Made in Italy

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Postwar Italian Art History Today: Untying 'the Knot', edited by *Sharon Hecker* and *Marin R. Sullivan*, New York: Bloomsbury, 2018, 320 pp., 50 b. & w. illus., hardback/ebook, £96/£57

Sculptural Materiality in the Age of Conceptualism: International Experiments in Italy, by *Marin R. Sullivan*, Abingdon: Routledge, 2017, 210 pp., 67 b. & w. illus., hardback, £115

Corrado Cagli: La pittura, l'esilio, l'America (1938–1947), by *Raffaele Bedarida*, Rome: Donzelli, 2018, 320 pp., 16 col. and 121 b. & w. illus., paperback, €32

For nearly forty years, the four As of Italian production, *Abbigliamento* (clothes), *Agroalimentare* (food), *Arredamento* (furniture) and *Automobili* (automobiles), have used the trademark 'Made in Italy' to showcase their provenance to anticipated Anglophone audiences. A precedent for revering Italian materials, craftsmanship and ingenuity was arguably set long ago with a fifth A: *Arte*. Three new publications about the international cultural networks and lesser-known figures of modern Italian art destabilize the supposed *italianità* (Italian-ness) of art, and artists, made in Italy. These books are indicative of a field in the ascendancy beyond the peninsula, for example, through the Center for Italian Modern Art (CIMA) in New York City, established in 2013, which has awarded fellowships to a number of the authors involved, and hosted the conference that spawned *Postwar Italian Art History Today: Untying 'the Knot'*.

The Knot to refers the first major exhibition of arte povera in the United States, held at MoMA PS1 (1985). Curated by Germano Celant, who had coined the name of modern Italy's most successful artistic export in 1967, 'the Knot' served as a metaphor for bringing together diverse threads. In subsequent decades the rise of modern Italian art in Britain and America's academies, institutions and markets has been built on exhibitions and publications elucidating the complex social, cultural and economic specificities of twentieth-century Italy for English-language audiences: the Royal Academy's *Italian Art in the Twentieth-Century* (1989); the New York Guggenheim's exhibition *The Italian Metamorphosis, 1943–1968* (1994); the opening of the Estorick Collection of Modern Italian Art in London (1998); and *Zero to Infinity: Arte Povera 1962–1972* at Tate Modern (2001).

The three volumes under review are part of a tendency to offer critical and historiographical reflection recently predominant in, but not limited to, Anglophone scholarship. Art historians have been excavating the field's untold stories, as well as turning outwards to consider Italy's connections to the international art world.[1] Both strands are present amongst the essays in *Postwar Italian Art History Today: Untying 'the Knot'*, a multi-authored volume. Its fifteen case studies unfasten the tightly-focused 'knot' of post-war Italian art presented to the American audience three decades earlier. In *Sculptural Materiality in the Age of Conceptualism: International Experiments in Italy*, the focus is on four artistic projects made in Italy between 1966 and 1972. This allows Marin Sullivan to shed light on the roles of Italian gallerists and photographers, and international cultural networks, while arguing for the sculptural and material

qualities of the performative works in question. Finally, in *Corrado Cagli: La pittura, l'esilio, l'America (1938–1947)*, Raffaele Bedarida offers a case study of an artist little known outside Italy, whose trajectory from muralist of the Fascist regime to Jew in exile and then to American soldier returning to Europe provides a singular case study of ambiguous Italian identity. These contributions use a range of approaches to undermine national particularism by highlighting the networks of varyingly itinerant artists and cultural operators. This has wider art-historical resonances, but will be most pertinent for historians of the twentieth century.

Hecker and Sullivan accurately present their volume as 'a cross-section of the field that addresses the complicated, often unruly nature of postwar Italian art' (3). As is to be expected from an attempt to disentangle a knot and examine its threads, the contributions are wilfully diverse in subjects, methodology and style. This revisionist impetus provides a light organizational structure of four sections: Reconsidering the Weight of Italy; Re-imagining Realism; Rethinking Modes of Patronage and Reassessing Arte Povera.

Indeed, the looseness of the parameters of post-war Italian art is immediately apparent in the first essay by Laura Petican, whose provocative title: 'Yes, but are you Italian?' will be familiar to any scholar in the field lacking an Italianate surname. Straying beyond the temporal scope of the volume, Petican addresses three Italian-born but internationally active contemporary artists whom she identifies as both Baroque and fashion-focused: Vanessa Beecroft, Maurizio Cattelan, and Francesco Vezzoli. Petican draws on the fashion industry, specifically the Missoni fashion house with its signature stripes and patterns. She uses this to argue for the possibility of engaging with international aesthetic networks – in Missoni's case op art of the 1960s – at the same time as using Italian craftsmanship to codify, commodify and challenge *italianità*.

Likewise, Denis Viva's 'Methodological Notes on Postwar Italian Art History' offers a case for Italian particularism but not isolation. Viva compares the appropriation of images of Italian art by Tano Festa and Giulio Paolini in the 1960s to the use of logos and comic books in American pop. But he connects it to the popularization of art history in Italy through reproductions. In turn, he relates this to Luigi Ontani and Salvo in the 1970s, whose practices also drew on reproductions, notably from German and Anglophone rather than Italian art-historical methodologies.

International inspirations return in 'Gianni Pettena and Ugo La Pietra: Crossing the Boundaries'. Silvia Bottinelli emphasizes the Italian specificity of the work of the Florence and Milan-based architects, in terms of the piazza as social space and their debt to Antonio Gramsci. At the same time, she underscores the wider context of ideas around public and private space, especially those of Henri Lefebvre. Moreover, by focusing on Pettena's *Wearable Chairs* – a performance of 1971 in which ten students at the Minneapolis College of Art and Design wore folding chairs on their backs as they moved around the city, occasionally using them to sit in public spaces – Bottinelli highlights his international activities.

In the final essay of this section, '*Our Lady of Warka*: Gino De Domenicis and the Search for Immortality', Gabriele Gurcio boldly argues for the unsuitability of the Italian historical context for comprehending this work by De Domenicis, instead preferring an anachronistic, even anarcho-chronistic, approach in which temporal agency is within the image. Gurcio notes the rediscovery in 1938 to 1939 and publication in 1960 of the Sumerian object that De Domenicis then appropriated in 1977. Yet in striking contrast to Viva's essay, Gurcio does not acknowledge the causal necessity of this in its availability to De Domenicis. The argument that the dissolution of previous political categories in Italy in the 1970s, and with them a sense of tradition and progress, renders irrelevant the moment of De Domenicis' production, feels knowingly circular, especially with the repeated invocation of the contemporary work of American science fiction writer Philip K. Dick.

This leads neatly to the book's second section, ostensibly about realism, but – happily – more concerned with commercial, curatorial and critical structures between Italy and the United States.

Davide Colombo's 'Transatlantic Exchanges. Piero Dorazio: Non-objective Art vs. Abstract Expressionism?' compares Dorazio's Italian and American post-war reception, showing how his revived interest in the European pre-war avant-gardes was mediated by American responses. Colombo's essay accentuates Dorazio's ability to synthesize in his painting and his curatorial practice the influences of his compatriots and those non-objective artists who had already gained prominence in the United States.

Turning to Italian pop art, or more specifically the *Scuola di Piazza del Popolo*, Christopher Bennett's 'Gleaning Italian Pop, 1960–6: The 1964 Venice Biennale, Renato Mambor's "Thread", and Pop as a Global Phenomenon'

is set in the context of Rauschenberg's infamous win at the Venice Biennale of 1964. Highlighting Italy's ambiguous relationship with American pop, and American culture more generally, Bennett's account offers a welcome English translation of the artist Renato Mambor's assessment of Italian pop. Bennett's essay comes with the beginnings of an analysis of the differing art market structures in Rome and New York; this would benefit from further development.

The Venice Biennale of 1972 is a backdrop for Nicoletta Leonardi's essay 'Photography, Visual Poetry, and Radical Architecture in the Early Works of Franco Vaccari', which summarizes its philosophical context with laudable clarity. That year Vaccari exhibited an automatic photo-booth at the Biennale exhibition, an attempt to trace a direct genealogy from informale to arte povera, conceptual art, environment and performance art. Leonardi uses this to emphasize the importance of Vaccari's experimental photography as a means of disruption and social agitation, going beyond the scope of arte povera and pre-empting his involvement in Global Tools from 1973.

Patronage comes to the foreground in the third section, with lesser-known Italian collectors and gallerists appearing amongst Italo-American relations and the Venice Biennale.

Antje K. Gamble's 'Buying Marino Marini: The American Market for Italian Art after World War II' shows how the cultural politics of the Cold War and the Marshall Plan shaped Marini's reputation. Despite his popularity in the Fascist period, Marini was reclaimed by Americans as an Etruscan progenitor of modern civilization. The placement of his signature horse and rider *Cavaliere* sculptures to complement the modernist architecture of New York's cultural elite was a clear attempt to create a lineage from ancient Italy to modern America. Gamble seamlessly connects the decline in Marini's American fortunes with the rise of home-grown sculptors under the tutelage of Clement Greenberg.

While the United States washed Marini clean of Fascism, Laura Moure Cecchini finds continuity in Italian artistic patronage under and after Mussolini, undermining the myth that in 1945 Italy was instantaneously transformed from a fascist to a liberal state. In in her essay 'A House No Longer Divided: Patronage, Pluralism, and Creative Freedom in Italian Pre- and Postwar Art', she discusses the collections of screenwriter Cesare Zavattini, film producer Ferruccio Caramelli, and the industrialist Giuseppe Verzocchi. These were established in the 1940s and 1950s and each followed Fascist models by stipulating the size, price and subject of their commissions, respectively self-portraits, views of Rome and representations of labour.

Jumping forward two decades, Jacopo Galimberti's 'Co-research and Art: Danilo Montaldi's Horizontal Production of Knowledge' situates the artistic activities of this social activist and intellectual internationally and nationally. Galimberti explores his role as owner of the gallery Gruppo d'arte Renzo Botti in Cremona between 1965 and 1975, which exhibited *inter alia* artists associated with the existentialist realist group, the young Ilya Kabakov, and agitprop silkscreen prints by the Atelier Populaire. Focusing on Montaldi's methodology of 'co-research' (*conricerca*), Galimberti contrasts his written studies on the working classes of Milan, particularly the shanty towns known as *coree*, with the aestheticizing films of his contemporary Pier Paolo Pasolini, and compares it to the reappraisal of art criticism voiced in Carla Lonzi's conversational *Autoritratto* (1969).

The Venice Biennale returns to close the section with Martina Tanga's 'Shaping and Reshaping: Private and Institutional Patronage'. This is a remarkably clear account of how the contents and administration of the Biennales of 1974, 1976 and 1978 respond to political changes both in their governance and in Italy as a whole. Tanga gives a potted history of the previous four decades of the Biennale to set the scene for the institutional reform of 1973. This made the Biennale independent and saw it shift from being a tool of political and art-market elites towards a radically transparent organization. The elected Biennale President in these years was the socialist politician Carlo Ripa di Meana, but Tanga also emphasizes the role of Enrico Crispolti in bringing social and decentralized practices to the Biennale.

The final section addresses arte povera, framing it as a loose grouping of artists with comparable tendencies rather than a defined project with a sense of *italianità*. Co-editor Hecker's own essay 'Isolated Fragments? Disentangling the Relationship Between Arte Povera and Medardo Rosso' demonstrates the diverse ways that artists associated with arte povera would draw on Rosso's sculptures, foregrounding formal and material qualities over *italianità*. For example, the artist Luciano Fabro, together with the critic Jole De Sanna, played close attention to Rosso in their exhibition *Aptico* in 1976, and when their Casa degli Artisti organized his archive. In contrast, Marisa Merz draws on Rosso in her wax heads, and gossamer environments; in 2011 she included one of his sculptures in her

own exhibition. Different again, Giuseppe Penone productively misunderstands Rosso's use of wax as being hand-moulded in his obsession with skin and bark. Finally, Giovanni Anselmo finds in Rosso a productive 'openness'.

The plurality of arte povera returns in Elizabeth Mangini's 'Gilberto Zorio's Radical Fluidity' which uses the artist's own vocabulary of fluidity to replace the dominant narrative of the artist as alchemist, as set by Celant. In doing so she uproots the mythical and iconographic interpretations of Zorio's work, attending instead to material reception and phenomenological readings. Her argument covers his contingent materials, mutating forms and the layered iconographic associations of the symbol he is most commonly known for, namely the pentagram.

Another arte povera figure is complicated by Giorgio Zanchetti in 'Summer Solstice AD MCMLXIII: Luciano Fabro's Early Works'. Notably, Zanchetti focuses on Fabro's interest in the Elizabethan philosopher Francis Bacon, evinced by his text *Pseudo-Bacon – My certainty: my sense for my action . . .* , which Celant included in his landmark book *Arte Povera* of 1969. Zanchetti makes a good, if not watertight, case for the availability of Bacon in 1963. He then links Fabro's Baconian desire 'To sharpen and systematize [. . .] observation and reflexion' with his 1965 glass plane *Tutto trasparente*, exhibited independently before its prominent inclusion in *Arte Povera + Azioni Povere* in Amalfi in October 1968.

Celant's book comes in for pointed analysis in Bedarida's closing chapter 'Transatlantic Arte Povera'. *Arte Povera* – published simultaneously in three languages in Italy, West Germany, the United Kingdom, and the United States – famously brought Italian artists to the American art market. Celant achieved this despite the anti-Americanism of the works in question and existing awareness of this in the United States. Bedarida highlights the volume's careful pretence to be anything but 'Made in Italy', Celant judiciously spacing out artists from different countries so that no Italians appeared together. Moreover, he did not translate textual works and titles, all the while claiming to have put the artists together as the materials arrived, denying his own critical hand.

The last section of the book is undoubtedly the most coherent, productively problematizing a singular vision of arte povera. The rest is deliberately uneven, almost antagonistic in its leaps in chronology and methodology, and between the established and the niche. Many of the chapters provide welcome English-language post-graduate teaching material and scholarly appraisals of artists with a growing market presence. As a slice of scholarship, it is heartening in its diversity and novelty.

If *Postwar Italian Art History Today* is an unravelling, Sullivan's monograph is a reconfiguration. It is structured around four very different art projects made in Italy between 1966 and 1972. Nevertheless, it makes an impressively coherent narrative by entangling Yayoi Kusama's *Narcissus Garden* at the Venice Biennale, Michelangelo Pistoletto's *Newspaper Sphere* in Turin, Robert Smithson's *Asphalt Rundown* in Rome and Joseph Beuys's *Arena* in Naples.

Here, the emphasis is more on the 'made' than on 'Italy', the active, rather than inert, substances of all four works. The period of enquiry knowingly echoes that of Lucy Lippard's landmark *Six Years: the dematerialization of the art world* (1973). Sullivan's goal, however, is not to debate whether the sculptural object was dematerialized (in this period generally or in these case studies specifically) but to hone in on the materiality under pressure in these sculptural projects, and the networks of individuals and institutions in and beyond Italy applying it.

As such, while the book addresses one Italian artist, Pistoletto, it underscores the radical artistic subculture in Italy during this period. Moreover, it demonstrates that the tension between materiality and immateriality that ran through arte povera yielded a welcome environment for international artists wishing to undertake such projects as well as a support system for their patronage, realization, documentation and photography. As Sullivan puts it: 'That so many notable sculptures were produced in Italy during this time speaks not only to an emerging and fluid international art scene, but also to one that was increasingly affected by the specifics of place' (11).

The theoretical approaches to networks and materiality discussed in Sullivan's introduction are quickly exemplified in Kusama's *Narcissus Garden*, an installation of 1,500 mirrored plastic balls installed on the lawn outside the Italian Pavilion at the 1966 Venice Biennale: 'an ever-expanding web of object, environment, and viewer' (34). In a schema used throughout the book, Sullivan brings into fruitful dialogue the sculptural, performative and photographic aspects of the works. She shifts the analysis away from its notoriety as a performance – Kusama sold the balls at $2 a piece – towards its sculptural materiality: 'the work's impact came from the combination of its multiple materials, whether tangibly realized in the form of a plastic orb or a fleeting gesture of contact between person and object' (41).

The performative and photographic nature of *Narcissus Garden* is predicated on that materiality, with photographs recording the almost constant presence of Kusama herself within it. A rarely reproduced image shows Kusama throwing one of the orbs in the air, while next to her, seated and also with a mirrored ball in his hands, is Lucio Fontana. More than a signifier of tactile and physical qualities of the balls, Fontana helped Kusama find a factory in Florence to make them. Having treated *Narcissus Garden* as, primarily, a sculpture, Sullivan argues that Kusama's presence within the work, and the photographs of it, are not 'supplementary information but integral components' (41).

The same could be said of Pistoletto's *Newspaper Sphere*, a piece best known through the stills from the film *Buongiorno Michelangelo* (1968) in which Pistoletto and fellow artist Maria Pioppi, and others, push and carry the sculpture through the streets of Turin. The *Sfera* was one of the *Oggetti in Meno* (*Minus Objects*) that Pistoletto produced in 1966. This series of diverse sculptures engaged with the environment and each other (when shown together). Sullivan wants to get at this 'connective tissue', or as Pistoletto put it: 'the passage between objects more than [...] the objects themselves' (60).

Pistoletto multiplied this connective tissue by making numerous iterations of the *Sfere* which Sullivan characterizes as 'operating as a kind of sculptural nucleus that pulled into its orbit countless other material elements' (59); her treatment of them follows suit, tracing numerous threads to build an overall thesis about the activation of sculptural materials. The chapter title comes from the exhibition *Cont temp l'azione* which ran concurrently at three Turin galleries, literally linked by a red thread, and by Pistoletto and Pioppi walking the sculpture.

Sullivan walks the reader from the creation of the series, supposedly in antagonistic response to the popularity of Pistoletto's mirror paintings in the American market. With this arose the subsequent versions without the art-historical hierarchy of original and copy, followed by the cessation of the *Sfera* in Amalfi, at the aforementioned exhibition in 1968 *Arte Povera + Azioni Povere*, in the form of *Mappamondo* a work in which the newspaper ball is caged, dividing object from action like the show's titular equation.

The (dis)connection of object and action runs through the book from the opening with Robert Smithson's Site/Nonsite Dialectic, to which Sullivan returns with the third chapter on the Smithson *Asphalt Rundown*. On 15 October 1969, as part of a series of post-Pollock 'pours' that year, Smithson dumped a truckload of asphalt down the disused Cava di Selce rock quarry eighteen kilometres southeast of Rome. Breaking from site/nonsite structure, Smithson presented an installation of mud and mirrors at Galleria L'Attico's new Via Beccaria space but with no text or photography to document the site. Perhaps tellingly, the gallery installation was not photographed at all.

As the asphalt has slowly disappeared in subsequent decades, the photographs of the site, by Smithson himself (*plate 1*) and the L'Attico staff photographer Claudio Abate, are crucial. Sullivan is attentive to Abate's role in shaping our understanding of this period through his singular black-and-white images, for example, Pino Pascali's *Vedova Blu* (1968) and Jannis Kounellis' *Untitled (12 Horses)*, the latter famously staged at L'Attico in the same year. Smithson as photographer – in this case a producing series of square colour images – is characterized as 'not only focused on documenting the material existence of the work, but also attempted to highlight how the key physical characteristics of the work functioned' (111). Sullivan argues for Smithson's photographs, and their appearance in numerous landmark books of the following years, as another mode of nonsite, two-dimensional representations inextricably linked to the materiality of the three-dimensional work.

Photography takes centre stage as sculptural material for the chapter on Beuys' *Arena*, displayed at Naples' Modern Art Agency in the summer of 1972. This work, usually considered through the biographical lens used for much of Beuys' oeuvre (not least as it functions as a photographic anthology of previous performances) is here addressed sculpturally, through the oil can, twenty-one slabs of wax and 100 grey aluminium frames containing 264 photographs: 'The focus on materials was always at the core of Beuys' practice, and thus, regardless of the diversity of his output, is what makes it sculptural in nature' (150).

Sullivan brings to light the role of Ute Klophaus, Eva Beuys-Wurmbach and Caroline Tisdall in photographing Beuys' work. On this basis, she makes thoughtful comparisons of the photographic temporality of Beuys' and Yves Klein's performances, and the role of photographs as both physical and as conveyors of visual information in the work of Beuys and Medardo Rosso. Notably this aspect of Rosso's work was not explored in Hecker's essay in the above volume.

The installation of *Arena* in Naples is compared to the subsequent arrangement at L'Attico in Rome. In this way, the final chapter is also the denouement

1 Robert Smithson, *Asphalt Rundown*, outside Rome, October 1969. Photo: © Holt-Smithson Foundation.

of a meta-narrative around the gallerists, patrons and photographers of the Italian art scene in the four cities in question. Sullivan's interest is not *italianità* and so she does not, for example, follow up Kusama's rationale for using pasta in other installations, nor does she examine Beuys' previous military presence in Naples. Instead, she produces an original and meaningful shift of Italy's post-war *genius loci* from a vague *italianità* of past genealogical or material supremacy to a definable contemporary network supporting an environment of experimentation.

This underpinning supports a compelling primary argument about the materiality of sculpture, photography and performance in this period, based on thorough archival research and theoretical reflection. Part of Ashgate's series 'Studies in Art Historiography', *Sculptural Materiality* describes its subjects in an evocative manner, apparently self-consciously adding another immaterial layer to the historiography of these works.

The international networks underpinning *Sculptural Materiality* find a precedent in the third publication under review here, which focuses on the international career of the Ancona-born artist Corrado Cagli (1910–76). A little-known figure beyond specialists, Cagli defies

categorization both artistically and biographically. Coming to prominence in 1932 as a central figure in the School of Rome, Cagli's artistic output continually veered between figuration and abstraction, expressionism and geometry. Active within the Fascist regime, the Jewish and gay artist went into exile following Italy's implementation of Fascist racial laws in 1938. He first went to Lausanne, then Paris, before joining his sisters Ebe and Jole in the United States, spending time in Baltimore, New York, Los Angeles and Oakland before returning to Europe with the United States' Army, exhibiting in London, participating in the Normandy landings and the advance across France, Belgium and Germany. His drawings of the Buchenwald concentration camp are perhaps what he is best known for today.

Corrado Cagli, La pittura, l'esilio, l'America (1938–1947), soon to be published in English translation by the Centro Primo Levi, is the first in-depth study of this period of Cagli's career; the translation will be the first major book on the artist in English. It builds on the publications and exhibitions by Enrico Crispolti (author of a spirited preface to this volume) since the 1980s, and more recently by Fabio Benzi, making extensive use of unpublished material in American archives to flesh out the story.[2] Published as part of a Donzelli series, 'Italians from exile', the book retraces Cagli's activities from his first trip to America in 1937 to his far from triumphal return to Rome ten years later.

The book illustrates Cagli's artistic output in this decade. Bedarida clearly discusses its formal variety but it is Cagli's biographical rather than artistic focus which forms the main trajectory. By necessity, the majority of Cagli's output in exile was on paper, and Bedarida is conscious of the unclear distinction between private, preparatory and public works. Despite careful analysis of catalogues and reviews, it is not possible to construct an exhaustive list of works exhibited, or not, in these years.

A number of previously unpublished documents, particularly autobiographical ones, allow Cagli to speak for himself about his career and artistic concerns. Applications for Guggenheim fellowships, bookending Cagli's American years, and his personal letters to friends in Italy and elsewhere, provide Bedarida with a rich vein for analysis, particularly regarding Cagli's sense of identity.

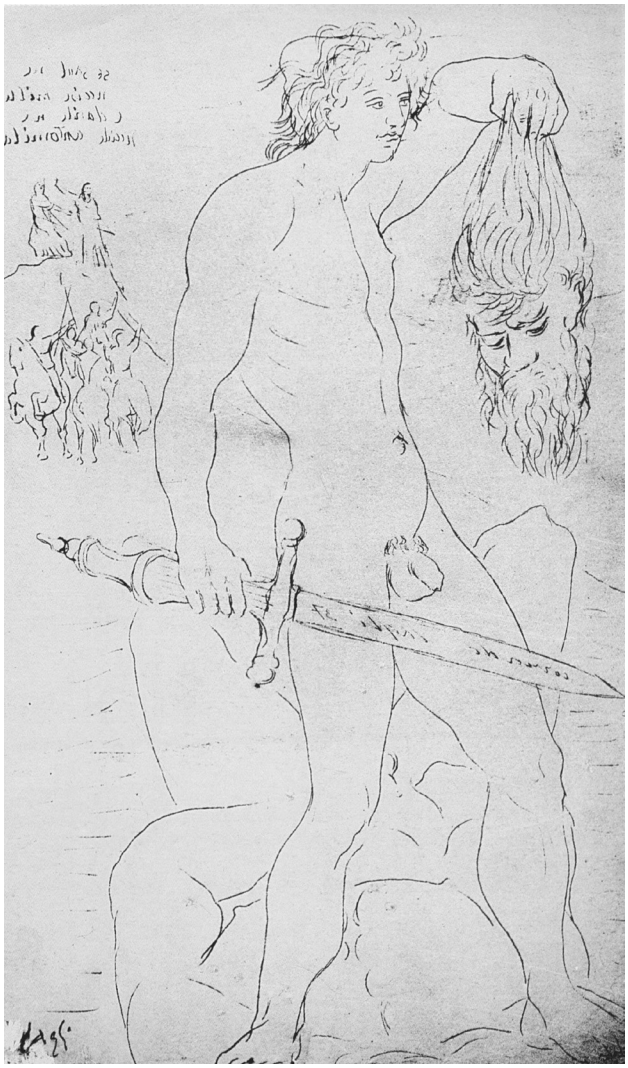
What is striking in Cagli's first application to the Guggenheim is the success of the twenty-nine-year-old's artistic career, in terms of sheer square-footage of wall-paintings and international reputation. Cagli painted murals for the Triennale di Milano in 1936, the Italian Pavilion at the Exposition Internationale in Paris in 1937 and the Venice Biennale in 1938, the last measuring 4 × 250 metres. The young artist also lists esteemed Italian collectors of his work and patrons in London and Riga.

Bedarida emphasizes that this internationalism was crucial during the exile years. Cagli applied to the Guggenheim on the encouragement of his Polish brother-in-law, the mathematician Oscar Zariski, and with references from the American Homer Saint-Gaudens and the already-exiled Lionello Venturi. The same Saint-Gaudens included Cagli alongside Max Ernst and Kees van Dongen in an article about future masters in December 1938. A detailed account of Cagli's work with Charles Olson, in the form of his illustrations for *Y & X*, links the Italian to Black Mountain College where Olson (who later became rector) lectured on Cagli in 1948. Cagli's internationalism is also manifest on a formal level. It was when the artist left Italy that he began to assimilate tendencies from French painters with whom he had long been familiar, specifically Matisse and Picasso.

Over the decade in exile there is – unsurprisingly – a palpable shift in the way Cagli presents himself. The newly exiled Cagli's emphasis is on technique rather than subject or style, specifically a desire to experiment with tempera and encaustic arguably meant to amplify his *italianità* to the American selection panel. By contrast, after the war he would focus on his identity as a soldier wishing to return to Europe to make 'documentary paintings'.

Cagli's initial representation of himself through nationality leads him to downplay other facets. His silence on his political past and sexuality is no surprise. More complex is Cagli's decision to describe his reasons for leaving Italy in 1938 as 'dignity and personal freedom' rather religious and racial persecution. The most successful synthesis of Cagli's complex identity comes in Bedarida's continuing treatment of his depictions of David (*plate* 2), and to a lesser extent, St Sebastian. Yet the author's correction of the neglect of Cagli's homosexuality in the Italophone literature is focused not on his imagery. Instead, Bedarida reads between the lines of Cagli's American networks, acknowledging that his association with the magazine *View*, the Hugo Gallery and the Ballet Society is as much a story of New York's gay subcultures as it is about artistic innovation.

Nonetheless, Cagli retains a relationship with Italy in his art, writings and activities throughout his exile. His internationalism went hand in hand with his



2 Corrado Cagli, *David Triumphant*, 1937. Drawing in oil on paper, 26 × 22 cm. Rome: Archivio Corrado Cagli. Photo: Archivio Corrado Cagli.

advocacy of Italian art overseas. Perhaps most indicative of how he saw his own position in Italian art history is a statement made in a letter to the poet Libero De Libero of November 1940, when Cagli was living in Los Angeles:

> Michelangelo said to Francesco d'Olanda that in a few centuries, painting, that is Italian art, would have left our lands for those beyond the mountains, but only for a short while and it would then return to flower again in its natural place. If Michelangelo would have me as a valet, I would like to close this prophecy – that time is to come. (110)

One could add 'receptions of Michelangelo in the twentieth century' to the myriad intersections that this seemingly niche publication makes with other areas of art history. While naturally sitting within the field of modern Italian art, and appealing to its scholars, the book reads like a who's who of European and North American artistic culture of the 1930s and 1940s, with everyone from Henri Cartier-Bresson to Henry Moore making a cameo. Yet the complex story of Cagli's biography and artistic production makes this a challenging read, however well Bedarida keeps tracks of the numerous threads. Happily, a lively narrative animates Cagli's eccentricity.

The focus on international networks in these three volumes calls to attention the networks of modern Italian scholars who have produced them. Bedarida, like many contributors to *Untying 'the Knot'*, is an Italian living in the US; his doctoral thesis addressed the promotion of Italian art in the United States from 1935 to 1969. Hecker, an American scholar of Italian art based in Italy, is best known for her work on Medardo Rosso.[3] Sullivan is an American scholar, based in the US. Who has recently become Director of the Harry Bertoia Catalogue Raisonné Project – Bertoia being an Italian-born artist working in the United States. Can this new wave of scholarship on modern Italian art overcome 'Made in Italy' and replace *italianità* with internationalism in the public and market realms too?

Notes

This review is dedicated to the memory of Enrico Crispolti (1933–2018) and Marisa Merz (1926–2019).

1 For example, the exhibitions *Alberto Burri: The Trauma of Painting* at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum in New York in 2015, and *New York New York! La riscoperta dell'America. Artisti italiani negli Stati Uniti (1930–1968)* staged in Milan's Museo del Novecento in 2017. See also Adrian R. Duran, *Painting, Politics, and the New Front of Cold War Italy*, New York, 2014; and Jaleh Mansoor's, *Marshall Plan Modernism: Italian Postwar Abstraction and the Beginnings of Autonomia*, Durham, 2016. The issues of the latter have been clearly outlined by Ara H. Merjian, 'Dematerialized Histories', *Art Journal*, 77: 3, 2018, 117–112.

2 Enrico Crispolti, ed., *I percorsi di Cagli*, Rome, 1982; Enrico Crispolti, *Cagli e la 'Scuola di Roma' 1927–1938*, Milan 1985; *Fabio* Benzi, ed., *Corrado Cagli e il suo magistero*, Milan, 2010. Bedarida also notes the thesis by P. E. Colombani, *La Pittura di Cagli 1937–47*, tesi di laurea, Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, Milan 1996–97.

3 Sharon Hecker, *A Moment's Monument: Medardo Rosso and the International Origins of Modern Sculpture*, Oakland, 2017.