

TRANSATLANTIC BRIDGES: CORRADO CAGLI, 1938-1948
OPENS OCTOBER 12TH, 2023



September 14, 2023. Today, The Center for Italian Modern Art (CIMA) unveils its new exhibition dedicated to the Jewish Italian artist Corrado Cagli (1910-1976). Titled *Transatlantic Bridges: Corrado Cagli, 1938-1948*, the exhibition will be on view at CIMA (421 Broome St 4th floor, New York, NY 10013) from October 12th, 2023 to January 27th, 2024.

This exhibition, curated by Cooper Union Prof. Raffaele Bedarida, will shed light on Cagli's captivating human and intellectual journey during his transformative years in the United States, from 1938 to 1948. *Transatlantic Bridges* will delve into Cagli's life as he was forced to escape his native country due to the censorship and persecution during the 1930s. A talented painter, Cagli was actively involved in public projects commissioned by the Italian fascist regime. However, after 1937, Cagli's work attracted fierce criticism from reactionary critics within the fascist establishment.



Corrado Cagli, *I Neofiti*, 1934
Tempera on panel. Private collection. Rome, Italy.

As a Jewish and openly gay artist, Cagli became the target of virulent attacks, especially after Italy promulgated its racial laws in 1938. In response to these hostile conditions, Cagli chose to leave his homeland and seek refuge in the United States. In America, he became an influential figure within the New York émigré artistic scene. He found camaraderie among the Neo-romantic milieu centered around the Julian Levy Gallery and the Wadsworth Atheneum. Cagli actively participated in the environment of anti-Breton surrealists of *View* magazine and became a part of a foundational moment in gay culture in New York, collaborating with other artists working for the Ballet Society and Harper's Bazaar, and exhibiting at Alexander Iolas's gallery. Throughout his

ten-year stay in America, Cagli continued to produce and exhibit drawings, a medium that allowed him to interrogate and critique fascist rhetoric.

As World War II raged on, Cagli joined the US Army, receiving training on the West Coast before returning to Europe to participate in historical events, such as D-Day and the liberation of the Buchenwald concentration camp.



Corrado Cagli, *Tobia a Sant-Lô*, 1944
Oil on paper. Courtesy of Valery Decola. Rome, Italy.



Corrado Cagli, *Polifemo*, 1946
Ink on paper. Private collection. Rome, Italy.

At the war's end, he played a crucial role in re-establishing cultural connections between Italy and the United States, collaborating with MoMA, Irene Brin and the Roman Galleria L'Obelisco.

The Center for Italian Modern Art's new exhibition, which includes drawings, paintings, photos and ephemera, will not only explore themes of war, exile, and discrimination but will also highlight Cagli's multifaceted engagement with the New York Surrealist and Neo-romantic milieu. Additionally, it will shed light on his collaboration with George Balanchine and the Ballet Society, showcasing the depth and richness of his artistic legacy.

Curator Raffaele Bedarida, PhD, a prominent art historian specializing in transnational modernism and politics, has extensive expertise in cultural diplomacy, migration, and exchange between Italy and the United States, making him uniquely qualified to unveil Cagli's fascinating narrative. The Center for Italian Modern Art (CIMA) is honored to present "Transatlantic Bridges: Corrado Cagli, 1938-1948" as it showcases an extraordinary artist whose life and work resonate with themes of perseverance, transformation, and artistic expression amidst adversity. The exhibition promises to be a thought-provoking and insightful exploration of an often overlooked chapter in Italian and American art history.

The show will be buttressed by a robust calendar of public events. Part of the public programming is conceived in conjunction with the Centro Primo Levi, which is also contributing to the analysis of Cagli's life and work through the publication of the English translation of Raffaele Bedarida's book on the artist. A series of public talks with contemporary artists, organized in response to the grant awarded to CIMA by the Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, will also relate to the themes of the Cagli exhibition.

All public events at CIMA are made possible through a generous contribution from the Tiro a Segno Foundation. The exhibition will be accompanied by a full-color catalogue conceived in collaboration with the Archivio Cagli in Rome.

ABOUT CIMA:

Founded in 2013, CIMA is a public non-profit exhibition and research center, dedicated to presenting modern and contemporary Italian art to international audiences. Through critically acclaimed exhibitions—many of them bringing work to U.S. audiences for the first time—along with a wide variety of public programs and substantial support for new scholarship awarded through its international fellowship program, CIMA situates Italian modern art in an expansive historic and cultural context, illuminating its continuing relevance to contemporary culture and serving as an incubator of curatorial ideas for larger cultural institutions. CIMA works to add new voices to scholarship on modern Italian art with annual fellowships that open fresh perspectives and new avenues of research. A visit begins with a complimentary espresso, followed by an informal exhibition tour with one of the resident fellows. Visitors are welcome to linger for additional viewing and conversation.

ABOUT RAFFAELE BEDARIDA:

Raffaele Bedarida is an art historian and curator specializing in transnational modernism and politics. An associate professor of art history at Cooper Union, he holds a Ph.D. from the CUNY Graduate Center, New York as well as M.A. and B.A. degrees from the Università degli Studi di Siena, Italy. He was the inaugural fellow of CIMA in 2014. Bedarida's research has focused on cultural diplomacy, migration, and exchange between Italy and the United States. He has also worked on exhibition history, censorship, and propaganda under Fascism and during the Cold War. His most recent books are *Exhibiting Italian Art in the US from Futurism to Arte Povera: Like a Giant Screen* (London: Routledge, 2022) and *Curating Fascism: Exhibitions and Memory from the Fall of Mussolini to Today*, co-edited with Sharon Hecker (London: Bloomsbury, 2022). The English translation of his monograph on Cagli's exile (Rome: Donzelli, 2018) was published by the Centro Primo Levi Editions in concurrence with the CIMA exhibition.

CIMA ON THE WEB:

Website | Facebook | [Instagram](#) | Twitter | Vimeo | LinkedIn

PRESS KIT:

<https://shorefire.com/roster/cima>

FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT:

*Mikaela Duhs / Shore Fire Media / mduhs@shorefire.com
Rebecca Shapiro / Shore Fire Media / rshapiro@shorefire.com*