

# *il Bollettino*

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



2018 • VOLUME 11 • NUMBER 2

Cari Amici,

Welcome to volume 11.2 of the Calandra Institute's *il Bollettino*! We hope you enjoy its contents, and please do not hesitate to contact us for any additional information.

In this issue you will find exciting news about what we do at the Calandra Institute and what is happening in our communities. I ask at the outset that you mark your calendars for November 1–3, 2018, a three-day discussion on “Transnationalism and Questions of Identity,” as the second part of a three-part, three-continent symposium, “Diaspore Italiane: Italy in Movement.”

We continue to enjoy support from many. Much still needs to be done, and our future activities will address many concerns of our community as we move forward.

As always, we are extremely appreciative of the unyielding support of Interim Chancellor Vita Rabinowitz's Office of CUNY and President Félix Matos Rodríguez's Office of Queens College. They and their staff continue to facilitate our greater development in all aspects.

So, again, I wish you all a *buona lettura* and look forward to seeing you at future events.

*Alla riscossa!*

Anthony Julian Tamburri

Dean and Distinguished Professor

## COVER ARTIST LUCI CALLIPARI-MARCUZZO

Luci Callipari-Marcuzzo is a multi-disciplinary artist, mother, researcher, arts worker, curator, and writer in North West Victoria, Australia. Her practice-based research investigates, interprets, and translates the experiences of Calabrian settlers to North West Victoria in a contemporary visual art and sociological context. Through the methodology of live art performance, Callipari-Marcuzzo's work actively engages with her familial and feminine history. An integral part of her research is the self-transformation into an imagined version of her Calabrian grandmothers. During these enactments, she makes artifacts utilizing traditional women's modes of making—sewing, embroidery, and crochet. The work is a manifestation of the hopes, dreams, and desires of migrant women and strives to honor their voices which were often silenced by the dominant gender roles within the Calabrian diaspora.

[lucicalliparimarcuzzo.com](http://lucicalliparimarcuzzo.com)



On the cover: *A fami caccia 'u' lupo d'u vòsco* (Hunger will bring the wolf from the woods), embroidery thread and graphite on stretched handwoven vintage cotton, 2017-2018.

At left: *L'asso d'coppe* (Ace of Cups), Modiano playing card, graphite, watercolor, colored pencil, acrylic paint, and pigment marker on paper, 2011. © Luci Callipari-Marcuzzo.

## ST. NICKS ALLIANCE PARTNERSHIP

IN PIAZZA

The Calandra Institute has partnered with the St. Nicks Alliance of Williamsburg, Brooklyn, to produce community lectures and presentations by academics and artists on topics of interest to members of the local Italian American community and to the general public. There are four of these presentations scheduled a year, two per semester, at the Swinging Sixties Senior Center at 211 Ainslie Street. The lecture series is named after Michele Giannattasio, an early neighborhood resident who immigrated in 1905. Like the public programming held at the Calandra Institute offices in midtown Manhattan, these talks are free and open to anyone who would like to attend.

The Institute's Joseph Sciorra opened the series in the spring with a presentation of his book *Built with Faith: Italian American Imagination and Catholic Material Culture in New York City*, which discusses, in part, Italian Williamsburg. He followed up by screening four films dating from 1923 to 1956 that documented the *giglio* feast in Nola, Italy, and in Brooklyn.

On September 27, Professor Mary Anne Trasciatti of Hofstra University spoke about the 1911 Triangle Shirtwaist Factory fire that killed almost 150 people, mostly Italian and Jewish women, and figured prominently in workplace safety reform in this country. Trasciatti spoke about the background of the fire and the effect that the horrific incident had on labor practices and unions in general. She also detailed some of the efforts in New York City to establish a fitting memorial to the victims at the site of the fire.

The next presentation from this partnership between St. Nicks and the Calandra Institute will be best-selling novelist Adriana Trigiani on December 6, 2018, during which she will read selections from and answer questions about her new book, *Tony's Wife*.



## ITALIAN DIASPORA SUMMER STUDIES PROGRAM

This past summer the fourth annual Italian Diaspora Studies Summer Seminar convened in Italy. Sixteen academics and doctoral students from all over the world met—in the classrooms of Roma Tre University's School of Humanities, Philosophy and Languages—to deepen their analyses of the migratory process of millions of Italians who left Italy in the late 1800s and early 1900s for the United States and other countries. Roma Tre University has a long tradition of American studies and hosts many fine scholars of Italian American literature. Rome is a current nexus of dialogue regarding Italian diasporic migrations of people leaving, as well as coming into, Italy.



During the three-week seminar, topics of discussion included: new migration phenomena such as “brain drain / brain gain” and the increasing numbers of immigrants; the refinement of teaching skills and research development in university level courses; and structure, semiotics, and social issues represented in film classics.

The program has been funded since 2015 by the Italian Language Intercultural Alliance, National Italian American Foundation, Order Sons of Italy in America Grand Lodge in New York, and Unico National.

## TELEVISION FOR THE ITALIAN AMERICAN EXPERIENCE

ITALICS

The August episode of *Italics* featured a discussion on bilingualism in New York and the first bilingual program in Italian in the borough of Manhattan. Guest speakers Stefania Puxeddu and Benedetta Scardovi have been dubbed the “Tiger Moms of Italian Bilingualism.” They embarked on this mission due to the fact that there were no options for fostering Italian learning within the public school system in Manhattan.



Stay tuned for exciting new programming this season!

*Italics* premieres the second Tuesday of each month at 9:30 pm and is rebroadcast the following Wednesday at 10:30 am and 3:30 pm, Saturday at 7:30 am, and Sunday at 6:30 pm on CUNY TV Channels 25.3, 75, 77, and 30, in Manhattan, Brooklyn, Queens, Staten Island, and the Bronx.



*Italics* can be viewed on demand at



[cuny.tv/show/italics](http://cuny.tv/show/italics)



[ItalicsATV](https://www.facebook.com/ItalicsATV)



[@ItalicsTV](https://twitter.com/ItalicsTV)



[youtube.com/ItalicsTV](https://youtube.com/ItalicsTV)

The Calandra Institute announces a new video platform, **Calandra TV**, as a complement to the regular *Italics* television program on CUNY TV.

### Disco Fever: Italian and American Diasporic Journeys, by Clarissa Clò

In this article I take *Saturday Night Fever* as the starting point for a discussion of Italian and Italian American disco cultures. As I attempt to provide a preliminary diasporic mapping of such interactions, I explore their significance for both communities across the Atlantic. How can disco enrich our understanding of Italian identities, masculinities, and femininities? Which other sonic and kinesthetic communities emerge across national, ethnic, racial, gender, and sexual boundaries by tracing the journeys of disco and dance music in the 1970s? As the film that brought disco into the mainstream, *Saturday Night Fever* represents not only a point of entry into charting such a volatile yet vital affective archive, but also an untapped resource in tracing a complex network of exchanges, appropriations, and imitations between diverse ethnic and national communities in which Italians played a significant role alongside other groups in Italy, the United States, and elsewhere.

By following some of the journeys and connections, both sonic and cinematic, figurative and material, ephemeral and embodied, improvised and performed, from underground clubs and parties in New York to countryside *balere* (dance halls) and *discoteche* in Italy, I consider how Italians at home and in the diaspora were not just passive consumers and imitators of disco music, but also active co-producers and co-creators. The Italian involvement in disco is represented by a vast cast of characters, from those literally playing them on screen, to those making and producing the tracks, to the many DJs on both sides of the Atlantic who promoted them,

to all those dancing away in remote and more prominent locations. Looking and listening for such diasporic sonorities offers a distinctive way to examine the complexity of Italian identities where cultural journeys across the Atlantic often emphasize the complicated and contradictory construction of national communities.



John Travolta and Karen Lynn Gorney in *Saturday Night Fever*.

### “In the Shadow of Liberty”: Shades of Pluralism in the Early Life and Writings of Edward Corsi, by Danielle Battisti

This article provides an intellectual history of an Italian American immigrants-rights advocate and noted proponent of cultural pluralism Edward Corsi. The project is based on archival research in the Edward Corsi Papers at Syracuse University and a survey of Corsi’s published works related to immigration and cultural pluralism in America in the interwar period. This article explores how cultural pluralism was employed by immigrants-rights activists to advocate for more

liberal treatment of immigrants and a more inclusive vision of American society. But it will also explore how pluralists’ outlooks were deeply constrained by notions of racial exclusivity. Although that point has been noted by scholars, they have yet to fully explore the policy implications and cultural ramifications of those limitations. This article will use Edward Corsi’s articulation of pluralist ideas and an examination of his public life in this period to illuminate how pluralist worldviews shaped aspects of racial, ethnic, and religious inclusivity/exclusivity in the United States throughout the early twentieth century.



### Between Divestment and Migration: Clothing Artifacts and Identity among Italian Immigrant Women, 1880s–1920s, by Francesca Canadé Sautman

Among the photographs of immigrants taken at Ellis Island between 1910 and 1925, mostly by Lewis W. Hine and Augustus Frederick Sherman, individual portraits as well as group images of Italian women show a number of them wearing, or posing in, traditional regional clothing. This clothing is generally modest and sometimes limited to just a few elements, but it is distinctive of the types of headdresses, bodices, and blouses worn in much of Southern Italy at the time of migration. While one might assume that such clothing was rapidly, even immediately, discarded by immigrants once they had cleared the Island and entered U.S. life, careful scrutiny of a number of images taken later of women working, traveling the streets with children, or sitting outside homes, shows that at the very least the head covering or *copricapo* remained in use for a certain time after arrival.

Attention to the details in these images reveals that these head coverings were often made of textiles recognizable as identical or similar to those originally from Italy. In other contemporaneous images, a different form of “folk” dress, or “national Italian dress” was appearing visibly and publicly in celebrations, street fairs, and pictorial representations, including advertising. This form of dress was not in fact traditional at all but the product of a process of construction that began in the late eighteenth century in Italy itself and was sustained by a prolific visual corpus, both in costume books and painting on canvas through the nineteenth century. Its end product was the streamlining of a generic “Italian” costume, unrelated to traditional forms in all but the most superficial aspects, increasingly worn and made widely recognizable with the pageantry organized by cultural organizations dedicated to Americanization as early as in the 1910 decade and in the folk revivals of the 1940s.

The essay discusses these various historical aspects of the migration of Italian women’s dress components and attempts to delineate a slow process of “di(s)vestment”

during which they finally fell into disuse, seeking to establish a “biography” of these objects. I suggest that the temporary survival of traditional clothing elements should not be read as a sign of “backwardness” in women but with more nuances, in a wider context of resistant strategies toward Americanization adopted by immigrants. The essay suggests that the relationship of Italian immigrant women to the migration of these sartorial objects is important to understanding their historical invisibility and gradual visibility as Italian Americans and relevant to the particular mechanisms of their identity formation.



*Ellis Island portrait. Augustus Sherman. “Italian Woman,” ca. 1907. New York Public Library Digital Collections. Image 418055.*

**The 2019 College Scholarship Handbook for Italian American Students and Students of Italian Studies**

is available to download at <https://calandrainstitute.org/research-and-education/scholarship-information/>

or contact the Calandra Institute to request a printed copy.

## AD MEMORIUM

### MARY SANSONE 1916–2018

Mary Sansone, a gutsy Brooklyn social worker who created a robust community service organization that bridged racial and ethnic barriers, defied the Mafia, and befriended supportive politicians, died on May 14, 2018. She was 101.

Sansone fought virtually her entire life for equal rights for women, the underprivileged, Italian Americans, and people of all ethnicities. She took part in every movement for justice, whether it was union rights, civil rights, human rights, women's rights, or gay rights. Her persistence made her a respected thorn in the side of nearly every politician in New York. Sansone achieved towering political stature and credibility, wielding influence beyond her neighborhood to advance her organization, the Congress of Italian American Organizations, sometimes sustaining it almost single-handedly. In return she drew the loyalty, even obeisance, of politicians—fealty that could inflame her already feverish rivalries with other community groups, regular Democrats, and even a leader of organized crime.

In 2010, Mary Sansone won the New York State Bar Association's 2010 Haywood Burns Award for Civil Rights Advocacy. The committee honored Sansone for her decades of extraordinary devotion to civil rights and

social justice. Sansone began organizing strikes in the garment industry at the age of fourteen and continued to be an effective civil rights leader for eighty years, with unmatched ability to inspire others and build bridges of tolerance among diverse groups of people. Her accomplishments helped manifest a more just society.

Sansone passionately believed that partisan politics should never get in the way of serving the public. Her allegiance was not to any political party, but to New York City, and there's no doubt that her civic involvement made the city she loved a better place.



Mary Sansone, photograph by Budd Williams, The Daily News

### STAFF NEWS

SIÁN GIBBY was a translator for Italian rapper Kento's short memoir *Resistenza Rap*.

NICHOLAS GROSSO will be representing Bordighera Press at IDEA Boston, an Italian-inspired festival of books, authors and culture, on November 2 and 3, 2018, in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

JOSEPH SCIORRA's article "Migrating Objects: Italian American Museums and the Creation of Collective Identity," co-written with Laura E. Ruberto (Berkeley City College), was published in *Altretalia* 56 (2018). Looking closely at US museums dedicated to Italian American history and/or culture, as well as the now closed Museo Nazionale dell'Emigrazione Italiana in Rome, the authors "examine what happens when objects are removed from their previous sites of use and recontextualized in the setting of eight Italian American museums, a process that involves privileging certain lived experiences and constructing authorial narratives of identity."

Sciorra also penned "A Calabrian's Sonic Resistance," the preface to the English translation of Italian rapper Francesco "Kento" Carlo's memoir *Resistenza Rap* (Bordighera Press, 2018).

This past June, Sciorra taught the unit "Folk and Vernacular Cultures" for the Italian Diaspora Studies Summer School, the Calandra Institute's

three-week seminar program offered at the Università Roma Tre. While in Italy, Sciorra and co-editor Ruberto were invited to several scholarly venues to present their two-volume anthology *New Italian Migrations to the United States* (University of Illinois Press, 2017) including the Università degli Studi di Scienze Gastronomiche (Pollenzo), Centro Altretalia (Turin), Centro Studi Americani (Rome), Università degli studi di Trieste, and the Università di Macerata.

Sciorra recently donated 35+ years of his research to the American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress pertaining mostly to Italian Americans in New York City on various topics including domestic altars and yard shrines, processions and religious feasts (especially the *giglio*), various types of music (folk, band, doo wop, rap), Sicilian oral poetry, games (*bocce*), and dialect and Sicilian marionette theater. It includes approximately 27,758 items consisting of 26 linear feet of manuscripts (field notes, clippings, ephemera), over 300 sound recordings, 400 photographs, and moving images, among other items.

ANTHONY TAMBURRI recently published two titles in Italy: *Un biculturalismo negato: la letteratura "italiana" negli Stati Uniti* (Franco Cesati Editore, 2018), and *Scrittori italiano[-]americani. Trattiati si trattino no?* (MnMprintEdizioni, 2018).



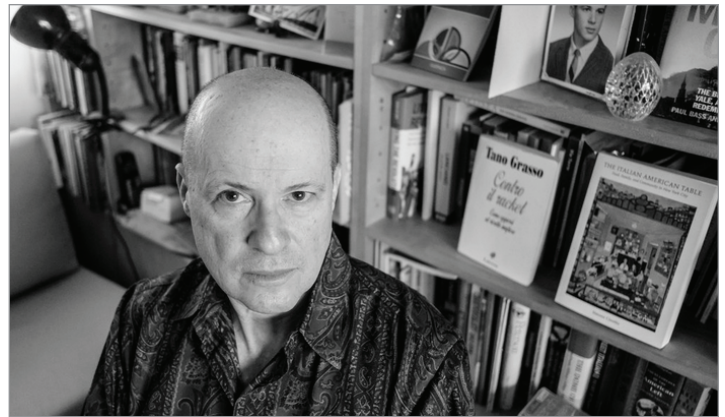
## AD MEMORIUM

### GIL FAGIANI 1945–2018

With profound sorrow the Calandra Institute announces the passing of Gil Fagiani, poet, translator, essayist, and political activist. Gil died on April 12, 2018.

Gil's politics placed him among the founding members of Italian Americans for a Multicultural United States. He figures also as one of the founders of the Vito Marcantonio Forum. Further still, with his wife Maria Lisella, Poet Laureate of Queens, he was a stalwart of the Italian American Writers Association. His organizational work in this regard knows no equal.

Gil's lifelong dedication to social activism was also reflected in his professional life as a substance abuse professional, as he himself characterized his work to David Gonzalez of *The New York Times* in a 2014 article. In his later years, that social activism was transformed into his poetry, since "a poem," as he stated, "is powerful . . . [it can] affect people in a way that is more powerful than an essay because it stirs up the emotions." Indeed, Gil's many books have moved people and stirred up emotions. His more recent, powerful poetry collection, *Logos* (2015), recounts his drug addiction, told with an honesty that captures his reader's attention throughout. His books about his upbringing in Stamford, Connecticut, in turn, offer his reader the privilege of an insider in both



*Gil Fagiani, photograph by David Gonzalez, The New York Times*

a melancholic and ironic manner, while never falling into sentimentality, and they thus keep his reader glued to the page. The impressive number of Gil's books increased this year, as the third of his Connecticut trilogy, *Missing Madonnas*, to be published in October.

Gil was a steady presence at the Institute with his life companion and wife, Maria. He was a dear friend to many of us. Gil's political insight and social awareness undergird a sensitivity toward others that was grounded in the firm belief of finding common ground. This is much of what made Gil the unique human being he was. This marked integrity constitutes what shall be remembered as his distinct eloquence and profound insight.

### JOANNE RUVOLI 1968–2018

The Italian American community of scholars and teachers lost a dear friend, JoAnne Ruvoli. JoAnne died on March 16, 2018. JoAnne was a warm human being, open and sensitive to other people's ideas and feelings. She was a professor, teacher, writer, mentor, sketcher, traveler, spouse, twin, daughter, aunt; a terrific scholar in Italian American literature and culture, and a wise and generous friend to so many in our community.

JoAnne served as Film Review Editor for the *Italian American Review* and was a member of the Italian American Studies Association. She attended many Institute and IASA conferences, and her presence was surely noted; she was always attentive and willing to join in on the discussion at hand. When she did, the direction the conversation took was always productive precisely because of her intuitive observations. JoAnne's essays were equally insightful. She examined the trope of personal storytelling on the part of the critic in textual exegesis.

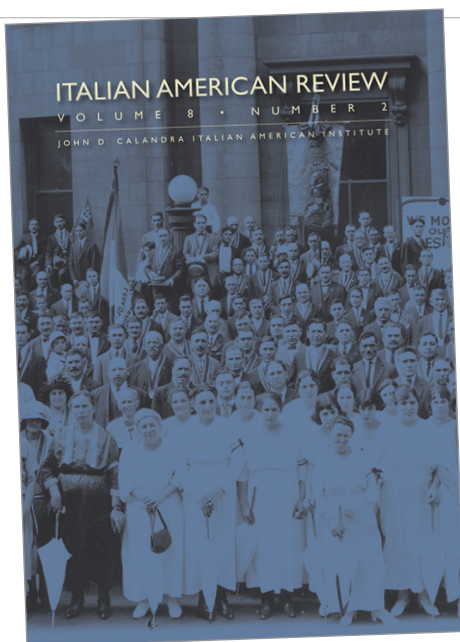
JoAnne's early passing marks a time of great sadness for those who have experienced her warmth and her



*JoAnne Ruvoli (r.) with Mary Jo Bona, Chicago 2013*

professionalism. We shall miss her intellect, to be sure; but we shall miss even more JoAnne, the sensitive and affable person who always had a kind word for all.

As Mary Jo Bona recollected: "JoAnne was one of the most decent and virtuous persons I have ever known: She knew that being a good friend meant maintaining vital relationships with those whom she loved, and she loved many of us. That is a quiet kind of flashiness: Its brilliance is illuminated by those who were privileged to have her friendship."



## 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 8, NUMBER 2 includes:

- Disco Fever: Italian and American Diasporic Journeys, by Clarissa Clò
- “In the Shadow of Liberty”: Shades of Pluralism in the Early Life and Writings of Edward Corsi, by Danielle Battisti
- Between Divestment and Migration: Clothing Artifacts and Identity among Italian Immigrant Women, 1880s–1920s, by Francesca Canadé Sautman

For more information, go to [calandrainstitute.org](http://calandrainstitute.org). Under the publications menu, click on *Italian American Review*.

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### FALL 2018 PUBLIC PROGRAMS

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

**Tuesday, October 9, 2018**

*Migrant Marketplaces: Food and Italians in North and South America*, ELIZABETH ZANONI, Old Dominion University

**Thursday, October 25, 2018**

*Italian American Women, Food, and Identity: Stories at the Table*, ANDREA L. DOTTOLO, Rhode Island College, and CAROL DOTTOLO, Liverpool Central School District, New York

**Monday, December 3, 2018**

*Searching for Subversives: The Story of Italian Internment in Wartime America*, MARY ELIZABETH BASILE CHOPAS, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

#### WRITERS READ SERIES

**Tuesday, September 11, 2018**

CHRISTIAN PICCIOLINI reads from *White American Youth: My Descent into America's Most Violent Hate Movement—and How I Got Out* (Hachette Books, 2017)  
Discussion led by Fred Gardaphé, Calandra Institute

**Tuesday, October 16, 2018**

Readings from Gil Fagiani's *Missing Madonnas* (Bordighera Press, 2018))

#### DOCUMENTED ITALIANS FILM AND VIDEO SERIES

**Monday, October 1, 2018**

*Borsalino City* (2016), 78 minutes  
In Italian with English subtitles  
ENRICA VIOLA, director  
Post-screening discussion led by Anthony Tamburri, Calandra Institute

**Wednesday, November 28, 2018**

*Shalom Italia* (2016), 70 minutes  
In Hebrew with Italian and English subtitles  
TAMAR TAL ANATI, director  
Post-screening discussion led by Alessandro Cassin, Centro Primo Levi

ITALIAN BROOKLYN: **PHOTOGRAPHS BY MARTHA COOPER**

Exhibition extended to December 14, 2018 / Gallery hours: Monday–Friday, 9am–5pm

Free and open to the public, all events begin at 6 pm at the John D. Calandra Italian American Institute, 25 West 43rd Street, 17th floor, New York NY 10036.

RSVP by calling (212) 642-2094. Seating is limited and cannot be reserved in advance.

