

The Museum of Modern Art

For Immediate Release
January 1988

CINECITTA: FIFTY YEARS

February 5 - March 8, 1988

More than twenty Italian films by such directors as Michelangelo Antonioni, Alessandro Blasetti, Federico Fellini, Roberto Rossellini, and Luchino Visconti are being presented in the golden anniversary exhibition CINECITTA: FIFTY YEARS. Opening at The Museum of Modern Art on Friday, February 5, and continuing through March 8, 1988, the series traces the history of Cinecittá, the film studio outside Rome that has been the focal point of the Italian film industry for half a century.

On Friday, February 5, at 6:00 p.m., Mr. Blasetti's 1941 masterpiece La Corona di ferro, starring Gino Cervi and Massimo Girotti, is being screened. Goffredo Alessandrini's Luciano Serra pilota (1938), with Amedeo Nazzari, is being presented at 2:30 p.m.

Cinecittá has been the one constant in the turbulent history of Italian filmmaking over the past fifty years. The diverse projects that the studio has undertaken include mass audience films, such as Vittorio Cottafavi's Hercules story, Ercole alla conquista di Atlantide (1961), with Reg Park; and more rigorous works, such as Mr. Antonioni's Le Amiche (1955), with Eleanora Rossi-Drago and Valentina Cortese, and Mr. Visconti's Le Notti bianche/White Nights (1957), starring Marcello Mastroianni, Maria Schell, and Jean Marais. In all genres, films made at the studio have always been recognized for the quality of their craftsmanship, created by talented set and costume designers and technicians.

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The studio was officially inaugurated in 1937 by Benito Mussolini, who attempted to create a national cinema rivaling that of the United States. Highlights in this exhibition from the Fascist period include Mr. Rossellini's rarely seen L'uomo dalla croce (1943), starring Alberto Tavazzi and Rosita Schmidt, and Mr. Blasetti's Quattro passi fra le nuvole/Four Steps in the Clouds (1943), with Gino Cervi and Adriana Benetti.

By the end of World War II, Cinecittá had been abandoned and it turned into a refugee camp. The studio's renaissance coincided with the Italian film industry's revival in the fifties. Films in the series representing this period include Mauro Bolognini's Gli innamorati (1956), starring Franco Interlenghi, Antonella Lualdi, and Nino Manfredi; and Francesco Rosi's La sfida (1958), with José Suarez and Rosanna Schiaffino.

Also during this period, American directors, actors, and producers made extensive use of the studio, which became known as "Hollywood on the Tiber." Directors who have made films at Cinecittá in recent years include Mr. Fellini, Bernardo Bertolucci, Jean-Jacques Annaud, and Ettore Scola. Among the recent works presented in this exhibition are Sergio Leone's Once Upon a Time in America (1984) and films by two of the most important new directors in Italy, Giuseppe Bertolucci's Segreti, Segreti (1985) and Nanni Moretti's La messa e finita (1985).

CINECITTA: FIFTY YEARS has been organized by Adrienne Mancina, curator, and Stephen Harvey, assistant curator, Department of Film. The program has been made possible by the cooperation and support of Italy's Ministero di Spettacolo e Turismo and the Ente Autonomo di Gestione per il Cinema.

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