

Surrealism in Italy (Venice, 17–18 Oct 24)

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

Grazina Subelyte

"Italy is more Surrealist than the Pope" - Salvador Dalí, 1935.

Surrealism in Italy: Conference Celebrating the Centenary of the Manifesto of Surrealism.

Organized by Gražina Subelytė, Giulia Ingarao, and Hubertus Gassner

Scientific Committee:

Alice Ensabella (Université Grenoble-Alpes)

Hubertus Gassner (Independent Art Historian; former Director of Hamburger Kunsthalle)

Giulia Ingarao (Accademia di Belle Arti di Palermo)

Alessandro Nigro (Università di Firenze)

Gavin Parkinson (The Courtauld Institute of Art)

Grazina Subelyte (Peggy Guggenheim Collection)

Anna Watz (Uppsala University)

Marking the centenary of the publication of the Manifesto of Surrealism, the conference "Italy is More Surrealist than the Pope" aims to explore the significance of Italy for international Surrealism from the 1920s through to the post-World War II period. Although we cannot speak of an Italian Surrealist school, some Italian artists, such as Paolo Uccello, Piero di Cosimo, and Giorgio de Chirico, were of great inspiration to the movement's poetics at large, while others, such as Enrico Baj, produced art works that coincided with Surrealist themes. Besides, artists such as Leonora Carrington, Salvador Dalí, Leonor Fini, Edward James, Manina, Matta, Kay Sage, and Pavel Tchelitchew, were affected by Italian art and culture in diverse ways. Some of them were inspired by Italian art, while others lived in Italy for varied periods of time and were influenced by experiences here. The conference will explore their life and work by analyzing individual case studies from both pre- and postwar periods, overturning the marginal role attributed to Italy in the development of Surrealism.

Among other themes, the conference will also examine Surrealist environments and architecture in Italy, as well as the wider international context of museums, galleries, and private collectors. Last but not least, it will shed light on how Surrealism was at the center of discussions in the intellectual circles in Italy through journals and exhibitions. "Italy is More Surrealist than the Pope" will provide an unparalleled opportunity to reevaluate Surrealism and its relation to Italy through an analytical study of Italy's cultural framework, and to present innovative arguments aimed at mapping and unearthing the lesser known, but critical themes and perspectives.

Program:

Thursday, October 17, 10:00–18:00

10:00 Opening remarks

10:30–12:30 First session: Surrealism and Italy: Before, During, After

Victoria Noel-Johnson: A Surreal Game of Smoke and Mirrors: The Surrealist Collection of Giorgio de Chirico's Artwork of the 1910s and 1920s

Stefania Portinari: "La poésie se fait dans les bois". Botanical Elements and Dreams in Italy in the 1920s

Matthew Gale: "Our good friends the surrealists:" the Case of Marco Levi Bianchini

Anna Watz: Legacies and Appropriations of Giorgio de Chirico in the Work of Kay Sage and Gertrude Abercrombie

12:30-14:00 Break

14:00–16:00 Second session: Surrealism and the Renaissance

Tessel M. Bauduin: "A grandiose vision of the cosmos and the unconscious": Piero di Cosimo in Surrealism, with Notes on Paolo Uccello and Giuseppe Arcimboldo

Giulia Ingarao: The Origins of Leonora Carrington's Organic Cosmology in Renaissance Culture

Alyce Mahon: The Tower of the Surreal: Leonor Fini and the Italian Tradition

Giuliana Altea and Antonella Camarda: Bona. A Surrealist Journey through France and Italy

16:00–16:30 Break

16:30–18:00 Third session: Museums, Galleries, Collections

Oliver Tostmann: From Hartford to Rome: "Chick" Austin's Tour to Italy in 1937

Alice Ensabella: The Exhibition "Têtes composées d'Arcimboldo" at the Galerie Furstenberg in the Spring of 1954

Alessandro Nigro: "Those hills of Tuscany remain on my brain. I fear I am possessed by Italy:" 1930s Paris, Surrealism, the Fascination with Italy and the Old Masters in Marie-Laure de Noailles' Correspondence with Bernard Berenson

Friday, October 18, 10:00–18:00

10:00–11:00 First session: Dalí and Italy

Annabelle Görgen-Lammers: Italian Lands Burnt by Desire on the Beach of Cadaqués

Elliott H. King: Salvador Dalí's Italian Campaign: Mysticism, Hiparxiologi, and the Divina Commedia

11:00–12:30 Second session: Surrealism in Post-war Italy

Gavin Parkinson: Surrealist Bajography

Jérôme Duwa: Jean-Jacques Lebel in Italy (1955–1961): Front Unique, Critical Front

Abigail Susik: Postwar Surrealism on View in Milan: The First International Surrealist Exhibition in Italy, 1959

12:30–14:00 Break

14:00-16:00 Second session continues

Ambra D'Antone: A Cold Take on Surrealism in 1960s Emilia Romagna

Paulina Caro Troncoso: Towards a "Historical Morphology:" Matta's Surrealism in Italy

Terri Geis: Manina's Neon Magic in Postwar Venice

Giulia Tulino: Pavel Tchelitchev and Charles Henri Ford Between the United States and Italy Following WWII

16:00–16:30 Break

16:30–17:30 Third session: Surrealist Environments

Tobia Bezzola: The Tarot Garten by Niki de Saint Phalle

Hubertus Gassner and Ute Janssen: Edward James' Casa dello Stregone: a Surrealist house?

17:30–18:00 Conclusions

The conference is made possible thanks to the KHR Family Fund. It is organized in collaboration with the Ca' Foscari University, Venice.

The conference is open to the public.

Spaces are allocated on a first come first served basis.

Simultaneous translation will be provided.

Reference:

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