

The Museum of Modern Art

11 West 53 Street, New York, N.Y. 10019 Tel. 956-6100 Cable: Modernart

NO. 105
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

PRESS SCREENINGS
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RE-EVALUATION OF ITALIAN CINEMA IN NEW MUSEUM RETROSPECTIVE BEFORE NEO-REALISM: ITALIAN CINEMA 1929-1944

A new generation of Italian film critics have begun to question the origins of neo-realistic cinema in post-war Italy, and at the same time to investigate the films which preceded the advent of De Sica, Rossellini and Visconti. As a result, a re-evaluation has been made of Italian films produced during the turbulent years before and during World War II.

Until now Italian films of the '30s and '40s were, out of political embarrassment, forgotten and ignored. Recently, however, they have been reappraised by Italian film historians; and an in-depth selection has now been compiled by Ted Perry for a retrospective entitled BEFORE NEO-REALISM: ITALIAN CINEMA 1929-1944. The series will consist of 44 films to be shown from October 5 through December 21 at The Museum of Modern Art.

It was Mussolini who built Cinecittà ("Cinema City"), the huge film studio in Rome (built on a scale comparable to the back lot at MGM), with the object of producing "a rich and diverse body of work." It is acknowledged today that Cinecittà provided the facilities, trained and nurtured the talent without which the techniques and experiences that eventually led to neo-realism could never have developed.

Encouraged by interest in vintage American films, the Italian film historians have explored this era, searching for equivalent Italian genre films--comedies, spectacles and melodramas. The films they found were rarely seen here, even in their own time, except in Italian language theaters; and later such films were seized by the Office of Alien Property. By and large, they were then known as "white telephone films," and considered

to rely exclusively on luxurious settings and highly implausible themes; or else they were dismissed as pure propaganda.

However, contemporary film critics in Italy, gathered at a conference at Pesaro in 1974, determined to uncover "the legacy of neo-realism" and explore the qualities of these films within the perspectives of "commercial" film in other countries. In all, 700 such films were re-examined during the next two years. Two of the leading exponents of this cinematic re-discovery, Adriano Aprà and Patrizia Pistagnesi, film critics and film historians seeking to explore the mythology of Italian cinema prior to the preoccupation with social realism, will arrive here from Rome to give two lectures December 14 and 16 in the Museum auditorium.

Of the 44 features on the program, 11 carry English subtitles, but all will be accompanied by complete plot synopses. This series is made possible by generous support from Cinzano International, the New York State Council on the Arts and the National Endowment for the Arts, and with the cooperation of the Italian Cultural Institute, New York, Cineteca Nazionale, Rome, Incontri Internazionali d'Arte, Rome, Cineteca Italiana, Milan, Alitalia Airlines, the Library of Congress, Washington, D.C., Macmillan Audio-Brandon Films, the National Film Archives, London, and Staatliches Filmarchiv der DDR, Berlin, with special thanks to Adriano Aprà, Patrizia Pistagnesi, Alessandro Blasetti, and Deborah Young.

Among the directors whose work will be represented in this retrospective are Alessandro Blasetti, Mario Camerini, Renato Castellani, Roberto Rossellini, Luchino Visconti, Ferdinando M. Poggioli, Mario Soldati, Augusto Genina, and Vittorio De Sica. Attached is a complete list of the films as well as the program schedule.

October 1978

For further information, please contact Lillian Gerard, Special Projects Coordinator, or Kent Wittrup (212) 956-7296, Department of Public Information, The Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53 Street, New York, N.Y. 10019.

BEFORE NEO-REALISM: ITALIAN CINEMA 1929-1944

October 5 - December 21, 1978

SCHEDULE

- SOLE and ROTAIE Thursday, October 5 at 8:30 and Friday, October 6 at 2:30.
SOLE - 1929, Alessandro Blasetti. With Marcello Spada, Vasco Creti, Dria Paola. Excerpt, 15 min. Silent
ROTAIE - 1929, Mario Camerini. With Kathe von Nagy, Maurizio D'Ancora, Daniele Crespi. 92 min.
Introduction by Ted Perry on Thursday, October 5 at 8:30.
- COME LE FOGLIE Saturday, October 7 at 2:30 and Thursday, October 12 at 2:30. 1934, Mario Camerini. With Nino Besozzi, Isa Miranda. 83 min.
- FIGARO E LA SUA
GRAN GIORNATA
(FIGARO'S BIG DAY) Saturday, October 7 at 5:00 and Monday, October 9 at 2:30.
1931, Mario Camerini. With Gianfranco Giachetti, Leda Gloria, Ugo Ceseri, Maurizio D'Ancora. In Italian, English subtitles. 88 min.
- TERRA MADRE Sunday, October 8 at 2:30 and Monday, October 9 at 6:00.
1930, Alessandro Blasetti. With Sandro Salvini, Leda Gloria, Isa Pola, Carlo Ninchi. 88 min.
- LA TAVOLA DEI
POVERI Thursday, October 12 at 6:00 and Friday, October 13 at 2:30. 1932, Alessandro Blasetti. With Raffaele Viviani, Leda Gloria, Salvatore Costa. 72 min.
- GLI UOMINI, CHE
MASCALZONI
(WHAT ROGUES MEN ARE) Thursday, October 12 at 8:30 and Saturday, October 14 at 2:30. 1932, Mario Camerini. With Vittorio De Sica, Lia Franca. In Italian, English subtitles. 67 min.
- ACCIAIO Saturday, October 14 at 5:00 and Monday, October 16 at 2:30. 1933, Walter Ruttmann. With Isa Pola, Piero Pastore. 68 min.
- SECONDA B Sunday, October 15 at 2:30 and Monday, October 23 at 2:30.
1934, Goffredo Alessandrini. With Sergio Tofano, Dina Perbellini, Maria Denis. 79 min.
- T'AMERO SEMPRE
(I'LL ALWAYS LOVE YOU) Friday, October 20 at 2:30 and Saturday, October 21 at 5:00. 1933, Mario Camerini. With Elsa De Giorgi, Nino Besozzi, Mino Doro. In Italian, English subtitles. 74 min.
- 1860 Saturday, October 21 at 2:30 and Monday, October 23 at 6:00. 1933, Alessandro Blasetti. With Guiseppe Gulino, Aida Bellia. In Italian, English subtitles. 82 min.

- LA SIGNORA DI TUTTI Sunday, October 22 at 2:30 and Thursday, October 26 at 6:00. 1934, Max Ophuls. With Isa Miranda, Memo Benassi, Tatiana Pavlova. 98 min.
- DARO UN MILIONE Thursday, October 26 at 2:30 and Saturday, October 28 at 5:00. 1935, Mario Camerini. With Vittorio De Sica, Assia Noris, Luigi Almirante. 79 min.
- VECCHIA GUARDIA
(OLD GUARD) Thursday, October 26 at 8:30 and Saturday, October 28 at 2:30. 1934, Alessandro Blasetti. With Gianfranco Giachetti, Mino Doro, Franco Brambilla, Maria Puccini. 88 min. In Italian, English subtitles.
- PASSAPORTO ROSSO Friday, October 27 at 2:30. 1935, Guido Brignone. With Isa Miranda, Gilippo Scelzo, Tina Lattanzi. 95 min.
- SQUADRONE BIANCO Sunday, October 29 at 2:30 and Thursday, November 2 at 2:30. 1936, Augusto Genina. With Fosco Giachetti, Fulvia Lanzi, Antonio Centa, Francesca Dalpe. 102 min.
- IL CAPPELLO A TRE
PUNTE Monday, October 30 at 2:30 and Thursday, November 2 at 6:00. 1934, Mario Camerini. With Eduardo De Filippo, Peppino De Filippo, Leda Gloria. 73 min.
- IL GRANDE APPELLO Thursday, November 2 at 8:30 and Friday, November 3 at 2:30. 1936, Mario Camerini. With Camillo Pilotto, Roberto Villa. 87 min.
- IL SIGNOR MAX
(I DUE AMORI) Saturday, November 4 at 2:30 and Monday, November 6 at 6:00. 1937, Mario Camerini. With Vittorio De Sica, Assia Noris, Rubi Dalma. 87 min.
- SCIPIONE L'AFRICANO Saturday, November 4 at 5:00 and Monday, November 6 at 2:30. 1937, Carmine Gallone. With Annibale Ninchi, Camillo Pilotto, Fosco Giachetti, Isa Miranda, Francesca Braggiotti. 121 min.
- NAPOLI D'ALTRI TEMPI Sunday, November 5 at 2:30. 1938, Amleto Palermi. With Vittorio De Sica, Emma Gramatica, Elisa Cegani. 97 min.
- BATTICUORE Saturday, November 11 at 2:30. 1939, Mario Camerini. With Assia Noris, John Lodge, Luigi Almirante. 91 min.
- GRANDI MAGAZZINI Saturday, November 11 at 5:00 and Monday, November 13 at 2:30. 1939, Mario Camerini. With Assia Noris, Vittorio De Sica. 88 min.
- IL FU MATTIA PASCAL Sunday, November 12 at 2:30 and Thursday, November 16 at 2:30. 1937, Pierre Chenal. With Pierre Blanchar, Isa Miranda. 90 min.