

JOHN D.
CALANDRA
ITALIAN
AMERICAN
INSTITUTE

il Bollettino

dedicated to the history and culture of Italians in America



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THE JOHN D. CALANDRA ITALIAN AMERICAN INSTITUTE IS A UNIVERSITY INSTITUTE UNDER THE AEGIS OF QUEENS COLLEGE, THE CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

LETTER FROM THE DEAN

Dear All,

Welcome to the thirty-sixth issue of the Calandra Institute's newsletter, *il Bollettino*!

I have completed yet another year as Dean of the Institute. These past nineteen years have been most rewarding overall. I am forever delighted at what the Institute—i.e., the Calandra staff—continues to accomplish despite various challenges. Herein you will see, first and foremost, that our staff has increased by two people, Andrew Checchia and Nicole Kruse. They will be working on both communication and research and collaborate with others in their respective areas.

Our annual conference for Spring 2026 looks at the theme of religion, “Religions, Beliefs, and the Supernatural in Italy and across Italian Mobilities,” and how the formation of the modern Italian state, as well as its efforts to establish a distinct national identity while operating within the ambit of the Catholic Church, has been profoundly influenced by religious practices, policies, tensions, and conflicts.

Research and scholarship continue to thrive both through the work of the Calandra staff and, as well, that of scholars whose work we publish in our various venues, be they our book series or journals. In this regard, forthcoming is a book on Italian American educators; it is a project begun by our late colleague Dr. Vincenzo Milione and co-authored with Stephen J. Cerulli, Itala Pelizzoli, and Carmine Pizzirusso. Dr. Donna Chirico is the overall editor. With regard to education, our “Italian Diasporas: Data Snapshots” this past September was dedicated to existing undergraduate and graduate Italian programs at universities in the United States. In a later project, we shall look into the existence of the Italian diaspora studies programs across the US.

Understanding the Italian diaspora as an invaluable resource for all things Italian beyond Italy's borders, we completed the ninth edition of the Italian Diaspora Studies Summer Seminar. June 2026 will mark ten years, and soon thereafter we shall organize a meeting of past fellows and scholars. So, stay tuned!

In the same spirit of the Italian diaspora and its many articulations, you will see that the Institute's two journals, *Italian American Review* and *Voices in Italian Americana*, continue to bring you innovative scholarship and creative writing, as does Bordighera Press as well.

The other items you will find in the newsletter are two announcements of the winners of the Pietro “Pete” Panto Award and the Francesco Durante Award. Brando Francesco Bonsanti won the Panto Award for his essay “A Matter of Identity: The Representation of Labor in Italian/American Literature,” and Stefano Morello won the Durante Award for his essay “Networks of Influence: Divagando's Italian (and) American Literary Infrastructure.” These prizes are unique for their highlighting of excellent scholarship by emergent scholars.

I am also delighted to be able to announce that the John D. Calandra Italian American Institute had reestablished its Faculty Fellowship program for spring 2025; our two fellows were Marcella Bencivenni of Hostos Community College and Jan Valle of City College. In spring 2026, they will each share their research in a public lecture.

Dulcis in fundo: All we have accomplished in these past forty-five years 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 nineteen years.

Con viva cordialità,



Anthony Julian Tamburri
Dean and Distinguished Professor

EXHIBITION: Creativity and World War II Italian POWs in the United States



Curators Joseph Sciorra and Laura E. Ruberto

The Calandra Institute exhibition *Creativity and World War II Italian POWs in the United States* consists of creative work made by Italian soldiers imprisoned by the Allied forces during World War II, with a focus on those held in the United States. The exhibit springs from research by Dr. Laura E. Ruberto, Berkeley City College, including historical photographs, rare artifacts, written accounts, and oral testimonies. Dr. Ruberto co-curated the exhibition with the Calandra Institute's Dr. Joseph Sciorra. This show, designed by Polly Franchini, brings together a selection of objects, images, and stories to highlight this little-known history. Funding for this exhibit comes from the Calandra Institute, the Australian Research Council, and the Mellon Foundation/American Council of Learned Societies.

ON VIEW MAY 1–NOVEMBER 26, 2025, MONDAY–FRIDAY, 9AM–5PM

COVER ARTIST: MARK GUGLIELMO Featured on the cover is a photocollage, *Vista da Zingaro, Scopello, Sicily*, by Mark Guglielmo, whose work incorporates a diverse range of materials to critically engage with themes of race, class, migration, and power. markguglielmo.com

FUORI COLLANA: EVENT HIGHLIGHTS

October 2–3, 2025

'Italian' Intellectuals in the U.S. / 'Italian' Intellectuals and the U.S.

Biannual Sorbello Conference cosponsored by the Calandra Institute, held at Stony Brook University.

October 8–December 17, 2025

Italian-Language Class

This semester Società Dante Alighieri New York in collaboration with the Calandra Institute hosts a weekly language class: Italian for Professionals.

STAFF NEWS

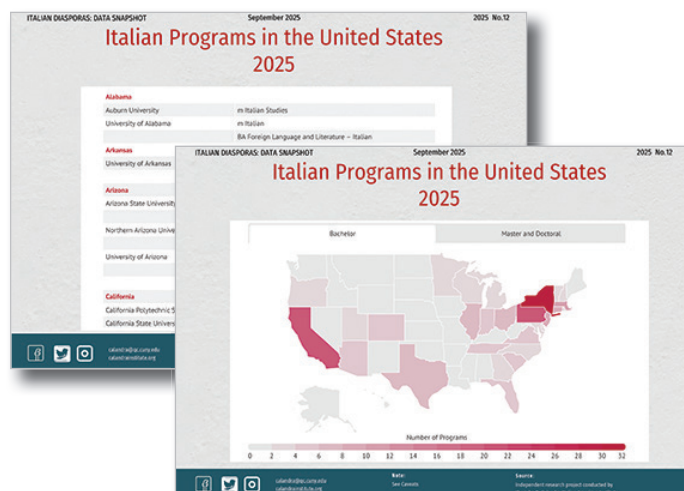
The Calandra Institute is pleased to announce the addition of two staff persons, ANDREW CHECCHIA as Writer Editor and NICOLE KRUSE as Research Programs Coordinator.

STEPHEN CERULLI hosted the March episode of Casa Italiana Zerilli-Marimò's *Nuova York: Hidden in Plain Sight* series, featuring "E. Rossi & Company (Little Italy)." In July Stephen was interviewed by the *Bury Me in New Jersey* podcast "Stornelli D'esilio (Story of the Exiles)."

ITALIAN DIASPORAS: DATA SNAPSHOTS

The Calandra Institute publishes Italian Diasporas: Data Snapshots, a monthly online series in demographics, research, and analysis, presenting data on characteristics of the Italian diaspora and issues of assimilation and accommodation.

The September Data Snapshot features details on existing undergraduate and graduate Italian programs at universities in the United States.



For more information, go to calandrainstitute.org. Under the Publications menu, click on Data Snapshot.

ITALICS: TELEVISION FOR THE ITALIAN AMERICAN EXPERIENCE



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



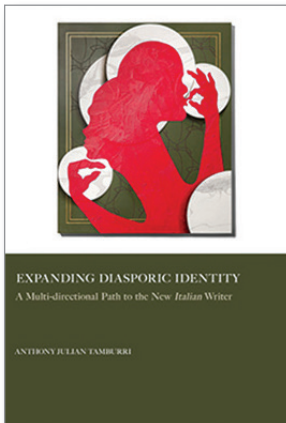
Italics can be viewed on demand at



tv.cuny.edu/media/italics



youtube.com/ItalicsTV



Expanding Diasporic Identity: A Multi-directional Path to the New "Italian" Writer

Anthony Julian Tamburri
Ethics International Press
ISBN 978-1-83711-382-8

This study examines the changing dynamics of the "Italian" writer and how we, as cultural critics, need to rethink our definitions of the new Italian writer. In so doing, we

must also reconsider the notion of the geo-cultural zones that we characterize as "Italian." Namely, how do we categorize that writer who, having left Italy and now living beyond its geo-cartographic boundaries, writes in Italian? Similarly, who is that other writer who, originating from another country that is both culturally and linguistically different from Italy, writes in Italian? Finally, where within these two groups do we position the writer of Italian origin who also lives in another country and, different from the previous two types of writers, composes his/her work in the language of his/her host country? —from the Publisher



Gli Americani Italiani: Cultura e Società

Anthony Julian Tamburri
Rubbettino Editore
ISBN 978-88-82985-279

Examining literary and cinematographic works from the perspective of cultural issues related to the concepts of memory, ethnicity, migration, and diaspora, Tamburri has argued for the need to broaden

the concept of "Italian identity," which in recent decades has extended far beyond traditional boundaries. Tamburri has thus initiated a dialogue that aims to launch an interactive process of shared practices and knowledge, which can benefit both "Italian" communities, including in their relations with other American ethnic communities, and the wider contexts in which we operate, including the Mediterranean and countries where the Italian diaspora is present: a textual and cultural journey that "will certainly not be easy, as it will confront us with a series of linguistic, cultural and [...] ideological deviations" and will force us to take a close look at stories that have long been removed from our collective imagination. —from the Publisher

From Basilicata to New York City: Ending the Exploitation of Italian *Fanciulli Girovaghi* in the 1860s and 1870s

VICTORIA CALABRESE

This article discusses *fanciulli girovaghi*, Italian child migrants contracted by their families to perform in major European and American cities in the mid to late nineteenth century. While some children emigrated with their parents, siblings, or relatives, others migrated while in the care of agents. Parents signed contracts with men who promised to take the children and teach them to play an instrument and then transported them to cities abroad where they peddled on the streets for money. Generally coming from poor agricultural areas of Italy, these children, some as young as six or seven, lived in terrible conditions, were treated brutally, and were visible on the streets of foreign cities including New York. The practice of using children this way peaked in the decades after Italian unification, largely due to the social and economic circumstances that pushed desperate parents to send their kids abroad in exchange for money. By the end of the century the practice had subsided, coinciding with the publication of stories like *Pinocchio* and a growing awareness of the need to protect children and prevent their exploitation both at home and abroad. This article reveals that the push to end the practice was caused by a combination of the growth of charity organizations interested in saving children from bad circumstances and concern from Italians and Italian Americans about how this treatment contributed to the negative reputation of Italy and its government. The article aims to contribute to our understanding of Italian migration by documenting the experience of these children and by highlighting the factors that ended this exploitative practice.

2025 PIETRO "PETE" PANTO AWARD WINNER

The winner of the 2025 Pietro "Pete" Panto Fellowship Award is Brando Francesco Bonsanti, for his essay "A Matter of Identity: The Representation of Labor in Italian/American Literature."

Bonsanti's essay examines the literary representation of labor in Italian American fiction, the structural dynamics of the Italian diaspora in the United States, the central role of labor within the context of Italian migration, and labor's crucial role in shaping identity.

Brando Francesco Bonsanti is a PhD student at Roma Tre University. He holds a master's degree from the University of Milan, where he studied literature of the Italian diaspora and Italian American literature.

NEW TITLES FROM BORDIGHERA PRESS

This fall Bordighera Press has a whirlwind line up of new titles!

VIA FOLIOS 174

Collected Stories
Pietro di Donato

VIA FOLIOS 183

Hunger
Danielle Jones

VIA FOLIOS 184

It Takes a Lifetime . . .
Libby Cataldi

VIA FOLIOS 185

*One Trail of Longing,
Another of String*
Carla Panciera

VIA FOLIOS 186

Stardust Lives in Us
Daniela Gioseffi

VIA FOLIOS 187

Let It Be Extravagant
Michelle Reale

VIA FOLIOS 188

*If We Still Lived
Where I Was Born*
Maria Giura

CROSSINGS 43

*It's Saturday You
Left Me and I'm
so Beautiful*
Emanuele Pettener

CROSSINGS 44

Livery Stable Blues
Salvatore Mugno
Tr. Carlo Massimo

CROSSINGS 45

Pound's Silence
Alain Elkann

CROSSINGS 46

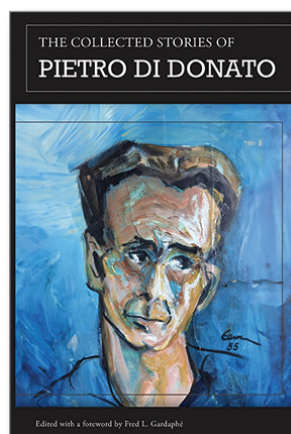
Brothers
Santo Versace

CHII-INM 3

Our Mezzogiorno
Nicoletta Stame, ed.

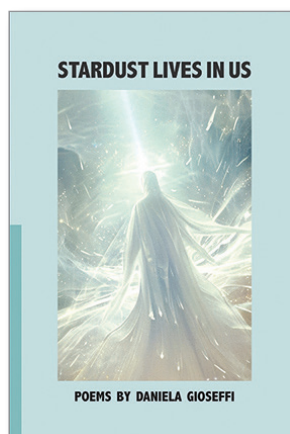
SAGGISTICA 43

Archivi americani
Roma Tre/Crisi



Those who are familiar with the name Pietro di Donato usually begin and end their knowledge with his first novel, *Christ in Concrete* (1939). Here instead you will find the imaginative, pithy, and passionate word renderings of life according to the writer beyond that first novel.

In every story you'll feel the fierce, unfiltered sensuality of a writer who turns contempt into expression, body parts into poetry, transgressions into confessions, and experiences into the basis for his political stands.



"In Daniela Gioseffi's poetry we're inspired to understand and embrace the natural world. Gioseffi's sympathy and empathy are everywhere in her poems and books, as in this new collection with her never-ending love for nature and the intricate and mysterious science of which it, and we, are composed . . . Imbued with respect for biological truths in an unfathomable universe—the poet reminds us we are made of the very dust of

exploding stars. But, there's humor, too, in poems like *Big Hearted*, *Witty* and *Wide-Eyed*. After all despair is realized, the glories of the natural world can save us with inspiration to collective community, where lives influence each other, and we all breathe the same atmosphere." —PHILIP APPLEMAN



VIA: Voices in Italian Americana

SPRING 2025, VOLUME 36, NUMBER 1

ESSAY:

Afterlife of a Kept Boy, Dale Corvino

FICTION:

Sturdy the Steed, Carmine Esposito

The Lakeside Inn, Stephen Murabito

Providence (November 1922), Cynthia Reeves

Garibaldi Avenue, Peter Dino Bruno

Negretta, Racist Kisses, Marilena Umuhoza Delli

POETRY:

Expansive Thoughts of a Third Generation Italian American; Angelina, Irene Mitchell

I and I, Vincent Peloso

Assimilation, David Cappella

The Window on the Piazza, Alessio Zanelli

Song of Naples, Mike Maggio

Feminist Sisters, Chris Baldino O'Hanlon

High Bread, John J. Trause

Un picchio rosso; Er filobus; A nisconnarella,
Mario dell'Arco

The Longest Road, Joan E. Bauer

REVIEWS:

Tony Ardizzone. *In Bruno's Shadow* (Chuck Joy)

Jennifer Martelli. *Psychic Party Under the Bottle Tree*
(Paola Corso)

Roger Taus. *Some Hits: Poems* (Joey Nicoletti)

Learn more at
bordigherapress.org/via

2026 ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Religions, Beliefs, and the Supernatural in Italy and across Italian Mobilities

The Calandra Institute will host its next annual conference April 24–26, 2026, on the theme “Religions, Beliefs, and the Supernatural in Italy and across Italian Mobilities.”

Religious practices, policies, tensions, and conflicts have been a defining feature of the construction of the modern Italian state and its struggle to assert a national identity while in the shadow of the Catholic Church. Various religious communities, such as Jews and Waldensians, and most recently Muslims and Buddhists, have had to contend with the dominance of Catholicism in Italy’s political and cultural spheres. Italy’s colonial and imperial projects in Africa and in the Mediterranean racialized religious differences as aspects of warfare and violent subjugation. Religious beliefs and practices have also shaped the ways in which Italian migrants were seen and understood in new environs, especially in Protestant-dominant countries like the United States. This conference builds on recent scholarship in the field of religious studies and Italian mobility studies to explore new avenues of research.

BIANNUAL SORBELLO CONFERENCE

The Biannual Sorbello Conference was held on October 2–3, 2025, at the Center for Italian Studies, Stony Brook University, where scholars and cultural leaders gathered for two days of reflection on transatlantic intellectual exchange. This year’s theme, ‘Italian’ Intellectuals in the U.S. / ‘Italian’ Intellectuals and the U.S., explores how Italian and Italian-American thinkers, artists, and cultural mediators have shaped and been shaped by the United States, from the early twentieth century through the postwar decades.

The conference grows out of the Sorbello Fellowship program, sponsored by the Romeyne Robert and Uguccione Sorbello Foundation and cosponsored by the Calandra Institute, in partnership with the University for Foreigners of Perugia and the Center for Italian Studies at Stony Brook University. By bringing together diverse voices and perspectives, the event fosters dialogue across disciplines, generations, and national borders, underscoring the enduring importance of cultural exchange in a global context.

2025 IASA CONFERENCE

The 57th Annual Italian American Studies Association Conference took place November 6–9, 2025 at Montclair State University. The conference theme “Intersecting Transitalia in Communities: Nation(s), Transnation(s), Neighborhood(s)” examined community in the Italian diaspora, historically and in the present day. The programs and panels of the conference analyzed ways in which Italians have worked in building their local communities and have worked to bridge linguistic, cultural, and other gaps across communities throughout the country and world.

2025 FRANCESCO DURANTE AWARD WINNER

The recipient of the 2025 Francesco Durante Award is Stefano Morello, based on his essay “Networks of Influence: *Divagando*’s Italian (and) American Literary Infrastructure.”

Morello’s essay investigates the role of *Divagando*, an Italian-language magazine published in New York City from 1943 to 1963, in shaping modern Italian American identities.

Stefano Morello is a multimodal author, scholar, educator, and translator, currently serving as Assistant Director for Digital Projects at the American Social History Project/Center for Media and Learning, a research center of the City University of New York.

2025–2026 FACULTY FELLOW

The Calandra Institute’s 2025–2026 Faculty Fellowship Program hosted MARCELLA BENCIVENNI, history professor at Hostos Community College, whose research is relevant to Italian American diaspora studies.

Bencivenni developed a project tentatively titled “Immigration, Race and Diasporic Identities: Black Italians within and outside of Italy.” Drawing on secondary literature on Italy’s “second generations” and qualitative research on the experiences of Black Italians, this project explores how immigration, race, and notions of blackness are reshaping Italian ideas of national identity, belonging, and citizenship. This research will contribute to scholarly and public debates on the experiences and expressions of identity of a rising number of children of immigrants who are born and raised in Italy. The project will detail how Black Italians are negotiating their identities, moving between dual cultures in their daily lives, and how their experiences are reshaping Italianità.

Italian American Studies Open Syllabus

The Italian American Studies Open Syllabus is a crowd-sourced digital collection of remixable resources to explore and teach the Italian diaspora in the United States. Organized by keyword, each entry offers an introductory curatorial overview alongside academic and non-academic texts, cultural artifacts, educational materials, and multimedia content. The resources are relevant for educators sourcing classroom material as well as individuals seeking knowledge of their heritage. The project was conceived by Stefano Morello, with contributors Nancy C. Carnevale, Ferdinando Fasce, Fred Gardaphè, John Gennari, Francesco Landolfi, Stefano Luconi, Martino Marazzi, Stefano Morello, Fraser Ottanelli, Loredana Polezzi, Matteo Pretelli, and Laura E. Ruberto. The digital collection is hosted by The City University of New York.

cuny.manifoldapp.org/projects/italian-american-studies-open-syllabus



The Lung Block: A New York City Slum & Its Forgotten Italian Immigrant Community

The Lung Block is a digital exhibition funded by Connect New York, through the Early Research Initiative and GC Digital Initiatives at The Graduate Center, CUNY, curated by Stefano Morello and Kerri Culhane. The onsite exhibit was on view at The Graduate Center and New York City Department of Records and Information Services in 2019.

The exhibit contrasts the progressive-era narrative of the Lung Block as the slum epicenter of disease with the lived experience of Italian immigrant tenement dwellers living in the area. The discourse surrounding the Lung Block illustrates a typical pattern of slum making and gentrification and typifies the plight and perceived perils of the Lower East Side immigrant in the popular imagination.



www.lungblock.nyc



Canone effimero

featured at Lincoln Center's Open Roads: New Italian Cinema 2025

In their latest documentary, brothers Gianluca and Massimiliano De Serio pay tribute to the musical customs of remote regions in Calabria, Marche, Liguria, and Sicily. The film *Canone effimero* captures deeply private people, speaking a mixture of languages, singing and playing strange, beautiful music. It offers viewers treasure beyond compare, providing a rare glimpse onto people who struggle in their remote communities to carry forward their musical expressions of oral tradition against the tide of homologation. *Canone effimero* is a collection of fragments of a survival code. The filmmakers honor their subjects with this meticulous, passionately assembled study of an invisible Italy far from current narratives.



Abruzzo NYC

In 2017 Tommaso Conte founded D'Abruzzo, his Abruzzese street food company, which operates from Suffolk County, Long Island. D'Abruzzo's award-winning *arrosticini* was recently showcased in the Abruzzo episode of Stanley Tucci's show *Tucci in Italy*.

Conte describes his inspiration: "Abruzzo is a rugged, mountainous, rural region. From my grandparents I learned how the ancient people from Abruzzo have always made everything themselves, leaving no waste and [taking] nothing for granted. Among the many foods of Abruzzo the most well known is *arrosticini*, a unique skewer of small cubes of lamb, salted and cooked over a *furnacell*' . . . You have to try it to understand, and when you do, you will be speechless."

abruzzonyc.com



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 15, NUMBER 2

ARTICLE

From Basilicata to New York City: Ending the Exploitation of Italian *Fanciulli Girovaghi* in the 1860s and 1870s, by VICTORIA CALABRESE

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

FALL 2025 PUBLIC PROGRAMS

THE PHILIP V. CANNISTRARO SEMINAR SERIES IN ITALIAN AMERICAN STUDIES

Tuesday, September 9, 2025

Captive Sites of Memory: Conflicting Italian Identities in the United States During World War II

Laura E. Ruberto, Berkeley City College

In conjunction with the exhibition *Creativity and World War II Italian POWs in the United States*.

Tuesday, September 23, 2025

Unpacking Memories of World War II Italian Captivity in Africa: Music, Theatre, Literature, and Art Making in POW Camps

Elena Bellina, New York University

In conjunction with the exhibition *Creativity and World War II Italian POWs in the United States*.

WRITERS READ SERIES

Monday, October 27, 2025

Frank Ingrassiotta presents *Blood Type: RAGU* (Next Stage Press, 2025)

Monday, November 10, 2025

Marianne Leone reads from *Christina the Astonishing: A Novel* (Akashic Books, 2025)

"DOCUMENTED ITALIANS"

FILM AND VIDEO SERIES

Tuesday, October 7, 2025

The Piccirilli Factor (2025), 69 minutes
Eduardo Montes-Bradley, director

Wednesday, December 3, 2025

Marcella (2025), 97 minutes
Peter Miller, director



GALLERIA EXHIBIT **May 1–November 26, 2025**

Creativity and World War II Italian POWs in the United States
Curated by Laura E. Ruberto and Joseph Sciorra

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.

QUEENS COLLEGE IS NY