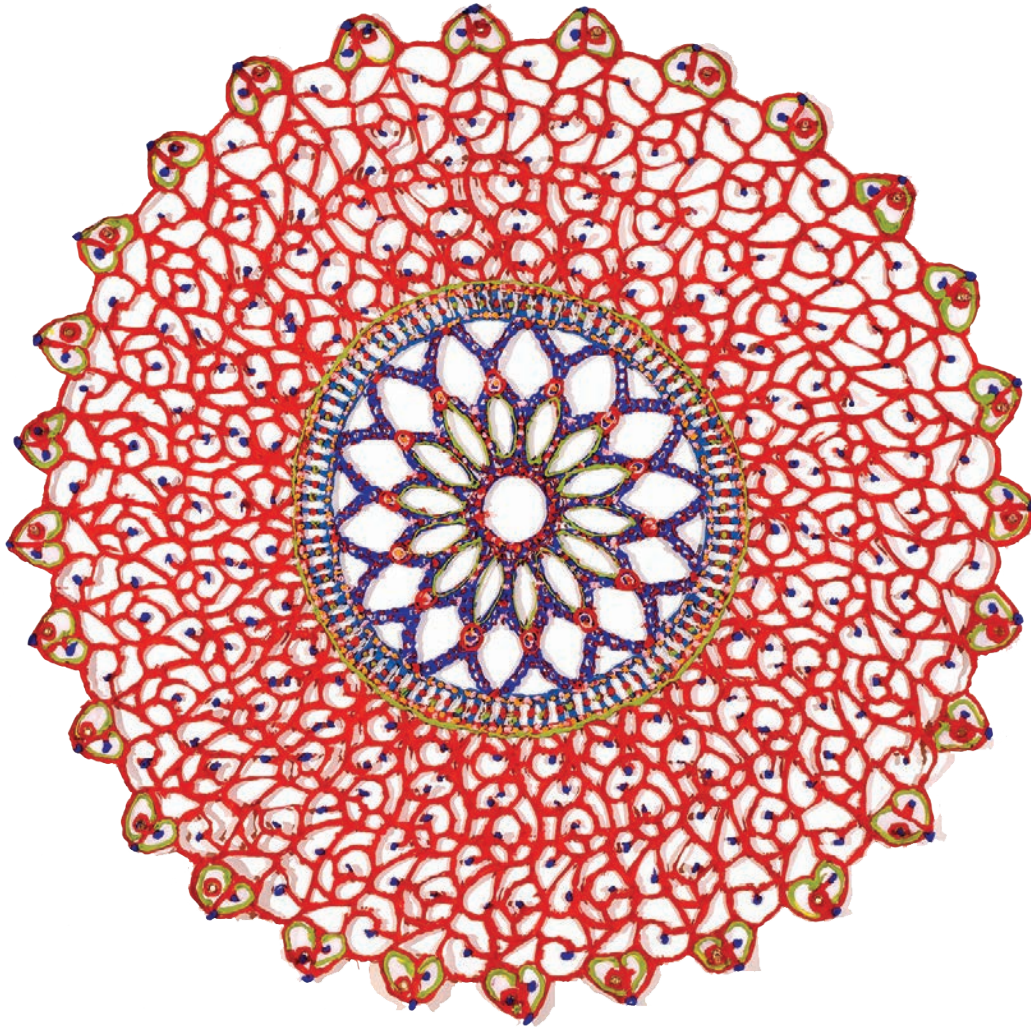


CALANDRA  
ITALIAN  
AMERICAN  
INSTITUTE

# *il Bollettino*

*dedicated to the history and culture of Italians in America*



VOLUME 5 • ISSUE 2 • AUTUMN 2012

## CONTENTS

- 2 Dean's Letter • Cover Artist: Jennifer Cecere 3 2012 Conference: Reimagining White Ethnicity  
4 *Italics* • Italian American Utilization Analysis • Staff News
- 5 2013 Year of Italian Culture in the United States • Alfredo de Palchi: A Life Gambled in Poetry  
6 Anthony LaRuffa: Fifty-One Years of Service 7 An Italian Spring!
- 8 Malia: A Collective of Italian American Women • Finding Joseph Tusiani
- 9 Italian American Faculty and Staff Advisory Council • Audience Profile: Martin and Patricia Sandler  
10 2013 Conference: *Lingue Migranti* • From the Archives • Ad Memorium: Helen Iannello  
11 On Presenting Italian America • *18 lus soli* 12 *Italian American Review* • Calendar of Events

Welcome to volume 5.2 of the Calandra Institute's *il Bollettino*! This issue marks the end of our fifth year publishing this newsletter and on to the initial period of seven years of my tenure at the Institute as dean. Both have been most rewarding and, to be sure, challenging in various ways.

As you read through this issue, you will learn about the various activities of the Institute. Our annual conference this past spring, "Reimagining White Ethnicity," examined white ethnicity as a significant narrative that is not necessarily included in the dominant cultural discourse in the United States. The conference presented issues—both internal and external to our community—that an Institute such as Calandra needs to examine; it is our responsibility to do so. Our 2013 conference, "*Lingue Migranti*," will explore yet another important issue within the Italian community outside of Italy; the Italian language in its many manifestations and how it has changed over the past 100 years since the final wave of historic immigration came to an end.

Another responsibility of the Institute is to dialogue with CUNY about the utilization of Italian Americans within the system. On page 2 you will find a synopsis of the "Utilization Analysis" compiled by Vincenzo Milione, Itala Pelizzoli, and Carmine Pizzirusso. An electronic copy of the full analysis is available upon request. On page 9 Donna Chirico comments on the Italian-American population in relation to CUNY's

recently issued faculty diversity action plan. The need to engage in dialogue and debate about this and all other issues is profoundly necessary for a healthy community. Constructive dialogue has been an important goal for the Institute over the past six-plus years. We have engaged topics that might otherwise be "swept under the rug." In this regard, on page 11, Joseph Sciorra addresses the challenges of public programming in the context of our discussion with Abel Ferrara and the screening of his documentary *Mulberry Street*.

We recognize two individuals in this issue. Anthony LaRuffa stepped down last year after fifty years of service, to Lehman College and the Italian-American community, through his directorship of the only academic major offered in Italian American studies in the United States. We also report on our symposium in honor of another titan, Joseph Tusiani, award-winning, internationally recognized poet, essayist, fiction writer, and translator.

There is much more in *il Bollettino*. We hope you enjoy what you find and, as always, we welcome your feedback.

We continue to enjoy great support from all. We are indebted to the invaluable support of Chancellor Matthew Goldstein's Office of CUNY and President James Muysken's Office of Queens College.

*Buona lettura!*

— ANTHONY JULIAN TAMBURRI, DEAN



**COVER ARTIST** Jennifer Cecere was born in Indiana and studied at Phillips Academy and Cornell University. She has lived and worked in New York City for the past thirty-seven years. Her work translates intimate and private needlework into large and public art.

In 2011, the Garibaldi-Meucci Museum, in partnership with the New York City Department of Transportation's urban art program, sponsored Cecere's public art installation at the St. George ferry terminal in Staten Island. "Bettina," an 8-foot vinyl mesh doily, hung outside the terminal ramp for eleven months. To fabricate the large-scale work, a computer-generated classic doily pattern was printed onto construction mesh, then hand cut by a tailor. To install it, the artist used a scissor-lift to hoist the doily into place and attached it with climbing ropes and 200 lb. fishing line.

Cecere's work has been exhibited at the Cooper-Hewitt Museum, the Museum of Modern Art, and Palm Beach Institute of Contemporary Art. Her work has been published and reviewed in *Art in America*, *Fiber Arts*, *Newsday*, *New York Magazine*, and the *New York Times*. For more information, visit [www.jennifercecere.com](http://www.jennifercecere.com).

*il Bollettino* is published by the  
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ON THE COVER:  
*Rose Window*, 4' diameter, nylon and  
acrylic, by Jennifer Cecere, ©2009.

## 2012 CONFERENCE: REIMAGINING WHITE ETHNICITY: EXPRESSIVITY, IDENTITY, RACE

Rosangela Briscese

The Calandra Institute's 2012 annual conference, addressing the theme "Reimagining White Ethnicity: Expressivity, Identity, Race," sought to reclaim white ethnicity as a complex and historically situated site that invites reflections on those heterogeneous and hybridic identities that often challenge hegemonic narratives and histories. On Friday, April 27, and Saturday, April 28, scholars from around the United States and from Australia, Canada, England, and Italy convened to present on such historical and contemporary subjects as the cultural heritage industry, white privilege, and the myriad ways identity is expressed through food, clothing, literature, and film. We are thankful for the co-sponsorship of Queens College's Center for Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies and excited to be engaging with scholars of Greek, Irish, Polish, and Scandinavian studies.

The conference featured two keynotes. On Friday, Yiorgos Anagnostou (Ohio State University) presented "Ethnic Acts: On 'European Ethnicity' Cultural Politics." He offered macro and micro approaches to the topic: first, a larger, national discussion of ethnicity and race, and then a close reading of the film *My Big Fat Greek Wedding* (2002). He described how the film reverses power relations between white ethnics and WASPs, using intersubjectivity to situate the audience to identify with the fiancé's parents as the minority. In addition, Anagnostou explained that historically the narrative of white ethnicity collapsed differences and emphasized common experiences, doing so at the expense of race. European ethnicity was viewed as normative diversity. Anagnostou stressed the necessity for scholars to dismantle this white-ethnic narrative and reclaim the complexity of ethnicity by recovering internal diversity; the challenge for educators and scholars is translating this goal to the community. He cited the rich research about Italian Americans as inspiration for further Greek American studies.

On Saturday, Sabina Magliocco presented the keynote "White Ethnicity and the Discourse of Authenticity in Modern Paganisms." Modern paganisms comprise a group of new religions that "revive, reclaim, and re-experiment with pre-Christian forms of worship" and look to the past as a more spiritually whole and authentic time. According to Magliocco, modern paganisms constitute an important form of symbolic ethnicity through which white ethnics, including Italian Americans, are reimagining ethnic affiliation. Religious movements such as *stregheria* (Italian-American witchcraft) provide adherents with a way of connecting with their Italian-American ethnic identity that is not anchored to conventional ethnic social structures. At the same time, modern paganisms' emphasis on authenticating elements such as kinship narratives and "indigenouness" help us "understand how discourses of authenticity are created and deployed."

The panel presentations were equally engaging and thought-provoking. While it is beyond the scope of the newsletter to thoroughly discuss the conference in its entirety, recapped here are two of the fifteen panels.

In the panel "Comparative Approaches," Stefano Luconi (Università degli Studi di Padova) compared the racial status of Italian immigrants on the East and West coasts of the United States and pointed to some factors that allowed California's Italian Americans to enter into the upper echelons of society earlier and more easily than their East Coast counterparts, factors including California's large number of racial minorities (Chinese, Japanese, Mexican) whose presence worked to deflect anxiety over Italian Americans. Krysta Pandolfi (York University) discussed Italian Canadians, arguing that the dominant Anglocentric perspective of whiteness studies ignores Canada's history, particularly the role of its aboriginal cultures. Discussing the experience of Greeks in Australia, Andonis Piperoglou (La Trobe University) noted that whiteness studies in Australia are in their infancy in comparison to the literature in the United States.

In "Negotiating Scandinavian Identities," Jonathan Bean (The New School) analyzed the menu, décor, and press coverage of celebrity chef Marcus Samuelsson's Harlem restaurant Red Rooster to show how Samuelsson creates and markets cosmopolitanism. Anna Blomster (University of California Los Angeles) looked at how the Swedish national folk costume is both employed by right-wing groups and reclaimed by antiracist groups. Hanne Pico Larsen (Columbia University) discussed the Danish-styled town of Solvang, California, where the annual selection of the "Danish Days Maid" is a venue for exploring the town's construction of Danish-American identity.

Thank you to all the conference participants for their contributions and to the audience members for their interest and support. We look forward to another exciting conference next year on the theme of language, "*Lingue Migranti: The Global Languages of Italy and the Diaspora.*"



Shopping center in Solvang, California.

*Italics* presents the eighth annual series of special extended programs on CUNY TV, during October, in conjunction with this year's celebrations of Italian Heritage and Culture Month 2012 in New York and around the nation:

**OCTOBER 1:** Dean Anthony Julian Tamburri speaks with Joseph Sciame (Vice President, Community Relations, St. John's University), about events planned for October and November. Ramu Damodaran (Chief Officer, United Nations Academic Impact) discusses the relationship between the Italian-American community and the U.N.'s Academic Impact. James Periconi, in turn, discusses the Grolier Club exhibition of his collection of Italian language books printed in the U.S. in the 1800–1900s.

**OCTOBER 8:** *Terra sogna terra* (2011) is a 45-minute documentary written and directed by Lucia Grillo in which older Italian immigrants and a younger generation of Italian descent tell the stories behind their passion for vegetable gardening and their bond to the earth.

**OCTOBER 22:** This edition of *Jukebox* highlights Italian international blues-rock star Zucchero Forniciari with an in-depth interview and clips from his concerts. *Jukebox* also presents Ricky Riccardi, archivist for the Louis Armstrong House (Queens College, CUNY), a museum dedicated to the New Orleans trumpeter's life in music and his indelible impact on jazz throughout the world.

**OCTOBER 29:** This program highlights the film *Ralph Fasanella's America: Lawrence 1912, Bread and Roses, The Great Strike*, about artist and activist Fasanella's paintings and his involvement in labor issues in the mid twentieth century, in commemoration of the 100th anniversary of the strike. The 50-minute documentary was compiled from more than twenty years of *Italics* coverage of Fasanella's life. The program includes commentary from scholar Paul D'Ambrosio, President of the Farmers' Museum and New York State Historical Association in Cooperstown, New York.

## ITALIAN AMERICAN UTILIZATION ANALYSIS

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Vincenzo Milione

Vincenzo Milione, Itala Pelizzoli, and Carmine Pizzirusso conducted an analysis of the effectiveness of The City University of New York to include the Italian-American workforce within the affirmative action process for increasing the representation and presence of Italian Americans on the colleges' campuses. Entitled "Evaluation of the Implementation of the Italian American Utilization Analysis in the Affirmative Action Plans of The City University of New York," the report was produced and printed by the Calandra Institute in May 2012. The inclusion of Italian Americans is a critical process.

In the thirty years of protected-class status of Italian Americans at The City University of New York, Italian Americans were never equally included in the analysis of the affirmative action plans. The report concludes that Italian-American faculty and staff are still significantly underrepresented due to their underemployment among the various CUNY campuses. The report is a critical addendum to Judge Constance Motley's 1992 decision to designate a five-year review, on the part of an expert panel of outside evaluators, of Italian-American protected status at The City University of New York.

### STAFF NEWS

VINCENZO MILIONE was appointed to the editorial board of the Faculty of Technology, Science and Education (FATECE) in São Paulo, Brazil. The institution is sponsored by Brazil-Europe Integrated Center for Education (DIDACIEBE) in agreement with the Università degli Studi del Sannio in Benevento, Italy. The FATECE trains professionals at all levels of society, with emphasis on scientific knowledge, technology, and entrepreneurship. Milione was also appointed to the board of directors of the Association of Italian American Educators (AIAE). The association was established to enhance the Italian-American image and presence in education. It supports formal education, recognizes distinguished educators, provides scholarships, and stimulates cultural dialogue.

JOSEPH SCIORRA was invited to present his edited volume *Italian Folk: Vernacular Culture in Italian-American Lives* (Fordham University Press, 2011) at the University of California, Berkeley, this past February at a conference sponsored by the Department of Italian Studies and the Italian American Studies Association's Western Regional Chapter. In the spring, he was interviewed by Al Jazeera English about the changing nature of *bocce* in New York City and by Ark Media for a four-part Public Broadcast Service series titled *Italian Americans*.

ANTHONY JULIAN TAMBURRI received the Lehman-LaGuardia Award for Civic Achievement for "Promoting Better Relations Through Education" at the 2012 Commission for Social Justice-B'nai B'rith award breakfast, co-sponsored by the New York Grand Lodge Commission for Social Justice of the Order Sons of Italy in America and the Metro North Region of B'nai B'rith International, celebrating 31 years of solidarity between the two groups. Tamburri also published the book *Re-viewing Italian Americana: Generalities and Specificities on Cinema* (Bordighera Press, 2011) and two articles "Il Vecchio Mondo in opposizione a quello Nuovo: la coincidentia oppositorum nel Nuovomondo di Emanuele Craiese" in *Incontri cinematografici e culturali tra due mondi* (Metauro, 2012), and "A Semiotics of Ambiguity: Indeterminacy in Alfredo de Palchi's Anonymous Constellation" in *Essays in Honor of Alfredo de Palchi* (Gradiva Publications, 2011). He also delivered three lectures: "Una rassegna dell'immagine mediatica dell'italiano negli States: perché siamo l'altro," at Link Campus University in Rome; "Italian[American]s in/and the Media: How They See Us, How We See Us," at Fairfield University; and "Italian Americans and the Media: Cinema, Video, Television," at the Italian Center in Poughkeepsie.

# 2013 YEAR OF ITALIAN CULTURE IN THE UNITED STATES

Anthony Julian Tamburri

The Italian Government and Italy's Ministry of Foreign Affairs declared 2013 the Year of Italian Culture in the United States. As described on its website, the ministry sees this as a "golden opportunity to showcase [Italy's] cultural and scientific legacies and promote the cultural and production (Brand Italia) components of its *Country Development Plan*."

"Research, discovery and innovation" constitute the triad in which to present Italy as a "forward-looking and forward-thinking" country, "whose excellence is deeply rooted in a time-honored past of success in the research, discovery, and innovation that repeat in this year's theme, with a vision and perspective together with the experience and expertise to meet the challenges of today and tomorrow."

While activities are continually being planned, a plethora of events is already listed on the calendar of Italy's Embassy in Washington, D.C., and on those of the various Italian consulates and cultural organizations in the following cities: Boston, Chicago, Detroit, Houston, Los Angeles, Miami, New York, Philadelphia, San Francisco, and more.

Italian culture will be defined, examined, and presented "through the kaleidoscope of geniality that has forged Italian

life and lifestyle: art, music, theatre, cinema, literature; architecture and archaeology, science, design, fashion; politics, law and economics; and, of course, cuisine."

The ministry goes on to invite "those attracted by the values and objectives of the Year of Italian Culture in the United States and interested in linking their brands" to become involved via "membership, partnership, sponsorship, and co-production. Other forms of participation may also be defined on an individual basis by contacting the Ministry, the Embassy of Italy in Washington, and the Consulates General and Italian Cultural Institutes in the United States."

For more information, visit the Ministry of Foreign Affairs website at [http://www.esteri.it/MAE/EN/Sala\\_Stampa/ArchivioNotizie/Approfondimenti/2012/08/20120808\\_AnnoCultura.htm](http://www.esteri.it/MAE/EN/Sala_Stampa/ArchivioNotizie/Approfondimenti/2012/08/20120808_AnnoCultura.htm)



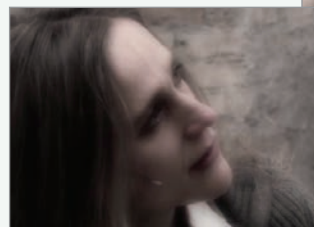
ANNO DELLA CULTURA ITALIANA  
YEAR OF ITALIAN CULTURE

## ALFREDO DE PALCHI: A LIFE GAMBLER IN POETRY

An evening dedicated to Alfredo de Palchi and his poetry was held at the Calandra Institute on March 23, 2012, celebrating the recently published *Una vita scommessa in poesia. A Life Gambled in Poetry*, edited by Luigi Fontanella (Gradiva Publications 2011). The collection gathers more than two dozen essays on Alfredo de Palchi's lyrical production. Contributors to the volume include: Sebastiano Aglieco, Donatella Bisutti, Luigi Bonaffini, Barbara Carle, Ned Condini, Milo De Angelis, Gabriella Fantato, Annamaria Ferramosca, Gio Ferri, Daniela Gioseffi, Karl Kvitko, Annalisa Macchia, Valerio Magrelli, Gerald Malanga, Luigi Manzi, Irene Marchegiani, Sandro Montalto, Mario Moroni, Michael Palma, Giuseppe Panella, Plinio Perilli, Silvio Ramat, Victoria Surliuga, Anthony Julian Tamburri, John Taylor, Patrizia Valduga, Paolo Valesio, and Antonella Zagaroli.

Attendees to the occasion enjoyed a rare screening of the dramatic film enactment of *Un Ricordo Del 1945, poemetto in 13 sequenze di Alfredo de Palchi*, with Francesca Brizzolara, directed by Sandro Carmino.

Alfredo de Palchi was born in Verona in 1926 and has lived more than a half century in the United States, as poet, translator, editor, and philanthropist. His own body of poetic work in Italian dates back decades. In addition, he has introduced to the English-speaking public the work of Eugenio Montale, Lucio Piccolo, and others.



Francesca Brizzolara in scenes from *Un Ricordo Del 1945, poemetto in 13 sequenze di Alfredo de Palchi*.

# Anthony LaRuffa, Director of the Italian American Studies Program: Fifty-One Years of Service

Maria La Russo

The Calandra Institute is pleased to join Herbert H. Lehman College faculty, staff, and students in recognizing the distinguished career of recently retired Professor of Anthropology Anthony L. LaRuffa. LaRuffa's career in academe spanned the course of five decades, and his teaching, scholarship, and service have left an indelible mark in the field of Italian American studies and in the hearts and minds of the many students he mentored throughout his tenure.

LaRuffa attended City College of New York, CUNY, where he earned an undergraduate degree in anthropology and immediately commenced graduate work at Columbia University, completing his dissertation in 1966. His early anthropological field work in Puerto Rico examined the role of Pentecostalism in an ethnographic context. This research culminated in the book *San Cipriano: Life in a Puerto Rican Community*. Upon returning to New York City, he worked at the American Museum of Natural History as an instructor before embarking on his lengthy career at Lehman College.

LaRuffa is the author of numerous books, articles, and book reviews. As editor of both the journal *Ethnic Groups* and the book series *Library of Anthropology*, he encouraged and guided anthropological research the world over. His own research agenda dramatically shifted in 1980, when he turned his focus to the study of Italian Americans. This was a nodal point for both LaRuffa and the college. It was an era of increasing diversity, and higher-education institutions nationwide began to assess what systematic efforts were being employed to help prepare students to know, appreciate, and interact in a world of ethnic and racial complexity. Recognizing the power of diversity in the United States as a major factor affecting Italian-American identity and behavior, LaRuffa collaborated with colleagues to create and implement a pioneering program in Italian American studies.

The program continues to be a unique interdisciplinary offering. One of LaRuffa's courses, "The Italian American Community," explores the importance of the past in the construction of present ethnic identities. He presents the politics of evoking the past to create community, affirm identity, and nourish reconnection with ancestral roots. Student awareness is heightened in an effort to understand immigration history as a way to combat racism and foster solidarity between white ethnics and racial minorities.

No better individual was suited to assume the role as director of the program in 1982. LaRuffa's continued research regarding the Italian experience in America is evidenced

in his comprehensive study *Monte Carmelo: An Italian-American Community in the Bronx*. The book explores the construction of Italian identity and reveals how and why ethnics selectively retain, rework, or reject their past. LaRuffa challenged the prevailing tendency of social-science theories to portray Americans of European background as a uniform cultural white category, and he effectively documented how a generalized view of American white ethnics misses the specific identity issues of particular groups as well as their internal differences and dynamics. His objective to facilitate the meaning and significance of Italian ethnicity in contemporary society resulted in a program that offers a 36-credit major with the departments of anthropology, art, english, history, languages and literature, music, political science, and sociology. Students are required to investigate the social, cultural, psychological, historical, and esthetic dimensions that are the foundations of the Italian-American experience and acquire methodological tools in ethnography.

Finally, when one has the good fortune to encounter Anthony LaRuffa one is immediately struck by his unassuming manner and his respectful treatment of others. He approaches his students with a quiet calm and peaceful demeanor, so it is no surprise that he served for three decades as the college ombudsman, advocating on behalf of students, faculty, and staff. In addition, he conducted a substantial amount of research and writing in the area of global peace and diplomacy. He was editor of *The Anthropology of War and Peace: Conflict, Diplomacy, and the Global System*, and "Howard Beach and Belmont: Studies in Ethnic-Racial Conflict" appeared in *The Anthropology of Peace: Essays in Honor of E. Adamson Hoebel*.



The Calandra Institute extends hearty congratulations to Professor LaRuffa on a career that has nurtured students and guided researchers and practitioners interested in ethnic studies and identity development. We applaud and appreciate his commitment and contributions to the Italian-American experience—past, present, and yet to come. While the Italian American studies program is currently being evaluated at the college, concerned faculty and administrators are working collaboratively to ensure that our past remains part of our future at Lehman.

SOON TO BE PUBLISHED BY THE CALANDRA INSTITUTE: *Italian Signs, American Politics*, edited by Ottorino Cappelli with essays also by Jerome Krase, Salvatore Lagumina, Stefano Luconi, and Rodrigo Praino; and *Benessere Psicologico: Contemporary Thought on Italian American Mental Health*, edited by Dominick Carielli with essays by Kathryn Alessandria, Christina Bruni, Donna Chirico, Donna DiCello, Gil Fagiani, Richard Gambino, Fred Gardaphé, Lucia Imbesi, Dana Kaspereen-Guidicipietro, Maria Kopacz, Lorraine Mangione, Rachel McBride, Anthony Tasso, and Jennifer Tursi.

# AN ITALIAN SPRING!

*Anthony Julian Tamburri*

As many of you know, I spent the months of April and May in Italy as Visiting Professor of Italian/American studies at the Università per Stranieri di Perugia; I taught a course on literature and film. My visit was part of yet a third agreement between our institutions, this one consisting of a faculty exchange and collaboration on research projects. We had already established two other agreements with the University, one a student exchange, the other a summer program.

While the course I taught went from April 10 to May 23, my sojourn began officially on April 3, in Bari, Italy. There, together with members of other institutions of higher education, I participated in a press conference that announced a new initiative created by the Puglia Center of America (PCA), "United Academia." This is a select group of United States and Italian institutions that are part of a larger United Nations program entitled United Nations Academic Impact (UNAI). The academic institutions represented in Bari include: Fordham University, Hofstra University, Università degli Studi di Bari Aldo Moro, Università del Salento, Politecnico di Bari, and our Calandra Institute. The notion of "united academia" was the brainchild of Luciano Lamonarca, President of the PCA. We were also joined by Ramu Damodaran, Chief of the United Nations Academic Impact and Deputy Director for Partnership and Public Engagement in the United Nations Department of Public Information's Outreach Division. In all, we spent two and one-half days engaging in all forms of cultural interaction in other locales as well, such as Ruvo di Puglia and Polignano a Mare. More information on the United Nations Academic Impact can be found at the website, <http://outreach.un.org/unai>.

Mine was an abbreviated course (six weeks) that was part of the MA curriculum of American studies, in collaboration with Professors Rosanna Masiola and Roberto Dolci. Together with our students and other attendees, we viewed five feature-length films and read stories and poetry from the likes of Helen Barolini, John Fante, Maria Mazziotti Gillan, Daniela Gioseffi, and Joseph Tusiani. We also discussed the social and political aspects of Italian America and reviewed other readings as well. Over a six-week period, four hours per week, by their own admission the students came away with a much greater knowledge about Italians in America.

While the main purpose of my stay was to teach, I also engaged in a series of other cultural activities both in Perugia and elsewhere. Within Perugia, there was a plethora of events that faculty and Ph.D. students organized on a regular basis. What I found most intriguing was a doctoral seminar on books, with specific regard to covers. At the end of this course taught by Professor Giovanna Zaganelli, students then presented their research during an afternoon symposium on the various covers they studied.

Also of particular interest was a symposium on translation, organized by Professor Enrico Terrinoni, whose translation of Joyce's *Ulysses* appeared recently in Italy and has already surpassed more than 24,000 copies sold in its first few months. In like fashion, a series of free concerts and dramatic performances took place on a regular basis.

Most important, in the end, are the bonds that we made. Together with our Stranieri colleagues, and the unmitigated support of the university's Rettore, Stefania Giannini, and its Preside, Paola Bianchi De Vecchi, I believe we have solidified a partnership at the intellectual and curricular levels like no others before us. And to that end, we can add the results of a one-day symposium that took place at Link Campus University, in Rome, on "The Other and Immigration." With Presidente Vincenzo Scotti and Rettore Gianni Ricci, we signed an agreement with Link that allows for both student and faculty exchanges, similar to our agreements with other institutions. Link Campus University offers a social science curriculum, and, like a number of universities in Italy today, some of its courses are taught in English, especially those of the social science M.A. degrees.

My two-month sojourn was most constructive, and surely laid a solid foundation for future collaborations. Indeed, we need to continue dialogue with our Italian brethren and aspire further to establish even greater lines of communication between our two worlds, the Italian and the Italian American. We must assure our colleagues on the other side that we have their interests at heart; and, in turn, they need to do the same. As we challenge the academic world here in the United States, in order to get Italian American studies into the curriculum, so do our sisters and brothers in Italy need to infuse to a greater degree their curricula with Italian Americana.



*Perugia, Italy. The two buildings among the trees are part of the Università per Stranieri di Perugia. View from the historical center of Perugia.*

## MALIA: A COLLECTIVE OF ITALIAN AMERICAN WOMEN

Rosette Capotorto

The women of Malia are activists, artists, filmmakers, teachers, and writers, whose paths have crossed and recrossed, mainly in the New York–New Jersey area, since the 1990s. We found each other at readings, conferences, cafés. We met in homes, offices, and classrooms from Cornelia Street to the Nuyorican, the Knitting Factory to Fordham University, NYU to NJCU. We wrote, read, and shared, cooked, danced, and sang in a community where we articulated the need for a progressive, feminist space for Italian-American women. In 2001 we named ourselves Malia: A Collective of Italian American Women.

The name Malia pays tribute to our identities and collective history. Malia is Italian, ancient, womanly, powerful. The Malia collective is diverse and inclusive, committed to creating events that explore our Italian roots while remaining multiethnic and open.

Malia has ushered in a sea of poems, stories, memoirs, articles, and books including: *The Milk of Almonds*, edited by Louise DeSalvo and Edvige Giunta (The Feminist Press, 2002); *Writing with an Accent* by Giunta (Palgrave Macmillan, 2002); *Are Italians White?: How Race Is Made in America*, edited by Jennifer Guglielmo and Sal Salerno (Routledge 2003); *Italian American Writers on New Jersey:*

*An Anthology of Poetry and Prose*, edited by Jennifer Gillan, Maria Mazziotti Gillan, and Giunta (Rutgers University Press, 2003); *The Skin Between Us: A Memoir of Race, Beauty, and Belonging* by Kym Ragusa (W.W. Norton, 2006); and *Teaching Italian American Literature, Film, and Popular Culture*, edited by Giunta and Kathleen Zamboni McCormick (Modern Language Association, 2010).

Our virtual community includes women from across the United States, Canada, Italy, and beyond. For more information, visit [www.Maliacollective.org](http://www.Maliacollective.org), or email [maliacollective@yahoo.com](mailto:maliacollective@yahoo.com).



## FINDING JOSEPH TUSIANI



On September 29, 2012, the Calandra Institute held a symposium co-sponsored by the Italian Heritage and Culture Committee of New York and Atena Films of Rome. *Finding Joseph Tusiani, Poet of Two Lands* celebrated the venerable career of one of our most respected cultural figures, not only among the Italian-American community

but in the greater realm of American letters.

Poet, fiction writer, essayist, translator, and professor, Joseph Tusiani has distinguished himself in so many ways. He was the first American ever to win England's prestigious Greenwood Prize; President Kennedy invited him to record his poetry, an hourlong tape, for the Archives of the Library of Congress; Tusiani also held the position of Vice President of the Poetry Society of America—great accomplishments each in their own right, let alone all part of a distinguished career of one individual, which includes further accolades still.

Tusiani's books and essays are many; he published his creative work in four different languages (English, Italian,

dialect, Latin), his critical work in two. His translations have, in turn, introduced the English-speaking world to the works of numerous Italian writers. Further still, he continues to create, as always, splendid work.

### ETHNICITY

O new awareness of my ancient light,  
 What's then so new about this earth of mine?  
 Though everything you seem to redefine,  
 'Tis but a tale of night excluding night  
 So I discover what in me was bright  
 Long before brightness was allowed to shine,  
 Able at last to trace and underline  
 Letter and spirit of my simple right.

Now, only now the truth I understand—  
 That, born as mortal as a bird or bat,  
 Man ever longs for some immortal land  
 Brother, you came from Erin, I from Rome,  
 And others started hence—but what of that?  
 Today migration and tomorrow home.



# Calandra's Eyes and Ears on the Campuses: The Italian American Faculty and Staff Advisory Council

Donna Chirico

This past spring, after a yearlong assessment of its efforts, CUNY issued an action plan titled "A Strategy for Enhancing CUNY's Leadership in the Areas of Faculty Diversity and Inclusion." Despite the rosy interpretation put forward by CUNY vis-à-vis its diversity ranking among other colleges, the actual report issued by Cambridge Partners presents a gloomier view:

Since 2001, the percentage of representation of CUNY's Black/African American, Puerto Rican and Italian American full-time faculty has remained almost unchanged; the representation of Hispanic/Latino(a) (excluding Puerto Rican) full-time faculty has grown less than 2%; and growth in the representation of Asian and Women full-time faculty was 3.5% and 3.9% respectively.

Given the effort and money spent in the last decade on targeted initiatives such as those for African American men and Latinos, and the establishment of what would become the Calandra Institute in the 1970s, the results are dispiriting.

The data for Italian Americans are especially bleak. Although the numbers of Italian Americans with doctorates have risen in the last twenty years, representation in the faculty at CUNY has gone from 6.3 percent to 5.9 percent since 2000. Plus, the latter figure includes faculty who are not part of the regular staff, such as visiting and substitute faculty. Especially worrisome is the fact that the lowest numbers are seen in the ranks of newly hired assistant professors. This means that as senior faculty retire, the numbers will only decrease, further limiting the representation of Italian Americans in the faculty ranks. A second area cited for low representation is the distinguished professor category.

This indicates that highly accomplished scholars are being overlooked as well.

The Italian American Faculty and Staff Advisory Council is a critical observer of the treatment of Italian Americans at CUNY. Campus delegates work, by their presence and by raising awareness, to ensure that Italian Americans are treated fairly in accordance with their status. This is achieved by council membership and by sponsoring campuswide events with other interested faculty and staff to promote understanding of Italian language, culture, and heritage. Scholarly and cultural events take place throughout the year, not simply for Columbus Day.

As the current diversity action plan unfolds, the charge of the council as the overseer of matters connected to recruitment and retention of all groups will intensify. Although searches at CUNY are done under specified procedures, how each search is conducted at the individual campus level requires participation and guidance, making the community aware of the inclusion of Italian Americans among the affirmative action groups at CUNY. The action plan put forward in the diversity report is sound, but it requires watchfulness to ensure that all the protected groups are included in these efforts. The council, working in concert with the Calandra Institute, is here to assert the rights and place of Italian Americans at CUNY.

To learn more about the council, or to express your interest in becoming a campus delegate, contact Donna Chirico, chair of the Italian American Faculty Staff Advisory Council, by telephone at 718-262-2687 or by email at [dchirico@york.cuny.edu](mailto:dchirico@york.cuny.edu).



## MARTIN AND PATRICIA SANDLER

*Rosangela Briscese*

The Calandra Institute has been part of Martin and Patricia Sandler's circuit of cultural programs since 2006. These Upper West Side residents attend Italian-specific events at least twice a week. Now retired, Martin worked as an electrical engineer and Patricia as a real estate broker. They've been married twenty-two years and enjoy opera, history, and traveling to Italy, where Patricia has family in Campania. She was raised in the historically Italian-American section of

Williamsburg, Brooklyn. Martin's parents were Jewish immigrants from Hungary and Russia. Among Martin and Patricia's favorite Institute events are the 2011 exhibitions "Graces Received: Painted and Metal Ex-votos from Italy" and "Migrating Towers: The Gigli of Nola and Beyond." They feel the Institute is a forum for education that presents Italian Americans in a positive light. As Patricia said, "I've learned many things at Calandra, and supporting something like this is very important to us."

**AUDIENCE PROFILE**

## Lingue Migranti: The Global Languages of Italy and the Diaspora, April 26–27, 2013

The Calandra Institute announces its fifth annual conference, to be held on April 26–27, 2013, at the Institute offices. Italy as a cultural zone developed throughout the centuries with a plethora of distinct languages. Regionally based Romance languages—e.g., Neapolitan, Sicilian, Tuscan, Venetian—and their local variants were the numerous languages spoken by illiterate peasants as well as professionals, scholars, and creative writers. In the aftermath of unification in 1861, the state sought to impose the Tuscan dialect as the national standard in an attempt “to make Italians” in the same period that mass emigration began in earnest. Tensions

emerged during that time and, with the onset of a more recent immigration, continue to inform the interrelated spheres of language and migration, from issues concerning standard Italian versus dialects, especially along a north-south divide, to representations of “Italian” as the esteemed language of the Renaissance versus the marginalized languages of working-class emigrants and their descendants, to responses to “foreign” influences of vocabulary and literatures. This conference seeks to build on the growing literature dealing with language and migration as it concerns Italy and the diaspora.

### FROM THE ARCHIVES

*When I was three, my paternal grandfather, Dominick Lizzi, died at the age of sixty. I knew that he loved me very much and that he had worked very hard doing work he disliked to give his family a good life. As I grew up, I realized that these two things could not be separated. His work—twelve-hour days, six days a week, in the shoe-repair shop he co-owned with his older brother Joe—was an expression of his love. For over forty years, the brothers worked together in the small shop on the corner of Swan Street and Hudson Avenue in Albany’s South End. The shop windows gave them a clear view of changes to their once-vibrant Italian neighborhood, culminating in Governor Nelson Rockefeller’s slum-clearance program. Their neighborhood disappeared around them, and, shortly after, my grandfather disappeared from our lives. The shoe shop, though, will live on in its entirety as part of a planned permanent exhibit at the New York State Museum—a tangible representation of my grandfather’s love.*



— MARIA C. LIZZI

### AD MEMORIUM

HELEN IANNELLO, activist and community leader, died on August 18, 2012, at age eighty-nine.

Born and raised in Greenwich Village, Helen attended P.S. 3 and New York University. She was an early President of the Village Independent Democrats club, an original member of Community Board 2, and community board adviser to St. Vincent’s Hospital.

Iannello served in the U.S. Naval Reserve during World War II. She later worked for New York City’s Department of General Services to ensure that women and minorities were not excluded from the agency’s work force.

Among the innumerable causes Iannello championed in the 1950s, ’60s, and ’70s, she organized to block the Westway mega-project, allowing the Hudson River Park to be built in its place; helped salvage the Jefferson Market Courthouse and convert it into a public library; marched for civil rights with Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.; fought for Planned Parenthood and the American Civil Liberties Union; and never gave up on the Equal Rights Amendment.

Helen Iannello was a force to be reckoned with. Her legacy lives on in the success of her contributions to human rights and social welfare.

# On Presenting Italian America

Joseph Sciorra

The Calandra Institute's March 12 screening of Abel Ferrara's *Mulberry Street*, a documentary film about the preparation for the annual St. Gennaro *fiesta* in New York City's Little Italy, elicited a wide range of reactions from audience members. The film, with its coarse language, indecorous characters, and nonlinear narrative, is neither a conventional documentary nor an attempt at ethnic boosterism.

One man found the film an honest portrayal of the type of neighborhood denizens he grew up with in Brooklyn. "I lost close people to the streets; thankfully my daughters don't know about that life," he said. Another audience member told the director during the post-screening Q&A, "The people in that film are a bunch of gavones, and you're the king of gavones!" She concluded by telling Ferrara bluntly that he should burn his documentary.

These two contradictory opinions are a healthy expression of the myriad voices of Italian America. And the Calandra Institute is a key venue where informed and engaged individuals come together to dialogue about issues of artistry and representation as they did that night in March.

The Institute's public programming is predicated on a simple belief: There is no monolithic Italian-American community, and there is no single Italian-American experience. Italian-American culture and history are varied. This is why the Institute invites a diversity of scholars and artists as part our free, public programs concerning Italian America, who have presented on everything from classic Neapolitan songs to punk music, from Catholic ex-voto paintings to abstract art, from mountain *zampognari* (bagpipers) to suburban Guidos, and from fascists to anarchists. These social, cultural, and political persuasions constitute the varied parts of the larger story of the Italian diaspora.

We selected Ferrara's challenging film for the "Documented Italians" film and video series not for its shock value but for several more important reasons. First, the sixty-year-old Ferrara is a world-renowned director who, in the words of *New York Times* film critic A. O. Scott, can be compared with American "writers like Henry Miller,

Hubert Selby Jr., Charles Bukowski and the other hard-bitten, openhearted bards of macho excess, pulp eroticism and existential defeat" (3/23/12).

The second reason we wanted to show the film is its subject matter, one of the best-known Italian-American street feasts in the country. But we also decided to screen the film because it is commercially unavailable, and thus we were offering it exclusively for the Institute's audience members. The Institute is only one of a very few places where such low-budget, independent films on Italian Americans and Italian migration, many of which have never been officially released nor have a distributor, are shown.

The day after the screening, novelist Marisa Labozzetta of Massachusetts emailed Dean Anthony Tamburri and me the following message:

"Every week I receive emails about the wonderful events being held at the Institute, and I truly wish I lived closer to take advantage of them. You're doing a great job bringing such interesting speakers and topics, and I thought I should finally tell you my sentiments. History, events, culture that would have been long forgotten and contemporary writers and scholars who may have gone unrecognized have been brought to the forefront. Thank you!"

This heartening note is testimony to the invaluable and incalculable impact of the Institute's scholarship through public programming.



Abel Ferrara and Anthony Julian Tamburri.



On October 16th, 2012 the Calandra Institute will screen the documentary film *18 lus soli* by Italian-Ghanaian director Fred Kuwornu. The film recounts the experiences of young adults born and raised in Italy but with origins from other parts of the world. Children of immigrants, they study in Italy, speak Italian and dialects, and most have never been to their parents' country. Yet they are not recognized Italian citizens. A panel discussion will follow the screening, with director FRED KUWORNU, and CUNY faculty: ROBIN HARPER, Professor of Political Science, York College, PETER VELLON, Professor of History, Queens College, and ANAHÍ VILADRICH, Director of the upcoming Center on Immigration Studies, Queens College. Additional CUNY campuses, as well as New York City high schools, are scheduled to screen the film and facilitate dialogue with students of Italian language, history, sociology, political science, and other disciplines.



## ITALIAN AMERICAN REVIEW

The *Italian American Review (IAR)* features scholarly articles about Italian-American history and culture, as well as other aspects of the Italian diaspora. The journal embraces a wide range of professional concerns and theoretical orientations in the social sciences and cultural studies. The *IAR* publishes book, film, and digital media reviews, and is currently accepting article submissions.

VOLUME 2, NUMBER 2 includes:

- “Textuality of Italian Migration in Luxembourg and the Great Region” by Claudio Cicotti
- “The Emerging Tradition of Soppresata Weekend: Sustaining an Italian-American Masculine Identity through Food Rituals” by Peter Naccarato

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### PUBLIC PROGRAMS FALL 2012

#### PHILIP V. CANNISTRARO SEMINAR SERIES IN ITALIAN AMERICAN STUDIES

**Monday, November 5, 2012, at 6 pm**  
Italian-American Foodways and the Making of  
Modern New York  
ROCCO MARINACCIO, Manhattan College

**Thursday, December 6, 2012, at 6 pm**  
The Art of Making Do in Naples  
JASON PINE, Purchase College, SUNY

#### WRITERS READ SERIES

**Thursday, September 20, 2012, at 6 pm**  
JONATHAN GALASSI reads from *Left-handed:  
Poems* (Knopf, 2012)

**Wednesday, November 14, 2012, at 6 pm**  
PAUL LAROSA reads from *Leaving Story Avenue:  
My Journey from the Projects to the Front Page* (Park  
Slope Publishing, 2012)

#### DOCUMENTED ITALIANS

**Monday, September 24, 2012, at 6 pm**  
*Painting Rules* (2012), 30 min.  
MARYLOU and JEROME BONGIORNO, dir.

*The Poetry Deal: A Film with Diane di Prima* (2011),  
27 min.  
MELANIE LA ROSA, dir.

**Thursday, October 4, 2012, at 6 pm**  
*Columbus Day Legacy* (2011), 27 min.  
BENNIE KLAIN, dir.

> All events are free and open to the public. All events are held at the  
John D. Calandra Italian American Institute, 25 West 43rd Street, 17th floor, Manhattan.  
RSVP by calling (212) 642-2094. Please note that seating is limited and seats cannot be reserved in advance.

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