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Art and Film in Italy: 1946–1963

Anthony Gardner, Mark Nicholls and Anthony White

In the twenty years following Italy's liberation from Fascism in 1943, the city of Rome housed an artistic colony that, in its celebrated personnel and creative output, rivalled Second Empire Paris and 1920s Berlin. The Italian capital in this period attracted well-known literary figures such as Tennessee Williams and Aldous Huxley, artists including Henry Moore, Robert Rauschenberg and Cy Twombly, and prominent film-makers as diverse as David Lean, Orson Welles, Ingrid Bergman, William Wyler and Jean-Luc Godard. As a result, Rome, along with Milan and Venice, which had similarly vibrant, international artistic communities at this time, became a cosmopolitan centre of creative activity that was to have a lasting effect on contemporary international art and entertainment cultures. Considering the number and range of foreign and local artists, from the most commercial to the most avant-garde, who were resident and active in Italy during the period, three key questions present themselves: what attracted these artists to Italy, what were they doing there, and what was the nature of their impact? Furthermore, given the strength of Communist and pro-Soviet left support in the Italian electorate and the strategic importance of Italy at a geopolitical level in a period dominated by the events surrounding the Cold War, to what extent were the art and activities that took place in cities like Rome, Venice and Milan related to the political, economic and social struggles of the era?[1] And what can an investigation of the Italian artistic scene from the 1940s to the 1960s tell us about wider notions of the writing of cultural history and the place of that Cold War cultural historiography in our understanding of the contemporary phenomenon of globalisation?

This article seeks answers to these questions by considering the production, distribution and reception of art and film in Italy during the height of the Cold War. Three key hypotheses direct this analysis. First,

1. The best English-language overview of the period and these events is to be found in Paul Ginsborg, *A History of Contemporary Italy: Society and Politics, 1943–1980*, Penguin, London, 1990. Particular accounts of US attitudes to the political and ideological threat posed by Communism can be found in Mario Del Pero, 'The United States and Psychological Warfare in Italy: 1948–1955', *Journal of American History*, vol 87, no 4, March 2001, pp 1304–1334; and Mark Nicholls, 'Freud and Gidget Go to Rome but Uncle Sam Doesn't: The Roman Fever Films 1953–1963', *Studi d'italianistica nell'Africa australe*, vol 18, no 2, 2005, pp 1–33.

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that art and cinema producers in Cold War Italy forged new networks that moved beyond national boundaries to rely on international dialogues and collaborations at a time when other countries, including France, were looking inward and seeking to consolidate their pre-existing national traditions of art and culture. Second, that a proper account of these interrelations can generate fresh understandings of Cold War histories and, equally importantly, of the development of globalisation in the mid-twentieth century. Such collaborations and conversations, which stand at the centre of more nuanced accounts of the Cold War, its cultural formations and their inventive diversity, can provide us with new histories and new ideas of global cultural production today. The third hypothesis is that the production of visual culture during this period offers researchers distinctive opportunities to critically examine Cold War politics, especially in a country frequently, but inaccurately, considered peripheral to the Cold War superpowers, the US and the USSR. Viewing the Cold War from the margin provides the opportunity to develop a new, different history, more nuanced than is possible with an approach focused on the bilateral conflicts of East versus West, so often recounted in existing studies of this period.

POSITIONING COLD WAR CULTURES

Since its emergence in the early 1970s, through to the present, cultural analysis of the Cold War has proven to be a significant and highly charged focus for scholarship in the humanities. However, many of these scholarly accounts have reduced their focus to state and corporate investments in the dissemination of cultural forms, especially those from the US, to international markets.[2] Exported Hollywood films and internationally touring exhibitions of American art, for example, are usually conceived in these histories as propagandistic exercises – as forms of 'soft power' that promoted American culture abroad and operated in parallel ways to the 'hard power' of military might.[3] When the Cold War-era production, rather than dissemination, of specific films, artworks or exhibitions has received scholarly attention, it has also been largely delimited to production within the US and the USSR.[4] Cultural formations and developments beyond these two nations, especially as engaged with Cold War politics, are consequently marked by a distinct lack of historical nuance. Even when scholars aim at 'rethinking Cold War culture', as Peter Kuznick and James Gilbert did in their book by that title, they invariably restrict themselves to these normative modes of address.[5]

Two significant gaps therefore stand out within extant accounts of Cold War cultural production. On the one hand, cultural activity within countries such as Italy rarely receives scholarly attention. On the other hand, when it does, cultural producers within such countries are either reduced to passive propagators of Cold War propaganda or ignored altogether. The agency of cultural production to critique soft power, and its potential to reframe that power in the interests of countries beyond the US/USSR dynamic, has inspired the few accounts that exist of Cold War cultures in countries like Italy.[6] It also subtends our investigation, which aims to write the active agency of Italy-based artists and

2. See Michael L Krenn, *Fall-out Shelters for the Human Spirit: American Art and the Cold War*, University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill, 2005; Frances Stonor Saunders, *Who Paid the Piper? The CIA and the Cultural Cold War*, Granta, London, 1999; and Eva Cockroft, 'Abstract Expressionism: Weapon of the Cold War', *Artforum*, vol 12, no 10, June 1974, pp 39–41.

3. Joseph S Nye, *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics*, Public Affairs, New York, 2004; David Ellwood and Rob Kroes, eds, *Hollywood in Europe: Experiences of a Cultural Hegemony*, VU University Press, Amsterdam, 1994

4. Daniel J Leab, 'How Red was My Valley: Hollywood, the Cold War Film, and *I Married a Communist*', *Journal of Contemporary History*, vol 19, no 1, January 1984, pp 59–88; Walter L Hixson, *Parting the Curtain: Propaganda, Culture, and the Cold War, 1945–1961*, St Martin's Press, New York, 1997; David Caute, *The Dancer Defects: The Struggle for Cultural Supremacy During the Cold War*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2003; Douglas Field, ed, *American Cold War Culture*, Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh, 2005

5. Peter J Kuznick and James Gilbert, eds, *Rethinking Cold War Culture*, Smithsonian Institution Press, Washington DC, 2001

6. Christopher Duggan and Christopher Wagstaff, eds, *Italy in the Cold War: Politics, Culture and Society, 1948–1958*, Berg, Oxford, 1995

film-makers, and their intercultural exchanges, back into histories of the Cold War, and to document the unique cultural response to the massive weight of the economic, military and cultural superpowers in a country like Italy, where openness, fluidity and porosity at an ideological, cultural and political level was the norm.

Analysis of Italian culture in this period reveals the significance of the international networks and collaborations that emerged between cultural producers. As Stephen Gundle has argued regarding the relationship of Italian film-makers to their American counterparts, for example, Italians were far more than passive consumers of American products.[7] Instead, they actively collaborated with their international colleagues to create inventive and diverse modes of cross-cultural transfer that were conceptual, material and professional. In this context Hollywood film productions such as *Roman Holiday* (1953) and *Cleopatra* (1963) are best understood as strategic co-productions with Italian governments, film studios and film professionals.[8] Italian film productions such as *Stromboli* (1950) and *The Leopard* (1963) are similarly understood as co-productions and artistic collaborations.[9] The highly politicised aesthetic dialogue that developed between Italian artists such as Alberto Burri or Piero Manzoni and their American counterparts in response to a series of exhibitions of American art in Italy during the 1950s is another case in point. This dialogue provided an important US reception of this new Italian art practice, and also provided the basis of the two-way shift emerging between American and Italian art because of these political-aesthetic exchanges.[10]

In what follows, two case studies are examined, one dealing with the domain of painting, the other with film-making, showing how the art produced in Italy during this period was related to the uniquely dynamic, intercultural environment in Rome, Milan and Venice. Although cultural producers in these centres were engaged in interactions between cultures from all over the world, due to limitations of space the focus of this article is primarily on exchanges between Italian and American artists, film-makers and cultures. Given the nature of the different disciplines concerned, including not just the inherent nature of each art form but also their conditions of production and reception, the separate media are treated differently. In the first section, covering painting in Italy in the 1950s and 1960s, the focus is on three Italian artists, Alberto Burri, Lucio Fontana and Piero Manzoni, and their artistic dialogue with American artists and culture of the period. Although there are many documented examples of artists working in groups or alongside artists from either country in Italy during this period, the focus in this article is on artists working singly in their own studios in response to individual works or bodies of work by other artists rather than on actual working collaborations between artists. The Italian and American artists absorb, react to or oppose themselves to prominent works by each other, producing a conversation that can be followed much as dialogue can be followed in a theatre or film script, and in that sense considered part of a single work of exchange. The second section, dealing with film-making throughout Italy in the same period, focuses on the works produced through collaboration between American and Italian film-makers (film itself being an inherently collaborative medium) but also on the production circumstances and public reception of those film-makers' collaborative work.

7. Stephen Gundle, 'Hollywood Glamour and Mass Consumption in Postwar Italy', *Journal of Cold War Studies*, vol 4, no 3, Summer 2002, pp 95–118

8. Nicholls, op cit, pp 1–33

9. Stephen Gundle, 'Saint Ingrid at the Stake: Stardom and Scandal in the Bergman–Rossellini Collaboration', in David Forgacs, Sarah Lutton and Geoffrey Nowell-Smith, eds, *Roberto Rossellini: Magician of the Real*, BFI, London, 2000; Mark Nicholls, 'Visconti's *Il gattopardo*: Melancholia and the Radical Sensibility', *Quarterly Review of Film and Video*, vol 23, no 2, 2006, pp 97–110

10. Anthony White, 'Lucio Fontana: Between Utopia and Kitsch', *Grey Room 5*, 2001, pp 54–77; Anthony White, 'Industrial Painting's Utopias: Lucio Fontana's Expectations', *October* 124, spring 2008, pp 98–124

The conditions attracting Orson Welles to Italy or the reception of Roberto Rossellini and Ingrid Bergman's artistic and personal partnership, as well as the content of the films themselves, speak to the special conditions of the Italian context within which American, Italian and other cultural producers from Europe worked together. Italy provided a fertile ground for an oppositional model of living and working that was emblematic of a postwar ethic of freedom and oppositionality not easily obtained by American artists working in their homeland under the cloud of hysterical anti-Communism and cultural conservatism generally.

UNMADE IN ITALY: BURRI, FONTANA AND MANZONI

Postwar Italian art was affected by the geopolitical context of the Cold War in two significant ways. First, after a period of cultural autarky in which Fascist Italy was increasingly isolated politically, economically and culturally from a great part of the Western world, there was an explosion of interest by Italians in the United States, a country which had recently been a military enemy and was also seen, at least in official discourse, as culturally opposed to Italy. Second, due to Marshall Plan aid and other efforts by Americans to harness Italy for a new democratic and capitalist Europe, resources, organisations and people flooded into the country from the USA with enormous impact, creating vibrant, international art colonies in cities such as Rome, Venice and Milan. Numerous exchanges took place between American and Italian collectors, artists, dealers and state galleries involving a massive increase in the reciprocal relations between individuals and organisations concerned with artistic production within the two countries.[11] Important players in the international exchange between these two nations included institutions such as the Rome-New York Foundation and the American Academy in Rome, the Venice Biennale and the Milan Triennale; galleries such as L'Obelisco in Rome and Il Naviglio in Milan; and individuals like the Italian scholar Lionello Venturi, the American collector Peggy Guggenheim and the Italian journalist Irene Brin, along with American artists Robert Rauschenberg, Jasper Johns, Cy Twombly and Phillip Guston and Italian artists who travelled to the USA and brought back information and contacts.[12] In their separate ways each of these organisations and individuals promoted and fostered a dynamic climate of intercultural experimentation.

This is the context in which to view the most significant developments in the immediate postwar period of Italian art, which saw the rise of three artists, Alberto Burri, Lucio Fontana and Piero Manzoni, all of whom shared an interest in cutting, suturing or otherwise manipulating the canvas. The three artists were part of a vibrant cultural engagement taking place between artists from the USA and Italy; they engaged in a dialogue with the work of prominent American artists present in the Italian context and directly addressed the impact of American society and culture in their work. In so doing Burri, Fontana and Manzoni did not passively adopt American styles, yet neither did they simply launch a negative critique of American influence.

11. Germano Celant and Anna Costantini, *Roma–New York: 1948–1964*, Charta, Milan, 1993

12. Anna Costantini, 'Before the End of the Journey: Testimony Across the Atlantic', in Germano Celant, ed, *The Italian Metamorphosis, 1943–1968*, Guggenheim Museum, New York, 1994, pp 32–40; Claudia Salaris, *La Roma delle avanguardie: Dal futurismo all'underground*, Riuniti, Rome 1999, pp 191–193

Alberto Burri (1915–1995), who had been a prisoner of war interned in Texas from 1943 to 1946, worked with the refuse of modern civilisation. The degraded materials and blasted surfaces of his canvases of the late 1940s through to the 1950s, some of which, like *SZ1* (1949), were painted on the burlap sacks used to transport Marshall Plan food aid to Italy, spoke to the contemporary perception that the horrors of war had degraded European culture and its artistic languages. While engaged in his Rome studio producing this series of works, Burri was visited and supported by several prominent American art dealers and curators, including James Sweeney, director of the Guggenheim Museum, and was subsequently offered numerous exhibitions in galleries in the USA, thereby becoming one of Italy's chief artistic exports during this period. Moreover, the American artist Robert Rauschenberg, who visited Burri's studio in 1953, was heavily influenced by the Italian artist's collage-like practice in the creation of his later 'combine' pictures involving assembled detritus and mass-produced imagery.[13] However, the differences between the two artists are as telling as the similarities: where Rauschenberg in his subsequent work was concerned with the complexity and multiplicity of a dawning information age, Burri's work was engaged with the present's relationship to the past.[14] By adhering to the compositional structures of pre-war European abstraction, Burri suggested that a sense of historical continuity might be salvaged from the catastrophe.[15] When Burri turned to burnt vinyl in the 1960s *Plastica* series, however, the artist abandoned the historical conventions of composition. With their drooping swaths of scorched and molten plastic, he presents the material of modern industry as a repugnant, shiny mass. In these works, which the American art critic Dore Ashton described in 1964 as possessing an 'utterly unpleasant cellulose surface', Burri suggested that the postwar industrial and economic boom linked to Italy's relationship to the United States – where, from 1963, Burri spent winters with his wife and family, in Los Angeles – had produced a traumatic and unsalvageable break with cultural tradition.[16]

Lucio Fontana (1899–1968), whose work owed much to the postwar current of American Abstract Expressionist painting, engaged in an open dialogue with the work of Jackson Pollock, who was rising to prominence internationally in that period and whose work was visible in the Peggy Guggenheim collection first exhibited in 1948 in Venice. Although the two artists never met, Fontana's interest in the work of Pollock is clearly evident in a series of swirling, looping drawings he executed in the late 1940s. The reception of Pollock in America and Europe in this period tended to emphasise the individualist nature of his enterprise, a fact that lends weight to the hypothesis that such painting was a 'weapon of the Cold War' against the prescriptive didacticism of Socialist Realism.[17] Fontana, however, re-engineered Pollock's work by reproducing his trademark swirling skeins of paint in a 1951 neon light installation at the Milan Triennale, converting the autographic gesture of the singular artist into a form of modern lighting technology. In so doing Fontana directly realised Pollock's contemporary ambition to see art more closely connected to architecture, and reinterpreted the American action painter's work as an industrial decorative object, thereby emphasising a collective reception and repudiating any autographic reading of

13. Jaleh Mansoor, 'Alberto Burri: Mitchell-Innes & Nash', *Artforum International*, vol 46, no 7, March 2008, p 361; Celant and Constantini, *Roma New York*, op cit; Walter Hopps, *Robert Rauschenberg: The Early 1950s*, Houston Fine Art Press, Houston, 1991

14. Celant and Costantini, *Roma New York*, op cit, 1993; Branden Joseph, *Random Order: Robert Rauschenberg and the Neo-Avant-Garde*, MIT, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 2003

15. Jaimey Hamilton, 'Making Art Matter: Alberto Burri's Sacchi', *October* 124, spring 2008, pp 31–52

16. Dore Ashton, 'Acceleration in Discovery and Consumption', *The Studio* 167, May 1964, pp 213–214

17. Eva Cockroft, 'Abstract Expressionism: Weapon of the Cold War', *Artforum*, vol 12, no 10, June 1974, pp 39–41

the artwork.[18] The relationship with Pollock continued into the later 1950s when, inspired by a posthumous exhibition of the American artist's *Cut Out* painting in Rome in 1958, and the vandalistic, graffiti aesthetic of Pollock's compatriot Cy Twombly who began exhibiting in Rome and Milan from 1958, Fontana started cutting his paintings open with a knife. As the artist explained, in the violent gesture of such works, Fontana attempted to achieve what Pollock had tried and failed to do: go beyond the canvas.[19]

Piero Manzoni (1933–1963), who was profoundly inspired by both Burri and Fontana, produced a series of paintings of white canvas squares assembled in workman-like, regular grids. In this minimal approach to painting, Manzoni opened an artistic conversation with, on one hand, the work of Rauschenberg, who just prior to his visit to Italy in 1952–1953 had completed his series of blank, uninflected *White Paintings*, and on the other hand, with the aesthetic of silence proposed by the American composer John Cage (who was in Italy during 1958, and appeared there on a popular television programme). Manzoni's regularised, serial approach also responded to the work of Jasper Johns, the American artist who visited Italy in 1958 to attend the exhibition of his paintings at the Venice Biennale and whose work Manzoni saw in Venice and Milan in the late 1950s and reproduced in his magazine *Azimuth* along with that of Rauschenberg.[20] However, by using vapid industrial materials such as polystyrene, plush and glass fibre, in contrast to the more humble folk materials of newspaper, encaustic and oil painting favoured by Johns, the young Italian artist showed that the cultural authenticity associated with modernism had now been completely evacuated, a condition linked to the developing industries of synthetic material manufacture strongly associated with the closer economic and industrial relationship to the USA. Manzoni's *Line* series, composed of long ink lines dragged by mechanical means along varying lengths of paper scroll, were sealed in cardboard tubes with a set of figures affixed denoting size and date of execution. Continuing a technique used by Rauschenberg in his tyre-print pictures of the early 1950s, Manzoni nevertheless demonstrated that in reducing the artistic gesture to data, what counted was the object's institutional placement and the information provided with it.[21] In other words, Manzoni returned Rauschenberg's work to an engagement with issues first raised by Marcel Duchamp, and thereby renewed an attack on that form of idealism which seeks meaning exclusively in the object isolated from its physical and institutional surroundings, laying the groundwork for the later American conceptual art movement.

'HERE'S TO LOVE ON MY TERMS': WELLES, BERGMAN AND ROSSELLINI

The effective beginnings of the American film colony in Rome, and the broader mix of major studio offices, production units, personalities and publicity that was to become known in popular culture as 'Hollywood on the Tiber', had very little to do with Hollywood or, more accurately, as little as possible. If Orson Welles and Ingrid Bergman had any clear ambitions when they arrived in Rome, in October 1947 and March

18. White, 'Lucio Fontana', op cit

19. White, 'Industrial Painting's Utopias', op cit

20. Anna Costantini, 'Piero Manzoni in Context', in Germano Celant, ed, *Piero Manzoni*, Serpentine Gallery, London, 1998, pp 263, 269; Jaleh Mansoor, 'Piero Manzoni: "We Want to Organicize Disintegration"', *October* 95, winter 2001, p 36; Jan Winkelmann, 'Cronologia degli anni 1957–1963', in *Zero Italien: Azimut/ Azimuth 1959/1960 in Mailand und Heute*, Canzt Verlag, Ostfildern, 1996, p 196

21. Thomas Crow, 'This Is Now: Becoming Robert Rauschenberg', *Artforum*, vol 36, no 1, September 1997, pp 94–96, 98, 100, 139, 142, 144, 152

1949 respectively, these were far from those of the Hollywood studio system they had left behind.

Welles is often considered to have been there for the money (a motivation not unknown in Hollywood), to escape the clutches of the Internal Revenue Service and as an artistic exile from the oppressive Hollywood scene.[22] Biographer Frank Brady has questioned the simplicity of this reasoning, however, and Welles himself provides as good a reason as any for his various excursions throughout Europe after the late 1940s when, in a 1974 interview with Michael Parkinson, he simply said 'I go where the work is'. [23] As *Citizen Kane* (1940) makes clear, home was always a difficult concept for Welles and, as David Thomson points out, Welles's travel habits make him a notoriously difficult character to pin down and place in one location at a time. As a lifelong traveller and self-styled 'adventurer', we can assume Welles needed no unusually personal reason to be in any particular place at any particular time beyond the requirements of the job at hand. What is clear is that for Welles between 1947 and 1952, and regardless of location – whether that was Rome, Venice, Paris, London, Vienna or Morocco – the essential job at hand was his own personal work on Shakespeare. Whatever monies he was making as an actor for hire in *Black Magic* (1949), *Prince of Foxes* (1949) in Italy, *The Third Man* (1949), *The Black Rose* (1950) and beyond, a great deal of his time in Italy in these years was taken up with editing *Macbeth* (1948) and the four-year, stop-start production work for *Othello* (1952).[24] Into the 1950s and early 1960s, following the success of *Othello*, Welles was travelling around Europe working on radio broadcasts for the BBC, namely the *Third Man* spin-off called *The Adventures of Harry Lime*, a Marshall Plan parody novel published in France as *Une Grosse Légume*, more acting roles in Italy such as the Luigi Pirandello-based film *L'uomo, la bestia e la virtù* (1953) and Pier Paolo Pasolini's *La ricotta* (1963), as well as a television series for RAI, *In The Land of Don Quixote* (1964).

A 1948 photograph taken at the Caffé Greco in Rome includes Welles in a group of writers and artists such as Carlo Levi, Mario Mafai and the actress Lea Padovani, who was Welles's original choice to play Desdemona.[25] Certainly not central to the group, the celebrated director of *Citizen Kane* is, nevertheless, discovered here as a part of the sort of artist gathering that stimulates interest and prompts questions about how such artists came together and what effect this society had on their work. The photo points to the collaborative nature of Welles's Roman work without being overly indicative of its substantial nature. Certainly all of the work mentioned above brought him into close contact with Italian actors, directors, technical professionals, producers and financiers, not to mention an Italian wife, Paola Mori, but the industry surrounding Welles was not only Italian but as broadly international as it was geographically diverse. Working with such film professionals as French composer Jacques Ibert, Russian financier/producer Michel Olian and Irish actor Micheál Mac Liammóir, Italy became a base in Welles's work for an Italo-American and pan-European cottage industry that extended its operations outwards, just as it drew creative personnel into Rome at its centre.

Welles's New Deal activism and his general political liberalism are well known and his writing, commentary and celebrated discussion on

22. Simon Callow, *Orson Welles Volume 2: Hello Americans*, Viking, New York, 2006, p 418; David Thomson, *Rosebud: The Story of Orson Welles*, Little, Brown, London, 1996, p 290

23. *Parkinson*, BBC TV, 1974

24. Frank Brady, *Citizen Welles: A Biography of Orson Welles*, Scribner, New York, 1989, p 428

25. Claudia Salaris, *La Roma delle avanguardie: Dal futurismo all'underground*, Riuniti, Rome, 1999, p 169

European politics with central figures such as Pope Pius XII and Winston Churchill are not at all atypical in his career. His work in this period, however, with the exception of his walk-on as the amoral Harry Lime in *The Third Man*, is hardly politically engaged. So dominated by Shakespeare and costume dramas had his work become that nothing from the Italian campaign approaches the controversial heights of the voodoo *Macbeth* or his clash with the newspaper tycoon William Randolph Hearst in the 1930s. What is political about his work in this period is not its content but the manner of its production and its resultant form. Editing *Macbeth* in his hotel room in Rome, or shooting scenes from *Othello* wherever he was and whenever he had the money, looks chaotic by Hollywood standards; pulling both films from important screenings at the Venice Film Festival could be thought manifestly unprofessional. But this type of production chaos and apparent lack of professionalism – clearly evident in the final films – expresses the very kind of operational freedom that Welles thrived on and that produced creativity and innovation. Following the experience of *Citizen Kane*, this was the kind of freedom denied Welles in Hollywood, and its flagrant expression in Italy in the early 1950s, by Welles and his colleagues, including Bergman, who followed him, played a significant part in challenging the restrictions of the vertically integrated studio system at home. Furthermore, in the early years of the Cold War, this concept of freedom for the American artist stands as an interesting and highly public example of that very American ideal that centred both the Marshall Plan and the more hawkish foreign policy initiatives that the US employed in its fight for European stability against Communism.

The Bergman/Rossellini collaboration may have been romantic in appearance but it was, more accurately, a self-conscious attempt by Rossellini to reach a world audience and by Bergman to 'assist in making art'.[26] The creative partnership and marriage produced five feature films, *Stromboli* (1950), *Europa 51* (1952), *Voyage to Italy* (1954), *Fear* (1954) and *Joan of Arc* (1954), three children and a moral and political scandal that had an enormous effect on both the popular press/'paparazzi' culture of Cold War Italy and, indeed, Italian Neo-Realist film-making.

The public scandal that erupted when Bergman abandoned her husband and daughter in Hollywood for an affair with Rossellini was, Stephen Gundle argues, essentially an American-style scandal. It may appear that such a scandal was easily manufactured by the domestic paparazzi (trash journalism, gossip columns, indiscreet photographers) associated with *Roman Holiday* and critiqued in *La dolce vita* (1960), but Gundle is insightful in arguing that such a domestic culture took its cue from the American example and effectively began with the arrival of Ingrid Bergman herself.[27] The role of this kind of media blitz, which reached its notorious apotheosis with *Cleopatra*, plays a significant and complex role in the makeup of the Cold War cultural scene in Italy and in its historiography. Responding to the arrival of international personalities and ensuring a level of press exposure that warrants their coming, Italian domestic popular journalism is both participant and historian of the Italian scene.

The more directly political aspect of the Rossellini/Bergman affair was that the Italian left considered that, in apparently pandering

26. Gundle, 'Saint Ingrid at the Stake', op cit, p 76

27. Ibid

to Hollywood notions of stardom and performance, Rossellini had sold-out Neo-Realism.[28] After his work and affair with Anna Magnani, the left-endorsed personification of Italy, his relationship with Ingrid Bergman came to stand as the sign of the foreigner and of alienation in Rossellini's films. This, in turn, was read as a politically treacherous abandonment of realist principles and the cinematic aesthetic of the Italian left.[29] For all the American moral outrage directed against the couple, there was a degree of opinion in Italy, beyond the institutional left, that saw Rossellini's 'seduction' of the great Hollywood star as a sexual victory in compensation for the harems of Italian women who had fallen prey to 'liberating' US forces.[30]

Perhaps the most enduring source of criticism that resulted from the collaboration was the reception of the films themselves. Notwithstanding the critical recuperation the films received, particularly by the French critics of the *Cahiers du Cinéma* group, the psychological realism that was Rossellini's project with his Bergman films failed to impress. Peter Bondanella emphasises the fact that, in his two well-known letters responding to Bergman's initial offer to work with him, Rossellini had to be emphatic about the way in which his methods differed from Hollywood. Nectar and ambrosia to her artistic ambitions at first, Bergman's experience of actually working with the director on the isolated Aeolian island of Stromboli later clearly shocked her. The results in *Stromboli*, furthermore, dismayed both fans of Bergman's earlier films and the audience committed to an aesthetic of Italian realism. A further effect of their collaboration, therefore, was that not only had Rossellini managed to offend both the anti-clerical left and the church, but also box office taste.[31]

Certainly the freedom Welles sought in his escape from Hollywood was also an attractive prospect for Bergman and – like Tennessee Williams, who was also in Rome in the late 1940s, writing of and revelling in the Arcadian freedoms the city had to offer – both Welles and Bergman found expressions of this freedom in Italy in very personal terms.[32] Whatever the substance behind rumours of Welles's sexual exploits and Bergman's outrages, both were married to Italians in this period. The expression of artistic freedom, however, had a more enduring effect on their work. Hollywood would move in on the back of their example, limit the extent of this kind of freedom and exchange it for the acquisition of the art and glamour that came with shooting films in Italy. Aesthetically this would simply lead to the production of Hollywood films slightly distanced from the restraints of Hollywood itself and in a country that provided not only attractive locations but also generous tax and financial incentives. Working in advance of Hollywood on the Tiber, however, and under production conditions impoverished compared with their previous experience, Welles and Bergman were essentially making European films by methods abhorrent to the Hollywood system. Collaborating within a wider network of film professionals and striving for funding, these two artists, having been nurtured in that system, were fundamentally altering perceptions of their own filmmaking practice. Furthermore, their individual collaborations set up a model of artistic cosmopolitanism in Italy during the Cold War that challenged more established, official understandings of cultural and political exchange in the period.

28. Ibid, p 73

29. Marcia Landy, *Stardom Italian Style: Screen Performance and Personality in Italian Cinema*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington, 2008 pp 199–205

30. Peter Brunette, *Roberto Rossellini*, University of California Press, Berkeley, 1996, p 111

31. Peter Bondanella, *The Films of Roberto Rossellini*, Cambridge University Press, New York, 1993, pp 17–23

32. Tennessee Williams, *Memoirs*, Anchor Press/ Doubleday, New York, 1983, p 144

COLD WAR COSMOPOLITANISM

Such interwoven engagements between local cultural industries and foreign investments are rarely included within accounts of art and film-making during the Cold War. However, as our Italian case study demonstrates, such interweavings suggest how, and to what degree, cultural producers throughout Europe worked with colleagues and their ideas to produce new professional networks, dialogues and forms of cultural exchange. Through analysis of such networks we can identify how artists and film-makers from distinct contexts across the globe actively replaced received Cold War ideologies with more nuanced relations of international dialogue. This, we propose, reveals how 'peripheral' cultures and countries such as Italy were also increasingly globalised at the time. It identifies the degrees to which the production and global dissemination of cultural products – often through geopolitical superpowers like the US – allowed for regional cultural producers to encounter geographically distant colleagues and their work. In short, analysis of these collaborations demonstrates how actual professional cultural exchanges developed along the geopolitical peripheries of the Cold War.

The overarching goal of this work, of which this article is an opening foray, is a theoretical and empirical account of such emergent global networks. A fuller account of local cultural production can reshape our understanding of the relationship between powerful industries of globalisation – technological, military, economic and social – and specific local contexts. As postcolonial scholars such as Arjun Appadurai alert us, individuals and groups are not passive recipients of new technologies, economic policies or political designs, but actively re-create them – often together with internationally based partners – for new forms of 'self-imagining' and trans-cultural trade.[33] This research expands on such insights by returning to the Cold War, a period that, as political scientists have recently and convincingly shown, provides the political, economic and technological foundations for globalisation today.[34] By focusing on Cold War cultures and their local, regional and global developments, globalisation can be understood not simply as a process of exploitation, or of unilateral intervention by dominant polities or organisations within local cultures. Much less does it represent the wilful ignorance of specific localities and peoples in the interests of international hegemony.[35] Rather, a more productive understanding of globalisation, and its precursors in Cold War cultures, can enable more subtle gradations of exchange, cooperation, influence and intercultural production between local and other contexts. It can secure alliances and cultural transfers that mutually inform and transform domestic and international relations, leading to local re-evaluations of what globalisation means.

So far this work has exposed how ideas of regional and global exchange underpinned Cold War cultural developments and critique, and how cultural producers actively sought to have their work displayed, discussed and gain influence internationally. Such cultural critiques of global hegemony continually receive condemnation for being 'anti-American'.[36] The Italian contexts outlined here proposes a more intricate argument, however: Italian cultural producers did not reject American cultural, political and economic influence *tout court*; instead, they sought to develop successful networks with foreign (including American)

33. Arjun Appadurai, *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization*, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 1996

34. Wendy Brown, 'Neoliberalism and the End of Liberal Democracy', *Theory and Event*, vol 7, no 1, 2003; Jonathan Monten, 'The Roots of the Bush Doctrine: Power, Nationalism, and Democracy Promotion in US Strategy', *International Security*, vol 29, no 4, spring 2005, pp 112–156

35. Daniel Cohen, *Globalization and its Enemies*, Jessica B Baker, trans, MIT Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 2006

36. Andrew Ross and Kristin Ross, eds, *Anti-Americanism*, New York University Press, New York, 2004; Alexander Stephan, ed, *The Americanization of Europe: Culture, Diplomacy, and Anti-Americanism after 1945*, Berghahn Books, New York, 2006

partners at the same time as they critically reassessed the cultural impacts that underwrote Cold War international investment. Indeed, it was through these networks that Cold War cultural models moved beyond normative notions of transatlantic cultural imperialism and unilateral exchange. More complex interactions existed between hosting and hosted cultures, and between local production and international distribution, both in Italy and worldwide. These interactions raise the possibility of seeing the Cold War as a period of cross-cultural cosmopolitan exchange rather than unilateralism, soft power or reactionary anti-Americanism. If the roots of militarised, neoliberal globalisation can be found in dominant Cold War politics, then the networks of Cold War cultures provide a crucial counter-image that is equally global in scale but based on cosmopolitan and critical dialogues between artists, film-makers and their audiences. These networks may therefore be an ideal front from which to present alternative histories of globalisation as the basis for re-evaluating and re-imagining global collaborations and cultures today.