



“ITALY IS MORE SURREALIST THAN THE POPE”

Salvador Dalí, 1935

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

October **17-18**, 2024

Auditorium Santa Margherita,
Ca' Foscari University Venice

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

Auditorium Santa Margherita, Ca' Foscari University, Venice

Organized by Gražina Subelytė, Giulia Ingarao, and Hubertus Gassner

17 / 10

10:00 **Opening remarks**

10:30 **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 **Break**

14:00 **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 **Break**

16:30 **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*

18:00

18/10

10:00 **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 **Second session: Surrealism in Postwar 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 **Break**

14:00 **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 Tchelitchew and Charles Henri Ford Between the United States and Italy Following WWII*

16:00 **Break**

16:30 **Third session: Surrealist Environments**

Tobia Bezzola: *The Tarot Garden by Niki de Saint Phalle*

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

17:30 **Conclusions**

18:00

“ITALY IS MORE SURREALIST THAN THE POPE..”

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 artworks 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.

