

Transatlantic Bridges: Corrado Cagli, 1938–1948 (New York, 25 Jan 24)

Center for Italian Modern Art, New York City, Jan 25, 2024

Deadline: Dec 28, 2023

Filippo Bosco, Center for Italian Modern Art

CIMA Study Day - Transatlantic Bridges: Corrado Cagli, 1938-1948.

Keynote speaker: Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev

CIMA's Fall-Winter 2023-24 exhibition is dedicated to Italian artist Corrado Cagli and focuses on the human and intellectual trajectory of the years he spent in the United States, between 1939 and 1948. As a Jewish and openly gay artist, starting in 1937 Cagli became the target of antisemitic attacks from reactionary critics within the fascist regime. As Italy promulgated its racial laws in 1938, Cagli left the country for the United States, where he became a protagonist of the New York émigré artistic scene; as World War II raged, he enrolled in the US Army, training on the West Coast, and traveled back to Europe, where he participated in historical events such as D-Day and the liberation of the Buchenwald concentration camp. During the ten years of his American stay, Cagli continued to produce and exhibit drawings—a medium that became a particularly apt instrument to interrogate and critique the magniloquence of the fascist rhetoric that Cagli himself had contributed to delineate. Besides the themes of war, exile, and discrimination, the drawings in the exhibition will also address Cagli's multifaceted engagement with New York artistic circles.

Taking cue from the stimuli this exhibition offers and from current scholarship in the fields of History, Art History, Italian Studies, Jewish Studies, Gender Studies, and Cultural Studies, the 2023-24 CIMA Research Fellows invite proposals for a conference that, departing from Cagli's example, examines the broad array of themes and individuals who worked across the Atlantic and in response to pressing historical events of the 1930s and 1940s. While Cagli's work is primarily visual, we welcome proposals that address works of literature, theater, film, art criticism within and outside of established critical frameworks. The all-day conference will take place in person and hybrid format at the Center for Italian Modern Art, on Thursday, January 25, 2024.

Some of the topics that proposals may address include (but are not limited to):

- Cultural responses to the promulgation of Italy's racial laws (art, literature, theater)
- Artistic reflections on Jewish identity between the 1930s and 1940s
- Strategies and representation of queer identities between the two World Wars
- Anti-fascist Italian and Italian American activism in the United States
- The communities of émigré artists in New York during the 1930s and 1940s
- Art as a form of political resistance
- The politics of cultural diplomacy between Italy and the United States after WWII
- Corrado Cagli's cultural networks: George Balanchine, Eugene Berman, Henri Cartier-Bresson, Charles Olson, Saul Steinberg, Bruno Zevi

- Corrado Cagli and the Surrealist and Neo-romantic cultural scene in New York
- The gay cultural scene in New York in the late 1940s
- Art in times of war; the status of art as a wartime document
- The memory and witnessing of the Holocaust through the visual arts

Please send an abstract (250–300 words), title, and a short biography (100–150 words) in English to info@italianmodernart.org with the subject line “Corrado Cagli CFP” by Sunday, December 28, 2023. Please send the requested material in a single PDF document. Please do not send multiple attachments.

Reference:

CFP: Transatlantic Bridges: Corrado Cagli, 1938-1948 (New York, 25 Jan 24). In: ArtHist.net, Dec 11, 2023 (accessed Jun 6, 2026), <<https://arthist.net/archive/40809>>.