



CALL FOR PAPERS

CIMA Study Day: Italian Avant-Garde Posters

May 5, 2023 - 10AM to 6:30PM
Center for Italian Modern Art, New York

Keynote speaker: Prof. Luca Cottini, Villanova University

The exhibition *From Depero to Rotella: Italian Commercial Posters between Advertising and Art* is curated by Nicola Lucchi and on view in New York at the Center for Italian Modern Art (CIMA) from February 16 to June 10, 2023.

The exhibition examines the cross-pollination between avant-garde art and commercial posters in Italy, with a particular focus on the interwar years and the post-WWII era during the country's economic boom. The exhibition illustrates how the design of Italian commercial posters moved hand-in-hand with the artistic currents of the time, pushing the boundaries of lithographic technique, photomontage, and typography. The commercial posters' ambition to deliver alluring forms and content to the masses, rather than to an elite circle, also make them an object of socioeconomic and philosophical interest.

The exhibition includes some 30 posters from major Italian institutions and corporate collections, as well as select private collections in the United States. Among the artists featured will be Erberto Carboni, Fortunato Depero, Nikolai Diulgheroff, Lucio Fontana, Max Huber, Bruno Munari, Marcello Nizzoli, Bob Noorda, Giovanni Pintori, Xanti Schawinsky, Mario Sironi, and Albe Steiner. The works of these individuals illustrated the products of companies that were of historic importance to the Italian economy, such as Barilla, Campari, Fiat, Olivetti, and Pirelli.

As a visual and conceptual counterpoint to the path traced by the commercial posters, the exhibition also includes works by Mimmo Rotella. An artist in the traditional sense of the word, Rotella's *décollages* and *retro d'affiches* turn the medium of the commercial poster onto itself, in a gesture of critique and self-reflection.

Taking cue from the stimuli this exhibition offers and from current scholarship in the fields of History, Art History, Design History, Italian Studies, Communication, and Cultural Studies, the 2023 CIMA Research Fellows invite proposals for the CIMA Study Day: Italian Avant-Garde Posters. The all-day conference will take place in person, at the Center for Italian Modern Art, on Friday, May 5, 2023.

The conference wishes to highlight the main themes that emerge from the exhibited works: we seek to gather scholars from diverse fields—including history of art and architecture, social history, economic history, Italian Studies—to investigate the themes at the center of the exhibition within and outside of established critical frameworks.

Some of the topics that proposals may address include (but are not limited to):

- The historical avant-gardes and the poster medium, from Futurism to Surrealism.
- Modernist graphic design and typography in the field of commercial posters.
- Monographic original research on specific artists (for example Carboni, Depero, Grignani, Nizzoli, Pintori, Sironi, Steiner).
- The Italian commercial poster vis-à-vis its European counterparts.
- The commercial poster as a case study in the field of Communication Science, Economic History, Food Studies, Fashion Studies, Gender Studies.
- The role of Italian industrial conglomerates in interwar and post-WWII culture
- Intermedia relationships of posters in the early days of television in Italy.
- The relationship between commercial posters and political propaganda.
- The evolution of Italian poster design after the 1950s.
- The relationship between art, advertising, and patronage under capitalism.
- Mimmo Rotella and his artistic re-appropriation of commercial posters.

Please send an abstract (250–300 words), title, and a short biography (100–150 words) in English to info@italianmodernart.org with the subject line “Italian Posters CFP” by Friday, March 31, 2023. Please send the requested material in a single PDF document. Please do not send multiple attachments.

A checklist of the exhibition can be found at <https://www.italianmodernart.org/exhibition/from-depero-to-rotella-italian-commercial-posters-between-advertising-and-art/>