

JOHN D.
CALANDRA
ITALIAN
AMERICAN
INSTITUTE

il Bollettino

dedicated to the history and culture of Italians in America



2023 • VOLUME 16 • NUMBER 2

LETTER FROM THE DEAN

Care Amiche, Cari Amici,

Welcome to Volume 16.1 of the Calandra Institute's *il Bollettino!* Since I last wrote, numerous significant events have taken place in these intervening months, and you will read about many successes in this issue related to those events and the individuals involved.

This fall we opened with two major events. One was the culmination of the tireless efforts of Joseph Sciorra, the Calandra Institute's Director of Academic and Cultural Programs, and his quest to procure a headstone for longshoreman Pietro "Pete" Panto. The July 9, 2023, edition of the *New York Times* published an article about Sciorra's work on this campaign. The fundraising for the tombstone was a success, with contributions coming from various sectors of our community. To say that we were delighted with the outcome is an understatement. On September 26, 2023, we went to the St. Charles Cemetery in Farmingdale, NY, to inaugurate the recently installed tombstone. Now, after more than eighty years with a footstone only, the courage and fortitude of Pete Panto can be fully appreciated with a gravestone that is now readily recognized.

Our second major event is the art exhibition *A Legacy of Making: 21 Contemporary Italian American Artists*. Curated by

Joanne Mattera and Joseph Sciorra, this exhibit features the work of artists whose styles and techniques vary widely across the show. The selected pieces have been organized into three categories: Mapping Routes, A Legacy of Making, and No Accent on the Italian. The exhibition opened at the Calandra Institute's Galleria on September 27, 2023, and is on view through January 12, 2024.

Our future activities will continue to explore the many sectors of our community as we move forward. To stay up to date with our activities, please join our mailing list on the home page of our website.

I wish to thank the members of the Calandra Institute staff for their continued dedication to the various projects and programming we organize. Overall, they have proven to be exceptional. I am delighted to reiterate once more that we continue to benefit from the unyielding support of both Chancellor Felix Matos Rodríguez of CUNY and President Frank Wu of Queens College. They and their staffs have cleared many a path throughout their respective tenures.

Con viva cordialità,



Anthony Julian Tamburri
Dean and Distinguished Professor

COVER ARTIST ANGELICA BERGAMINI

Angelica Bergamini is an Italian-born visual artist and color therapist based in New York City. Her work has been shown in the US, Europe, and China, including C24 Gallery, Tanja Grunert, Lehman College Art Gallery, Ivy Brown, White Box, BRIC Arts Media, Torrance Art Museum, Chelsea Space (London), Galerie Arnaud Lefebvre (Paris), Färgfabriken (Stockholm), Pari&Dispari (Milan, Reggio Emilia), and Kwai Fung Hin Art Gallery (Hong Kong). Her latest solo show was at the Museum of Sculpture and Architecture in Pietrasanta, Italy.

Bergamini recently completed her Master's degree in Partnership Studies and Shamanism at the University of Udine, Italy. The program, based on the work of cultural historian Riane Eisler and her *partnership (gylanic) model*, has developed multidisciplinary research to investigate the presence and meaning of partnership/dominator configurations in linguistic, literary, cultural, educational, and artistic contexts.

angelicabergamini.com

On the cover: *Fons et origo #5* (dedicated to Rachel Carson), mixed media collage, 2018. Right: *Manahatta #1*, mixed media collage, 2022. © Angelica Bergamini



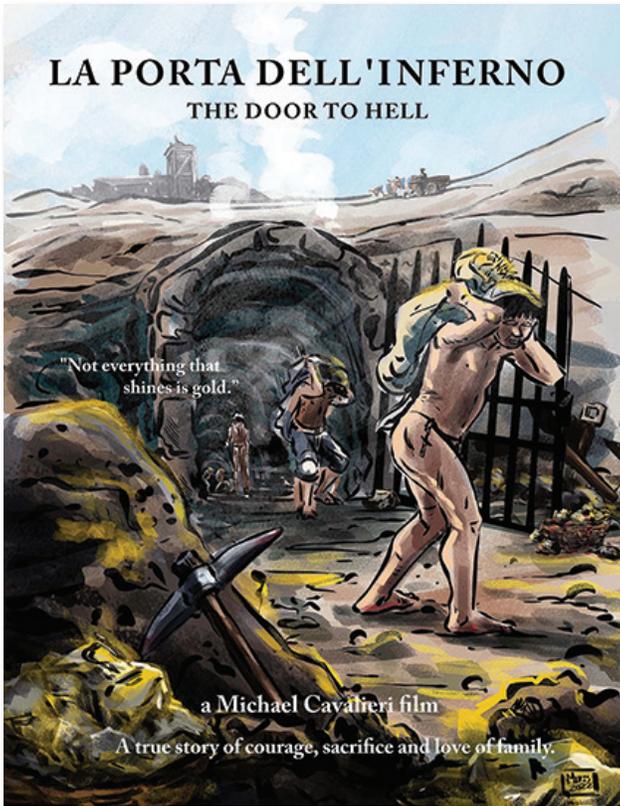
FOUR DAYS OF NAPLES

On October 10, 2023, the Calandra Institute and E-Novation Foundation cohosted an event, International Days of Freedom: Remembering the Four Days of Naples. Remarks were given by Anthony Julian Tamburri, Dean of the Calandra Institute, Massimo Lucidi, President of E-Novation Foundation, and Francesco Giubilei, President of Tatarella Foundation.

The presentation commemorated four days during World War II—September 27–30, 1943—when the people of Naples, Italy, with the contribution of soldiers loyal to the Kingdom of the South, rose up against the German military troops occupying their land.

The war's indiscriminate executions, looting, control of the civilian population, and increasing poverty and destruction spurred a spontaneous rebellion. Armed with makeshift weapons and against overwhelming odds, Neapolitan men, women, and teenagers drove the German forces from their city.

Naples was the first among major European cities to arise and successfully defeat the German military occupation. On September 10, 1944, the city of Naples was awarded the Gold Medal of Military Valor.



RECENT EVENT HIGHLIGHTS

May 16, 2023

FILM SCREENING

La porta dell'inferno (The Door to Hell)

(2022). Michael Cavalieri, director. Film introduced by Aileen Riotto Sirey. Screening followed by conversation with the filmmaker and Gaetano Cipolla.

June 6, 2023

BOOK PRESENTATION

Scoprirsi Italiani: I viaggi delle radici in Italia

by Marina Gabrieli, Riccardo Giumelli, Delfina Licata, and Giuseppe Sommario (Rubbettino, 2022). Panel discussion with Sommario, John Calvelli, Rosa Coppola, Alessandro Crocco, Silvana Magione, and Anthony J. Tamburri.

September 7, 2023

BOOK PRESENTATION

Soundtrack of a Life: New and Selected Poems

by Gil Fagiani (Legas Books, 2023). Posthumously published works. Cosponsored by the Italian American Writers Association.

ITALICS: TELEVISION FOR THE ITALIAN AMERICAN EXPERIENCE

The April 2023 *Italics* episode “Preserving Italian American Culture: A Zampogna’s Journey” featured an interview with ethnomusicologist David Marker and the Calandra Institute’s Joseph Sciorra. They discussed Italian immigrant Rocco Costello’s bagpipe instrument, the *zampogna*, that they helped Costello’s descendent donate to the New York Historical Society. The unusual instrument was brought to the United States in the early twentieth century by Costello who was known as New York’s last Italian bagpiper. The *zampogna* was on temporary display this year.



Marco Tomassi (*zampogna gigante*) and Marco Cignitti (*zampogna zoppa*). Photograph © A. Maggio.



Italics airs Monday through Thursday at 9:30 am
on Spectrum/Optimum 75, Antenna 25.3, RCN 77, and Verizon FiOS 30

Italics can be viewed on demand at  tv.cuny.edu/media/italics  youtube.com/ItalicsTV

Italians from Brazil and the Armed Conflicts of the Twentieth Century: Money and Men for the Italian Wars JOÃO FÁBIO BERTONHA

Italians who lived abroad participated in armed conflicts in Italy since the unification wars, offering, for example, financial and voluntary support to Garibaldi's forces. Subsequently, Italians abroad were involved in the various colonial wars promoted by Italy, such as those of Libya and Ethiopia. Similarly, there was mobilization of the Italian collectivities during the two World Wars and during the Fascist invasion of Ethiopia in 1935. The purpose of this article is to make an analysis of the participation of Italo-Brazilians in support of Italy during the conflicts of 1895–1896 (the First Ethiopian War), 1911–1912 (the Italo-Turkish War), and especially 1915–1918 (World War I), 1935–1936 (the Second War of Ethiopia), 1936–1939 (the Spanish Civil War), and 1940–1945 (World War II), focusing particularly on the financial and symbolic support given. The article pays special attention to the volunteers (or draftees) who went to Italy's aid in these wars and compares the Brazilian efforts with those of other countries in Europe and the Americas.

Reflections on Photography and Race in Kym Ragusa's *The Skin Between Us* JOSEPH TUMOLO

Descriptions of photographic images recur throughout Kym Ragusa's *The Skin Between Us: A Memoir of Race, Beauty, and Belonging*. However, the specific role of photography in her memoir has yet to be explored in depth. In my article, I consider the key role that photographic images play in Ragusa's text and how literary discourse and photography are inseparable for her. The book recounts the author's upbringing with her Italian American father and African American mother; caught between these two communities that are often at odds, Ragusa is all too familiar with racism. Indeed, the narratives of her paternal family history and identity relentlessly repress a past of Italian American alterity and racial difference, erasing, by extension, Ragusa's blackness. *The Skin Between Us* can be read as the author's attempt to establish agency and to craft a narrative of self and family that does not efface, but rather embraces her difference. Because of the heavily visual component of most forms of racism, photographs are key for Ragusa, who makes use of them in her memoir to challenge her readers to see past a dichotomic categorization of people into the color-coded categories of Black and white. In addition to this use of photographs, Ragusa is also interested in photography's power to document. She is drawn to photography for its ability to record what Roland Barthes called the "that-has-been"—its ability to testify to the existence of the photographed subject. For Ragusa, photography's documentary power serves as a reminder of the agency of the photographed other, which, as the author knows too well, can be canceled in representation. Thus, as Ragusa re-establishes the self—her self—that was erased in her family's history, she always seeks to respect the agency of the individuals she depicts in her memoir. *The Skin Between Us* emerges as a meta-artistic reflection on balancing the need to represent one's own story with the ethical imperative to mitigate the risk of erasure that is always present in representation.

STAFF NEWS

STEPHEN CERULLI was one of the stalwart lifters at the Sant'Antonio procession for East Harlem's Giglio Feast on August 13, 2023.



John Cerulli and Stephen Cerulli at the Giglio Feast in New York City.

NICHOLAS GROSSO's article, "Other than itself" (with Sabrina Morreale and Lorenzo Perri of Lemonot Studio) was published as the Curator's Statement for the 2023 Architecture Book Fair (see page 7).

ANTHONY JULIAN TAMBURRI was in Italy this summer representing the Calandra Institute and Queens College, CUNY, at a number of events. One of these was a presentation, organized by the mayor of Settefrati, of a book titled *Una Nuova e Più Grande Settefrati sul Suolo D'America (A new and greater Settefrati on American soil)*, written by Mario Vitti (edited by Dean Tamburri). The book covers the immigration of Italians from Settefrati to Connecticut.

ZIRU WANG joined the staff as IT Media Specialist to assist the production of *Italics* on CUNY TV. Welcome, Zirui!

The *Italian American Review* has recently had its classification updated by the Italian National Agency for the Evaluation of Universities and Research Institutes (ANVUR). As of October 2022 IAR is classified as a Scientific Journal in area 10 (Antiquities, Philology, Literary Studies, and Art History), Area 11 (History, Philosophy, and Pedagogy), and Area 14 (political and Social Sciences). It additionally enjoys ANVUR's highest "class A" ranking for area studies 11/A5 (Cultural, Ethnic, and Anthropological Studies) and 14/C2 (Sociology).

A LEGACY OF MAKING

The exhibition *A Legacy of Making: 21 Contemporary Italian American Artists* is on view at the Calandra Institute Galleria September 27, 2023, through January 12, 2024. Curators Joanne Mattera and Joseph Sciorra say of the show: “The work of the twenty-one artists featured in this exhibit offers a richness of form, medium, subject matter, color, and style that is a delight and a revelation to behold. Connections to a discernable Italian art tradition—or for that matter to Italian

American aesthetic practices more specifically—vary across the exhibition, ranging from the explicit to the suggestive to the nonexistent. A dynamic tension operates in which a usable past is employed to create not only art of the moment but a reimagined and reconfigured ethnic sensibility. Ultimately such creative diversity is predicated on a heterogeneity of experiences, sensibilities, and understandings that serve as inspiration for transformative acts of beauty.”

ARTISTS: B. Amore – John Avelluto – Nancy Azara – Angelica Bergamini – Gianluca Bianchino – Jennifer Cecere – Chris Costan – Elisa D’Arrigo – Claudia DeMonte – Diana González Gandolfi – D. Dominick Lombardi – Joanne Mattera – Timothy McDowell – Patricia Miranda – John Monti – Carolanna Parlato – Anna Patalano – Karen Schifano – Mary Schiliro – Denise Sfraga – Lisa Zukowski



At left: Chris Costan, *I Believe 4*, 2023, textile pieces and mixed media on paper, 11 x 13 inches; bottom left: Timothy McDowell, *Siren's Call*, 2023, oil on panel, 24 x 18.5 inches; below right: B. Amore, *Following the Thread IV: Concettina De Iorio*, 1999, copper, wood, photo, fabric, thread, 24 x 48 x 3 inches; bottom right: Elisa D’Arrigo, *Double Dyad*, 2010, hand-built and glazed ceramic, 8.5 x 12 x 7 inches



IN MEMORIAM

HELEN BAROLINI 1925–2023

Helen Barolini, distinguished writer and poet, passed away in March at the age of 97. Barolini was born and raised in Syracuse, NY, and attended local schools, graduating high school with a NY Regents scholarship award. She attended Wells College for two years and went on to graduate magna cum laude from Syracuse University, where she was editor of the *Syracusan* magazine and was elected to the Phi Beta Kappa honor society. Barolini conducted post-graduate work at the University of London and received a Master's degree from Columbia University. She also studied in Italy where she met and married the late Italian author and journalist Antonio Barolini. It was a life that involved several transatlantic moves for them and their three daughters; they had homes in both Italy and the US. Much of her work reflects the dual background of her



married life and her writing career. With a grant from the National Endowment of the Arts, Barolini completed her first book-length work, the novel *Umbertina* (The Feminist Press, 1979), which is still in print, used in college curricula, and was published in an Italian edition in 2001. She edited *The Dream Book: An Anthology of Writings by Italian American Women* (Syracuse University Press, 2000), which received an American Book Award in 1986 and the Susan Koppelman Award for the best anthology in the feminist study of American culture. This work, too, is still in print and much used in college curricula. Barolini is the author of ten books and more than fifty works of short fiction and essays, several of which have been cited in the annual collections of Best American Essays. Barolini was been a fellow at Yaddo and the MacDowell Colony, a writer in residence at Elmira College's Quarry Farm, a resident writer at the Rockefeller Foundation's Bellagio Center in Italy, and a visiting artist at the American Academy in Rome. She participated in numerous public readings, panels, workshops, and conferences internationally and taught at Trinity College in Rome, Westchester Community College, and Pace University in Pleasantville, NY. Additionally, she was a member of PEN, the Authors Guild, Phi Beta Kappa, and the Hastings Historical Society. Barolini's contributions to Italian American literature and culture have been widely recognized and she will be remembered as a trailblazer who gave voice to the Italian American experience. She is survived by her three daughters, Teodolinda, Susanna, and Nicoletta, and by her five grandchildren.

Reprinted from edwardsdowdle.com/obituaries/Helen-Barolini

2024 ANNUAL CONFERENCE: TRANSLATING ITALIAN MOBILITIES

The Calandra Institute will host its annual conference April 26–27, 2024, on the theme of “Translating Italian Mobilities.”

In his 1942 memoir *Mount Allegro* about growing up in a Sicilian immigrant community in Rochester, New York, Jerre Mangione recounts how his monolingual Uncle Luigi asked the eleven-year-old Jerre to write on his behalf a love letter to a non-Italian woman. The result was both disastrous and humorous. Examples of such intergenerational linguistic and cultural brokering are numerous in the literatures of migration and represent a significant reality in multicultural societies.

Translation is a constant presence in the life of migrants, be it in the form of everyday exchanges within multilingual communities or through official contact with public institutions. Translators and interpreters

(trained or otherwise) play a fundamental role of mediation in negotiating new environments, making sense of new experiences, and/or devising new strategies of survival and belonging. Translation has held and continues to hold a critical role in bridging the local and global, encompassing transnational and translingual issues that concern aspects of the cultural politics of power, emotions, the imagination, and ever-changing individual and collective identities.

The link between translation and mobility, especially in the Italian context (e.g., Moira Inghilleri, Loredana Polezzi), has been explored with increasing attention in the last decades. In line with this recent scholarship, the conference aims to shed light on the multiple forms in which translation has operated and continues to operate within the realm of Italian mobilities.

IN PIAZZA

OTHER THAN ITSELF

The LINA Architecture Book Fair is a virtual book fair dedicated to architecture and its intersection with politics, technology, economy, and society.

The 2023 curators Nicholas Grosso, Sabrina Morreale, and Lorenzo Perri, describe the project: “Creating an associative web along with a selection of fifteen books, we hope to discover portals to alternative pasts, presents, and futures for the field of architecture.” They chose and classified the fifteen titles below “to draw out constellations, and identify, praise, and conceive the field of architecture as something other than itself.”

Architecture as a Way of Seeing and Learning: The built environment as an added educator in East African refugee camps, by Nerea Amorós Elorduy (UCL Press, 2021)

Collective Processes: Counterpractices in European Architecture, by Natalie Donat-Cattin (Birkhäuser, 2021)

Convivial Ground by Constructlab, Joanne Pouzenc, Alex Römer (Jovis, 2023)

Emergent Tokyo: Designing the Spontaneous City, by Jorge Almazán and Studiolab (Oro Editions, 2022)

Every So Often a Talking Dog Appears and Other Essays, by Smiljan Radic (Buchandlung Walter König, 2019)

How to Blow Up a Pipeline: Learning to Fight in a World on Fire, by Andreas Malm (Verso Books, 2021)

In Praise of Good Bookstores, by Jeff Deutsch (Princeton Architectural Press, 2022)

Poetechnics, by Yaxkin Melchy (Cardboard House Press, 2023)

The Femicide Machine, by Sergio González Rodríguez (Semiotext(e), 2012)

The Gospel of Regicide, by Eunsong Kim (Noemi Press, 2017)

The Heiress/Ghost Acres, by Lightsey Darst (Coffee House Press, 2023)

The Time of Discretion, by Lisa Mara Batacchi (Silvana Editoriale, 2020)

Unidentified Flying Object for Contemporary Architecture: UFO's Experiments between Political Activism and the Artistic Avant-garde, by Beatrice Lampariello, Andrea Anselmo, Boris Hamzeian (Actar Publishers, 2020)

Weaving Language I: Lexicon, by Francesca Capone (Essay Press, 2022)

Welcome my friend, by Testo Michel Agier, Marielle Macé, Gilles Raynaldy (Spector, 2022)



Photo credit: Eliot Stein

BYSSUS, THE SILK OF THE SEA

Chiara Vigo, who lives in a remote village in Sardinia, Italy, may be one of very few people in the world who still weave sea silk made from byssus, a fine filament produced by large mollusks under the sea.

The noble pen shell, or *pinna nobilis*, native of the Mediterranean Sea bed, proliferates in the lagoon of Sant'Antioco. It was declared endangered in 1992 and is now protected by European and regional law. Traditionally, the pen shell was fished in order to pull the byssus out, but Vigo has developed a technique to extract the secreted material without harming the sea creature.

The gleaming golden threads spun from byssus were used to embroider robes for noble kings, and to fashion religious garments for pharaohs, popes, and clerics. The magical strands are noted throughout the bible and referenced on the Rosetta Stone.

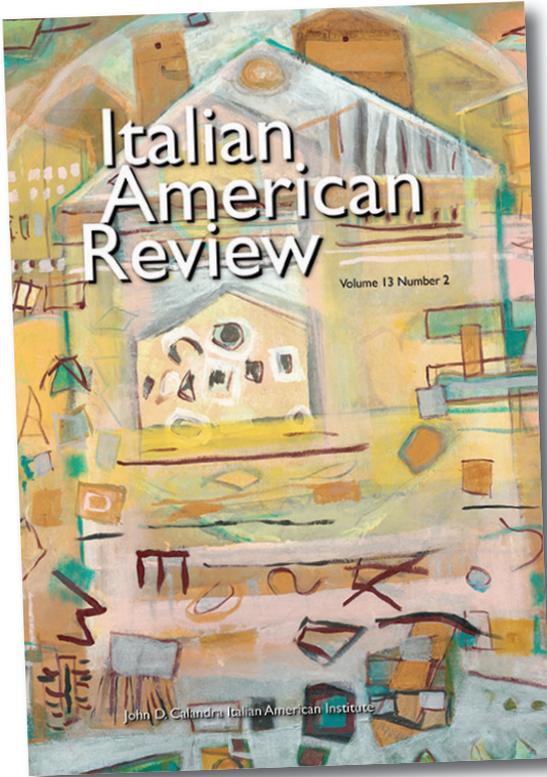
This form of art was born in ancient Middle Eastern lands thousands of years ago. Vigo was introduced to the ancient craft by her maternal grandmother. The matriarchal sea weaving traditions of Vigo's family date back more than 5,000 years to the women in Mesopotamia.

Vigo's unique pieces are displayed in museums in Rome, London, New York, and the Louvre in Paris, and have been donated to presidents and popes. According to tradition, byssus cannot be bought or sold, but only gifted.

In 2008, Vigo was acknowledged by the Council of Ministers and Board of the Order of Merit of the Italian Republic and registered in the register of Commanders. In 2006, she was recognized by the President of Italy for her commitment to defending the natural environment. She is a candidate for Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity at UNESCO.

architecturebookfair.com

chiaravigo.it



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 13, Number 2 includes:

ARTICLES

- Italians from Brazil and the Armed Conflicts of the Twentieth Century: Money and Men for the Italian Wars by JOÃO FÁBIO BERTONHA
- Reflections on Photography and Race in Kym Ragusa's *The Skin Between Us* by JOSEPH TUMOLO

NOTES AND DOCUMENTS

- Gerald Meyer: The People's Historian (June 5, 1940–November 10, 2021) by MARCELLA BENCIVENNI
- A Distinguished Stranger: Elena Vespucci (1804–1866) by BARBARA MONTESI

For more information, go to calandrainstitute.org. Under the Publications menu, click on *Italian American Review*.

FALL 2023 PUBLIC PROGRAMS

THE PHILIP V. CANNISTRARO SEMINAR SERIES IN ITALIAN AMERICAN STUDIES

Wednesday, September 20, 2023

*The Sicilian Puppet Theater of Agrippino Manteo (1884–1947):
The Paladins of France in America*
JO ANN CAVALLO, Columbia University

Thursday, October 12, 2023

Spaghetti Sissies: Queering Italian American Media
JULIA HEIM, University of Pennsylvania
SOLE ANATRONE, Vassar College

WRITERS READ SERIES

Wednesday, November 29, 2023

ANGELO ZEOLLA reads from *The Bronx Unbound, ovvero i versi
Bronxesi* (Bordighera Press, 2023)

DOCUMENTED ITALIANS

Wednesday, November 15, 2023

Potentially Dangerous: When It Was a Crime to Be Italian (2021),
50 minutes, ZACH BALIVA, director

Thursday, December 7, 2023

Oltre i bordi/Beyond the Frame (2023), 41 minutes
SIMONE BRIONI and MATTEO SANDRINI, directors

EXHIBITION OPENING

Wednesday, September 27, 2023

A Legacy of Making: 21 Contemporary Italian American Artists
Curated by Joanne Mattera and Joseph Sciorra

ON VIEW September 27, 2023–January 12, 2024
Gallery hours: Monday–Friday, 9am–5pm



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.

