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“ITALIAN CINEMA – THE CREATORS OF DREAMS”

Ferdinando Lauretani's sculpture exhibition dedicated to the most important film directors from the post-war period to the present.

Gallery Centro Steccata 5th February – 10th March 2011

Translated by Anna Barozzi

Ferdinando Lauretani is certainly better known as a film expert rather than as a sculptor, although he has been a keen sculpture lover since his youth: from the age of 7 to 16 he was a pupil of the sculptor Pietro Corradi. After a brilliant career as a film director and co-author of many Rai TV programmes, he became a teacher at the School of Cinema, Television and the new Media in Milan and he published the book “La regia televisiva – dai format alla realizzazione dei programmi” (TV direction – from formats to programme making).

This is how the union between the cinema and sculpture began. As Lauretani himself says: <<When you are 7 years old as I was then when I first approached a sculptor's workshop (today we would call it an atelier) and you see someone create things with clay, “give life” to a human figure, for a child it is something magic and spiritual at the same time. The Scriptures say God created Adam with clay, I say He was the first sculptor of all times. During all my life I have created human figures with all sorts of materials: clay, plasticine, sand, breadcrumbs, chewing gum, and I have always called them Adam. I have never managed to create Eve, God used a technique that I don't know. To make a model and transfer it on marble or wood or on more modern materials is complex and tiring, but always quite an enjoyable activity. Ever since I was young, the cinema and particularly Italian cinema, has always been a passion, an excitement, a fixed idea. I have collected film recordings, cassettes, DVDs, interviews, scrapbooks, catalogues and reviews. And what about three-dimensional film directors? I said to myself that I would make them in marble, by myself”. Therefore, a versatile artist.

In four years he created the sculptures dedicated to the “Creators of dreams” of the Italian cinema (15 works 13 of which are in marble and 2 in baked clay, average dimension 60x40x50), a poetic concentration of the conceptions, of the personality

and of the art of the most important film directors of our country. It would be vain to look for the formal perfection or their physical resemblance, the artist's starting point was something they said that represented a manifesto of the film director's artistic conception, he created these figures dangling between light and darkness, between reality and fiction, they are surrounded by a metaphysical air, they are almost small creatures escaping from the suspended vastness and bareness of De Chirico's works.



Among these figures we can see Roberto Rossellini and the philosophy of wait, Michelangelo Antonioni oscillating in amazement before his deep enigmatic revelation, Fellini and his conception of light, but also film directors who are alive such as Bernardo Bertolucci or the brilliant Roberto Benigni.

There is a sort of melancholy but also at the same time an authentic declaration of love for the cinema, sculpture and for the film director. <<There are a few film directors – Lauretani says- who have appeared in the galaxy of the Italian cinema like meteors: a work or two then they disappeared forever. Besides their works were not always unwatchable or horribly avoidable. Take the example of: Carmelo Bene, his films were certainly not very popular, but who said that the best films are those who receive the greatest commercial success? Also *Ladri di biciclette* was unsuccessful when it appeared, but has since then been seen by millions of people. To these anonymous film directors I have dedicated some of my time>>.



CARLO LIZZANI

He was born in 1922 and it is possible to say that, as a film director, scriptwriter, actor and film producer, he lived through the XX century. He started his career as a film director in 1951 with the film: *Achtung! Achtung! Banditi!* starring Gina Lollobrigida, and he has been making films ever since; at the moment he is making another film at the age of 88. A clearly distant world in black and white appears to us in his films: Lizzani recalls a picture of Italy which no longer exists, a very different political and artistic context from the one we are accustomed to, which has made the country grow and mature. His films are a mixture between a tragedy and a documentary report and represent an attempt to reveal the “mistakes” which are sometimes created by History. In his reports he is searching for an objective and historical truth concerning events. As a matter of fact before becoming a film director Lizzani was a film critic and he had worked as a young man for magazines such as “Cinema” and “Bianco e nero”.

He started as a scriptwriter and in 1948 he won an award for the best original script at the Locarno Festival for *Germania anno zero* by Roberto Rossellini. In 1953 he won the International Award of Cannes for the film *Cronache di poveri amanti* starring Marcello Mastroianni. In the same year he collaborated with Cesare Zavattini for *Amore in città*, together with Michelangelo Antonioni, Federico Fellini, Dino Risi, Alberto Lattuada. Then, he directed a number of films among which *Il gobbo* (1960) with Pier Paolo Pasolini, *Il processo di Verona* (1963) starring Silvana Mangano, *La vita agra* (1964) starring Ugo Tognazzi.

In 1965, he collaborated with Ettore Scola in the comedy *Trillino* starring Alberto Sordi and in 1968 he directed Stefania Sandrelli in the undervalued film *L'amante di Gramigna*. He won the David di Donatello award for the best direction and won the Nastro d'Argento award for the best script for *Banditi a Milano* (1968), in 1971 *Roma bene* and in 1974 *Mussolini ultimo atto* starring Rod Steiger and Henry Fonda as main actors.

He also directed many TV films among which the latest are: *Maria José, l'ultima regina* (2002) dedicated to the controversial last queen of Italy, *Le cinque giornate di Milano* (2004), *Giuseppe De Santis* (2008).

He is generally considered one of the most versatile intellectuals of the time and will be in Parma for the exhibition of Ferdinando Lauretani who has dedicated to him a sculpture without his knowing as a homage to the last great Maestro of the Italian Cinema (24th February, at 17.00. Galleria Centro Steccata).





Visconti



Pasolini



De Sica

The sculpture dedicated to Mario Monicelli wants to represent a picture of the "Commedia all'Italiana" of which he was a master and which the Americans tried to imitate. <<Mario has left us – Lauretani says – because he knew that up there the best places of observation of the earth were running out and so he who was a great analyzer of human frailty thought he had better leave us as quickly as he could.. I am sure he is sitting up there in the front row looking at us with his ironic and intense eyes and that he is still smiling in his Tuscan way.. Even if he has deprived us of other opportunities of amusement., his 55 films will always remain. Thank you, Mario, thank you, maestro, forever>>.

His works will be exhibited at the Gallery Centro Steccata from 5th February to 10th March 2011 in an exhibition which will contain also other important events: on 10th and 17th February and on 3rd March there will be three events dedicated respectively to Monicelli, Fellini and Pasolini. On 24th February there will be an event dedicated to one of the last great neorealist film directors: Carlo Lizzani.

As Marzio Dall'Acqua writes in the preface of the catalogue, this exhibition will perhaps have the merit of bringing back to us the faded memory of the films and film directors that have gradually changed our youth and our lives touching our hearts more than the real events as they have affected our dreams and memories. Lauretani's works are really forms moving in the space with a vital plasticity. Lauretani's small, graceful, witty, allusive sculptures, are exceptional, synthetic and they strike and fascinate us. They are involving and we must somehow come to terms with them. We must immediately discover the passion that has guided the sculptor's hand, his personal involvement which can sometimes appear as a joyful illusion, with however an eternal taste of youth, of unchangeable lightness".

The proceeds from the catalogue will be donated to AMURT, a non profit bearing charity organization which was founded in Italy at the beginning of the eighties with the aim of aiding people. Amurt Italia particularly deals with long distance adoptions to help abandoned orphans or orphans in need who are sheltered in the various Children's Homes all over the world. (www.amurt.it)

High and junior school students visiting the exhibition will receive a copy of Ferdinando Lauretani 's novel: "Sinfonia per una quercia condannata". If anyone has ever wondered what poetry is he will find the answer in this short book by Lauretani, meant for teenagers but which should be read also by adults. His poetry, his psychological insight, the stylistic ease of his sculptures can be found in this book by the versatile artist. It is half way between a fairy tale and real life: it has the power to reveal the point of view of childhood, love for nature, for music and above all the power of dreams.

ITALIAN NEOREALISM

The plots of Neorealist films are usually set among the poor, working classes, often in outdoor scenes and often employing non professional actors for minor roles and sometimes even for the main characters. The films mainly deal with the economical and moral situation of the Italian post-war period depicting the changes in the outlook and the life standards of the period: frustration, poverty, despair which are all well evident in works like *Roma città aperta* by Roberto Rossellini, *Sciuscià* and *Ladri di biciclette* by Vittorio De Sica, or *La terra trema* by Luchino Visconti.

Italian Neo-realism was influenced by the French *cinéma vérité* and by the German *Kammerspiel*. It greatly influenced the French *Nouvelle Vague* as well as the American documentary movement and Polish films.

After the Second World War, some artists felt the need to put emphasis on the fundamental formal values of the XX century art and, as a matter of fact, in 1946 the "Fronte Nuovo delle Arti", is



founded in Milan, a movement which asserts the liberty of artistic expression and a new political and social engagement. Many different artists belong to it: Renato Guttuso, Carlo Levi, Alberto Viani and Emilio Vedova, only to mention the most important ones. Some artists underline the importance of a manifestly social and political art which should make the 19th century Realism coexist with the Cubist method of formal dismemberment.

Renato Guttuso who had been influenced by the Roman literary and decadent atmosphere of the early nineteen forties will give a realistic turn to his art in the post-war period. The starting point of his paintings seems to be Picasso's *Guernica* with an expressionist touch.

Neorealism affects also Italian writers and intellectuals who give more importance to the subject matter rather than to the style of their works, thus turning away from the too formal and symbolic literature of the past which they considered detached from the real problems of people; they used new forms of narrative expressions and above all a non literary language, closer to popular jargon including dialects and slang.

Alberto Moravia who in his first novel *Gli indifferenti* (published in 1929) represented the lack of values and the boredom of the upper classes, after the war turns his attention to the lower classes and to the under proletariats who not only had suffered for the war, but were now paying for its consequences: all this is in fact represented in his *Racconti romani*.



CALENDAR OF SIDE EVENTS:

5th February – at 5 pm - Opening of the exhibition by the critic Marzio Dall'Acqua.

Performance of the comedian Gianni Giannini, who starred in the film "Amici Miei" Act III

10th February – at 5 pm – Homage to Mario Monicelli – Projection of the film "Buon compleanno Monicelli", directed by Daniela Piccioni and Sandro Lai, documentary with interviews and parts from the film on Monicelli's life. Intervention by Filiberto Molossi.

17th February – at 5 pm – Event dedicated to Federico Fellini. Projection of some interviews given by a Fellini in his study or on the set from the fifties onwards in collaboration with the Fondazione Fellini in Rimini.

24th February – at 5 pm – Event with Carlo Lizzani on Neorealism. Interventions by Prof. Roberto Campari, Professor of History and Film Criticism at the University of Parma and Sauro Borelli, film critic, introduced by Roberto Silvestri, film critic of "Il Manifesto".

26th February – at 5 pm. "Cinema - Parole e Musica", by Susanna Siviero and Paolo Consigli. The actor Ilari will read poems by Attilio Bertolucci, Pier Paolo Pasolini. Also, there will be space for the projection of some film sequences and guitar intermezzos performed by Irene Michailidis.

3rd March – at 5 pm– Event dedicated to Pier Paolo Pasolini, in collaboration with Centro Studi – Archivio Pier Paolo Pasolini in Bologna, with the projection of interviews and parts of his films. Presentation by Prof. Michele Guerra, History and Film Criticism, University of Parma.