

The Museum of Modern Art

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Press Screening Announcement

COMEDY, ITALIAN STYLE OPENS MAY 9 WITH MONICA VITTI AND ALBERTO SORDI

Witty satire and acute social observation characterize the more than sixty films in COMEDY, ITALIAN STYLE, opening at The Museum of Modern Art on Friday, May 9, 1986. The exhibition, which spans the period from 1949 to 1979, combines well-remembered classics of the genre with many films never before seen in the United States.

Presenting works of many of Italy's most acclaimed directors, including Federico Fellini, Ettore Scola, and Marco Ferreri, the series showcases the talents of a generation of great comic actors, including Vittorio Gassman, Marcello Mastroianni, Ugo Tognazzi, and Nino Manfredi. The exhibition commences with two features directed by Alberto Sordi, Amore Mio Aiutami (1969) at 2:30 p.m. and Polvere di Stelle (1973) at 6:00 p.m. Monica Vitti and Alberto Sordi, who star in both films, will introduce the 6:00 p.m. screening. Noted directors Alberto Lattuada, Mario Monicelli, and Luigi Magni, who have contributed several major works to this series, will be present at the May 9 opening.

COMEDY, ITALIAN STYLE has been organized by Adrienne Mancina, curator, and Stephen Harvey, assistant curator, in the Department of Film of The Museum of Modern Art, and Graziella Lonardi, Adriano Aprà, and Patrizia Pistagnesi of Incontri Internazionali d'Arte, Rome. The exhibition is made possible by a generous grant from Missoni, with additional support from the Italian Ministry of Entertainment and Tourism, the Italian Tourist Board (C.I.T.) and the Ente Gestione di Cinema.

For more than three decades Italian cinema was dominated by commedia all'italiana, an outgrowth of and reaction to the neorealist school of the late forties. This genre substituted irony for lamentation with films that were both funny and socially relevant. Screenwriters like Sergio Amidei, Suso Cecchi d'Amico, and the team of Age and Scarpelli, and such directors as Dino Risi, Luigi Comencini, and Pietro Germi came of age with this school of screen comedy. Veteran comic actors including

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Totò, Vittorio De Sica, and Eduardo De Filippo became its early mainstays, with Alberto Sordi soon emerging as the tragicomic Everyman of the Italian screen. Commedia all'italiana was primarily a male cinema, but several comediennes emerged, including Sophia Loren and Gina Lollobrigida in the mid-fifties and Monica Vitti in the sixties. COMEDY, ITALIAN STYLE reveals the historical roots of the genre and the talents of its creators and performers.

An exhibition of original film posters and film stills enlargements will accompany the film program. Organized by Mary Corliss, assistant curator in the Department of Film, the exhibition is drawn from the collections of the Department of Film, Incontri Internazionali d'Arte, and Martin Scorsese.

An exhibition catalog, published by ERI Edizioni RAI, Rome, will contain essays written by two of the exhibition curators, film scholars Adriano Aprà and Patrizia Pistagnesi, as well as interviews, filmographies, and numerous still photographs.

In conjunction with the exhibition, a symposium on Italian comedy will be held on Tuesday, June 10, at 6:00 p.m. at the Italian Cultural Institute, 686 Park Avenue. Included on the panel are the director Mario Monicelli; Masolino d'Amico, a film scholar and critic who has written a book in Italy on Italian comedy; Stephen Harvey, coorganizer of COMEDY, ITALIAN STYLE; and Carrie Rickey and Andrew Sarris, film critics.

After its New York showing, the exhibition will be seen at the Pacific Film Archive at the University Art Museum, Berkeley; the Los Angeles County Museum of Art and the UCLA Film, Television, and Radio Archives in Los Angeles; the Museum of Fine Arts in Houston; the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston; and The Art Institute of Chicago.

Press Screening Schedule (all films at 2:30 p.m.)

- Monday, April 28 (The Roy and Niuta Titus Theater 1): Polvere di Stelle. 1973. Alberto Sordi. With Monica Vitti, Alberto Sordi, John Phillip Law. 142 min.
- Tuesday, April 29 (Titus Theater 1): L'Armata Brancaleone. 1966, Mario Monicelli. With Vittorio Gassman, Catherine Spaak, Gian Maria Volonté, Barbara Steele. 120 min.
- Wednesday, April 30 (Titus Theater 1): To be announced.
- Thursday, May 1 (Warner Screening Room, The Museum of Modern Art, fifth floor): To be announced.
- Friday, May 2 (Warner Screening Room, The Museum of Modern Art, fifth floor): To be announced.

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For additional press information and photographic materials, contact Howard Feinstein, films press representative, The Museum of Modern Art, 212/708-9752.