

"Italy is More Surrealist than Even the Pope", Dalí, 1935 (17–18 Oct 24)

Ca' Foscari Venezia Auditorium Santa Margherita, Venice, Italy, Oct 17–18, 2024

Registration deadline: Dec 5, 2023

Grazina Subelyte, Peggy Guggenheim Collection

The conference "Italy is More Surrealist than Even the Pope" (Dalí, 1935) aims to explore the significance and influence of Italy on international Surrealism. Artists such as Carlyle Brown, Leonora Carrington, Salvador Dalí, Leonor Fini, Edward James, Frida Kahlo, and Pavel Tchelitchew, and the designer Elsa Schiaparelli were strongly affected by Italian art and culture in diverse ways.

Some of them were only inspired by Italian art, while others lived in Italy for varied periods of time. The conference will explore this by analyzing individual case studies, overturning the marginal role attributed to Italy in the development of Surrealism. Although we cannot speak of an Italian Surrealist art nor of an Italian school, some Italian artists, such as Paolo Uccello, Piero Di Cosimo, and Giorgio De Chirico, were of great inspiration to André Breton, the founder of Surrealism and the movement's poetics. The conference will provide an opportunity to reevaluate the subject through an analytical study of Italy's cultural framework at the time, and to present innovative arguments aimed at mapping and unearthing the lesser known, but critical themes and perspectives.

The conference will be divided into three parts:

The first part will deal with De Chirico's influence on the painters and writers of the first phase of Surrealism (1924-1930). Besides, it proposes to analyze the visibility of and knowledge about French Surrealism in Italy in those years, leading up to the comparison with the poetics of 'realismo magico'.

The second part looks at artists, writers, and composers, who associated with Surrealism and stayed in Italy in the 1930s and were also influenced by its culture and art. Among them, the artist and writer Leonora Carrington and the poet and collector Edward James – who later became an artist – played a central intermediary role. He brought Salvador Dalí to Italy and befriended Leonor Fini and Lord Berners.

The third and final part concerns the artists, who developed a Surrealist-laden visual vocabulary, inspired by Italian art. These include, but are not limited to Carlyle Brown, Niki de Saint Phalle, Frida Kahlo, and Pavel Tchelitchew. Through their work, linked to their relationship with Italian culture, they contributed to the international Surrealist art movement in the broadest sense.

The conference will be held in English and Italian.

To participate please send a 1 page abstract and a short biography by 5 December 2023 to

ArtHist.net

curatorial@guggenheim-venice.it.

Conference organized by Hubertus Gassner, Giulia Ingarao, and Gražina Subelytė
Ca' Foscari Venezia Auditorium Santa Margherita, Venice, Italy

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