). He has also published extensively on film music: *Musical Modernism and German Cinema* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), *Dietro un velo d'organza* (Accademia University Press, 2020), *Durch einen Gazeschleier* (edition text + kritik, 2026), *L'industria della persuasione* (Accademia University Press, 2022). He is the Chair of the "Music and Politics: Past and Present" International Musicological Society Study Group.

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Deborah Fox, University of Auckland (New Zealand)

Not the usual song and dance: The role of music and dance in Paola Cortellesi's *C'è ancora domani* (2023)

Throughout *C'è ancora domani* (Cortellesi 2023) Paola Cortellesi's use of incongruous music and discordant dance sequences challenges cinematic conventions and audience expectations. However, the inclusion of these unexpected elements into the film's neorealist aesthetic is not merely a flashy cinematic stunt. This paper builds on the assertions by numerous critics, and Cortellesi herself, that the anachronistic music links the film's historical setting to the present day. My analysis positions the film's music and choreographed sequences as integral to the fabric of the film and central to informing its characterisations and narrative. Selected musical genres from a range of politically charged cultural contexts, such as funk and hip hop/rap, and recontextualized Italian popular music, serve as analogous interpretive markers that unveil Delia's condition and responses and signpost her character development. Furthermore, critical attention to the treatment of domestic violence through dance has focused on its function to either diminish the horror of gender-based violence, or to avoid sensationalising violence. I suggest, however, that choreographed elements can be viewed as a technique that deliberately evokes a sense of the oneiric, ritualistic and performative aspects of the protagonist's relationship to her daily degradations and abuses. Far from trivialising or diluting the issue of the abuse of women, Cortellesi's deployment of these choreographed dance and musical elements enhances both the audience's engagement with the film's difficult themes and the impact of her call for an end to oppression of and violence against women.

Deborah Fox is a post-graduate student in Italian Studies at the University of Auckland. Her interests are in Italian cinema and literature, with a focus on women's narratives. Beyond academia, she pursues her interest in film by practicing law in the film and television industry. Widely regarded as the leading entertainment lawyer in New Zealand, she has been the New Zealand legal counsel on over 60 international studio film and television projects, and acts for the major and mini-major US studios producing feature films and television productions in New Zealand, such as *The Lord of the Rings* and *The Hobbit* trilogies.

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Giovanna Gagliardo, Italian Filmmaker, Rome (Italy)

Il mestiere di vivere / The Stressful Art of Living (2024) (1h 30 min)

The documentary begins at the end: that is, on the weekend of 26th/27th August 1950. It is the last, frantic day of Cesare Pavese's life. He wanders through the deserted city, searches for friend he cannot find, writes, makes phone calls. On Sunday evening, he ends his life. This epilogue serves as the premise for telling another story. The story of a man, a writer, an intellectual who, in his short life, manages to create a new literary and cultural world that shapes the second half of the twentieth century in Italy.

Giovanna Gagliardo is an Italian Filmmaker. She started as a journalist for *Il Giorno*, *Il Messaggero*, *la Repubblica* and *Espresso* and worked as a screenplay writer for RAI television series. In the 1970s, she worked in cinema as a screenwriter for Alberto Lattuada and Miklós Jancsó. Her debut film *Maternale* (1978), was a psychological and symbolic representation of the relationship between mothers and daughters. She then produced *Bellissime: Parte I* (2004) and *Parte II* (2006), a documentary consisting of *archival footage that depicts the evolving conditions of Italian women during the twentieth century*. In 2009, Gagliardo directed *L'abito di domani. Storia della moda nel tempo*, a documentary about the sociocultural and economic history of Italy through fashion. A poignant documentary, *Vittime – 'Gli anni di piombo'* (2009), revisits the *lead years* through the stories of the survivors and the victims's families. In 2012, she directed *Venti anni*, a docu-fiction starting with the fall of the Berlin Wall and ending with the collapse of Lehman Brothers. Then, in 2016, she produced the documentary *Le Romane. Storie di donne e di quartieri*, in which she pairs four female characters with four neighbourhoods in Rome. Two documentaries set in the Mediterranean are: *Il mare della nostra storia* (2018) about the history of Italian colonialism in Libya from the perspective of the Italian and the Italian-speaking Jewish communities in Tripoli; and *Good Morning Tel Aviv* (2021) covering history, life and culture in the titular capital city. Her most recent film *Il mestiere di vivere/The Stressful Art of Living* (2024) portrays Cesare Pavese through his work as poet, prose writer, translator, editor and screenwriter.

Christina Georga, National Technical University of Athens (Greece)

The visualization of the modern city's evolution in Michelangelo Antonioni's tetralogy

This paper examines Michelangelo Antonioni's tetralogy of modernity using the cinematic lens as a means of recording and commenting on the modern city, its architecture and its social impact, based on the theoretical approaches of Simmel (1903), Fromm (1994), Augé (1995) and Pallasmaa (1996). In *The Adventure* (1960), *The Night* (1961), *The Eclipse* (1962) and *The Red Desert* (1964), filmed in Sicily, Milan, Rome and Ravenna, respectively, at the historic period of the Italian economic miracle (1958-1963), Antonioni gradually captures the rapid evolution of the modern city and its architecture. Eight characteristic scenes, two of each movie, are analyzed in this paper. The research tools of this study are the spatial qualities of old-new, presence-absence, scale and distance-closeness. Each spatial quality is produced by cinematic techniques and styles of filmmaking such as montage, dead time, long shots and close-up shots, directing instructions and sound editing. Through the detection of these spatial qualities in the eight scenes, the transition from the old city to the modern one is revealed. This transition seems to sweep away the buildings of past centuries, nature and, ultimately man himself. Antonioni brings the modern city out of the background and, into the foreground, turning it into a protagonist. Whereas he places his main characters within the urban landscape of the modern city, presenting a new embodied spatial experience that highlights the alienation of modern man from his environment, others and himself.

Christina Georga is a PhD candidate at the Department of Architectural Language, Communication and Design of the School of Architecture at the National Technical University of Athens (NTUA), where she is currently conducting research on space, multisensory urban experience and cinema. She has authored a chapter in *After Oil: A Comparative Analysis of Oil Heritage, Urban Transformations, and Resilience Paradigms* publication, A. Mehan (ed) (Springer, 2025). She was awarded the 3rd prize in the Architectural Competition “Architectural design of the complex of administration and central services buildings of PPC S.A. in N. Faliro” (2018).

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Gülşah Görücü, The University of the Aegean in Lesvos (Greece)

The algorithmic afterlife of *The Sopranos* and the affective reframing of Italian American masculinity

This paper examines the contemporary resurgence of *The Sopranos* through social media platforms, where the series circulates as short-form clips, aesthetic edits, memes, and nostalgic fragments. Drawing on digital ethnography of TikTok, X and Instagram fan cultures, the study analyzes how a new generation encounters the series not as a linear television narrative, but as an algorithmically curated affective archive. The paper argues that this algorithmic afterlife does more than reactivate *The Sopranos* as a cultural object; it reorganizes its emotional economy and political meanings. While earlier receptions foregrounded crime, violence, and ethnic stereotyping, contemporary platform circulation increasingly centers therapy scenes, domestic moments, monologues, and expressions of anxiety, fatigue, and melancholia. Through edits, sound loops, and quote cultures, Tony Soprano is reframed less as a gangster anti-hero than as a figure of masculine fragility, emotional labor, and psychic exhaustion. Methodologically, the paper combines digital ethnography, platform content mapping, and close analysis of circulating

clips and edits. By tracing how platform metrics, remix practices, and participatory circulation reshape what becomes visible, shareable, and affectively resonant, the paper conceptualizes *The Sopranos* as a platform object whose Italian American identities and masculinity scripts are algorithmically reorganized. The article situates this transformation within debates on media memory, digital heritage, platformization, and the changing affective politics of Italian American representation.

Gülşah Görücü is PhD candidate in Cultural Communication and Technology at The University of the Aegean in Lesvos, Greece, working at the intersection of digital culture studies, science and technology studies (STS), and critical media infrastructure studies. She employs qualitative and digital methods, including digital ethnography and her research examines platform governance, algorithmic cultures, digital religion, and the mediated politics of space, memory, and affect. Her major publications include two forthcoming book chapters with Palgrave (2026) and Bloomsbury (2026). Her recent scholarly work has also appeared in *The International Journal of Religion and Spirituality in Society* (2025) and *Information, Medium, and Society: Journal of Publishing Studies* (2026).

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Alexander Greenhough, Stanford University (USA)

Niccolò's Desires: The sexual politics of *Identification of a Woman* (1982)

On its glossy surface, Michelangelo Antonioni's *Identification of a Woman* (1982) presents a male film director's psychosexual frustrations through his search for an ideal female muse. Although seemingly unrelated to Italian political life, the film's visual style actually aestheticizes the prior decade, when civil unrest, domestic terrorism, and governmental instability wracked the country during *the years of lead*. During this period significant social legislation was passed in support of women's rights – a 1974 national referendum affirmed the right for married couples to divorce, family law was reformed in 1975, and abortion was legalized, with certain provisions, in 1978. Both these dimensions of the tumultuous 1970s function as a thematic backdrop for the filmic refiguration of the ideological contradictions of late-Cold War Italy, ultimately constituting the film's form. Unlike fellow postwar auteurs such as Rossellini, Pasolini, and Bertolucci, Antonioni is often viewed as minimizing or ignoring the political, yet *Identification of a Woman's* psychoanalytical and mythic narrative should be understood within contemporaneous politicized social relations. With its clear focus on class stratification, sexual politics, technologized mass media, and political violence, the film reveals Antonioni's ambivalent views on both liberal democracy and revolutionary struggle, through a focus on a solitary artist-intellectual who contends with the novel freedoms of women under the law during a time in which the ideas of the far left were popularized and mobilized.

Alexander Greenhough is Lecturer in the Program in Writing and Rhetoric at Stanford University. His research interests include film theory, videographic criticism and postwar European and American cinema. He is the editor of *Albert Brooks: Interviews* (University Press of Mississippi, 2024), and his work has appeared in journals such as *Film Criticism*, *Quarterly*

Review of Film and Video, [in]Transition: Journal of Videographic Film & Moving Image Studies, and MAST: The Journal of Media Art Study and Theory.

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Julia Heim, University of Pennsylvania (USA)

Reading gender through genre in Netflix’s *Mrs. Playmen* (2025-) and *The Monster* (2025)

This paper examines *Mrs. Playmen* (2025-) and *The Monster* (2022), two contemporary Italian television series inspired by real events, to analyze how genre conventions shape the representation of gender. While both series appear to challenge dominant narratives—*Mrs. Playmen* through its portrayal of a woman navigating and reshaping the erotic-publishing industry, and *The Monster* through its blend of true-crime and social critique—their generic frameworks ultimately limit the extent of their subversive potential. Drawing on scholarship that understands genre as a system of expectations, the paper argues that each show uses genre to gesture toward gender transgression while simultaneously reabsorbing that transgression into normative structures. In *Mrs. Playmen*, melodramatic and biographical tropes frame the protagonist’s defiance of patriarchal norms as exceptional, personal, and morally fraught, reinforcing familiar narratives about the risks of female ambition. In *The Monster*, true-crime conventions position male violence as an individual aberration, stabilizing normative masculinity by detaching deviance from broader gendered power relations. Through comparative analysis, the paper demonstrates how these series mobilize genre to both enable and contain critiques of gender norms. Ultimately, the analysis reveals the persistent pull of normative gender expectations within texts that appear to challenge them, showing how genre functions not only as a storytelling framework but also as a mechanism that shapes the cultural legibility of gendered agency.

Julia Heim (they/them) is Lecturer of Foreign Language at the University of Pennsylvania. A scholar who focuses on LGBTQIA+ representation in contemporary Italian media and radical pedagogies, they have recently co-edited the volumes *Spaghetti Sissies Queering Italian American Media* (Palgrave, 2023) and *Queering Italia Media* (Lexington, 2020).

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Amy Hough-Dugdale, University of California, Riverside (USA)

Fellini’s fluid Office and the ever-expanding hyperfilm

This paper will highlight some of the exhibits housed in the “Fellini Forever” collection in Toronto, Canada, arguing that the voyage of this collection (essentially, the entirety of what remained in Fellini’s office at Cinecittà at the time of his death) via cargo ship across the Atlantic constitutes a surprising extension of what I have previously referred to as Fellini’s “liquid hyperfilm.” Marketed as a “Hidden Archive,” the Fellini Forever collection is an assemblage of Fellini’s personal artifacts (among which are his famous red scarf and Borsalino fedora), rarely seen sketches, film props, film reels that are in the process of being digitized, and scripts for

films made and unmade. Now, as the materials are being made more accessible to scholars, I examine several of them in the context and composition of Fellini's "creative space," in both the concrete and abstract senses of that term. I show that material traces and resonances of the objects that surrounded him in his office—from photos of women taped to his jar of *pennerelli* to sketches hanging on the walls—not only appear in his later films *Intervista* and *La voce della luna* but also extend Fellini's "liquid hyperfilm" to include the actual "eye" of his liquid creative chaos: the office space in which he dreamed, created, collaborated. It is especially interesting to consider the extension of the liquid hyperfilm in light of the *ufficio*'s oceanic transport to Canada, an event that, itself, is spawning new documentaries and creative work inspired by Fellini.

Amy Hough-Dugdale is Lecturer in the University Writing Program at the University of California, Riverside. Her research focuses on the intersections of intermediality, ecopoetics, and the senses, mostly in the films and other creative work of Federico Fellini. A poet, as well as a scholar, Amy has published in the *Los Angeles Review of Books*, the *Companion to Federico Fellini* (John Wiley & Sons, 2020), *Italica*, and *The Journal of Italian Cinema and Media Studies*, among others. Amy was the co-editor, along with Frank Burke and Marita Gubareva, of a special section on the poet and screenwriter Tonino Guerra in the *Journal of Italian Cinema and Media Studies* (11/1, 2023).

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Russell J. A. Kilbourn, Wilfrid Laurier University (Canada)

Rohrwacher, Ferrante...Beckett: Adapting *smarginatura* in *The Story of a New Name* and *The Lying Life of Adults*

In the 'Ischia' episode in Elena Ferrante's *Storia del nuovo cognome* (2012), Lila schemes to impress Lenù's friend Nino by discussing Samuel Beckett's Complete Plays. Ferrante invokes Beckett in *In the Margins* (2021) to shore up her concept of *frantumaglia* as the necessary precondition for literary form: "I had the...unconfessable ambition of going outside the given forms, letting the writing spill outside them. Gradually that phase passed: even...Samuel Beckett, said that the only thing we can't do without, in literature and any other place, is form" (p. 35). For Ferrante, far from fixing things in a static frame, form allows subjectivities to come into being even as it disrupts their ongoing becoming. With *Happy Days* (1961), Beckett's *All that Fall* (1957) is an ironic source for the concept of *smarginatura*. In a comparison of the Ischia episode (set in August 1961) with Alice Rohrwacher's adaptation in episodes 4 and 5 of *L'amica geniale*'s season 2, this paper explores the influence on Lenù's and Lila's post-adolescent coming-of-age of a short play about an elderly Irishman who rhapsodizes about becoming deaf and mute on top of blind. Life in such a "pure state" frightens Lila: "Life without seeing and without speaking, without speaking and listening, life without a covering, without a container, is shapeless [*sformata*]" (ch. 51). This Beckettian intertext anticipates the 'dissolving-of-boundaries' that comes to define Lila as a woman even as it proves her undoing, while clarifying the untranslatability of *smarginatura* in the translation from page to screen.

Co-editors

Roberta Cauchi-Santoro, University of Waterloo (Canada)
Russell Kilbourn, Wilfrid Laurier University (Canada)

Framing Ferrante: Adaptation and Intermediality in the works of Elena Ferrante: From L'amore molesto to La vita bugiarda degli adulti
(Società Editrice Fiorentina, 2026)

The most fertile path open to Ferrante scholars is that of observing her work through the lens of a close analysis in which authors' identities are diffracted and margins between texts are dissolved. This collection of essays, *Framing Ferrante: Adaptation and Intermediality in the works of Elena Ferrante*, remarkably meets this challenge, as Ferrante's texts are examined in adaptation, outside the orderly narrative and interpretative frame that the author created through the invention of her name. *Framing Ferrante* fills a gap in Ferrante studies, providing the first scholarly collection of essays entirely dedicated to adaptations of Elena Ferrante's novels: Mario Martone's *L'amore molesto* (1995), Roberto Faenza's *I giorni dell'abbandono* (2005), Maggie Gyllenhaal's *The Lost Daughter* (2021), and the television series: Saverio Costanzo et al.'s HBO adaptation of *L'amica geniale* (2018-2024), and Edoardo De Angelis's Netflix series *La vita bugiarda degli adulti* (2023).

Russell J. A. Kilbourn is Professor of English and Film Studies at Wilfrid Laurier University. His books include: *Framing Ferrante: Adaptation and Intermediality from Troubling Love to The Lying Life of Adults* (co-ed. Roberta Cauchi-Santoro) (La Società Editrice Fiorentina, 2026); *Feminist Posthumanism in Contemporary Science Fiction Film and Media: From Annihilation to High Life and Beyond* (Bloomsbury, 2023); *The Cinema of Paolo Sorrentino: Commitment to Style* (Columbia UP, 2020); *W.G. Sebald's Postsecular Redemption: Catastrophe with Spectator* (Northwestern UP, 2018); *The Memory Effect: The Remediation of Memory in Literature and Film* (WLU Press, 2013); *Cinema, Memory, Modernity: The Representation of Memory from the Art Film to Transnational Cinema* (Routledge 2010).

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Gloria Lauri-Lucente, University of Malta (Malta)

Sicily's political unconscious in Francesco Rosi's *Salvatore Giuliano* (1962)

This paper reads Francesco Rosi's *Salvatore Giuliano* (1962) through the lens of Sicily's political unconscious, arguing that the figure of the bandit functions less as a historical subject than as a symbolic condensation of unresolved social contradictions. Drawing on Leonardo Sciascia's reflections on Giuliano's cinematic invisibility and on Fredric Jameson's reformulation of Claude Lévi-Strauss's notion of art as a symbolic act, the paper contends that Rosi's portrayal of Giuliano operates as a projection of antagonisms that could neither be articulated conceptually nor resolved through social or political practice but could only find resolution at a purely imaginary level. Giuliano's quasi absence from the screen intensifies his mythic charge, transforming him into a collective fantasy figure through which Sicily's oppressed classes imagine resistance, justice, and transcendence in the face of oppressive

institutional power. The film's oscillation between documentary realism and lyrical or ritualised moments, most notably in the morgue sequence, reveals how myth, while traditionally associated with falsehood, simultaneously conveys a higher, oblique truth. In this sense, Giuliano's legend does not mystify Sicily's historical reality; rather, it gives form to and makes manifest the island's political unconscious, offering an imaginary and provisional resolution to contradictions that remain materially unresolved.

Gloria Lauri-Lucente is Professor of Italian and Comparative Literature and Deputy Dean of the Faculty of Arts at the University of Malta. She is Head of the Department of Italian and Director of the Institute of Anglo-Italian Studies. She is the founding designer and academic coordinator of the MA programme in 'Film Studies'. She is editor and co-editor of a number of critical collections and has authored numerous articles on Anglo-Italian Studies, Film Studies and Comparative Literature. She has been the volume editor of the *Journal of Anglo-Italian Studies* since 2014. She is also an Honorary Member of CUSVE (Centro Universitario di Studi Vittoriani e Edoardiani, Università degli Studi "G. d'Annunzio" Chieti-Pescara). She is currently completing a monograph on the filmic and the television adaptations of Victorian and Neo-Victorian Literature.

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Irene Lottini, The University of Iowa (USA)

The poet's body: Corporeality in Pupi Avati's *Dante* (2022)

Pupi Avati's *Dante* (2022) retraces the poet's life through Giovanni Boccaccio's mission to rehabilitate his memory. Drawing on nearly two decades of research, Avati's cinematic portrait of Dante intertwines the echo of the poet's sublime verses with representations of his corporeal existence. The episodes devoted to Dante's experiences – his mother's death, his love for Beatrice, his friendship with Guido Cavalcanti, his political engagement and his exile – emphasize the vulnerability and transience of the human body, aligning the film with medieval notions of caducity and submission to a higher power. Avati's pursuit of historical accuracy is articulated through a visual strategy that refers to medieval artistic models in which the human figure is subordinated to architectural and spatial systems. By evoking the monumentalism of medieval architecture and the compositional logic of medieval painting, many scenes overwhelm the characters' physical presence, producing a cinematic aesthetic that underscores bodily frailty. This paper examines how Avati's portrayal of Dante Alighieri deploys Italy's artistic heritage as an intermedial framework through which the poet's physicality and earthly experience in medieval Italy are reimagined.

Irene Lottini is Associate Professor of Instruction at the University of Iowa, where she teaches courses on Italian language, literature and cinema. Her main research interests focus on Italian silent, modern, and contemporary cinema, the relationship between film and the other arts, and Italian American cinema. Her publications include the co-edited volume *A Global "Puppet"*, special issue of the *Journal of Adaptation in Film & Performance* (with D. Marcheschi and F. Pacchioni, 2025), and essays on Italian literature, 1910s cinema, modern and contemporary film

(Luchino Visconti, Michelangelo Antonioni, Martin Scorsese, Davide Ferrario, Roberto Andò, Ferzan Ozpetek, Gianluigi Toccafondo).

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Bernadette Luciano, University of Auckland (New Zealand)

***Eccomi* (2024): Representations of ageing women in short films**

Italian cinema and television have largely struggled to represent ageing—particularly women’s ageing—beyond narratives of decline or nostalgia. By contrast, the short film format has emerged as a vital space for counter-narratives that reimagine later life in more complex, affectively nuanced, and resistant terms. This paper takes its cue from the expression *eccomi*, the 2024 theme of the most prominent Italian short film festival dedicated to ageing in Italy, *I Corti di Lunga Vita*. *Eccomi* resonates on two levels: as an assertion of agency and a reclaiming of visibility, “here I am,” and as a declaration of ethical openness to care and communal solidarity, meaning “here I am to help you.” In its dual sense, *Eccomi* encapsulates a vision of ageing that is both self-affirming and socially generative and that is foregrounded in the festival’s award-winning shorts discussed in this paper. These films articulate an aesthetic and discourse of affirmative ageing deployed through strategies of self-reflexivity *Letizia* (Vincenzo De Nicola, 2019), nuanced performance *A cena con delivery* (Daniele Cattini 2023), sensory detail *Albicocche* (Pasquale Armenante 2024) and elliptical storytelling *L’alfiere* (Daniele Camerlingo 2024). Enhanced by the filmmakers’ skillful use of short-form narrative strategies—climax, resolution, and emotional immediacy—these shorts reveal the capacity of the form to reimagine ageing as an active, relational, and creative condition, while engaging the viewer with a reparative model of ageing women on screen.

Bernadette Luciano is Professor of Italian and European Studies at the University of Auckland, New Zealand and specializes in Italian cinema and cultural studies. She has published numerous articles and book chapters in the areas of cinema and documentary studies, film adaptation, women’s autobiographical writing, women’s history, the theory and practice of translation and subtitling, and issues of identity, migration and transnationalism in literature and film. She is co-author (with S. Scarparo) of *Reframing Italy: New Trends in Italian Women’s Filmmaking* (Purdue UP, 2013) and author of *The Cinema of Silvio Soldini: Dream, Image, Voyage* (Troubador, 2008).

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Andrea Malaguti, University of Massachusetts Amherst (USA)

Metamorfosi femminili in Michelangelo Antonioni: *Le amiche* (1955) e *Il grido* (1957)

Ne *Il grido* (1957) di Michelangelo Antonioni, le donne che l’operaio Aldo incontra vagando per il Polesine costituiscono modelli di indipendenza di giudizio e azione da cui lo stesso Aldo si sente escluso. Sono donne che, in chiave di indipendenza e resilienza, ricalcano da vicino, anche nella somiglianza fisica, le cinque figure femminili più importanti di *Le amiche* (1955).

L'intervento vuole far luce sui nessi e sulle dinamiche di genere che, tradotte dalla borghesia urbana al proletariato rurale, suggeriscono un rapporto molto più profondo e diverso tra personaggi in sé complessi e paesaggi cruciali sia nel cinema di Antonioni, che comincia col documentario *Gente del Po* (1943), sia nella cronaca del tempo, con l'alluvione del Polesine del 1951. Con l'intervento si indaga quindi la troppo spesso ignorata, anche se implicita e fondante, riflessione di Antonioni sulla società attraverso il rapporto tra paesaggio e icona femminile come "volto attivo della crisi" (Tinazzi 2002).

Andrea Malaguti è Professore Associato di Italian and Film Studies alla University of Massachusetts Amherst. Si interessa soprattutto di letteratura italiana del dopoguerra (Tonino Guerra, Giorgio Bassani, Giorgio Caproni, su cui ha pubblicato la monografia *La svolta di Enea*, (Melangolo, 2008) e di cinema italiano. Ha pubblicato una monografia sul cinema di Antonioni degli anni Cinquanta *Straniere a se stesse: immagini femminili nel cinema di Michelangelo Antonioni degli anni cinquanta* (Galaad, 2018) e continua a interessarsi del cinema di quell'epoca.

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Stefano Mancini, Palacký University di Olomouc (Czech Republic)

La dimensione metalinguistica nella poesia di Bernardo e Giuseppe Bertolucci

Oltre all'essersi dedicati alla regia cinematografica (quando non teatrale e televisiva), nel corso della loro esistenza i fratelli Bertolucci hanno prodotto anche numerosi articoli e componimenti poetici. Scritte prima d'intraprendere la carriera registica, le poesie di Bernardo e Giuseppe Bertolucci (contenute, rispettivamente, ne *In cerca del mistero* e *Professione di poeta incerto*) risultano particolarmente rilevanti: attraverso l'attività poetica i fratelli Bertolucci cominciano a plasmare il loro universo autoriale, che circoscriveranno e struttureranno poi con i loro film. Ciò detto, per la capacità d'indurre il lettore-spettatore a riflettere sul rapporto tra il cinema e le arti, così come sulla storia e sul potenziale del cinema, la dimensione metalinguistica della produzione filmica di Bernardo e Giuseppe Bertolucci appare (ancora) di grandissimo interesse. Ebbene, attraverso studi approfonditi ho constatato le tracce di una dimensione metalinguistica anche all'interno di alcuni dei loro componimenti poetici giovanili - quali, ad esempio, *A Pasolini*, in cui Bernardo Bertolucci intraprende il tentativo, compiuto definitivamente attraverso *La commare Secca*, di raggiungere la piena autonomia poetica da Pier Paolo Pasolini, e "*Animae ludentes...*", in cui Giuseppe Bertolucci accenna a una riflessione sul dispositivo scrittoriale tout-court, anticipando quanto in parte rintracciabile già in *Berlinguer ti voglio bene*. Allo scopo di condividere i risultati della mia ricerca, attraverso il mio intervento vorrei soffermarmi su questi (e altri) componimenti poetici: a mio avviso, i veri e propri "atti di nascita" della dimensione metalinguistica dell'opera di Bernardo e di Giuseppe Bertolucci.

Stefano Mancini è uno studente di dottorato in Románské literatury presso la Faculty of Arts della Palacký University di Olomouc (Czech Republic). I suoi principali campi d'interesse sono: la letteratura, il cinema, l'intertestualità e l'intermedialità. Nel 2025, ha presentato un contributo su Emmanuel Carrère nella cornice rappresentata dal "V International Colloquium of Romance Philologies for Students" e un contributo sull'opera di Bernardo e Giuseppe Bertolucci nella

cornice rappresentata dal “21st International Meeting of Romanists”. La sua recensione di *Immagini sincretiche. leggere e scrivere in digitale* (Montani 2024) è in corso di pubblicazione su *Ágalma – Rivista di studi culturali e di estetica*.

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Mujah Maraini-Melehi, Italian filmmaker (Rome)

Haiku on a Plum Tree (2016) (1h 13min)

This is a documentary following filmmaker Mujah Maraini-Melehi as she retraces her family's survival in a Japanese prison camp during the Second World War. It tells the story of her grandparents, Fosco Maraini and Topazia Alliata, who were imprisoned in 1943 after refusing to align with Mussolini

Mujah Maraini-Melehi, director, co-writer, and producer of the documentary *Haiku on a Plum Tree*, was raised in Morocco and Italy. She studied in Canada and at Sarah Lawrence College in New York, focusing on theatre and film. She also trained at Boston University and studied acting at the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art in London and at the Actors Studio in New York. She lived in the United States for two decades, performing in theatre at La MaMa under Ellen Stewart. Now based in Rome, she runs the production company Haiku Film. Her documentary *Haiku on a Plum Tree* (2016) premiered at the Rome Film Festival and was also selected for IFC Center's *Stranger Than Fiction* series in New York. Her short film *Mémoire Future* (2024) was screened at the São Paulo Biennial in 2025. She has been developing a theatre project, *Letters from Exile*, on Tina Modotti with Claudia Gerini, produced at La MaMa in New York in March 2026 and in Italy in the autumn.

Annachiara Mariani, University of Tennessee, Knoxville (USA)

Reclaiming the narrative: Amanda Knox and the power of media representation

This presentation examines the Amanda Knox case as one of the earliest and most influential examples of a global “trial by media.” It investigates how journalistic framing and sustained media exposure shaped public perceptions of Knox, transforming a legal case into a moral and cultural spectacle. Drawing on Framing Theory (Entman 1993) and Cultivation Theory (Gerbner 1976), the study analyzes how early tabloid narratives—centered on gender, sexuality, and morality—constructed Knox's image in the public imagination. It also considers how these representations persisted across newspapers, television, documentaries, and dramatizations such as Hulu's *The Twisted Tale of Amanda Knox* (2025), co-written and co-produced by Knox herself. This paper argues that media framing not only builds narratives but, through repetition and emotional appeal, cements them into collective belief—often overriding judicial truth. Knox's memoir, *Waiting to Be Heard* (2013), and her later screen collaborations are interpreted as acts of narrative reclamation, allowing her to challenge the mythologized versions of herself that dominated public discourse. Through this intersection of media studies, gender representation, and justice narratives, the presentation reflects on how contemporary media can

both distort and democratize storytelling—and what it means to reclaim identity in a world where truth competes with spectacle.

Annachiara Mariani is Associate Professor of Italian at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville. Her research focuses on Italian Cinema, National and Transnational Media Studies, and Italian Theatre. She is the author of *The Grotesque Theatre and Pirandello* (Cassandra Editore, 2013) and editor of *Paolo Sorrentino's Cinema and Television* (Intellect, 2021). She has published numerous essays and reviews on Italian theatre, cinema and television, exploring the intersections between media, history and identity, in volumes and journals published by Cambridge University Press, Johns Hopkins University Press, University of Toronto Press, Rutgers University Press, and University of Bologna Press.

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Alessandro Marini, Palacký University in Olomouc (Czech Republic)

***Leonora addio* (2022) di Paolo Taviani, tra elaborazione del lutto e nostalgia del cinema**

Dopo la morte di Vittorio nel 2018, Paolo Taviani gira nel 2022 *Leonora addio*, il suo ultimo lungometraggio. La vicenda del film ripercorre gli ultimi anni della vita di Pirandello e l'incredibile storia delle sue ceneri, nel 1936 provvisoriamente tumulate a Roma e solo dopo la fine della Seconda guerra mondiale traslate avventurosamente in Sicilia; su tale materia, il regista innesta l'adattamento di *Il chiodo*, la novella pirandelliana che già avrebbe dovuto far parte di *Kaos* (1984), il primo dei tre adattamenti pirandelliani dei Taviani. *Leonora addio* è un'opera testamentaria e identitaria, in cui Paolo intende non solo confrontarsi con uno dei modelli fondativi della propria poetica, ma anche, nello stesso tempo, ricostruire idealmente, nel segno di Pirandello, il sodalizio estetico con il fratello. *Leonora addio* porta infatti a compimento un progetto pensato in due, realizzato come se fosse l'esecuzione di una volontà testamentaria comune, anche se idealmente eseguita da un unico, privilegiato sopravvissuto. Questo contributo si propone di mettere in rilievo come, in *Leonora addio*, lo strumento privilegiato per gestire il lutto sia proprio il cinema. Ricordare Vittorio per Paolo Taviani equivale infatti a ricostruire un intero percorso di formazione estetica e politica, e, in esso, il ruolo storico svolto dal cinema, testimonianza identitaria di un'intera generazione, ora oggetto di inesausta rievocazione e inguaribile nostalgia.

Alessandro Marini is Associate Professor in the Department of Romance Studies at Palacký University in Olomouc. His research interests lie in Italian film and adaptation. He has authored chapters in more volumes and also written articles published in *Journal of Italian Cinema & Media Studies*, *Modern Language Review*, *Forum Italicum*, *Cinémas* and published three monographs: *Pirandello e i Taviani* (VUP, 2006), *Bernardo Bertolucci: Il cinema, la letteratura* (Falsopiano, 2013), and *Two Directors in Search of an Author* (Carocci, 2025).

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Gaetana Marrone-Puglia, Princeton University (USA)

Framing the city and the rhetoric of power in Francesco Rosi's *Hands Over the City* (1963)

In *Hands Over the City* (1963) Francesco Rosi investigates a contemporary public drama centered on building speculation and political corruption affecting Naples, his hometown. Edoardo Nottola (Rod Steiger), a housing developer and a member of the municipal council, becomes the subject of an investigation when a tenement collapses in the city center. Deserted from his right-wing political allies, he switches party allegiance and succeeds in shifting the balance of political power in his favor resuming his lucrative housing projects. The film goes beyond an indictment of local civic corruption and political opportunism: Naples exemplifies the scandalous urban developments in postwar Italy. This paper focuses on how Rosi captures the interplay between legal and illegal powers to shed attention on a passionate call for democracy and social justice.

Gaetana Marrone-Puglia, Professor of Italian Studies at Princeton University, specializes in modern Italian literature, postwar European cinema, and GSS. She is the author of several books, including *New Landscapes in Contemporary Italian Cinema* (*Annali d'Italianistica*, 1999), *The Gaze and the Labyrinth: The Cinema of Liliana Cavani* (Princeton U. P., 2000), a critical edition of Ugo Betti's *Corruzione al Palazzo di Giustizia* (Maria Pacini Fazzi, 2006), *Encyclopedia of Italian Literary Studies* (Routledge, 2007) and *The Cinema of Francesco Rosi* (Oxford U. P., 2020). She has received the AAIS Presidential Award, the MLA Scaglione Prize, the honorary title of "Cavaliere dell'Ordine al Merito della Repubblica Italiana," and the Premio Internazionale Flaiano 2021.

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Jill Martiniuk, University of California, San Diego (USA)

Nostalgia o nostal'giya: The duality of longing in Nikita Mikhalkov's *Dark Eyes* (1987)

From the 1940s through the 1990s, a series of Russian–Italian film collaborations explored Russia's enduring fascination with Italian culture. While the plots of these films vary, each presents an idealized vision of Italy in which the nation's history and art are elevated to an almost mythical status. Taken together, these films convey a strong longing for the past and suggest that what once was is better, expressing a pronounced nostalgia that positions the past as preferable to the present. This paper examines how Russian director Nikita Mikhalkov plays with Italy's mythical status in Russian film and with the allure of nostalgia in his 1987 film *Dark Eyes*, which transposes Chekhov's 1899 short story "Lady with a Lapdog" to Italy, mapping the narrative onto both Italian and Russian settings. Although not an exact retelling, Chekhov's story provides the structural backbone of *Dark Eyes* and shapes its imagined relationship between the two cultures as Romano (played by Marcello Mastroianni) moves between them in search of his lost love. I argue that Mikhalkov draws parallels between Italy and Russia, invoking their cultural legacies to build a sense of connection, only to ultimately subvert it through humor. Mikhalkov juxtaposes Italy's romanticized aura with Russia's more ambivalent relationship to its own past, allowing moments of comedy, exaggeration, and self-awareness to destabilize the very myths the film appears to celebrate. In doing so, the film exposes the gap between cultural

fantasy and lived experience, revealing nostalgia not as a source of authenticity or continuity but as something constructed, fragile, and ultimately contradictory.

Jill Martiniuk is Lecturer in the Warren Writing Program at the University of California, San Diego. Her research interests center on cross-cultural conversations on grief and redemption. She has authored the book *Wandering in Circles: Venichka's Journey of Redemption in Moskva-Petushki* (Academic Studies Press, 2021) and has published chapters in *Critical Insights: Leo Tolstoy* (edited by R. Stauffer) (Salem Press, 2017) and *Queer Transnationalities* (edited by S. A. Bellezza and E. Dundovich) (University of Pisa Press, 2023). She has also written articles published in the *Journal of Italian Cinema & Media Studies*, *Canadian Slavonic Papers*, and *Russian Literature*.

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Matthew Mason, Catholic University of Portugal (Portugal)

Cold War nostalgia and political utopia in Nanni Moretti's *Il sol dell'avvenire* (2023)

This paper seeks to offer a critical reading of Nanni Moretti's recent film *Il sol dell'avvenire* (2023) – *A Brighter Tomorrow* (in English) – and, more specifically, the ways in which the film engages with the important tradition of Italian Communism and the world-historical events of the Soviet crushing of the Hungarian uprising in November 1956. By making direct reference to the events in Budapest in 1956, and by playfully providing an alternative historical direction for the Italian Communist Party (PCI) itself, it will be suggested that the film, quite paradoxically, both seeks to provoke a serious engagement with this important historical moment but, at the same time, reduces the representation of it, by nature of its general comedic tone, to one of parody or 'pastiche' (Jameson 1991). The paper intends to analyse the way in which the film uses décor, costumes and props as well as historical footage to stage its playful representation of the past and will consider the ways in which such representation conforms to, as well as contradicts, Fredric Jameson's conception of the 'nostalgia film' (1991, 2007). It will be suggested that the film to some extent problematises this notion through its perceived interest in political utopia and its alternative, optimistic vision of the future, something that Jameson suggested had been lost in the postmodern. At the same time, however, with its overarching playful tone, the film can be seen to effectively neutralise its own radical utopianism by falling back into characteristic 'postmodern' irony.

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Francesca Medaglia, Sapienza Università di Roma (Italy)

Dalla pagina allo schermo: adattamento e narrazione transmediale nei media italiani contemporanei

Questo intervento analizza il ruolo dell'adattamento e della transmedialità nel cinema e nella televisione italiani contemporanei, collocandoli all'interno dei più recenti dibattiti negli studi sui media. Negli ultimi vent'anni, la produzione audiovisiva italiana ha intensificato il ricorso alle pratiche di adattamento — da opere letterarie e romanzi storici a *graphic novel* e format internazionali — sperimentando al contempo forme di narrazione transmediale che attraversano cinema, televisione, piattaforme di *streaming* e paratesti digitali. L'adattamento in Italia non è solo trasferimento da un *medium* all'altro, ma processo dinamico di negoziazione tra immaginari culturali, strategie industriali e ambienti tecnologici. Attraverso casi di studio che spaziano dal fenomeno di *Il commissario Montalbano* fino a produzioni recenti come *Noi* (adattamento italiano di *This Is Us*) e format transculturali quali *Skam Italia*, l'intervento indaga come le pratiche adattive riconfigurino le narrazioni nazionali per pubblici domestici e globali. La transmedialità complica ulteriormente questi processi: campagne social, podcast, piattaforme interattive e circuiti festivalieri contribuiscono a creare mondi narrativi estesi, trasformando gli adattamenti tradizionali in esperienze partecipative. Queste strategie avvicinano la produzione italiana alle tendenze internazionali, mantenendo però caratteristiche distintive radicate in tradizioni, generi e forme di *branding* culturale nazionale. Combinando gli *adaptation studies* con la teoria transmediale, l'intervento mostra come la narrazione audiovisiva italiana contemporanea funzioni come laboratorio di traduzione culturale e innovazione narrativa, ridefinendo il concetto stesso di “media italiani” in un contesto di circolazione globale e mettendo in discussione le nozioni di autorialità e coinvolgimento del pubblico.

Francesca Medaglia è Ricercatore a tempo determinato di “Critica letteraria e Letterature comparate” presso il Dipartimento di Lettere e Culture Moderne di Sapienza Università di Roma. Si occupa di autorialità, di personaggi e di transmedialità. Ha pubblicato, cinque volumi sulla scrittura a quattro mani e collettiva *La scrittura a quattro mani* (Pensa MultiMedia, 2014); *Asimmetrie ibride nella critica di Antonino Contiliano* (CFR, 2014); *Il ritmo dei tempi in Antonino Contiliano* (Empiria, 2014), sulla questione dell'autore *Autore/personaggio: interferenze, complicazioni e scambi di ruolo. Autori e personaggi complessi nella contemporaneità letteraria e transmediale* (Lithos, 2020) e su intermedialità e transmedialità *Intermedialità diffusa: la narrazione transculturale metamoderna* (Peter Lang, 2024).

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Tommaso Meozzi, Università di Vienna (Austria)

Una narrazione polifonica? La rappresentazione filmica della pandemia in Italia

A quasi tre anni di distanza dalla fine dello stato di emergenza, la pandemia di Covid-19 sembra essere solo un ricordo lontano, per lo più rimosso dalla memoria culturale (cfr. Assmann) italiana. La pandemia, tuttavia, non solo ha colpito la salute di milioni di persone e il sistema socio-economico italiano, ma ha costituito anche una sfida narrativa, portando le storie individuali a confrontarsi con un evento di proporzioni globali. Nonostante anche l'industria cinematografica italiana sia stata duramente colpita dalla pandemia, sono molti i film che hanno

cercato di raccontare questo momento storico complesso, adattandosi alle mutate condizioni ambientali (paesaggi vuoti, film girati interamente in interni o produzioni corali). Tra questi ricordiamo *Fuori era primavera* (Gabriele Salvatores 2020), *Molecole* (Andrea Segre 2020) e *State a casa* (Roan Johnson 2021). L'intervento si propone di analizzare i tre film attraverso il concetto di polifonia, per rispondere alla domanda seguente: in che modo il cinema italiano ha cercato di offrire una rappresentazione polifonica della pandemia, mettendo in dialogo prospettive diverse su questo fenomeno e superando semplici polarizzazioni ideologiche? Il concetto di polifonia, teorizzato nell'ambito degli studi letterari da Michail Michajlovič Bachtin, è stato poi applicato anche nell'ambito dell'analisi filmica (Lotman, Stam), non solo da un punto di vista tematico-narrativo, ma anche per indagare l'interazione tra i diversi sistemi semiotici che costituiscono il linguaggio audiovisuale (inquadratura, immagini in movimento, rapporto immagini-musica). L'intervento si propone dunque di indagare il corpus sia da un punto di vista tematico-narrativo che estetico.

Tommaso Meozzi è Professore Assistente all'Istituto di Romanistica dell'Università di Vienna, dove si occupa di letteratura e media italiani. I suoi principali interessi di ricerca sono la distopia letteraria e cinematografica, la narrazione autobiografica relativa a esperienze di migrazione (sia dall'Italia che verso l'Italia) e la rappresentazione della pandemia di Covid-19 nella cultura italiana. Oltre a vari articoli, ha pubblicato un volume sulla distopia letteraria e cinematografica *Visioni dell'alienazione* (Pacini, 2017) ed è stato membro del progetto *Corona Fictions*, finanziato dall'*Austrian Science Fund*, dedicato alla rappresentazione culturale della Pandemia di Covid-19 in area anglofona e romanza.

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Anna Miller-Klejsa, University of Lodz (Poland)

The reception of Luchino Visconti's films in the Polish press from the late 1950s to the late 1970s

Among the great masters of Italian cinema whose films were released in Poland, Luchino Visconti was surpassed only by Federico Fellini in the number of films he distributed. All of Visconti's films were shown through normal distribution channels (unlike Pier Paolo Pasolini's films, many of which were never released in the People's Republic of Poland). Of Visconti's feature films, only *Ossessione* (1943) – considered a precursor to neorealism – never reached Polish screens. Visconti's filmography, initially associated with the neorealist movement (*La terra trema* [1948]; *Bellissima* [1951]) and over time evolving into a distinctive artistic idiom, was well known and widely discussed in Poland. Based on an analysis of reviews and other forms of film criticism, such as essays and columns, I will examine the image of Visconti that arose in national trade magazines (*Film*, *Ekran*), socio-cultural magazines and selected local press titles. In my paper, I will attempt to determine what kind of image the Polish press constructed for Luchino Visconti and which themes of his oeuvre were particularly highlighted. I will pay close attention to the film *Morte a Venezia* (1971), which was widely commented on in the Polish press, not only because Visconti received a jubilee award for it at the Cannes Film Festival, but also because of its Polish connection (the character of Tadzio) and the fact that Visconti visited Warsaw in 1970 in search of an appropriate actor for the role.

Anna Miller-Klejsa is Assistant Professor in the Department of Italian Studies at the University of Lodz (Poland). Her research interests include Italian cinema with a focus on Polish-Italian film relations and the history of twentieth-century Italy represented in fiction films. She is the author of two books: *Resistenza we włoskim filmie fabularnym* (Resistenza in Italian Feature Film) (University of Lodz Publishing, 2013) and *Dekada ołowiu na ekranie: Polityczny terrorizm lat 70: we włoskim filmie fabularnym* (The Decade of Lead on the Screen: Political Terrorism of the 1970s in Italian Feature Film) (University of Lodz Publishing, 2016). She is also a member of the Polish Society for Film and Media Studies and of the Association of Polish Italianists.

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Mario Monopoli, Sapienza University of Rome (Italy)

Alternative spatial imaginaries of Venice and its hinterlands in contemporary Italian cinema

In global audiovisual productions, Venice is often depicted as an iconic playground detached from reality, serving as the setting for international blockbusters. In this context, several Italian authors have attempted to recontextualize the city and its surrounding areas by countering this dominant imagery, reframing Venice as a contested and unstable place, marked by social displacement and the progressive abandonment of its inhabitants due to tourist gentrification (Genç et al. 2022). This paper examines how recent Italian cinema represents Venice and its provincial areas not as a static postcard, but as a lived environment undergoing profound transformation, in which the inhabitants themselves struggle to recognize the city as their own. Focusing on *Welcome Venice* (Andrea Segre 2021), *Atlantide* (Yuri Ancarani 2021), and *Le città di pianura* (Francesco Sossai 2025), the analysis explores different cinematic approaches to the erosion of urban identity, from family to economic conflict to youth marginalization and the expansion of post-urban peripheral spaces, drawing on the notion of *non-place* (Augé 1995). Emphasizing a spatial reading of cinema (Shiel and Fitzmaurice 2001), the paper investigates how these films construct alternative spatial imaginaries that focus on local perspectives and everyday practices. In doing so, they articulate a counter-narrative to the globalized and touristic vision of Venice, revealing the city as a place of loss, resistance, and unresolved tensions between the visible and the invisible.

Mario Monopoli is a PhD candidate in the Department of Communication and Social Research at Sapienza University of Rome. His current research, conducted within the framework of a European-funded NRRP scholarship, explores risk communication through a bottom-up, practice-oriented approach, with particular attention to social movements.

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Fulvio Orsitto, Georgetown University in Fiesole (Italy)

The changing body in Gabriele Mainetti's films

In both his shorts and in his feature-length films, Gabriele Mainetti has always shown a deep interest in the human body and in its mutations. In *Basette* (2006) and *Tiger Boy* (2012) the inspiration source comes from Japanese manga like *Rupan Sansei* and *Taigā Masuku* (later turned into successful anime series); while in *They Call Me Jeeg* (2015) – in spite of the title paying homage to the Japanese manga (later also an anime) *Kōtetsu Jiigu* – the films propose an Italianized version of the Hollywood superhero movie's classic formula. Hence, while spectators at first enjoy the typical and exhilarating protagonist's "origin story" (which openly echoes Sam Raimi's 2002 *Spiderman*) they are also quickly taken into unfamiliar territory, as soon as they realize that the movie's protagonist is actually an anti-hero with characteristically Italian traits. The trend continues with Mainetti's following films *Freaks Out* (2021) (clearly inspired by Tod Browning's 1932 *Freaks*) and *The Forbidden City* (2025) (which pay tribute to the karate movies popular in the 1970s). This paper will explore how Mainetti's bodies undergo a constant transformation process that crosses national cinemas and Hollywood, film genres and different media, giving the audience an ever-changing gaze on Italian culture and Italians in the new millennium.

Fulvio Orsitto is the Director of the Georgetown University study center in Fiesole (Italy). He has published more than thirty essays on Italian and Italian American cinema and literature and has edited and co-edited several volumes, including *Pier Paolo Pasolini. American Perspectives* (with F. Pacchioni) (Metauro, 2015.), *Cultural Crossings* (with S. Wright) (Vecchiarelli, 2016) *TOTALitarian ARTs: The Visual Arts, Fascism(s), and Mass-Society* with M. Epstein & A. Righi), (Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2017), *Boom. The Italian Economic Miracle in Cinema, Television and Literature* (with I. Lanslots, L. Martinelli, and U. Perolino) (Peter Lang, 2019), *Italian Americans in Films* (with D. Fioretti) (Palgrave, 2023) and *Italian Americans in Films and Other Media* (with D. Fioretti) (Palgrave, 2024).

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A certain tendency in Italian cinema: *Palazzina LAF* (2023) and the survival of Italian social critique

This paper examines the nature of contemporary Italian cinema, focusing particularly on the enduring presence of socially conscious, artistic films. Features with a strong sense of social critique are becoming a rarity in the industry, and the 2025 tax credit reform threatens to eliminate the few remaining examples. Against this backdrop, and despite the commercial pressures of the comedy-blockbuster era, some directors continue to create socially aware films, such as Michele Vannucci's *Delta* (2022), and Alessandro Marzullo's *Non credo in niente* (2023). One notable contribution to this trend is Michele Riondino's directorial debut, *Palazzina LAF* (2023), which succeeds as a potent activist film centered on ILVA, the controversial steel plant in Taranto. The film offers a subtle critique of societal structures that prioritize surveillance and control within industrial landscapes. Through its portrayal of isolation, psychological stress, and the fragmentation of human connection, *Palazzina LAF* serves as a stark metaphor for workplace

mobbing. By analyzing these themes, this essay establishes a thematic lineage between Riordino's depiction of industrial desolation and the environmental and existential anxieties pioneered in Michelangelo Antonioni's 1964 masterpiece, *Red Desert*.

Barbara Ottaviani Jones is an adjunct faculty member within the Department of Communication and Media at John Cabot University in Rome. Her interdisciplinary research focuses on independent cinema, gender studies, global film movements, and social problems in film. Her work has been featured in a variety of peer-reviewed publications, including the *Journal of Religion & Film*, *Rivista Luci e Ombre*, *Electronic Journal of Foreign Language Teaching*, and *Northeast Conference for Teachers for Languages for Cultures*. She presented her findings at international conferences, notably at John Cabot University in Rome and Indiana University Bloomington.

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Cinzia Padovani, Southern Illinois University (USA)

Anti-fascist media, a comparative analysis of democratic politics in Italy and the United States

In this article, I examine comparatively a selection of anti-fascist media in Italy and the United States. The input for this analysis arises from the contemporary political closeness between the two elected governments in the USA and Italy. Yet, the two countries' histories, and the nature of the ultra-right, are considerably different. Thus, by comparing and contrasting the two experiences, this paper aims at highlighting similarities as well as differences. In Italy, where a former neo-fascist militant has been serving as the country's Prime Minister since 2022, anti-fascism is deeply rooted in the memory of World War II and the Resistance. As such, anti-fascism continues to inform initiatives that counter the various far-right, and explicitly neo fascist, narratives. Italian anti-fascist media (in particular, radio stations, digital media and publications) have historically operated across grassroots platforms, independent journalism, and activist networks. In contrast, fascism has always been considered a 'foreign' element in the narrative of American politics, until the contemporary Republican President has heightened the fear of authoritarianism, and even fascism, among many. Traditionally, U.S. anti-fascist practices have focused on exposing white supremacist networks and mobilizing decentralized activism, particularly in response to the resurgence of far-right movements. In more contemporary times, anti-fascist communicative practices have been waived in among more mainstream oppositional movements. The article argues that anti-fascist media are productive sites of political identity, where democratic values, historical memory, and oppositional publics are actively constructed. More research in this area is necessary to better understand the function and importance of this kind of activism for contemporary democratic politics.

Cinzia Padovani is Professor of Critical Media Studies at the School of Media Arts, Southern Illinois University. Her research interests include the relationship between media and political

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Paola Panarese, Sapienza Università di Roma (Italy)

Italian algorithmic femininity. Corpi digitali, culture visive e regimi computazionali della femminilità

Le *computer generated influencer* (CGI) italiane costituiscono un oggetto di studio utile per indagare come, nell'ecosistema digitale contemporaneo, si ridefiniscano i regimi di visibilità e le forme di rappresentazione delle donne nell'intreccio (Cronqvist & Hilgert 2017) tra design computazionale del corpo, culture visuali locali e logiche infrastrutturali delle piattaforme. Tale oggetto è letto attraverso la lente dei *feminist media studies* (Gill 2007; Banet-Weiser 2018), i *platform studies* (Gillespie 2014) e la *technoscience femminista* (Haraway 1991; Braidotti 2013), utili per leggere le CGI come *corpi algoritmici* generati dall'intra-azione fra attori umani e non umani. Su questo sfondo teorico si colloca un'analisi del contenuto di oltre trecento immagini tratte dai profili Instagram di quattro CGI/AI influencer attive nel mercato italiano. Dall'esame del corpus emerge una configurazione visuale ricorrente, definita *femminilità algoritmica italiana*: un modello di rappresentazione delle donne in cui la standardizzazione estetica globale delle piattaforme (Manovich 2017; Bucher 2018) si combina con elementi riconoscibili dell'iconografia femminile nazionale e la tradizione estetica del Made in Italy. Tale configurazione non si limita a riprodurre i canoni computazionali dominanti, ma li ricalibra attraverso marcatori culturali locali, generando corpi digitali giovani, iper-curati e altamente normati, in continuità con le genealogie storiche della rappresentazione femminile italiana (Gundle 2007; 2019). Il concetto di femminilità algoritmica italiana offre così una chiave critica per comprendere come l'intreccio fra tecnologia e italianità visuale automatizzi - più che trasformi - modelli rappresentativi profondamente radicati nella media culture contemporanea.

Paola Panarese è Professoressa Ordinaria di Sociologia dei processi culturali e comunicativi presso la Sapienza, Università di Roma. Studia le relazioni tra genere e media, giovani e pratiche culturali ed etica e sistemi algoritmici. Coordina l'unità di ricerca Ge.M.Ma.- Gender and Media Matters, e il Corso di laurea magistrale in Gender Studies, culture e politiche per i media e la comunicazione. Tra le pubblicazioni recenti: *La pubblicità nell'era digitale* (con C. De Luca) (Carocci, 2024), *Donne nella storia dei media* (con A.L. Natale) (Franco Angeli, 2024) e la traduzione di *Gender and media* di Krijnen e Van Bauwel (con F. Comunello, M. Farci e C.M. Scarcelli) (Mondadori, 2025).

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La "Cena Coreana": Esplorando l'identità localizzata nell'adattamento cinematografico di *Perfetti Sconosciuti*

Il film italiano del 2016 *Perfetti Sconosciuti* di Paolo Genovese, riconosciuto come l'opera cinematografica con più remake nella storia, è stato reinterpretato nel film sudcoreano del 2018 *Wanbyeokhan ta-in (Intimate Strangers)*. La presente relazione analizza la versione coreana non come una semplice traduzione linguistica, ma come un paradigma di "transcreazione culturale". Attraverso le lenti teoriche della "domesticazione" di Lawrence Venuti e dell'"ibridismo" di Homi K. Bhabha, lo studio esamina come la narrazione originale sia stata profondamente localizzata per riflettere le gerarchie sociali, le norme patriarcali e le ansie di classe (come l'elitismo accademico e il fardello della cura familiare) specifiche della Corea contemporanea. L'analisi evidenzia la trasformazione fondamentale del genere: dalla "black comedy" intellettuale e cinica dell'originale a un "melodramma emotivo" fondato sul concetto coreano di *yeon-go* (legami geografici). Inoltre, il saggio discute come la risonanza del film sia stata amplificata da un contesto mediatico unico, caratterizzato dall'ecosistema OSMU (*One-Source Multiple Uses*), dall'apice del movimento #MeToo e dall'evoluzione della rappresentazione LGBTQ+ nel cinema mainstream coreano. Infine, l'articolo contrappone il nichilismo filosofico del finale italiano al "pragmatismo sociale" della versione coreana, sostenendo che quest'ultima privilegia la conservazione della stabilità comunitaria rispetto alla rivelazione della verità individuale, offrendo così una critica complessa sulla natura delle relazioni nella moderna società coreana.

Moonjung Park è Research Professor presso il Center for Cross-Cultural Studies della Kyung Hee University (Corea del Sud). Ha conseguito un dottorato di ricerca internazionale in co-tutela tra le Università di Firenze, Paris-Sorbonne e Bonn. Ha tradotto in coreano *Le avventure di Pinocchio* e opere di G. Agamben (*La follia di Hölderlin, A che punto siamo*). È autrice del capitolo sull'adattamento coreano nel volume dedicato ai remake globali di *Perfetti Sconosciuti* [2026 previsto]. Ha all'attivo circa 40 pubblicazioni accademiche, tra cui "Tabucchi oltre Pasolini: dall'«io so» all'«io non so se so»" (*Il Ponte*, [2019]) e "Letteratura versus realtà: Tabucchi «letterato»" (*Il Ponte*, [2023]).

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Gloria Pastorino, Fairleigh Dickinson University (Emerita) (USA)

A song and a dance to find a woman's voice: Paola Cortellesi's *There's Still Tomorrow* (2023)

With an ironic take on Disney's *Cinderella* (1950), Paola Cortellesi's directorial debut, *There's Still Tomorrow* (2023), begins with an all-but-idyllic matrimonial scene where Prince Charming, already awake in bed, responds to his awakening wife's "Buongiorno" with a back-handed slap. As the voice of Fiorella Bini encourages women to open the windows to spring and love ("Aprite le finestre," 1956), a now-awakened Delia opens the windows of her basement apartment on street dust, people's feet, and a peeing dog. It is the opposite of the "happily ever after" that marriage is supposed to bring, even according to the song. Cortellesi's choice of songs, culminating in the last scene where the extradiegetic song "A bocca chiusa" (Daniele Silvestri) briefly becomes diegetic, contributes substantially to the way the grim and all-too-contemporary theme of the abuse of women is treated in the film. Instead of choosing to show, voyeuristically,

the numerous beatings Delia endures, the film turns routine violence into a choreographed ballet, the missed opportunity of a true love story into a Chabrol-reminiscent orbit shot, the presence of American MPs into De Sica-esque magic neorealism, exposing the objective limitations to women's freedom on the verge of the new political asset of post-Second World War Italy in 1946. Cortellesi's treatment of the abused bodies of her protagonists exposes the patriarchal reasons to keep women captives for what they are – a song and a dance – while songs underscore the incongruence of romantic dreams when one of the two elements of a couple is subordinate and without legal rights.

Gloria Pastorino is Professor Emerita of Italian and French at Fairleigh Dickinson University. Her publications include *Othello. As Interpreted by Luigi Lo Cascio* (Bordighera, 2020), *Beyond the Grave: Zombies and the Romero Legacy* (with B. Peabody) (McFarland, 2021), *Per amor di battuta. Dario Fo e la reinvenzione della lingua scenica (For Love of the Punchline. Dario Fo and the Reinvention of Stage Language* (Biblion/Scriba, 2023), *L'Eden mancato: traslazioni letterarie nell'immaginario del corpo migrante* (Biblion, 2024), articles on Italian cinema, cinema and migration, Italian theatre, and translations for American productions of plays by Italian authors, including Dario Fo and Luigi Pirandello.

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Fabio Pezzetti Tonion, Museo Nazionale del Cinema di Torino (Italy)

‘La più grande storia mai raccontata?’: Appunti per un film su Gesù (non) diretto da Gillo Pontecorvo

La posizione di Gillo Pontecorvo nella storia del cinema italiano appare ancora oggi parzialmente defilata, nonostante il riconoscimento del suo ruolo centrale nella definizione di un cinema politicamente impegnato. Tale marginalità è riconducibile sia al numero limitato di opere realizzate, sia a una pratica autoriale fondata su un rigoroso lavoro di documentazione e su una concezione del cinema come strumento di indagine critica della realtà. Formatosi nel solco del Neorealismo, Pontecorvo sviluppa uno stile che coniuga essenzialità formale e tensione cronachistica. L'intervento si concentra sull'analisi di parte del Fondo Gillo Pontecorvo (conservato presso il Museo Nazionale del Cinema di Torino) con particolare attenzione ai progetti cinematografici non realizzati, finora poco indagati. Tra questi emerge un nucleo di soggetti accomunati da tematiche “religiose”, che trova la sua espressione più compiuta nel progetto *I tempi della fine*, sviluppato tra il 1971 e il 1975. Attraverso l'esame dei materiali d'archivio — appunti, documenti di produzione e diverse stesure della sceneggiatura — questo contributo intende ricostruire la genesi e l'evoluzione di un film che il regista indicava come il suo “grande film non fatto”. Il progetto rivela l'elaborazione di una figura di Gesù radicalmente umana, priva di attributi messianici, attraversata dal dubbio e immersa in una crisi storica totale, in cui l'elemento religioso, seppure presente, non definisce il personaggio nella sua totalità. In continuità con l'intera filmografia del regista, *I tempi della fine* si configura come un ulteriore tentativo di indagare i momenti di rottura della Storia e di riaffermare il cinema come spazio di verità storica, politica ed etica.

Fabio Pezzetti Tonion è Conservatore Aggiunto presso il Museo Nazionale del Cinema di Torino, dove dal 2013 lavora presso la bibliomediateca “Mario Gromo”. I suoi interessi di ricerca riguardano il cinema scandinavo con particolare riferimento all’opera di Ingmar Bergman, il realismo fenomenologico di Amedée Ayfre, il cinema muto italiano e quello di autori di impegno civile come Francesco Rosi e Gillo Pontecorvo. Ha pubblicato saggi sulle riviste *La Valle dell’Eden*, *Bianco e Nero*, *Fata Morgana*, *North-West Passage*, *Arabeschi* e *Acta Sapientiae*. Socio dell’AISRC – Associazione Italiana per le Ricerche di Storia del Cinema, è membro della segreteria di redazione di *Immagine – Note di Storia del Cinema*.

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Emanuela Piovano, Italian Filmmaker, Roma (Italy)

Finale allegro (2026) (1h 13 min)

Karina, a retired pianist, lives alone among memories, past loves, and the challenges of ageing. With the help of Suliko, a young and mysterious Georgian woman, she embarks on a journey that will lead her to her destination. An intimate path through memory, autonomy, and the desire for an end chosen consciously. A choice towards the end... or perhaps towards a new beginning.

Emanuela Piovano is an author, director, producer and distributor. She worked for several years for Paolo Gobetti’s Archivio Nazionale Cinematografico della Resistenza, Rai and the film journal *Il nuovo spettatore*. Piovano started her career as the producer of *Processo a Caterina Ross* (1982) by Gabriella Rosaleva. In 1988 she founded her own production company KitchenFilm to promote international independent cinema by young and women filmmakers. Together with Anna Gasco and Tiziana Pellerano, she also directed the documentary *Le rose blu* (1989) about the fire that destroyed the Le Vallette women’s prison in Turin and killed eleven inmates on 3 June 1989. Her feature debut, *Le complici* (1998), was the adaptation of Maria Rosa Cutrufelli’s novel *Complice il dubbio* (1992). This was followed by the romantic drama *Amourfù* (2003), the drama *Le stelle inquiete* (2010) on Simone Weil and Gustave Thibon, *L’età d’oro* (2016) an homage to filmmaker Annabella Miscuglio, and the docu-film *Con voce di Nilde* (2023) on Nilde Iotti, one of the founding mothers of the Italian Constitution and President of the Chamber of Deputies. Piovano’s most recent film *Finale allegro* is an adaptation of Margherita Giacobino’s novel *L’età ridicola* (2018).

Damien Pollard, Northumbria University (UK)

As thick as thieves: Donald Mugisha’s *The Boda Boda Thieves* (2015) and neorealism’s legacy in Uganda

It has been suggested that neorealism has had minimal influence on the development of national cinemas in sub-Saharan Africa: these films have circulated little on the continent and their presence is felt only distantly via the influence of Latin American third cinema (Gabara 2006). This generalised impression, however, risks overlooking the complex ways in which neorealism has been engaged and reanimated in a small number of African films. Donald Mugisha’s *The Boda Boda Thietransves* (2015) was foundational to the early development of Ugandan cinema

and loosely reworks De Sica's *Bicycle Thieves* (1948), transposing the setting to Kampala and replacing the bicycle with a Boda Boda – a Ugandan moto-taxi. As well as closely reading both films, this presentation draws upon in-depth conversations that I have held with Mugisha and fieldwork I have conducted in Kampala. It analyses the influence of De Sica's film on *Boda Boda*'s genesis, narrative and form and it also examines how the original film and the principles of neorealism are reworked by Mugisha so that they may speak to and about twenty first-century Africa. I argue that *Boda Boda* displays the dialogic legacy of neorealism in Uganda in the sense that the neorealist mode is esteemed but also engaged critically by the country's directors, who continue to revisit, reappraise and rework it. In this way, neorealism's presumed universalism is constructively rethought across continents and decades. Broadly, this paper aims to revive and nuance the broader discussion around Italian neorealism's African legacy.

Damien Pollard is Assistant Professor of Film at Northumbria University. His teaching and research interests include Italian cinema, East African cinema, film sound and the horror film. He is the co-editor of *Film Exhibition: The Italian Context* (with Edward Bowen) (Legenda, 2024) and author of *Sound and Horror in the Giallo Film* (Indiana University Press, 2025). His articles have appeared in the *Journal of Italian Cinema & Media Studies*, *L'avventura*, *Screen*, *Sound Studies*, *Discourse* and *The Soundtrack*.

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Angela Porcarelli, Emory University (USA)

***Invelle* (2024): Memory and resistance in Simone Massi's animated cinema**

In this paper I read Simone Massi's *Invelle* (2024), his first feature-length animated film, as a privileged site for rethinking temporality in contemporary Italian media. His work, shaped by nostalgia and memory, offers a counter-narrative to the digital acceleration that characterizes our present. Massi embraces an artisanal, hand-crafted technique—oil pastels scratched frame by frame into black-and-white surfaces—that constitutes not only an aesthetic choice but also a temporal gesture. His cinema enacts resistance through slowness while reactivating visual memories rooted in Italy's rural past. Drawing from stories transmitted orally by elders in his native village in Le Marche region, Massi creates a visual space grounded in the real yet suspended in the abstract temporality of dreams: a space that lives outside linear history and yet speaks insistently to the present. The term *Invelle*, meaning “nowhere” in the local dialect, captures his temporal poetics: a non-place situated between disappearance and survival, absence and return. Through an analysis of Massi's interplay of image, sound, and narrative structure, I illustrate how his temporal practice recovers the marginalized rural culture of the peasants from his region—an act he conceives as an ethical necessity. Remembering becomes a way of understanding the present, perhaps even of shaping it. Like the partisan who “holds his position” in *Tengo la posizione* (2001), immobilized in the snow, Massi uses his art as a stance of resilience and moral persistence, linking the rural past to new possibilities for reimagining the present.

Angela Porcarelli is a Teaching Professor of Italian in the Department of French and Italian and Director of Undergraduate Italian Studies at Emory University. Her research focuses on early

modern theories and literary expressions of comedy—especially *the beffa* tradition in Boccaccio—and on the relationship between cultural processes and spatial forms in Italian urban history. She is the co-editor with A. Scapolo of *Interpreting Urban Spaces in Italian Cultures* (Amsterdam University Press, 2022). She also works in Italian film studies, with particular attention to the cinemas of Federico Fellini and Pier Paolo Pasolini.

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Sumithra Prasanna, Birkbeck, University of London (UK)

Framing ‘Honour’ through a patriarchal lens: The politics of seeing in *Oor Iravu* (2020)

Honour crimes are not isolated acts of violence but culturally sanctioned practices embedded within systemic patriarchy. Yet, when they are represented on screen, they are seldom constructed from the standpoint of the women who endure them. Male authorship often centres these narratives on men, turning women’s trauma into a mere backdrop to a crime. This paper examines how actors and directors, in translating embodied perception into cinematic expression, can erase women’s subjectivity and withhold sensory and emotional depth from the women they depict. It explores how cinematic language renders some bodies perceptible while leaving others invisible. Utilizing Zarilli’s notion of acting as an embodied practice and Sobchack’s view that cinematic language employs patterns of lived experience to articulate its vision, I analyse *Oor Iravu*, directed by Vetrimaaran and featured in the Tamil-language anthology *Paava Kadhaigal* (2020). Although framed as a tragedy, the film uses aesthetic and narrative techniques to humanize the perpetrator and foreground male psychological turmoil, without interrogating the patriarchal logic that underpins the violence. The film’s body takes on a gendered orientation as the honour crime is staged through a father’s moral struggle, while the woman’s body appears only as a surface onto which male affect is projected, thus mirroring the patriarchal framework within which the film is conceived.

Sumithra Prasanna is a CHASE-funded doctoral researcher at Birkbeck, University of London. An award-winning documentary filmmaker and journalist, her work includes *India’s Broken Generation* (2022), examining child trafficking during COVID-19; *Stateless in India* (2021), addressing India’s citizenship law crisis; *Kashmir: A War of Stones* (2019), on youth militancy in the Kashmir Valley; and *Manufactured Orphans* (2018), investigating the global orphan trade. Drawing on extensive media background, her doctoral research explores Dalit rape survivors’ perceptions of their media representation. Bridging documentary storytelling and academic research, her work offers a layered perspective to the politics of voice, visibility and marginalization in media.

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Veronica Pravadelli, Università di Roma Tre (Italy)

Art cinema and the gender of modernity

This paper begins from the premise that feminist film theory has been uninterested in devising theoretical frameworks for studying art cinema. I propose that the trope of modernity/modernization is a viable one for initiating such a discussion, and I analyze three films: *Lo sceicco bianco* (Fellini 1952), *Il posto* (Olmi 1961) and *Prima della rivoluzione* (Bertolucci 1964). In all three films, female characters embrace modernity as a vehicle for emancipation, while male characters do not. And all three directors make formal choices that distance the camera from the male characters—the protagonists—while cultivating empathy for the female characters. By contrast, a figure like Antonioni has been justly appreciated for his choice of a female protagonist in Monica Vitti, but even in this case, Vitti remains as alienated as the male characters. *Lo sceicco bianco*, *Il posto* and *Prima della rivoluzione* reconfigure the gendered relation between alienation and emancipation—the founding dichotomy of modernity—to make possible an emancipated modern woman.

Veronica Pravadelli is Professor of Film Studies at Roma Tre University. Her research blends historical and theoretical frameworks especially in relation to the transformations of the filmic form. Her publications include *The New Woman in European Silent Cinema* (Bulzoni, 2022), *Dal classico al postmoderno al global. Teoria e analisi delle forme filmiche* (Marsilio, 2019), *Contemporary Women's Cinema, Global Scenarios and Transnational Contexts* (Mimesis, 2017), *Classic Hollywood: Lifestyles and Film Styles of American Cinema, 1930-1960* (University of Illinois Press, 2015), *Le donne del cinema. Dive, registe, spettatrici* (Laterza, 2014). She is working on a manuscript tentatively titled *Italian Art Cinema and the Issue of Modernity*.

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Rajko Radović, Independent Scholar and Filmmaker, Ottawa (Canada)

Blood feud and the female gaze: Živko Nikolić's *The Beauty of Vice* (1986) as an experimental zone

Živko Nikolić's *Lepota poroka* (*The Beauty of Vice*) (1986), a film centered on the Montenegrin tradition of *krvna osveta* (blood feud) does not open with ritualized violence but with a face: the close-up of Jaglinka (Mira Furlan), a new bride whose luminous yet unsettled expression establishes the film's central ethical and ideological tension. I argue that Nikolić stages the disintegration of Yugoslavia's socialist symbolic order not through the male economy of honor and revenge, but through Jaglinka's female gaze—an optic that destabilizes both patriarchal tradition and the emerging liberal marketplace of bodies. Drawing on Julia Kristeva's concept of abjection, I propose that Jaglinka's gaze articulates a "revolt of being": not desire in the libidinal sense, but a form of subjective excess saturated with shame, disgust, and existential dilemma. This gaze stands in radical contrast to the male gaze embodied by the bridegroom Luka (Mima Karadžić), whose subjectivity appears fully colonized by what Lacan terms the Big Other of patriarchal law and honor. The conflict between these two gazes structures the film's dramatic and ideological core. I further argue that Jaglinka's perspective opens an experimental zone situated between two regimes of power: the rural Montenegrin highlands governed by honor killing, patriarchy, and symbolic shame, and the coastal nudist colony where she later finds work—a space organized as a proto-late-capitalist economy of visibility, pleasure, and shamelessness.

Rajko Radović is a Filmmaker and Film Studies scholar based in Ottawa, Canada. His work explores political imagination, cinematic form and cultural memory, with a focus on Balkan histories and global dystopian narratives. He won the Best Direction award at the Festival of Serbian Fantastic Film for the short dystopian horror film *Last Day on Earth* (2023). He is a guest lecturer at the Faculty for Montenegrin Language and Literature (FCJK) in Cetinje, Montenegro, and the author of *Escape from Brazil—Writings on Film and Globalization* (Prometheus, 2021) and *Characters of Montenegrin Politics* (Čigoja Press, 2025).

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Catherine Ramsey-Portolano, The American University in Rome (Italy)

A gendered portrayal of neurosis in Italian cinema of the economic boom

This presentation explores neurosis in Italian cinema during the years of Italy's economic boom, analysing its role in Michelangelo Antonioni's *Il deserto rosso* (1964) and Elio Petri's *Indagine su un cittadino al di sopra di ogni sospetto* (1969) and *La classe operaia va in paradiso* (1971). The emotional and psychological turmoil of characters suffering from neurosis reflects their reaction to changes affecting Italian society of the time. As members of a community transformed by new social values and gender roles, neurotic characters embody and become spokespeople for the revolution of cultural norms taking place. I consider the differing factors that influence a gendered portrayal of neurosis in certain films of the 1960s and 1970s through a comparative analysis of female and male characters demonstrating neurotic symptoms and tendencies. Demonstrating how neurosis serves in the films examined to counter predominant gender models for Italian women and men of the time, I argue that these films propose reevaluations of traditional forms of femininity and masculinity. Narrating the neurotic functions in these films to transform narratives of normalcy, portraying neurosis as a source of agency and knowledge rather than individual or social liability.

Catherine Ramsey-Portolano is Associate Professor and Director of the Italian Studies and Modern Languages Program at The American University of Rome. Her fields of research include Gender Studies, nineteenth- and twentieth-century Italian literature and Italian cinema, with special focus on women writers and the portrayal of gender in literature and film. In addition to numerous peer-reviewed articles and essays in the above fields, her books include *Female Cultural Production in Modern Italy: Literature, Art and Intellectual History*, edited with Sharon Hecker (Palgrave Macmillan, 2023); *Nineteenth-Century Italian Women Writers and the Woman Question: The Case of Neera* (Routledge, 2020); *Performing Bodies: Female Illness in Italian Literature and Cinema 1860-1920* (Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2017); *The Future of Italian Teaching: Media, New Technologies and Multi-Disciplinary Perspectives* (Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2015) and *The Italianist Special Issue Rethinking Neera*, edited with K. Mitchell (2010).

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Dagmar Reichardt, Latvian Academy of Culture, Riga (Latvia)

Transcultural cinema: The Italo-Anglophone-Japanese biopic *Haiku on a Plum Tree* (Maraini-Melehi 2016)

This contribution focuses on the family history of Italy's internationally renowned writer Dacia Maraini (1936), her sister, art historian and author Toni Maraini (1941), as well as of Toni's daughter Mujah Maraini-Melehi (1970), who directed, produced and co-authored the transgenerational film *Haiku on a Plum Tree* (2016/2018). Maraini-Melehi mixes in her work genres, time periods, spaces and cultural spheres to pinpoint the Japanese experience of the Maraini family, thus concentrating on its migration history. The first part of this paper will introduce the cosmopolitical genealogy of the Maraini family. Tracing its *nomadism* (Deleuze and Guattari 1980) and matriarchal impact, the film's storyline clearly unveils the incomplete representation of the past and missing narrative links to fill blind spots of history, while rounding out the so-called HERstory. The second part takes up the concept of *Transcultural Cinema*, coined by the American-Australian visual anthropologist David MacDougall (1998). It becomes clear that migration narratives often address trauma and border dimensions (Anzaldúa 2000), situated "between" storytelling and historical-documentary recording. Maraini-Melehi's biopic unites a combination of historical and emotional elements, whose authenticity is characterized by the search for *post-memory* (Hirsch 2012) as an embrace of time that questions post-migratory situations which go beyond the transitions from the first to the second, third or fourth generation.

Dagmar Reichardt is Professor for Creative Industries at the Latvian Academy of Culture in Riga, Latvia. Author of more than 400 publications in English, Italian, German and French, she specializes on specific sociological and globalization aspects of Contemporary Italian Studies, Sociocultural Relations, and Comparative Literary and Cultural Studies. An expert in Transcultural Studies, she has received numerous awards for her scientific work, starting with the International Flaiano Prize (2007). Among her publications: *Icone della transculturalità* (Cesati, 2022); *Porno—Theo—Kolossal. Pasolinis letztes Filmprojekt* (Schüren, 2022); *Benvenuti al Nuovo Sud* (Cesati, 2024); and *Le tante traduzioni dell'opera di Dacia Maraini* (Peter Lang, 2024).

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Milena Sabato, Università del Salento (Italy)

Raccontare il Settecento: “Questione meridionale” e conflittualità di genere nel cinema e nella televisione italiana

La “questione meridionale” è stata a lungo interpretata come una problematica nata con l'Unità d'Italia; tuttavia, il Settecento rappresenta un momento cruciale nella formazione del divario culturale ed economico tra Nord e Sud. Questo paper analizza come il cinema e la televisione italiana abbiano rappresentato il Settecento e, al loro interno, l'esperienza femminile nel Mezzogiorno. Attraverso l'analisi di opere come *Ferdinando e Carolina* (1999) di Lina Wertmüller, *Il resto di niente* (2004) di Antonietta De Lillo e la miniserie televisiva *Luisa Sanfelice* (2004) dei fratelli Taviani, si evidenzia come le narrazioni oscillino tra celebrazione folclorica, tragedia rivoluzionaria e rimozione delle complesse dinamiche sociali ed economiche del tempo. Particolare attenzione è dedicata alle rappresentazioni di genere del potere e alla

persistenza di stereotipi, ormai lontani dagli attuali orizzonti della storiografia, che continuano a modellare l'immaginario del Sud e delle sue protagoniste femminili. Parallelamente, si osserva come cinema e televisione si confrontino sempre più con le figure di donne italiane dell'età moderna attraverso la lente della *biofiction*, negoziando tra riscrittura storica e mito popolare. Infine, si intende mostrare come le recenti forme transmediali — docufilm, progetti digitali e narrazioni interattive — possano offrire nuove modalità per rileggere il Settecento e le sue geografie di genere. In questa prospettiva, cinema e media italiani non solo arricchiscono il dibattito storiografico, ma invitano a ripensare il Settecento come momento chiave nella genealogia del divario Nord-Sud.

Milena Sabato è Docente a contratto di Storia sociale dei media (Storia moderna) presso l'Università del Salento e ha conseguito l'Abilitazione Scientifica Nazionale a Professore Associato in Storia moderna. Le sue ricerche si concentrano principalmente sulla censura libraria, sulle donne lettrici, sulle viaggiatrici e sulla storia religiosa, politica e culturale dell'Italia meridionale in età moderna. È autrice di due monografie dedicate alla censura, alla circolazione libraria e ai rapporti Stato-Chiesa nell'Italia meridionale d'età moderna *Il sapere che brucia* (Congedo, 2009) *Poteri censori* (Congedo, 2007). È Co-Editor della rivista *Modern Italy* (Cambridge University Press).

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Alexandra Semenova, Autonomous University of Madrid (Spain)

The city under a violet haze: Analysing space in Luca Guadagnino's *Queer* (2024)

To situate a protagonist's longing for the *other* within a distinctive landscape has a long tradition in literature and cinema, as exemplified by *Death in Venice*, in both its literary and filmic versions. More broadly, the connection between the notions of journey and desire is deeply rooted in cultural history, from the myth of Orpheus to contemporary cinematic forms such as Bi Gan's *Long Day's Journey into Night* (2018). In Luca Guadagnino's *oeuvre*, journey, space, and desire also constitute a central concern of his cinematic practice. This paper focuses on the distribution of space in *Queer* (2024), examining how it is reconfigured in relation to William Burroughs's original novel (1953) as well as to Guadagnino's earlier works, particularly *Io sono l'amore* (2009). In *Queer*, the director constructs a specific spatial dynamic that can be analysed through the notion of levels: whereas the novel is essentially *flat* in its spatial organisation, the film is structured as a pronounced, even spiral-like ascent. Another key aspect is Guadagnino's aesthetic decision to create a deliberately artificial, postcard-like environment. A manipulated colour palette and sustained references to the history of art—most notably to Surrealism, and particularly to René Magritte—contribute to the film's ambiguous Lynchian atmosphere. This unstable spatial conception is further reinforced by the presence of a film-within-the-film—Jean Cocteau's *Orpheus* (1950)—and especially by the mirror scene, which emphasises a conception of space that is not only optical but also haptic: a space that can, and must, be intruded upon through touch.

Alexandra Semenova is a PhD student in the Department of History and Theory of Art at the Autonomous University of Madrid, and a multidisciplinary artist and researcher. Alongside her

work in illustration, *Laurel y Marfil* (Ediciones Kalos, 2021) and stage design, *Ifigenia in Aulide* (Innsbruck Festival of Early Music, 2025), she focuses on film philosophy and aesthetics, examining *auteur* cinema in dialogue with art and literature, through structuralist and post-structuralist approaches. Her publications appear in *Schermi tra lingue, letterature e culture* (edited by A. Nagini, I. Orlandazzi, and E. Verra (Ledizioni, 2024), and in the journals *Acta Univ. Sapientiae Film Media Studies* and *Frames Cinema Journal*.

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Danilo Siragusa, Università di Torino (Italy)

Nascita di una rivoluzione. *La battaglia di Algeri* (1966) nelle carte dell'archivio Pontecorvo

La presente proposta di intervento intende illustrare la storia produttiva de *La battaglia di Algeri* (1966) di Gillo Pontecorvo attraverso l'analisi del fondo Pontecorvo, custodito presso l'Archivio storico del Museo Nazionale del Cinema di Torino. L'indagine si basa in larga parte su fonti inedite d'archivio (trattamenti, sceneggiature, appunti di lavoro, repertori fotografici, corrispondenze, documentazione amministrativa) e sulla ricca rassegna stampa inerente al film, messa insieme dallo stesso Pontecorvo e disponibile presso la Bibliomediateca 'Mario Gromo' di Torino. Tale documentazione permette di ripercorrere le fasi salienti di ideazione e realizzazione del capolavoro del cineasta pisano, la cui origine va collocata all'inizio degli anni '60, in un iniziale soggetto cinematografico sulla liberazione dell'Algeria dal dominio francese, scritto a quattro mani dal regista insieme allo sceneggiatore Franco Solinas e mai realizzato. La svolta si ebbe grazie all'incontro con una delegazione algerina, giunta in Italia alla ricerca di un regista in grado di realizzare un film sulla nascita della nuova nazione; raggiunto l'accordo, si procedette alla stesura della sceneggiatura e alle riprese nella *casbah* di Algeri. La vittoria del Leone d'Oro alla XXVII Mostra Internazionale d'Arte Cinematografica di Venezia del 1966 avrebbe consacrato il successo del film, pur tra le polemiche scaturite dalla sua diffusione internazionale. Lo studio del fondo Pontecorvo consente dunque di ricostruire la tormentata genesi di un'opera che ha rappresentato non solo una pietra miliare della storia del cinema, ma anche una rappresentazione, divenuta nel tempo paradigmatica, di un momento cruciale di storia della decolonizzazione.

Danilo Siragusa è Dottore di Ricerca in Storia Moderna e culture della materia presso il Dipartimento di Studi Storici dell'Università di Torino. Le sue ricerche vertono principalmente sulla storia culturale e politica del XVIII secolo, sul falso storico in età moderna e sul rapporto tra storia e cinema. È *section editor* della rivista scientifica *Diciottesimo Secolo*. È autore della monografia *Lo storico e il falsario. Rosario Gregorio e l'«arabica impostura» (1782-1796)* (FrancoAngeli, 2019) e di saggi pubblicati in volumi collettanei e sulle riviste scientifiche *Diciottesimo Secolo*, *Didattica della Storia – Journal of Research and Didactics of History* e *Zapruder. Storie in movimento*.

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Antonella Sisto, Rhode Island College (USA)

***E la nave va*: The non-cinematic afterlife of Fellini's labour**

This paper considers the relocation of Federico Fellini's office from Cinecittà to Toronto as a case study in the afterlives of cinematic material culture and the limits of institutional care. Reconstructing the circumstances through interviews with key characters, including the producer who inherited and sold the office; Fellini's principal heir, Francesca Fellini; and the director of the Fellini Museum in Rimini, Marco Leonetti; the paper situates the event within broader debates through the lenses of prop theory and care ethics. Rather than treating the office materials as memorabilia or archival residue, I draw on Elena Gorfinkel and John David Rhodes's theorization of the prop as an object that performs labor and generates meaning beyond the screen, and I propose to think the cargo ship that transported Fellini's office across the Atlantic as the largest Fellinian "prop" to appear offscreen. In contrast to the spectacular ships of his cinema, the ideological Rex in *Amarcord* and the allegorical vessel in *E la nave va*, this real-life cargo ship works logistically to enable the disposability of his creative labor's heritage and its transformation into a mobile asset. Framing transport itself as a speculative act, I argue that the transatlantic voyage functions as a symptom: a material trace of cultural disposability and a critical tool that invites rethinking the public care/cultural economy of the creative materiality that makes filmmaking.

Antonella Sisto teaches at Rhode Island College. She has presented and published internationally on dubbing; the politics of sound and the voice; and the works of Michelangelo Antonioni, Federico Fellini, Tonino Guerra and Pier Paolo Pasolini. Her first book *Film Sound in Italy: Listening to the Screen* (Palgrave-McMillan, 2014) engages in a critical re-thinking of the primacy of the visual in film studies, to re-discover the sonic dimension of the cinematic experience. Her current project and articles link cinematic creativity to ecological awareness and acoustic ecology.

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Adrianna Sowińska, Università di Breslavia (Poland)

La rappresentazione dell'immigrazione nella serie televisiva *Il commissario Montalbano*

Andrea Camilleri (1925-2019) è uno dei più importanti esponenti della letteratura italiana contemporanea. La fama mondiale gli è stata assicurata dalla serie di romanzi e racconti dedicati al personaggio del commissario Salvo Montalbano. Nelle sue opere l'autore dimostra un particolare impegno nel dibattito sulla crisi migratoria europea. Il nuovo veicolo espressivo dell'opera letteraria di Camilleri e del messaggio sociale in essa contenuto è diventata una trasposizione televisiva della serie sul capo della polizia siciliana e il relativo circuito mediatico-culturale. La serie *Il commissario Montalbano*, diretta da Alberto Sironi, è stata trasmessa dalla rete televisiva italiana Rai dal 1999 al 2021. Questo paper analizza come il tema dell'immigrazione in Italia presente in alcuni romanzi di Camilleri [*Il ladro di merendine* (1996), *Il giro di boa* (2003) e *L'altro capo del filo* (2016)] sia stato messo in evidenza e sviluppato nelle loro trasposizioni televisive, che si inseriscono nella più recente corrente del cinema postcoloniale. La mia ricerca dimostra che la prospettiva postcoloniale visibile in queste adattamenti non solo comprende la rappresentazione dei problemi di discriminazione etnica e

razziale degli immigrati in Italia attraverso il prisma delle vicende individuali, ma implica anche la necessità per gli italiani di riconoscere e confrontarsi con la propria identità mediterranea – un’identità inclusiva ed esclusiva della marginalizzazione dell’altro in un mondo il cui presente e futuro saranno sempre più influenzati dai movimenti migratori.

Adrianna Sowińska è studentessa di dottorato presso la Scuola di Dottorato della facoltà di Comunicazione Sociale e Media dell’Università di Breslavia (Polonia). La sua tesi di dottorato esamina l’opera letteraria di Andrea Camilleri come esempio dell’impatto culturale e sociale dei mass media. I suoi interessi di ricerca includono la letteratura poliziesca italiana e le sue trasposizioni cinematografiche e televisive, nonché i fenomeni intermediali nella cultura popolare contemporanea. È autrice di un articolo pubblicato nel 2022 sulla rivista *Italica Wratislaviensia* sul tema della ricezione delle opere di Andrea Camilleri in Polonia fino all’anno 2021.

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Damien Spiccia, Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts (Australia)

Breaking the spell: Bozzetto’s *Allegro non troppo* (1976) as metacritical deconstruction of Disney’s *Fantasia* (1940)

This paper argues that Bruno Bozzetto’s *Allegro non troppo* (1976) functions as a key work of cinematic metacriticism, positioning itself as a postmodern antithesis to the cultural authority and aesthetic ideology of Disney’s *Fantasia* (1940). While inheriting *Fantasia*’s structure of dialogue-free animated vignettes set to classical music, Bozzetto repurposes the form as a vehicle for structural, barbed satire, offering a sophisticated critique of the relationship between high art and its populist visual interpretation. The analysis focuses on three central strategies. First, the film actively de-sentimentalises music, rejecting Disney’s pursuit of visual harmony and emotional uplift. Classical compositions are frequently paired with vulgar, mundane, or destructive imagery, producing critical distance rather than emotional immersion. Bozzetto’s *Boléro* sequence, which charts cyclical evolution and environmental ruin, reframes humanity as the ultimate agent of destruction, forcing viewers toward structural interpretation rather than reverence. Second, *Allegro non troppo* embraces stylistic pluralism and aesthetic rupture. Each segment adopts a distinct, often abrasive visual style, undermining the seamless unity central to Disney’s model and foregrounding animation as a series of visible, ideological choices rather than an invisible craft. Finally, the film’s black-and-white live-action framing device foregrounds the material labour of animation. Through its Brechtian depiction of exhausted bodies, crude tools, and chaotic production conditions, Bozzetto dismantles the myth of magical creation promoted by Disney. In doing so, *Allegro non troppo* asserts animation as a self-aware medium capable of rigorous cultural critique.

Damien Spiccia is Lecturer in Screen Studies at the Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts. His research interests include film surrealism, fairy-tale cinema, and the cinematic adaptation and subversion of folkloric narratives. His work has been published in *Senses of Cinema* and *FilmInk*. He is the creator of the popular BOOK TO FILM screening series which has run at The Backlot, Perth, since 2020. His professional experience encompasses script

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New maternal realism: Representation of motherhood and care in contemporary Italian cinema

This paper examines how contemporary Italian cinema redefines motherhood and the concept of care through a comparative analysis of Mimmo Verdesca's *Per il mio bene* (2024) and Laura Bispuri's *Figlia mia* (2018). In *Figlia mia*, set in Sardinia, ten-year-old Vittoria discovers that her biological mother is the impulsive Angelica, not the protective Tina who raised her. The film contrasts nature and nurture to suggest that maternal care is an ethical act rather than a biological inheritance. In *Per il mio bene*, Giovanna, an adult woman, learns that her devoted mother Lilia is not her biological parent when illness forces her to seek a transplant from a blood relative. Here, the revelation unfolds within middle-class domesticity, exposing the complexity of care and identity in late adulthood. Juxtaposing these films, directed respectively by a woman and a man, the paper explores how gendered and generational perspectives shape Italian cinema's evolving language of motherhood. Both Bispuri and Verdesca depict the maternal as a site of ambivalence, where love, resentment, and desire coexist. Methodologically, the paper draws on Laura Lazzari's theorization of "new maternal realism" and the maternal as a site of trauma and transmission (Lazzari 2021, 2023). Through this lens, *Figlia mia* and *Per il mio bene* unmask the complexity of motherhood, revealing care as a contested practice of belonging and autonomy. Lazzari's integration of reproductive justice and maternal ethics (2025) situates these narratives within broader cultural negotiations of agency and intergenerational care in postfeminist Italy.

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Power, (un)visibility, and content regulation in socialist and platform-era media

This paper examines the transformation of media regulation and censorship by comparing two historically distinct yet structurally comparable systems of control: the state-driven censorship apparatus of socialist Czechoslovakia (1945 – 1989) and the contemporary regulatory mechanisms of global streaming platforms such as Netflix. While the former relied on explicit political supervision, centralized production structures, and ideological oversight of television and cinema, today’s media landscape is shaped by more diffuse but equally influential forms of platform governance – internal content guidelines, algorithmic visibility, global market expectations, and standardization of themes, formats, and narratives. The study highlights how socialist-era institutions, including film committees, script approval boards, and broadcasting councils, dictated representational norms and suppressed alternative perspectives. This form of “vertical control” is contrasted with modern “horizontal control”, in which platforms regulate content through opaque policies, data-driven commissioning, compliance with global audience metrics, and the commercial prioritization of certain cultural narratives. These mechanisms shape filmmaking practices by limiting thematic diversity, influencing pacing and structure, and encouraging creative self-censorship among creators seeking platform visibility. By integrating media history with contemporary European production trends, the paper argues that the locus of power has shifted from the state to corporate entities, but the effects – constraints, incentives, and narrative shaping – remain comparable. The analysis situates this shift within broader debates on media sovereignty, cultural identity, and the balance between artistic freedom and regulatory frameworks. Ultimately, the paper proposes that studying past models of censorship provides valuable insight into understanding today’s less explicit but pervasive forms of media control.

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The power of the (bisexual) erotic: Modesta's journey in the *The Art of Joy* (Golino 2025)

The Art of Joy (2025) is a television series produced by Sky Studios and directed by Valeria Golino, who also co-wrote the screenplay. Adapted from the first part of Goliarda Sapienza's eponymous novel, the series recounts the first twenty years of the protagonist Modesta's (Tecla Insolia) life, a trajectory of self-emancipation from patriarchal violence set in early twentieth-century rural Sicily. Thanks also to the powerful performances of its female cast, the series succeeds in translating the novel's radical politics of subjectivity into an audiovisual language that foregrounds the body and face of its protagonist, constructing Modesta as a disruptive figure whose vitality exceeds normative frameworks of femininity. Drawing on Audre Lorde's seminal theorization of "the erotic as power" (1978), the paper approaches *The Art of Joy* as a narrative organized around the erotic understood as a generative resource, and as a form of knowledge capable of sustaining resistance to oppression and enabling new modes of being in the world. Engaging with feminist and queer scholarship on Sapienza and her work (Farnetti, 2011; Ross, 2012; Rizzarelli, 2018), this paper argues that Modesta embodies an erotic politics that dislocates normative regimes of gender, sexuality, labor, and care. Within this framework, her bisexuality is understood not as a stable identity but as an epistemological position (Garber, 1995; Pramaggiore, 1996; Storr, 1999): a mode of knowing and inhabiting desire that resists monosexual logics. Moreover, through Modesta's unapologetic non-monosexual desire, *The Art of Joy* challenges the persistent (in)visibility and bi-assimilation of bisexuality in media culture (San Filippo, 2013; Eisner, 2013).

Lucia Tralli is Assistant Professor in Communication and Digital Media at The American University of Rome. She is a gender and media studies scholar; her primary research focuses are media fandom practices, popular culture, bisexual representation and intersectionality in the media. Among her recent publications: a monograph, *Vidding Grrls. Nuovi sguardi sulle pratiche di genere nei fandom* (Meltemi, 2021), chapters in *Routledge Companion to Fan Video and Digital Authorship* (Routledge, 2025), *Routledge Companion to Remix Studies* (Routledge, 2024), *Media and Gender. History, Representation, Reception* (BUP, 2023); *Politiche della bisessualità* (ETS, 2023), and articles in *Arabeschi*, *Cinergie*, *Comunicazioni Sociali*, *Feminist Media Histories*, *Film, Fashion and Consumption*, *Quaderni del CSCI*. She is a member of the Leading Team of the International Bisexual Research Group.

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Maria Bonaria Urban, Royal Netherlands Institute Rome (Italy)

Imagining the future of democracy through transmedial fascism in *M. Son of the Century* (Wright 2024)

This paper focuses on the television series *M. Son of the Century* (Wright 2024), a TV adaptation of Antonio Scurati's eponymous "documentary novel" (2018), in order to investigate whether

this fictionalised narrative of fascism can generate a transcultural and transnational political imaginary in contrast to the contemporary crisis of democracy. Firstly, it shows that Mussolini's character shifts between the diegetic and extradiegetic dimensions of the narrative. By placing himself in both the fascist past and the television audience's present, his body occupies a symbolic space where historicity and "engagement" converge. Secondly, the paper argues that *M. Son of the Century* is a "serial pastiche" and its radical aesthetic mainly serves to highlight the tension between "spectacle" and moral judgement. Overall, *M. Son of the Century* reimagines Italian fascism as a wake-up call to the crisis of democracy, presenting Mussolini as a metaphor for "eternal fascism" (Eco, 1995). As the "great puppeteer" of History, in fact, Wright's *Duce* establishes a strong connection with both the masses of his time and the television audience, proving that his fascination endures worldwide. In doing so, the paper questions the potential of artistic and media practices to address a key issue in contemporary social science: the rise of populist authoritarianism. Furthermore, it reflects on how television series contribute to the rebranding of Italian culture for a global audience by blending literature, traditional imagery, national stereotypes, and contemporary mass culture.

Maria Bonaria Urban is Senior Lecturer in Italian language and culture at the University of Amsterdam and currently serves as a Director of Studies in History to the Royal Netherlands Institute Rome (2021-2027). She has published, among others, the monograph *Sardinia on Screen. The Construction of the Sardinian Character in Italian Cinema* (Rodopi/Brill, 2013), and co-edited the volumes *Transatlantic Practices of Fascism(s) and Populism(s) from the Margins: The Cultural Politics of 'Us' versus 'Them'* (Routledge, 2025) and *Televisionismo. Narrazioni televisive della storia italiana durante la Seconda Repubblica* (Ca' Foscari/'Innesti', 2015), the special issues "Postsecular Italy: Transnational and Interdisciplinary Approaches" (*Italica* 2024) and "Spanish Exile and Italian Immigration in Argentina (1930–76): Gender, Politics, and Culture" (*Romance Studies* 2020).

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Nuov(issim)o cinema italiano al femminile. Il caso delle attrici-registe

Nel capitolo conclusivo del suo libro *Storia del cinema italiano. Regie, autori e linguaggi dal muto a oggi* (Rubettino, 2023), Vito Zagarrìo dedica alcune pagine al cinema realizzato dalle donne, chiedendosi già dal titolo se la nuova direzione del cinema italiano sarà quella di un "cinema al femminile". Dal 2023 ad oggi, questa tendenza si conferma pienamente. Alle registe nominate nel libro (Maura Delpero, Cristina Comencini, Francesca Comencini, Francesca Archibugi) o dimenticate (Carolina Cavalli), che continuano a realizzare film, si aggiungono nuove registe (Lyda Patitucci, Ludovica Rampoldi). Ma quello che colpisce e meravaglia di più è che, all'interno di questa tendenza, prende forma e si sviluppa una sotto-tendenza di cui Vito Zagarrìo non parla, sebbene menzioni un nome (Giulia Steigerwalt). Si tratta di un cinema realizzato da attrici italiane che, pur proseguendo la loro carriera nel campo della recitazione cinematografica, diventano anche registe, in alcuni casi con grande successo (Paola Cortellesi). Questa sotto-tendenza in corso, ricchissima e potente, costituisce l'oggetto privilegiato del mio intervento. In un primo tempo, propongo di tracciare un panorama dei film realizzati da attrici

italiane, identificandone alcune caratteristiche. In un secondo tempo, vorrei avviare una riflessione sulla questione se questa tendenza possa essere considerata sintomatica di un divenire-minoritario del nuov(issim)o cinema italiano.

Marina Vargau è docente a contratto in Studi Italiani presso il Dipartimento di Letterature e Lingue del Mondo dell'Università di Montreal. I suoi interessi di ricerca includono il cinema italiano, le relazioni tra arte e media, le rappresentazioni delle città nel cinema e nella letteratura. Il suo libro, *Romarcord: flânerie, spectacle et mémoire dans la Rome de Federico Fellini* (Guernica Editions, 2021) analizza la poetica cinematografica della Roma felliniana e il suo effetto nel cinema e nella letteratura. Ha inoltre pubblicato capitoli nei volumi *Federico Fellini: Riprese, riletture, (re)visioni* (a cura di P. Bernardini, J. Granata, T. Lobalsamo e A. Zambenedetti) (Franco Cesati Editore, 2016), *Fellini Centenary Essays* (a cura di A. Zambenedetti, J. Whitehead e M. Malvestio) (University of Toronto Press, 2023) e articoli in riviste accademiche tra cui *Journal of Italian Cinema & Media Studies* e *Art Research Journal*.

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Le nuove politiche della rappresentazione LGBTQ+ italiana: Note sul dialogo tra media e gender studies

Nell'ultimo decennio, il panorama mediale italiano - non diversamente da quello di numerosi altri Paesi europei e d'oltreoceano - ha conosciuto un'inedita trasformazione sul piano della rappresentazione delle minoranze socioculturali e, più in generale, della diversità nelle sue varie forme e sfaccettature. Lungi dal doversi considerare un fenomeno di mera proliferazione numerica di trame e personaggi non- o anti-normativi, il processo di *mainstreaming* di identità precedentemente silenziate o relegate ai margini ha dato impulso non solo alla diversificazione dell'offerta audiovisiva in sé per sé, ma anche - crucialmente - all'interesse di pubblico, critica e accademia nei confronti di quelle che sono note come "politiche della rappresentazione". Con frequenza e dimestichezza sempre maggiori, ci interroghiamo su chi e cosa sia appropriato rappresentare, e su quali siano i tempi più consoni, le modalità più soddisfacenti, le motivazioni più condivisibili per farlo. Il contributo qui proposto vuole perciò offrire una mappatura dell'attuale dibattito italiano sui significati sociali, culturali e politici delle rappresentazioni della diversità, soffermandosi, in particolare, sullo sguardo che le produzioni italiane più recenti hanno riservato alla mediazione di personaggi, temi, ambienti e discorsi LGBTQ+. Nodo centrale della riflessione sarà il crescente dialogo cross-disciplinare tra studi sui media, studi di genere e *media psychology*, e dunque alleanze, tensioni e scontri fra prospettive umanistiche, sociologiche e psicologiche nel definire quali siano o debbano essere le politiche della rappresentazione della diversità sessuale e di genere.

Tristan Venturi è Dottorando in Arti visive, performative, mediali presso il Dipartimento delle Arti dell'Università di Bologna, dove conduce un progetto di ricerca volto a investigare la rappresentazione dell'ambiguità di genere nel filone cinematografico del giallo all'italiana. I suoi interessi di ricerca si collocano all'intersezione tra studi cinematografici e studi queer, LGBT e trans.

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Representation of caste-based honour crimes in Indian cinema

This paper examines the representation of caste-based honour crimes in Indian cinema through a critical, interdisciplinary framework that incorporates feminist film theory, critical caste studies and visual culture analysis. Honour crimes in India function as violent mechanisms to reinforce caste and gender hierarchies. While mainstream discourse often renders caste invisible in honour-related violence, this study sheds light on its centrality. Three films were critically analysed in this context: Hindi-language *Achhut Kanya (Untouchable Girl/Untouchable Maiden)* (1936), directed by Franz Osten; Hindi-language *Khap* (2011) directed by Ajai Sinha; and Marathi-language *Sairat* ('Wild') (2016), directed by Nagraj Manjule. Together they trace a historical trajectory in cinematic depictions of caste, love and violence. The analysis reveals that early reformist cinema acknowledged caste barriers but ultimately reaffirmed dominant social norms through melodramatic sacrifice. Later cinematic efforts offered a more explicit critique of caste-based oppression and patriarchal institutions, though their narratives often remained constrained by melodrama and the recurring figure of the dominant-caste saviour. In contrast, recent works by filmmakers from marginalised communities represent a radical departure, portraying caste-based honour killing as a manifestation of structural violence. This paper critically examines the ethics of representation, focusing on how cinematic gaze, authorship and audience reception influence the political impact of depicting caste-based honour crimes. It advocates for a caste-conscious cinematic practice to resist both liberal sentimentality and voyeuristic spectacle. This chapter aims to situate honour crime cinema within the larger contest over caste, gender and narrative authority in contemporary India.

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