

# *il Bollettino*

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



2022 • VOLUME 15 • NUMBER 1

## LETTER FROM THE DEAN

Welcome to Volume 15.1 of the Calandra Institute's *il Bollettino*! This issue marks the beginning of our fifteenth year publishing this newsletter and the midway point of a similar number of years for my own tenure at the Institute as dean. Both endeavors have been most rewarding and, to be sure, challenging in various ways.

As I look through this issue, I am reminded of so much we do and have done as an Institute. Our annual conference is back up and in person this coming spring: "Eco Italie: Material Landscapes and Environmental Imaginaries." As you will see, we had begun some in-person events at the end of 2021 and the beginning of 2022. With COVID-19 data changing for the better, we shall resume this spring our regular programming; the schedule is set, and you'll find it herein.

This has been a sad year for the Institute in that we lost two friends. You will read on page 7 about the unexpected passing of Professor Gerald Meyer. Gerry was a dear friend of the Institute. He offered his scholarly wisdom and insight on our history and culture whenever we asked. As an intellectual, he was instrumental in shedding light on those individuals who were often forgotten. His work on Vito Marcantonio, for instance, has solidified the congressman's reputation in the annals of history.

The second person we lost, and we were informed of his passing only days before this issue was to go to press, is Joseph Seminara, he, too, a lifelong friend of the Calandra Institute. A lawyer by profession and a scholar by desire, Joseph was involved early on with the legal challenges the Institute faced in the early 1990s. He remained a steadfast friend, and he and his wife Anita used to attend some of our events when

they were in New York. Joseph's interest in our history never waned; he was often in touch with us here in New York and frequented events at Florida Atlantic University when he was at his second home in Boca Raton.

There is much more in *il Bollettino*: updates for *Italics*, our publications, and more. We hope you enjoy what you find, and, of course, we relish your feedback, which you can send to us at [calandra@qc.cuny.edu](mailto:calandra@qc.cuny.edu).

Our staff continues to respond to so many new challenges in an adroit manner and with aplomb. To say that they stepped up to the plate during COVID is an understatement. As dean, I can only look back with a great deal of pride as we bring this Institute to the level of university-wide research institute that it should indeed occupy. In this sense, yes, hats off to them!

We continue to enjoy great support from a variety of sources. Our colleagues and friends within CUNY are always most helpful; many of the Italian American community of the greater New York metropolitan area reliably encourage our work. Much still needs to be done; our future activities will continue to explore the many sectors of our community as we move forward.

As I have stated before, we are grateful for the stalwart support of both Chancellor Félix Matos Rodríguez's Office of CUNY and President Frank Wu's Office of Queens College. They and their staff continue to facilitate our greater development in every way.

*Alla riscossa,*

Anthony Julian Tamburri  
Dean and Distinguished Professor

### RECENTLY PUBLISHED!



*Gli Italiani in USA: nuove prospettive di una diaspora secolare*

Edited by Anthony Julian Tamburri and Silvana Mangione

Contributing authors: Ottorino Cappelli, Peter Carravetta, Teresa Fiore, Silvana Mangione, Emanuele Pettener, Laura E. Ruberto, Joseph Sciorra, Ilaria Serra, Anthony Julian Tamburri

### STAFF NEWS

CAV. JOAN MARCHI MIGLIORI, director for community and international programs, received the 2021 Christopher Columbus Award from the Italian Charities of America.

In January ROSARIA MUSCO, director of administration, celebrated twenty-five years of service at the Calandra Institute. Rosaria earned her BA from Queens College and went on, while working full time at the Institute, to complete a Master's degree in Urban Studies.

The documentary film *Squatters*, by CATALINA SANTAMARÍA, producer for *Italics*, was named "Official Selection" at MIDBO 23 and FICCALI in Colombia, and premiered in the US at the 38th Chicago Latino Film Festival.

## RECENT EVENT HIGHLIGHTS

DECEMBER 2, 2021

### BOOK PRESENTATION

#### Adriana Ink: In Conversation with Anthony Tamburri

Award-winning author Adriana Trigiani spoke with Anthony Julian Tamburri about his book *Signing Italian/American Cinema: A More Focused Look* (Ovunque Siamo, 2021).

DECEMBER 8, 2021

### BOOK PRESENTATION

#### *Gli Italiani in USA*

The recently published volume *Gli Italiani in USA: nuove prospettive di una diaspora secolare* (Calandra Institute, 2021) was presented by co-editors Anthony Julian Tamburri and Silvana Mangione, along with Fabio Finotti and Damiano Palazzolo.

DECEMBER 10, 2021

### BOOK PRESENTATION AND ROUNDTABLE

#### *Italia, Italie: Studi in onore di Hermann Haller*

Scholars Daniela D'Eugenio, Roberto Dolci, Alberto Gelmi, Hermann W. Haller, Dario Marcucci, and Anthony Julian Tamburri discussed the recently published *Italia, Italie: Studi in onore di Hermann Haller* (Mimesis Edizioni, 2021).

JANUARY 13, 2022

### ROUNDTABLE

#### Our Voyage: Italian American Stories

I AM Books of Boston and the National Italian American Foundation sponsored this discussion of Italian American histories and writings, with the participation of Patricia Dunn, Chiara Durazzini, Nicola Orichuia, and Anthony Julian Tamburri.

JANUARY 18, 2022

### MEMORIAL BOOK PRESENTATION

#### Remembering Robert Viscusi

Contributing authors celebrated the publication of *This Hope Sustains the Scholar: Essays in Tribute to the Work of Robert Viscusi* (Bordighera Press, 2021) edited by Siân Gibby, Joseph Sciorra, and Anthony Julian Tamburri.

FEBRUARY 1, 2022

### ROUNDTABLE

#### *The Garden of the Finzi-Continis: The Novel, the Film, and the Opera*

This roundtable was presented by the Calandra Institute, Centro Primo Levi NY, Italian Academy at Columbia, and NYU Casa Italiana Zerilli Marimò. Panelists included Stefano Albertini, Bianca Finzi-Contini Calabresi, Alessandro Cassin, Michael Korie, and Anthony Julian Tamburri.

## ITALICS: TELEVISION FOR THE ITALIAN AMERICAN EXPERIENCE

### FALL 2021 HIGHLIGHTS

In September *Italics* interviewed salsa-music legend Henry Fiol. Born in New York City's Italian Harlem, Fiol discussed his Italian and Puerto Rican cultural identity and his coming-of-age novel *The Short End of the Stick*.

October's *Italics* guests were Maria Tamburri and Pat Tinto (national chair and president, respectively, of the National Organization of Italian American Women) and distinguished professor Fred Gardaphé (pictured at right).

In November *Italics* featured Robert Allegrini, president of the National Italian American Foundation, honorary consul of the Republic of San Marino, and former vice president of communications for Hilton Worldwide.

In December, *Italics* guest Alison Cornish, professor and chair of Italian Studies at New York University, discussed Dante Alighieri. *Italics* also attended the Italian Charities of America celebration honoring Cav. Joan Migliori, the Calandra Institute's director for community and international programs.



*Italics* premieres the second Tuesday of each month at 9:30 pm and is rebroadcast the following Wednesday at 10:30 am and 4:30 pm, Saturday at 7:30 am, and Sunday at 6:30 pm on CUNY TV Channels 25.3, 30, 75, and 77 in Manhattan, Brooklyn, Queens, Staten Island, and the Bronx.

*Italics* can be viewed on demand at



tv.cuny.edu/media/italics



youtube.com/ItalicsTV

### SPECIAL ISSUE: MONUMENTS, MEMORIALS, AND ITALIAN MIGRATIONS

LAURA E. RUBERTO AND JOSEPH SCIORRA, GUEST EDITORS

#### Disrupted and Unsettled: An Introduction to Monuments, Memorials, and Italian Migrations

LAURA E. RUBERTO AND JOSEPH SCIORRA

The introductory essay for this special issue of the *Italian American Review* reflects on the wide and complex history of monuments and memorials and their relationships to Italian mobilities broadly understood. The combination of Italy's complex and diverse migration histories and the fundamental involvement of Italian and Italian diasporic craftspeople and communities in the creation of commemorative spaces on multiple continents offers an excellent opportunity to decenter monument studies from a national focus to a more transnational perspective.

Our essay positions our approach within popular notions and scholarly trajectories on the subject of monuments and memorials, presenting what an understanding of migration brings to such studies, especially with regard to Italian mobilities. We then focus on a number of factors specifically within Italian diasporic and transnational contexts, including the role of migrant communities in relation to monuments, the problematics of building and dismantling monuments, Fascism's legacy on landscapes, the role of politics and aesthetics in interpreting commemorative objects, and the suggestive possibilities for re-imagining Italian monuments moving forward. We intend the introductory essay both to stand alone as an analytical resource on the topic while also highlighting the specific case studies and research inquiries of our four contributors and the careful work with which they entrusted us.



#### "Hero of Two Worlds": The Equestrian Monument to Giuseppe Garibaldi in Buenos Aires, Argentina

HEATHER SOTTONG

At the end of the nineteenth century, Italian residents of Buenos Aires proudly donated an equestrian monument of Giuseppe Garibaldi to their city. The monument's 1904 inauguration in the square that five years later would officially be renamed "Plaza Italia" was not without controversy; at the time, many of Argentina's patriots were yet to have their own memorial. In this article, I will discuss divergent reactions to the monument and explain what the country's governing elite intended it to signify to turn-of-the-century Argentines and the world at large. I will focus in particular on the significance of Garibaldi the man and the monument to him as voiced by Bartolomé Mitre (president of Argentina from 1862–1868), who knew the hero personally and who played a key role in the groundbreaking and inaugural ceremonies. Lastly, I will discuss how the iconography and placement of the monument align with Mitre's vision.



Above: Plaza Italia. Photograph courtesy of Diego Silvestre. Wikipedia Commons. Licensed under CC BY 2.0. <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/2.0/deed.en>.

Left: This monumento all'emigrante was installed in 2010 at a roundabout near the cemetery outside the town of Bagnoli del Trigno (Isernia province), Molise. Inscribed on the pedestal of the bronze statue are the names of two ships, Vulcania and Saturnia, and the cities and countries from where migrants sent their donations. Photograph by Laura E. Ruberto, 2018.

### Places of Memory and Struggles for Identities: Ernesto Verrucci's 1938 Monument to Khedive Ismail in Alexandria, Egypt

STEFANO GIANNINI

This article investigates the history and analyzes the urban and political impact of the monument to Ismail Pasha, khedive of Egypt (1863–1879), built by Ernesto Verrucci and Pietro Canonica in Alexandria, Egypt. The monument consists of an exedra that surrounds a bronze statue of Ismail. The political decision to select a controversial historical figure such as Ismail to honor, Verrucci's role in the creation of the monument, and its problematic funding and building processes allow insights both on the large Italian community of the second-largest Egyptian city and on the role of monuments. Throughout the years after the Egyptian Revolution of 1952, the statue's location and dislocations across areas of Alexandria show how the role of the statue and of the exedra changed throughout Nasser's nationalization process. Ultimately, in 1966 the statue was taken away, and the colonnaded hemicycle was rededicated, severing its link to the Italian Alexandrian community. The "fragments"—both concrete (a monument eventually partially disassembled) and metaphorical (different symbolic usages of its elements)—and functions of the Ismail Pasha monument reveal Italian Alexandrians' continuous efforts to negotiate their identities that Fascist Italy was determined to influence. The monument's vicissitudes show the different roles it can play as it shapes new memories that impact the communities' cultural awareness.

### "Mussolini's Column:" Fascist Memorials and the Politics of Italian American Identity in Chicago

FRASER M. OTTANELLI

This article provides a historical analysis of the origins of Italian Fascist memorialization in Chicago: the column donated by Mussolini in Burnham Park and the naming of Balbo Drive and the plaque at the base of the Columbus statue in Grant Park. Looking at the period from the 1920s to the present, the article describes and analyzes how differing views over the presence of these Fascist memorials illustrate conflicting definitions of Italian American identity.

### Memorials and the Mine Disaster in Monongah, West Virginia: Trauma to an Italian Global Memoryscape

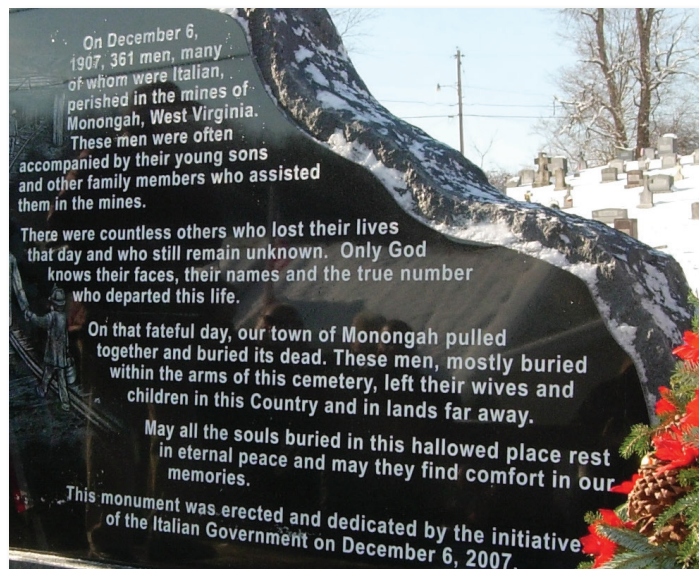
JOAN L. SAVERINO

On December 6, 1907, the largest coal mining disaster in United States history occurred in Monongah, West Virginia. Given that a significant number of recent Italian immigrants were victims, the resulting detritus stretched far beyond Monongah and left tangible but also psychic

wounds in communities on both sides of the Atlantic. From August to December 6, 2007, when there was no living person who recalled it, the 100th anniversary was internationally recognized in a series of public ceremonies to commemorate it, thus inaugurating a heritage site. This article focuses on three physical memorials: the heroine statue, the bronze bell, and the granite slab. New memories were created through the erection of permanent and ephemeral memorials, performative events, spiritual experiences, and the narrations that accompanied them. All of these served to remap, reinscribe, and redefine the spatial trajectories of the tragedy and to refashion a collective historical memory that emphasizes diasporic Italian identity.

This article will interpret the contestable interplay of sociocultural and political power that occurred among the different parties who had a stake in the Monongah representations, including the Italian regional and national governments. Since the bituminous coal industry boom in the nineteenth century, coal was the force of common engagement and power in the state. It will not be surprising that heritage making in Monongah is deeply rooted in the intertwining of coal mining, state politics, and immigration history. The involvement of the Italian national and regional governments in this memorial making was a more unexpected factor.

This article uses original research, which includes documentary evidence as well as oral interviews, to add new discussion to the field of memorials in general and Italian studies in particular by investigating how what began as a traumatic site with a preponderance of immigrant deaths evolved into an Italian-focused heritage site that is still evolving.



*The granite slab was donated on December 6, 2007, by the Italian national government and is surrounded by wreaths festooned with the colors of the Italian flag. It was erected in Mt. Calvary Cemetery, where the Italian victims are buried. Photograph by Joan L. Saverino.*

Program subject to change

FRIDAY, APRIL 29

9:00–9:30 am Coffee &amp; Pastries

9:30–10:30 am

## Gardening in North America

Chair: Stefano Morello, The Graduate Center, CUNY

My Father's Garden: Cultivating Bonds Across Time and Space, SUSAN AMATANGELO, College of the Holy Cross

Gardens of Survival: Nourishing Body and Soul in the Italian Diaspora in North America, JAN MARTA, University of Toronto

10:45 am–12:15 pm

## Keynote

Green Traces: Vegetal Imagination in Italian Science Fiction from Gilda Musa to Solarpunk, ENRICO CESARETTI, University of Virginia

12:15–1:30 pm Lunch on Your Own

1:30–2:45 pm

## Twenty-First Century Literature

Chair: Rosangela Briscese, John D. Calandra Italian American Institute, Queens College, CUNY

Climate Change Narratives: Italy's Human and Non-Human Transformative Storytelling, LAURA DI BIANCO, Johns Hopkins University

Ecological Identities and Environmental Imaginaries in Fabrizia Ramondino's Writings, ROSSELLA DI ROSA, University of Pennsylvania

"Infinite Chromatic Games": Textual Visibility of Color in Caterina Franciosi's Eco-Dystopian *Terra nova* (2020), ROSE FACCHINI, Boston University

3:00–4:40 pm

## Crisis in Italy

Chair: George De Stefano, Independent Scholar

*Terremoto!* Major Earthquakes and Their Consequences in Southern Italy, VICTORIA CALABRESE, Lehman College, CUNYDanilo Dolci's *Acqua e potere*: A Posthuman View on Water in Western Sicily, VIKTOR BERBERI, University of Minnesota, Morris

Polluted Land, Poisoned Futures: Trans-Corporeality in Scanzano's Antinuclear Protests, Past and Present, DYLAN GILBERT, The University of Texas at Austin

Territories on the Move: Biocultural Heritage, Rural Regenerations, and Poetics of "Restanza": Ethnographies from EARTH Project, LETIZIA BINDI, University of Molise

SATURDAY, APRIL 30

9:00–9:30 am Coffee &amp; Pastries

9:30–10:45 am

## Twentieth-Century Literature

Chair: Fred Gardaphé, Queens College, CUNY

Central Italy's Countryside in *Il sole a picco* (1929): Writer Vincenzo Cardarelli and Painter Giorgio Morandi Facing Natural Landscape, VIRGINIA MAGNAGHI, Scuola Normale SuperioreTo Dwell within this World: Political and Material Landscapes in Luigi Sturzo's *Ciclo della creazione*, DANIEL JOSEPH RIETZE, Brown University

Joseph Tusiani and His Naturalistic Poetry in Four Languages, ROSINA MARTUCCI, University of Salerno

11:00 am–12:15 pm

## Migrating Landscapes

Chair: Donna Chirico, York College, CUNY

American Economy/Italian Ecology: Making and Unmaking the Lung Block, STEFANO MORELLO, The Graduate Center, CUNY, and KERRI CULHANE, University College London

Giacomo Sferlazzo's Lampedusa: Music, Art, and Political Commitment, from the "Middle of the Mediterranean," GEORGE DE STEFANO, Independent Scholar

Conserving Fascism's Legacy: The Politics of Waste, Preservation, and Erasure, SOPHIA MAXINE FARMER, University of Arkansas-Fort Smith

12:15–1:30 pm Lunch on Your Own

1:30–3:10 pm

## Colonial and Fascist Agriculture in Africa

Chair: Joseph Sciorra, John D. Calandra Italian American Institute, Queens College, CUNY

The Water of the Horn: Erratic Rivers and Irrigation Projects in the Italian Colonial Empire between Adwa and Mussolini (1897–1934), ANGELO MATTEO CAGLIOTI, Barnard College

Sciences and Agricultural Services of the Italian Colonies during the Fascist Period, RICCARDO DE ROBERTIS, University of Teramo

Nature, Race, and Empire: Fascist Agricultural Projects in Libya, MICHELE MONSERRATI, Williams College

3:25–4:40 pm

## Gardening in Italy and Beyond

Chair: Siân Gibby, John D. Calandra Italian American Institute, Queens College, CUNY

Reframing Italian Cultures of Nature in the Nineteenth Century: Alpine Gardens and the First Steps toward Nature Conservation, ZOE LAURI, European University Institute

Crafting New Italian Landscapes in Captivity: Italian Prisoners of War in Kenya and South Africa during World War II, ELENA BELLINA, University of Rochester

Gardening to Preserve Ancient Roots, ILARIA SERRA, Florida Atlantic University

## IN PIAZZA: TONI GENTILLI'S ADAPTIVE IMMUNITY

Featured on this newsletter's cover is a detail from *Synthesis Sigil 1* by artist, curator, and anthropologist Toni Gentilli. This work was featured in her 2021 solo exhibition, *Adaptive Immunity*, at the Sanitary Tortilla Factory in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Gentilli seeks to render the entanglement of human and environmental health, specifically the disproportionate impacts of autoimmunity on women and other chronic conditions linked to ecosystem degradation. Gentilli states: "My creative practice is rooted in a process of exploration bridging art, science, and embodied knowing, and stems from an intuitive alchemy that integrates plants as materials and subjects for healing across organisms, species, and ecologies. I use botanical pigments, leaves, and light sensitive chemistry to make paintings, prints, and camera-less photographs that probe the edges of the known and visible world. I am particularly awestruck by the life giving power of photosynthesis, which I invoke as an analog for my body's inability to metabolize sugar due to Type 1 diabetes. My current mixed media work, which also incorporates botanical dyes and fibers transformed into weavings, macramé, soft sculptures, and botanical hydrosols, tends to topics of human and environmental health, specifically the invisible labor associated with managing autoimmunity and the disproportionate effects on women of chronic conditions linked to ecosystem disruption and degradation. I intentionally collaborate with living materials to collapse distinctions between self/other, inner/outer, humans/nature, and to cultivate care for human-plant-microbial interdependence and connect to the wild, yet cyclical character of emergence and decay foundational to the universe." For more information visit [tonigentilli.com](http://tonigentilli.com)



## IN MEMORIAM

It is with great sadness that we mark the death of Gerald Meyer, professor at Hostos Community College, the City University of New York. Meyer's varied research has resulted in almost one hundred articles and books elucidating various aspects of Italian America and working-class history as well as the intersections of radicalism and immigrants.

His biography *Vito Marcantonio: Radical Politician, 1902–1954* (SUNY Press, 1989)—now in its fourth printing—was instrumental in presenting a critical history of US Representative Marcantonio and his service on behalf of his Harlem constituents, who included Italian Americans, Puerto Ricans, and African Americans. Meyer also wrote about educator Leonard Covello, providing an afterword to the reprint of Covello's *The Heart Is the Teacher*, published by the Calandra Institute in 2013.

Meyer's collection of essays, co-edited with Philip V. Cannistraro, *The Lost World of Italian-American Radicalism* (Praeger, 2003) grew out of the 1997 conference of the same title, hosted by the Calandra Institute. Both the conference and the publication filled a void in the study of Italian American history and culture by offering participants and readers a series of analytical and interpretive essays on radical Italian America. *The Lost World of Italian-American*

*Radicalism* (which is the fruit of more than three generations of scholars working in the field) is the first work of its kind that has at its base the knowledge, intellectual expertise, and critical acumen of the who's who of Italian American studies.

Gerry, as his friends and colleagues knew him, was also an activist. He was a founding member of the faculty at Hostos, and during the fiscal crisis of the mid-1970s he served as the chair of the Save Hostos Committee, which succeeded in keeping the college open. Once retired, he co-founded The Circle of 100 Scholarship and Emergency Fund. For his advocacy and generosity to Hostos, Room B-115 of the college's Building B was renamed the "Vito Marcantonio Conference Room" in his honor. He co-founded the Vito Marcantonio Forum, for which he was serving as co-chair at the time of his passing, and which is dedicated to documenting and teaching about the life and work of that great Italian American fighter for the working class.

Certainly as a scholar but also, and more importantly, as the caring individual he was, Gerry Meyer shall be dearly missed.

— ANTHONY JULIAN TAMBURRI



The *Italian American Review* 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 *Italian American Review* publishes book, film, and digital media reviews.

#### VOLUME 12, NUMBER 1 INCLUDES:

- Special Issue: Monuments, Memorials, and Italian Migrations, Laura E. Ruberto and Joseph Sciorra, Guest Editors
- Disrupted and Unsettled: An Introduction to Monuments, Memorials, and Italian Migrations, Laura E. Ruberto and Joseph Sciorra
- “Hero of Two Worlds”: The Equestrian Monument to Giuseppe Garibaldi in Buenos Aires, Argentina, Heather Sottong
- Places of Memory and Struggles for Identities: Ernesto Verrucci’s 1938 Monument to Khedive Ismail in Alexandria, Egypt, Stefano Giannini
- “Mussolini’s Column”: Fascist Memorials and the Politics of Italian American Identity in Chicago, Fraser M. Ottanelli
- Memorials and the Mine Disaster in Monongah, West Virginia: Trauma to an Italian Global Memoryscape, Joan L. Saverino

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

## SPRING 2022 PUBLIC PROGRAMS

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

Thursday, April 7, 2022

The World Refugees Made: Decolonization and the Foundation of Postwar Italy

PAMELA BALLINGER

University of Michigan

Monday, June 6, 2022

Lifeblood of the Parish: Men and Catholic Devotion in Williamsburg, Brooklyn

ALYSSA J. MALDONADO-ESTRADA

Kalamazoo College

### WRITERS READ SERIES

Monday, April 4, 2022

CLAUDIA DURASTANTI reads from *Strangers I Know* (Riverhead, 2022)

Tuesday, May 10, 2022

CHRISTOPHER SORRENTINO reads from *Now Beacon, Now Sea: A Son’s Memoir* (Catapult, 2021). In partnership with Centro, The Center for Puerto Rican Studies, Hunter College.

Thursday, May 19, 2022

GIANNA PATRIARCA reads from *This Way Home: Selected and New Work* (Guernica Editions, 2021)

### DOCUMENTED ITALIANS

Tuesday, March 22, 2022

*Dear Sirs* (2021), 93 minutes  
MARK PEDRI, director

Wednesday, May 25, 2022

*Revelstoke: A Kiss in the Wind* (2015), 74 minutes  
NICOLA MORUZZI, director



All events are free and open to the public and begin at 6 pm at the John D. Calandra Italian American Institute. RSVP by calling (212) 642-2094.

COVID protocols will be followed: Attendance is limited to 15 people, and face masks and proof of vaccination and ID are required.

QUEENS COLLEGE IS  CUNY