

**Faces Looking Like Us. A Conversation with Pietro Marcello**

Edited by Alma Mileto

Pietro Marcello's cinema investigates History not according to a chronological linearity, but rather by deconstructing its horizontal progression, starting from its deepest stratifications. Through the foundfootage technique he gives life to an act of excavation in time no longer bound to a "forward" movement but rather free to open up to gestures of superpositions, dilations, condensations that operate on historical eras in an anachronistic sense. History with a capital "s" constantly lends itself, in artistic practice, to intersecting with stories with a lowercase "s". In many of his films it is precisely the latter that emerge, the testimonies of the so-called "anonymous", who contribute to the narrative starting from marginal perspectives. Oral history, and therefore the investigative documentary, is essential from this point of view. Then there is the power of history to settle in places: in this sense the filmmaker's bond with the South is fundamental: a land often of marginalization and subalternity, but also of revenge and struggle. Furthermore, what happens to the narrative when it encounters caesuras in history? This is the case of a recent event such as the pandemic, which Marcello is also called to face. Of course, the term "history" has various semantic openings, many of which deviate from the meaning of history as "documentary testimony", lending itself to the manipulation of "storytelling". In this case, history becomes essentially synonymous with narration and therefore with the reworking of a real time in fictional terms, as happens in Marcello's cinematic adaptations of the great twentieth-century novels.

**Beyond History. America Between Geography and Myth**

Roberto De Gaetano

If Europe is marked by history, by time and the proper names of its past heroes, America is its geography. A space where traces of events are scarce, because natural geography dominates with its imaginary and symbolic dimension. And where the proper names that populate this geography are more legendary than historical figures, or rather they are the transfiguration that the former have operated on the latter. As in the mythological tale of

the West, where people become characters. And if America has been the West of Europe, this happened because it was not only the place of escape from totalitarianism and poverty, but also the place where the image of a possible “new beginning” was projected.

### **Political and Symbolic Revolutions in Italian Cinema**

Fabio Andreazza

In the first half of the twentieth century, two groups of film critics and filmmakers tried to subvert the symbolic order of the cinematographic field in Italy: the first, led by Blasetti, was active between the twenties and thirties, while the second, which revolved around the magazine “Cinema”, in the early forties. What united them was their political militancy, respectively fascist and communist. The essay aims to show how the revolutionary spirit – a heteronomous action scheme, arising from events in political history – played a decisive role in the process of autonomization of the field.

### ***Voir Venir: the “Plastic” Philosophy of History of the Politique des Auteurs***

Marco Grosoli

This essay draws a parallel between the philosophy of history of the *politique des auteurs* trend in film criticism (issued from 1950s Cahiers du Cinéma) and the philosophy of history of Catherine Malabou’s plasticity (a concept she derived from G.W.F. Hegel). According to both philosophies, either classic and modern age share a constant trait (plasticity for Malabou, *mise en scène* for the *politique des auteurs*), as well as an anti-deterministic conception of future based on the dialectical conflation between necessity and contingency, teleological predictability and surprise.

### **Fractures of Italy. The Contemporary Art Version**

Gianpaolo Cacciottolo

The present paper investigates the relationship between contemporary art and Italian history, in a lapse of time that goes from the Seventies to now. The essay intercepts in particular some of the Italian artistic and exhibition trajectories that have dealt with some of the dramatic moments in the contemporary history of the Italian peninsula, especially with those

events that have indelibly marked the memory and collective imaginary of our country, those fractures (from fascism to the pandemic) which in their tragic nature have stimulated, however, artistic creation on multiple levels (reaction and interpretation).

### **Microanalysis and Global Perspective: Edgar Reitz and Carlo Ginzburg**

Guido Ginestra

This essay aims to analyze the theoretical and methodological affinities that connect Edgar Reitz's cinematic practice with the investigative method of microhistory, focusing on a specific theme: the seemingly marginal detail considered in relation to the general context. At the end of the analysis, an attempt is made to establish which possible traditional influences might have shaped this particular way of understanding the relationship between the particular and the universal in Reitz's work.

### **Removed Heritage. *Archeologia* by Antonia Mulas**

Virginia Gerlero

This essay aims to analyse and investigate Antonia Mulas' unpublished photographic work entitled *Archeologia*. Realized in 1976 in Berlin, the sequence recreates frontally more than twenty kilometres of the Berlin Wall, thirteen years before its fall. By analysing the photographs and the technique used, and by considering the motivations that led the artist to create this reportage, the essay aims to open up a reflection on the Berlin Wall as *removed heritage* and to clarify in what sense Mulas' operation can be defined as *archaeological*.

### **Why History Matters? Notes on John Akomfrah**

Sara Tongiani

John Akomfrah (1957) is one of the founders of the *Black Audio Film Collective*, well-known for his seminal reflections on Black aesthetics, British Cultural Studies, and Black British identity and cinema. Akomfrah was born in Accra (Ghana), but he moved to London at an early age. His works are deeply characterized by their investigations into temporality and aesthetics of history, memory, archive, post-colonialism, and migrant diaspo-

ras. This paper aims to connect Akomfrah's poetic with images' regimes of truth, and the reconceptualization and remediation of memory and history.

### **History in Peacetime. Soviet Cinema and the Thaw**

Alessio Scarlato

The essay intends to reconstruct the role of History as a founding myth in Soviet culture, focusing on the decade (from 1953 to 1967) in which war cinema (above all, *The Cranes Are Flying*, *Ballad of a Soldier*, *Ivan's Childhood*), usually thought of as the heart of Soviet historical cinema, proposes a new model of hero (and new models of narrative composition), which increasingly clearly demands the desire to live in a time of peace. This progressively involves a different attention towards ordinary life, daily life, life in peacetime, causing the myth of History to implode as a teleological horizon based on the Revolution (on the Event), to move towards a historical gaze of a sociological nature towards the ordinary man and his difficulty in overcoming the moral references of the Stalinist era (above all, *I'm 20* and *Ordinary Fascism*).

### **The Animated Risorgimento: Gavioli's *La lunga calza verde***

Christian Uva

In 1961, Italy celebrates its centenary by returning to the roots of its own identity. In addition to live action cinema, also animated production actively participates in this operation. Roberto Gavioli's *La lunga calza verde* (1961), based on a story by Cesare Zavattini, exploits the subversive potential of cartoons to revisit, in an antirhetorical manner, the epic of the Risorgimento. What emerges is the tale of an Italy inebriated by economic boom, which, between irony, imagination, and thoughtful accents, emotionally and originally reconstructs a foundational moment of national history.

### **Hauntology and Imaginative Rewriting in Erice's *The Spirit of the Beehive***

Martina Tassone

Moving from the concept of *hauntology* conceived by Jacques Derrida and through a reflection on Víctor Erice's *The Spirit of the Beehive* (1973) the essay investigates the re-appropriation of the historical fact – in particular the Spanish Civil War and the Franco dictatorship – through the recourse

to fantastic worlds populated by children, monstrous or phantom figures. As for the French philosopher, also for Víctor Erice history occupies in the present a *virtual space of spectrality*: the present is acted by a strong spectral causality that affects history by questioning its linearity. How to imaginatively rewrite history to redeem it and authenticate its future?

***Sequenze sul G8 and Supervideo Diaz: Into the Fragments of History***

Roberto Paolo Ormanni

The Italian G8 Protests of 2001, related to the “altermondialiste” mobilizations, were an “iconic event”: in fact, the mediaactivism spreaded in the radical movements during the 1990s produced, on the streets of Genoa, the action of thousand activists “armed” with cameras. Nonetheless, the protest demonstrations - with their photos, images, and films – were immediately surrounded by Italy’s “divided memory”. Analyzing two films that works with archival images, *Sequenze sul G8* (2001) by Silvia Savorelli and *Supervideo Diaz* (2007) by Mark Covell, the essay aims to show how the found footage films could become evidentiary documents useful to writing History from below.

***Sono stata io. Autofiction and Historical Narrative in the Work of Daniela Comani***

Vincenzo Di Rosa

The essay explores the relationship between autofiction and history in the artwork *Sono stata io. Diario 1900-1999*(2002-2006) by Daniela Comani. Using different media, the artist appropriates some historical events and recounts them as if they had happened to herself by writing a sort of private diary of the 20th century. Comani creates a fictional autobiography in which she skips any chronological linearity. At the same time, she disrupts collective memory and transforms it into the private memory of a global and multiple personality, continuously questioning the possibility of a comprehensive view of the historical process.

***Hostel and 9/11: Torture Porn or Rape and Revenge?***

Leonardo Magnante

Emerging within the milieu of post-9/11 American tension, Eli Roth’s

*Hostel* is widely regarded as a cornerstone of the *torture porn*. However, the essay seeks to illustrate how the ethos of “justified violence” aligns it more closely with the *rape and revenge*. We argue that 9/11 can be considered as a national *rape and revenge* narrative, sharing with this subgenre a sense of retribution, a violent *pathos* that neither confines it to the eternal present of the catastrophic site of causation of the attack (the disaster movie) nor entirely disregards it (the *torture porn*), but places it within the procedural remodulation of the event itself and its numerous manifestations, including the violence perpetuated in the Middle East.

**Staging History. *I Do Not Care If We Go Down in History as Barbarians* by Jude**

Samuel Antichi

This paper aims to examine Radu Jude’s film, *I Do Not Care If We Go Down in History as Barbarians* (2018), whose title refers to Romanian President Antonescu’s statement, who initiated the ethnic cleansing of the Eastern Front in 1941. While this event has been dialogically forgotten by the country’s collective memory, a theater director attempts to re-stage it publicly in Bucharest amid rehearsals, censorship, research and misunderstandings. Referring to the theoretical framework of trauma and memory studies, and the practice of reenactment in contemporary documentary cinema, the film reflects on the politicized construction of History.

**Serialisation of History in *Cuéntame cómo pasó* (*Remember When*)**

Laura Ysabella Hernández García

When it comes to historical narration, audiovisual media such as films and television series can active complex and dynamic processes that result in the re-creation of difficult, hidden, or suppressed events from official discourse. The television series *Cuéntame cómo pasó* (TVE, 2001-2023) is one of the most influential works in Spanish television: in terms of historical themes such as late-Francoism, the transition to democracy, and modernization, the series participates in the construction and reinterpretation of the past in the present, while employing specific serial device modes. The case study allows us to ask questions such as: how does contemporary seriality contribute to memory mediation? What role does serial storytelling play in updating historical memory?

## **From the Potemkin Bridge. The Anachronistic Time of Images in Revolt**

Giuseppe Previtali

Georges Didi-Huberman recently devoted an extensive study to Ejzenstejn's *Battleship Potëmkin*, and he somehow took the movie as the possible starting point for a visual history of contemporary protests. Moving from its analysis, the essay intends to examine a specific passage within the film in order to formulate a hypothesis on the anachronistic temporality of images in revolt. As a matter of fact, the act of imagining the future that the sailors perform on the deck of the ship seems to suggest a convergence of plural times, where the idea of a future 'otherwise' emerges.