

Upcoming events

CONFERENCE – Famous Luxury Fashion Houses: A Remarkable Family History

date/location: **OCTOBER 4 @ Intercultural Center Auditorium, Georgetown University**

CONFERENCE AND EXHIBITION – Archaeology in the Mediterranean Region: A Cultural and Economic Challenge for a Better Future - "The Ancient Giants of Mont'e Prama: From Stone Fragments to a New Image for Sardinia"

date/location: **OCTOBER 12 @ EMBASSY OF ITALY**

SPECIAL EVENTS – XVI Week of Italian Language in the World

date/location: **OCTOBER 18, 19, 20, 21 and 24 @ Various Venues**

OCT 18 – Italian as a Foreign Language – Studies Generated from a Learner

Corpus by Camilla Bardel @ Georgetown University, ICC 227

OCT 19 – Made in Italy e Cultura. Indagine sull'identità italiana contemporanea by Daniele Balicco and "Castiglione's Sprezzatura: A Long Journey" by Gianni Cicali, with the participation of Jhumpa Lahiri @ EMBASSY OF ITALY

OCT 20 – Italian Fashion, Couture Bridal Tradition and the Power of the Veil – Conference and Fashion Exhibition with the participation of Enrica Ponzellini and Max Botticelli, in dialogue with Alison Miller @ EMBASSY OF ITALY

OCT 21 – PAREIDOLIA by Kiko Gianocca @ Hillyer Art Space

OCT 24 – The Bridge Award with Maria Ida Gaeta and Domenico Starnone @ Embassy of Italy

CONFERENCE AND EXHIBITION – Remembering the flood of Florence 50 years later

date/location: **OCTOBER 25 @ EMBASSY OF ITALY**

SPECIAL EVENTS – Stories of Many Stories – Kids Euro Festival

date/location: **OCTOBER 26 @ The Millennium Stage – Kennedy Center**

CONFERENCE – If Venice Dies, a conference by Salvatore Settis

date/location: **OCTOBER 27 @ Library of Congress**

(schedule subject to change)

ITALIAN CULTURAL INSTITUTE

3000 Whitehaven Street NW – Washington, DC 20008

Phone: +1.202.518.0998

Web: www.iicwashington.esteri.it

Newsletter: iicwashington.info/join



In Celebration of the 100th Anniversary of Giorgio Bassani's Birth

THE AMERICAN JOURNEY OF GIORGIO BASSANI



A conference by Valerio Cappozzo
in dialogue with Laura Benedetti

PRESENTED UNDER THE PATRONAGE OF



ITALIAN CULTURAL INSTITUTE/EMBASSY OF ITALY
SEPTEMBER 29, 2016 at 7:00PM

3000 WHITEHAVEN STREET NW - WASHINGTON, DC

The Embassy of Italy and the Italian Cultural Institute in Washington, in collaboration with **Georgetown University** and the **University of Mississippi**, welcome you to the conference by Valerio Cappelletto in dialogue with Laura Benedetti in celebration of the **100th anniversary of Giorgio Bassani's birth**.

Giorgio Bassani travelled several times to the United States, first as President of the association Italia Nostra, when he presented the exhibition "Italia da salvare", then for the publication of the English translations of his novels, and finally as Visiting Professor of Italian at various universities in California, Illinois, and Indiana. ***Lezioni americane di Giorgio Bassani, recently edited by Valerio Cappelletto (Ravenna: Giorgio Pozzi, 2016)***, focuses on this little-known chapter in Bassani's life while celebrating the 100th anniversary of the author's birth.

In a letter that he wrote in 1976 from Indiana, Bassani referred to these trips as some of the best moments of his life, that also inspired some among the most successful poems of the collection *In Gran Segreto* (1978), which can be read as a poetic journal of his American journey. This talk is dedicated to Bassani in America. While dealing about the author's gifts to his students, it will also evoke the role that the United States played as a source of inspiration for the Italian author.

VALERIO CAPPELLETTO

Valerio Cappelletto is Assistant Professor and Director of the Italian Program at the University of Mississippi. His research focuses mainly on the manuscript tradition of dream sciences and their literary application in early Italian poetry. On this topic he has published several scholarly articles and his monograph, titled "Medieval Dream-Dictionary. The Somniale Danielis in Literary Manuscripts", is forthcoming for the Leo S. Olschki publishing house. He has recently curated an exhibition devoted to the collector A. H. Reed in New Zealand: "European Treasure: A. H. Reed's French and Italian Autograph Letters", and authored its catalog which presents several unpublished letters from Garibaldi, Mazzini, Dumas, among many others. He edited the volume "*Lezioni americane di Giorgio Bassani*" (Giorgio Pozzi Editore 2016) and he is now editing a collection of essays on "*Storia e storiografia di Carlo Michelstaedter*" for Romance Monograph at the University of Mississippi.



LAURA BENEDETTI

Laura Benedetti is the Laura and Gaetano De Sole Professor of Contemporary Italian Culture at Georgetown University. Her publications include the volumes *La sconfitta di Diana. Un percorso per la "Gerusalemme liberata"*, *The Tigress in the Snow: Motherhood and Literature in Twentieth-Century Italy*, the edition and English translation of Lucrezia Marinella's *Esortazioni alle donne e agli altri* and, most recently, the novel *Un paese di carta*. She was Guest of Honor at the annual meeting of the American Association of Italian Studies (2016), as well as the recipient of the Flaiano International Prize for Italian Studies, the "Wise Woman" award from the National Organization of Italian American Women and the Gold Medal from the Federazione Associazioni Abruzzesi/U.S.A. She is currently Associate Editor and Book Review Editor of *Italian Culture*, the journal of the American Association of Italian Studies.



GIORGIO BASSANI

Giorgio Bassani, was born in 1916 in Bologna, Italy, and was brought up in a prosperous Jewish family in nearby Ferrara. He studied journalism at the University of Bologna. In 1938 he was studying literature in Bologna when racial laws were passed in Italy that restricted the activities of Jews, including banning them from universities. Bassani, who had to publish his early works under a pseudonym (Giacomo Marchi), became involved in the antifascist movement in the early 1940s and was briefly arrested in 1943. After World War II he settled in Rome, where he continued his writing career, while still maintaining a home in Ferrara. In addition to writing novels, poetry, screenplays, and essays, he also served as editor of the publication *Botteghe Oscure* from 1948 to 1960. He was coeditor of the literary and artistic periodical *Paragone* from 1953 to 1955.



The author's Jewish heritage and the life of the Jewish community in Ferrara, Italy, are among his recurrent themes. The collection *Cinque storie ferraresi* (1956; *Five Stories of Ferrara*, also published as *Prospect of Ferrara*; reissued as *Dentro le mura*, 1973, "*Inside the Walls*"), describes the growth of fascism and anti-Semitism and was awarded the Strega Prize, given each year for the best Italian work. This success led Bassani to find work as an editor for Feltrinelli, one of the major Italian publishing houses. He also began teaching the history of theater at the National Academy of Dramatic Arts in Rome. Bassani was also briefly vice-president of the Italian national broadcasting service, RAI. In 1955, together with other prominent intellectuals, he was a founder of "Italia Nostra", the historic preservation and environmental protection association. Bassani's prestige grew with the appearance of another successful novel, *Gli occhiali d'oro* (1958; *The Gold-Rimmed Eyeglasses*).

The Ferrara setting recurs in Bassani's best-known book, the semiautobiographical *Il giardino dei Finzi-Contini* (1962; *The Garden of the Finzi-Continis*; adapted into a movie directed by Vittorio di Sica in 1971). The narrator of this work contrasts his own middle-class Jewish family with the aristocratic, decadent Finzi-Continis, also Jewish, whose sheltered lives end in annihilation by the Nazis. Bassani's later novels include *L'airone* (1968; *The Heron*), a portrait of a lonely Ferrarese landowner during a hunt, that received the Campiello Prize for the best Italian prose work, and *L'odore del fieno* (1972; *The Smell of Hay*). His collections of poetry include *Rolls Royce* and *Other Poems* (1982), which contains selections in English and Italian from earlier collections. Both works again describe his adopted city of Ferrara, with its inhabitants, streets, and landscapes. Bassani died in 2000 in Rome and was buried in Ferrara.