

JOHN D.
CALANDRA
ITALIAN
AMERICAN
INSTITUTE

il Bollettino

dedicated to the history and culture of Italians in America



Celebrating 45 Years of the Calandra Institute

2024 • VOLUME 17 • NUMBER 2

LETTER FROM THE DEAN

Dear All,

Welcome to the thirty-fourth issue of the Calandra Institute's newsletter, *il Bollettino*! This academic year, 2024–2025, marks forty-five years of the existence of the John D. Calandra Italian American Institute. I have been at my position of dean since the 2006–2007 academic year. The past eighteen years have been challenging and over all a rewarding and gratifying experience. Together with the Calandra staff and various members of our Italian and Italian American communities and other local institutions, we have accomplished many things.

Since its inception, the Calandra Institute has succeeded in bringing to completion a series of significant projects and initiatives. In building on those past successes, we have brought the Institute to its current position as the premier institute dedicated to the history and culture of Italians in America as well as to the Italian diaspora. From our local organizations to national and international institutes and centers, we have been able to bring to the international stage a keener and more integral discussion and debate on the Italian diaspora.

Regarding research and scholarship done by Institute staff and affiliated scholars, we have had the opportunity to bring about venues such as the thrice-resurrected *Italian American Review* and *Voices in Italian Americana*. Our book series *Studies in Italian Americana* and *Transactions* have together published more than two dozen books. Further still, our annual conferences have drawn scholars from all parts of the globe, Argentina, Australia, China, France, Italy, and Great Britain, as well as other countries.

As for books we have published, two years ago we collaborated with Tulane University for a symposium on the theme of “The Italian Immigrant Experience: Between Black and White,” and recently we produced a volume of essays from that event; more information is available here within (p. 3). Earlier this year, Bordighera Press became an official entity of the John D. Calandra Italian American Institute (p. 5). Its authors have been recognized across many fields and from many institutions including the National Endowment for the Arts, American Literary Translators Association, American Association of University Women, Rockefeller Foundation, Association of Writers & Writing Programs, Academy of American Poets, American Book Award, PEN America, and Poet Laureate Emeritus of New York State.

Another source of pride comes from our members of the Calandra staff who have garnered multiple awards and recognitions over the years. In this issue, you'll see that Dr. Joseph Sciorra was awarded the Vernacular Architecture Forum's 2024 Catherine W. Bishir Prize (p. 6).

The John D. Calandra Italian American Institute has reestablished the Faculty Fellowship program for this coming spring (see below). As well, the Institute will be able to offer scholarships to graduate students who enroll in the two graduate courses being offered in Spring 2025 at Queens College (p. 4).

Information on our other events of this past year is included in this issue of *il Bollettino*. Please do not hesitate to call on us if we can be of any assistance with further details about anything listed herein. Also, be sure to join our mailing list. Our contact information is at the bottom of this page.

As I take stock of the past eighteen years, I am delighted to recognize the continued support from several venues. The Italian American community of the greater New York metropolitan area has proven to be most collaborative in various ways. Equally generous over the years have been the many Italian American organizations at the local, regional, and national levels. Their support has enabled us to realize endeavors that help lay the foundation for our sustained objective of (1) studying further our culture in all of its manifestations and (2) re-examining in a more rigorous manner the history of Italian Americans. Most impactful has been the Italian Diaspora Studies Summer Seminar that we hold each June. Many of the fellows of the IDSSS have returned to their campuses and offered courses on Italian Americana and the Italian diaspora.

Dulcis in fundo: All we have accomplished and continue to accomplish could not have been done without unyielding support from our friends in Albany, the New York Conference of Italian American State Legislators, from CUNY Chancellor Félix Matos Rodríguez, from Queens College President Frank Wu, and from our Provost Patricia Price. They and their staffs have cleared many a path throughout these eighteen years.

Con viva cordialità,



Anthony Julian Tamburri
Dean and Distinguished Professor

FACULTY FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM

The Calandra Institute has invited full-time, tenured CUNY faculty members to apply to its Spring 2025 Faculty Fellowship Program. Fellows will develop research or curricula in any field related to Italian American or Italian diaspora studies, from the social sciences to the arts and humanities. For more information contact Dean Anthony Julian Tamburri: anthony.tamburri@qc.cuny.edu.

Cover art: *Five Disciples*, 1977, Edward E. Boccia. Private collection.

RECENT EVENT HIGHLIGHTS

October 5, 2024

Giovanni da Verrazzano Symposium

Symposium exploring the historical figure and cultural relevance of Giovanni da Verrazzano. Cosponsored by the Consulate General of Italy New York, Italian Cultural Institute, Italian Heritage and Culture Committee, and University for Foreigners of Perugia.

October 8, 2024

The Uses of Comparison in Social Science

Lecture by John Torpey, presidential professor of sociology and history and director of the Ralph Bunche Institute and European Studies Center at The Graduate Center, CUNY.

October 28, 2024

The Role of Exchange Programs in Public Diplomacy

Lecture by Paola Sartorio, executive director of the US–Italy Fulbright Commission. Cosponsored by Belle Zeller Scholarship Trust Fund, German Academic Exchange Association, CUNY Academy for the Humanities and Sciences, Fulbright Association chapters in New York and Italy.

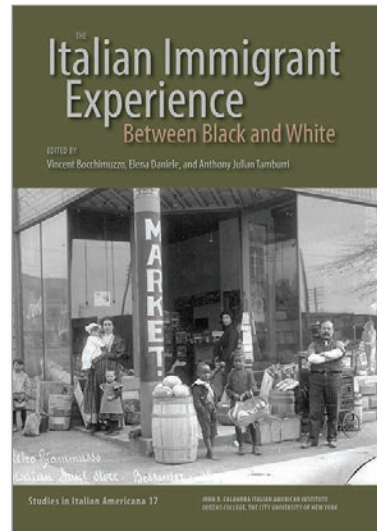
RECENTLY PUBLISHED!

The Italian Immigrant Experience: Between Black and White

Edited by Vincent Bocchiumuzzo, Elena Daniele, and Anthony Julian Tamburri

Studies in Italian Americana, Volume 17

This book is a compilation of the papers presented at the symposium “The Italian Immigrant Experience: Between Black and White,” a collaboration between the Calandra Institute and Tulane University. The symposium, held on the Tulane campus in New Orleans, September 23 and 24, 2022,



featured scholarly discourse on the Italian American and Black experiences in New Orleans and throughout the United States.

Contributors to this volume include: George De Stefano, Fred L. Gardaphè, John Gennari, Jessica Barbata Jackson, Mark A. Reid, Joseph Sciorra, and Frank I. Williams.

ITALICS: TELEVISION FOR THE ITALIAN AMERICAN EXPERIENCE



2024 EPISODES

For the AUGUST episode, *Italics* visited the Sanctuary at Park Center in Manhattan for the performance of “In Sardinia in New York: A Celebration of Sardinian Songs and Stories.” The concert featured the polyphonic Paulicu Mossa Choir of Bonorra, Sardinia. After the concert *Italics* interviewed Sardinian curator and creative producer Valeria Orani and American playwright and journalist Jeff Biggers, author of *In Sardinia*.

In SEPTEMBER, *Italics* went to Soho Playhouse for the all-ages theater sensation “Mario the Maker Magician.” The show won the 2024 Adelaide Fringe Best Kids & Family Show Award and was featured on *The Tonight Show* and *Sesame Street*. *Italics* then visited Mario and his family in their home in New York.



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

Translated Italian Fiction in the United States, 1949–1972: Modernity, Modernism, and Literary Innovation GIULIA PELLIZZATO

This article discusses fiction translated from Italian and published in English. It examines the paratexts and intertextual discourse around novels by Giuseppe Bertolucci, Ennio Flaiano, Alberto Moravia, Italo Svevo, and Elio Vittorini. After comparing and contrasting the “uses” of fiction books in Italy and in the United States during the mid-twentieth century, the article retraces how contemporary Italian fiction was presented by US publishers the New American Library and New Directions. This survey evidences a distinct articulation of the modernity and modernizing potential of such texts. Directly as well as indirectly, Italian books appear to play a role in the literary renewal that New American Library as well as New Directions set out to achieve.

Cheating Destiny? The Daughters & Mothers of *Household Saints*

TINA CHIAPPETTA-MILLER

Nancy Savoca's *Household Saints* (1993) is described as the story of three generations of Italian American women. These generations seem to chart the development of a fraught feminist attempt to find a new language to express female subjectivity. An examination of the mother-daughter relationship is the key to this reading of *Household Saints*. This essay shows that despite the potential for mothers and

daughters to connect via common lived experiences within a story clearly critical of patriarchal control, the categories of destiny and free will in the film confine women to their stereotypical roles. The youngest Santangelo, Teresa (Lily Taylor), stands only as a reminder that, without a positive figuration of the mother-daughter bond, the work of self-determination is still not available to women.

Curriculum, Archives, and the Digital Turn: The Italian American Experience and the Transnational Approach to Community-Based Learning

EVELJN FERRARO

This article documents an experience of integration of archives into the Italian curriculum that offers evidence for a transnational curricular space at the intersection of Italian Studies and Italian Diaspora Studies. It details the prevalence of archival undergraduate research at Santa Clara University during the pandemic through a distinct Italian model of Community-Based Learning that leverages relationships with virtual and “bricks and mortar” archives of the Italian diasporic experience. The documented experience reveals the versatility of this framework. Three areas of intersection emerge: the role of students as mediators operating within an asynchronous dynamic between diasporic and ethnic communities; the integration of language learning and linguistic mediation; using digital platforms to amplify the reach of students’ narratives to wider audiences.

GRADUATE STUDIES SCHOLARSHIPS FOR STUDENTS OF ITALIAN

The Calandra Institute is offering scholarships for graduate students who enroll in one of the two graduate courses in Italian studies at Queens College for Spring 2025. The readings will be in the original Italian, the discussions will be in English. The courses are:

ITAL 755, MODERN & CONTEMPORARY ITALIAN POETRY; Tuesday, 5:00-6:50 PM, at the Calandra Institute and Hyflex, online with camera open (anthony.tamburri@qc.cuny.edu)

ITAL 781, THE ITALIAN NOVEL; Monday, 5:00-6:50 PM, online synchronous with camera open (morena.corradi@qc.cuny.edu)

Please apply at <https://www.qc.cuny.edu/ga/applying/> for admission to Queens College if not already accepted. In addition, all non-matriculated students must send a letter of recommendation from an academic professor to calandra@qc.cuny.edu with “Spring

2025 Scholarship” in the subject line of your email. A final decision will be made by a committee of professors of Italian.

Deadline for applications is November 30, 2024.

STAFF NEWS

DONNA M. CHIRICO published a review essay, “Steering Us Off Course: When Leadership Becomes the Point of Contention,” in the Summer 2024 issue of *Italian Americana*. This is a critical analysis of the book *A Politics of [Self] Omission: The Italian/American Challenge on a Post-George Floyd Age*, by Anthony Julian Tamburri.

ANTHONY JULIAN TAMBURRI delivered the keynote address at the Italian American Studies Association’s 56th annual conference in October. He was the featured speaker at the Italian Legacy Lecture Series presentation on October 24, 2024, at the Italian American Museum’s Sociocultural Center in Washington, DC.

CURRENT AND UPCOMING EXHIBITIONS

Edward E. Boccia: Postwar American Expressionist

A selection of paintings, drawings, and never-before-seen journals by the artist Edward E. Boccia (1921–2012) is on view for the first time in New York City at the Calandra Institute, October 29, 2024–February 21, 2025, curated by Rosa Berland. Throughout his long yet underrecognized career, Boccia developed a new genre of contemporary monumental panel painting that functioned as devotional art while raising questions about ethical, philosophical, and



stylistic problems in twentieth-century America. He produced work that expressed the crisis of morality experienced in the US in the face of war and consumerism. His bold paintings speak of desire, loss, and spirituality and provide a fresh perspective on what constitutes Italian American modernism. For more than thirty years, Boccia served as professor of fine arts at Washington University, where he fostered generations of studio artists, thereby changing the landscape of American painting.

Seeking Objects Made by Italian POWs in the United States



In April 2025 the Calandra Institute will mount an exhibit on the artistry of World War II Italian POWs in the United States. The exhibit will feature handcrafted objects, paintings, photographs,

letters, newspapers, and other artifacts documenting creativity under captivity. During the war more than 51,000 Italian military personnel were held throughout the country, from Massachusetts to Hawaii.

The curators, Laura E. Ruberto, Berkeley City College, and Joseph Sciorra, Calandra Institute, are looking for items, especially crafts and artwork, for possible inclusion in the exhibit. While the exhibit will focus on the United States, objects from other parts of the world are also of interest.

The exhibit is cosponsored by the Calandra Institute, Australian Research Council, and Mellon/ACLS Community College Faculty Fellowships.

Contact Dr. Ruberto (lruberto@peralta.edu) and Dr. Sciorra (joseph.sciorra@qc.cuny.edu) directly with leads, examples of artifacts, or questions.

NEWS FROM BORDIGHERA PRESS

This summer Bordighera Press was acquired by Queens College, CUNY, establishing it as a university-affiliated publisher. The October episode of *Italics* featured an interview with founders Fred Gardaphè, Paolo Giordano, Anthony Julian Tamburri, and managing editor Nicholas Grosso. *Sicilianas*, by Suzanne Manizza Roszak was the first finalist for the Poetry Society of Virginia's 2024 North American Poetry Book Award. The press received a generous grant from the Italian heritage organization Tiro A Segno to underwrite one year of the publication of *VIA: Voices in Italian Americana*.

bordigherapress.org

RECENTLY PUBLISHED!

No. 41 in Crossings
Sempre Fidele and other poems
Joseph Bathanti
Marina Morbiducci (translator)
Darcy Di Mona (translator)

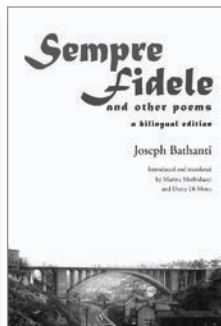
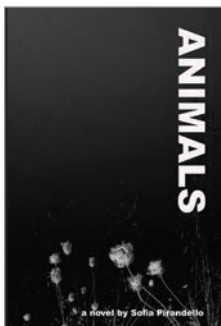
No. 42 in Crossings
Animals
Sofia Pirandello

No. 172 in VIA Folios
Collegiate Gothic
Matthew Meduri

No. 173 in VIA Folios
The Birthday Years
Rachel Guido de Vries

No. 175 in VIA Folios
The Tomb of the Divers
Francine Masiello

No. 2 in Il nostro mezzogiorno
An Education: Selected Writings by Luca and Friends
Nicoletta Stame, Editor
Michael Gilmartin (translator)



DR. JOSEPH SCIORRA WINS BISHIR PRIZE

The Vernacular Architecture Forum has awarded Joseph Sciorra its 2024 Catherine W. Bishir Prize for his article “The Strange Artistic Genius of This People’: The Ephemeral Art and Impermanent Architecture of Italian Immigrant Catholic Feste,” published in the Fall/Spring 2023 issue of *Buildings & Landscapes: Journal of the Vernacular Architecture Forum*.

Sciorra looks at late nineteenth and early twentieth-century mobile shrines and street chapels—Baroque confections as tall as sixty feet or as wide as buildings, shaped like altars, towers, or even land-faring boats. Italian American craftsmen created these for their immigrant community feste, or—as Sciorra calls them—“cultural-religious extravaganzas.” He shows the reader these works through the eyes of their intended audiences, as well as those of outsiders—photographers, journalists, visual artists—whose potential biases he carefully considers. Sciorra examines “how these transient objects of devotion . . . enacted and proclaimed a diasporic community of believers that challenged hegemonic notions of artistry, religion, the built environment, and the public sphere.” He further expands his gaze to contextualize his hand-crafted sources of study as, in his words, “part of the Progressive era’s xenophobic climate and, in particular, the picturesque gaze that racialized and othered Italian immigrants.”



Above: Ralph Fasanello, *Festa* (1957), oil on canvas. Estate of Ralph Fasanello.

Below: *Devotees of Our Lady of Succor congregating around a festa chapel and flanking bandstand, Mott Street, Manhattan, 1908.* (The photograph is misidentified as being in Brooklyn.) Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division.



IN PIAZZA

MARIA LAI RETROSPECTIVE AT MAGGAZINO

"I played with great seriousness. At some point they began to call my games art."—Maria Lai

This fall Magazzino Italian Art in Cold Spring, New York, will host the first US retrospective of the work of Sardinian artist Maria Lai (1919–2013). Lai's work explored the craft traditions and folklore of her native island and employed weaving, embroidery, writing, and drawing. The Art Informel and Arte Povera movements deeply influenced her artistic developments.

The exhibition *Maria Lai. A Journey to America*, on view from November 15, 2024, to July 28, 2025, features approximately 100 works, many presented to the public for the first time. Curated by artistic director Paola Mura, the exhibition, offers a comprehensive overview of Maria Lai's work, from the 1950s to the 2000s, with a focus on her approaches to collective and relational art.

The seminal 1981 performance *Legarsi Alla Montagna* (Binding to the mountain)—where Lai reinterpreted an ancient legend to bring together all the inhabitants of her hometown by connecting the doors of each house together with miles of blue ribbon—is an astonishing example of performative land art and social sculpture.

Lai's work has been exhibited at the Venice Biennale and at documenta in Athens and Kassel. Museo Nazionale delle Arti del XXI Secolo in Rome hosted a major retrospective in 2019.

Magazzino, co-founded by Nancy Olnick and Giorgio Spanu, is a nonprofit museum and research center dedicated to advancing scholarship and public appreciation of postwar and contemporary Italian art in the United States. www.magazzino.art

2025 ANNUAL CONFERENCE

THE BITTER BREAD OF WAR

The Calandra Institute will host its annual conference April 25–26, 2025, on the theme "The Bitter Bread of War: Multidisciplinary Perspectives from Italy and the Diaspora."

In his 1999 short story "Ten Little Italies of Indiana," Michael Martone conjures a community of released Italian POWs who settle in Milan, Indiana, after World War II and establish a thriving fashion industry specializing in camouflage garments. This fantasy landscape of immigrant war veterans offers opportunities to imagine hopeful alternatives to the calamities of war related to Italian mobilities.

War has been foundational to the shaping of modern Italian history, memory, and culture—from the wars of the Risorgimento to colonial and Fascist wars of expansion up to and including the two world wars. Furthermore, in all these Italian war efforts, emigrant and diasporic communities have played significant roles whether through moral and material support, serving in the Italian military, or through their opposition to Italian wars. As such, scholars are increasingly turning their attention to the theme of war and its importance to our understanding of the history of Italy, the Italian diaspora, and former colonial subjects.

This interdisciplinary conference is open to a wide range of topics concerning war from an Italian—broadly understood—perspective.

IN MEMORIAM

NANCY AZARA, 1939–2024

Annunziata Jean Azara was born in Dyker Heights, Brooklyn, New York, the daughter of Annunziata (Como) and Joseph Azara. She was a graduate of Finch College, NY, and Empire State College, SUNY, and studied at the Art Students League of New York.

As an artist and feminist educator, Azara was best known for her carved wood sculpture and mixed media collages. She received numerous awards including a Civitella Ranieri Foundation Fellowship, Women's Studio Center's Elan Lifetime Achievement Award, Chikraniketan Fellowship, Bogliasco Foundation Fellowship, and the National Organization for Women's Susan B. Anthony Award.

In 1979 Azara cofounded the New York Feminist Art Institute, an organization that produced workshops, classes, performances, and exhibitions in and around New York City, whose activities continued through 1990. Instructors included Harmony Hammond, Arlene Raven, Elke Solomon, and Zarina Hashmi, and weekend workshops were taught by Faith Ringgold, May Stevens, and Darla Bjork, among others.

Azara acknowledged time spent in her grandfather's garden in Brooklyn as a formative influence that helped develop her capacity for observation and an appreciation for solitude. She later developed an active interest in eastern spiritual traditions and utilized yogic and buddhist themes in her work. She crafted tributes to female family members, including *Leaf Altar for Nunzia* (2007), a large altar for her mother; *Birthpiece* (1967) for her daughter; and *Maxi's Wall* for her granddaughter. These works speak to her Italian American heritage and a cultural legacy of shared experiences and strong family ties.

In Nancy Azara's own words, "All my work is about the brilliance of light, about the shadows and the darkness, about a history of what was, about the nature of memory, yearning, and desire."





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, digital media, and exhibition reviews.

VOLUME 14, NUMBER 2

ARTICLES

- Translated Italian Fiction in the United States, 1949–1972: Modernity, Modernism, and Literary Innovation
GIULIA PELLIZZATO
- Cheating Destiny? The Daughters & Mothers of *Household Saints*
TINA CHIAPPETTA-MILLER
- Curriculum, Archives, and the Digital Turn: The Italian American Experience and the Transnational Approach to Community-Based Learning
EVELJN FERRARO

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

FALL 2024 PUBLIC PROGRAMS

THE PHILIP V. CANNISTRARO SEMINAR SERIES IN ITALIAN AMERICAN STUDIES

Wednesday, September 18, 2024

Rocco Scotellaro's Transnational Basilicata
ISABELLA LIVORNI, New York University

Thursday, November 21, 2024

Gastrofascism and Empire: Food in Italian East Africa, 1935–1941

SIMONE CINOTTO, University of Gastronomic Sciences Pollenzo

"DOCUMENTED ITALIANS" FILM AND VIDEO SERIES

Wednesday, October 9, 2024

Il mondo è troppo per me: La storia di Vittorio Camardese (2023), 63 minutes

VANIA CAUZILLO, director

WRITERS READ

Monday, September 9, 2024

Roundtable Discussion: Three Creative Women:
PENNY ARCADE, JOANNA CLAPPS HERMAN,
and HELENE STAPINSKI

Wednesday, October 23, 2024

JULIET GRAMES reads from *The Lost Boy of Santa Chionia: A Novel* (Knopf, 2024)

CAMILLA TRINCHIERI reads from *The Road to Murder* (Soho Crime, 2024)

Wednesday, November 13, 2024

GEORGE GUIDA reads from *The Uniform* (Guernica World Editions, 2024)

ALEXANDER SAMMARTINO reads from *Last Acts* (Scribner, 2024)

EXHIBITIONS

August 22–September 27, 2024

Basilicatè: A Celebration of Lucanian Culture in the World

Thursday, August 22, 2024

Opening Reception

October 29, 2024–February 21, 2025

Edward E. Boccia: Postwar American Expressionist

Curated by Rosa Berland

Tuesday, October 29, 2024

Opening Reception

Gallery hours:

Monday–Friday

9am–5pm

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

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