EXTENDED DEADLINE

CALL FOR PAPERS

XXVIII INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF FILM STUDIES
Department of Philosophy, Communication, and Performing Arts
Roma Tre University
November 28-29, 2022

“Italian Film Production Practices 1949-1976. The Exception and the Rule”

Organisers:
Leonardo De Franceschi, Elio Ugenti, Christian Uva, Vito Zagarro

1949 was the year in which Law no. 958/49 known as the “Andreotti Law” was passed. The aim of the new law was to incentivise Italian productions and rebalance the relationship between the circulation of American and Italian films in Italy. 1976 was the year in which the Constitutional Court ruled on the “liberalisation of the airwaves” and changed the history of Italian television forever. These two dates mark two momentous turning points for audio-visual production in Italy (Comand, Venturini 2021) and constitute the terms a quo and ad quem of the XXVIII International Film Studies Conference “Italian film production practices 1949-1976. The exception and the rule”, and of the Prin Project “Modes, memories and cultures of film production in Italy (1949-1976)” of which the Conference is part.

Between these two dates, numerous historical and cultural processes transformed the Italian film system and determined the establishment of a “rule” - or of several rules - according to which a series of dominant production models that followed one another during this thirty-year period took shape. Fundamental in this sense is Law no. 1213 of 1965 (the “Corona Law”), which was the first major intervention in the field of film legislation after the Andreotti Law of 1949 and subsequent amendments made in 1956 and 1959, which continued to be the reference law for forty years, until the Urbani Decree was passed in 2004.

The legislative framework (Cucco, Manzoli 2017) is crucial if we are to try to define the Italian film industry after the Second World War, which was founded on completely different mechanisms and procedures to the Hollywood standard of the Majors. State support has always been fundamental in the Italian film industry, allowing certain entrepreneurs to build a loosely structured industry that was not based on a “system” logic which they were able to benefit from (Corsi, 2001). This process ended up determining standards (economic, format, running time, censorship) that gradually became decisive for the circulation of films and their access to movie theaters.
Alongside and around productions designed for theatrical release, alternative production models also flourished as “exceptions” to a rule aimed at guaranteeing as much commercial exploitation of the films as possible. This meant that there was an almost invisible (or barely visible) film industry, not designed for theatrical release or cut off from the main distribution channels because - by design or by accident - it did not comply with the standards imposed by the rule. We could call it an ante-litteram “fuori norma” cinema (Aprà, 2013).

Based on these assumptions, the aim of this Conference is to bring together scholars working on the development of primary and secondary sources in the light of new research perspectives on the production models of Italian films from 1949 to 1976, via both methodological reflections and the proposal of individual case studies. With this in mind, the intention is to understand the relationship between the functioning of the dominant Italian production system and the broader, heterogeneous cultures of production and distribution (Caldwell 2008; Szczepanik, Vonderau, 2013; Barra, Bonini, Splendore 2016) in order to identify the elements that qualify an Italian film as inside or outside the enclosure of a “norm” or a “standard”. More specifically, we ask ourselves which factors (of a legislative, geographical, cultural or strictly technical-productive nature) make it possible to frame the existence of an exception to the aforementioned rule.

Specifically experimental cinema must certainly be taken into account, but not only that. The rule excludes all productions related to corporate, educational, scientific and religious cinema, as well as works that are too short or too long to find a place in the cinema programme, such as films in reduced format - shot on 16 mm, 8 mm, super 8 film - or in electronic format, but also films subject to state or market censorship. Other exceptions to the rule are, if not co-productions as such, at least certain types of co-production, taking market data into account. Co-productions represent a particularly interesting field of attention, if we consider that - based on ANICA data - of the 5866 Italian films released onto the market between 1949 and 1976, as many as 2397 were co-productions, without distinguishing between majority and minority productions. These figures rise even further if we also include in this group what we might call Italian-style runaway productions, filmed entirely or partly in third countries, which were often exotic and almost never officially involved in production. Lastly, we have to consider the animation cinema that was rarely intended for theatrical distribution in Italy, ending up somewhere between pure experimentalism and distribution through “alternative” channels (usually television) (Bellano 2014; Bendazzi, De Berti 2003; Di Marino 2001).

Based on these assumptions, the following is a (non-binding and non-comprehensive) list of research topics on which to focus attention within proposals for intervention of a theoretical-methodological nature or which target the analysis of particularly significant case studies, paying specific attention to modes of production:

1. Production culture and new research methods;
2. Production system and technologies;
3. Alternatives to Roman-centric productions and enhancement of local and regional cultures;
4. Less explored forms of production: independent and cooperative productions;
5. Experimentation and avant-garde between film and television;
6. Political and militant productions;
7. Co-productions with countries other than traditional partners;
8. Runaway productions, filmed entirely or partly in third countries;
9. Animation cinema;
10. Material culture: organisation of work and memoires of work.

Proposals (max. 500 words), in Italian or English, must be sent by 10 September 2022 to the following email address: convengnopraticheproduttive@uniroma3.it accompanied by five essential bibliographic references, five keywords and a biographical note on the applicant (max. 10 lines). The results of the selection will be announced by 30 September 2022.

Fee for speakers: €50.00.
Presentations will last 20 minutes.

Bibliographical References:

