

18 December 2015 - 28 March 2016

OFFICINA Pasolini

**Exhibition promoted and realized by Cineteca di Bologna
In cooperation with Istituzione Bologna Musei | MAMbo**

Within the project
Più moderno di ogni moderno. Pasolini a Bologna
On the 40th death anniversary
of Pier Paolo Pasolini

MAMbo - Museo d'Arte Moderna di Bologna
via Don Minzoni, 14 - Bologna

The world of Pasolini on display in Bologna:
FROM HIS YOUNG YEARS TO SALÒ AND PETROLIO

**FROM ARCHAIC MYTHS TO THE ATTACK ON MODERNITY:
THE WORK OF PASOLINI IN A POLYPHONIC EXHIBITION**

The display area was turned into the nave of a Roman cathedral
where are brought together the personal life events and the work
of an artist
who went far beyond
literature, painting, photography and cinema

From December 18 until March 28 the exhibition *OFFICINA Pasolini at MAMbo*,
promoted by the Cineteca di Bologna within the project *Più moderno di ogni moderno*,
and with the support of the Municipality of Bologna, celebrates Pier Paolo Pasolini on
the 40th anniversary of his death

Personal documents, paintings, costumes,
photographs, videos:
a new and unprecedented gaze on PPP's work

PRESS RELEASE

Officina Pasolini: the exhibition devoted to the poetic, aesthetic and cultural world of Pier Paolo Pasolini on the 40th anniversary of his death, dated November 2, 1975, promoted by the Fondazione Cineteca di Bologna, in conjunction with Istituzione Bologna Musei and the University of Bologna - Scuola di Lettere e Beni culturali will open at MAMbo - Museo d'Arte Moderna di Bologna on December 18 until March 28 2016, and will crown the project ***Più moderno di ogni moderno. Pasolini a Bologna***, a cross-cutting initiative promoted by the Municipality of Bologna to pay homage to the work and life of Pasolini within the program *Pasolini 1975/2015* acknowledged by the MiBACT - Ministry for cultural heritage and tourism. Marco Antonio Bazzocchi, Roberto Chiesi and Gian Luca Farinelli curated the exhibition, in conjunction with Rosaria Gioia and Antonio Bigini, the lighting project was made by Luca Bigazzi.

This exhibition was designed following Pasolini's *modus operandi*: a collection of notes, a succession of footages, and a cluster of fragments. The visitor will find **the most meaningful core of Pasolini's world, from his young years in Bologna to his last two works**: the film, released after his death, ***Salò o le 120 giornate di Sodoma***, and the unfinished novel ***Petrolio***. A magnifying lens focussing on these two crucial aspects in order to interpret, analyse and connect them. The result is a collection of his most recurrent themes: the mother figure, the Greek tragedy, his vision of different worlds and archaic civilizations, the holy element, poverty-stricken suburbs, the middle-class bourgeois world, the neo-capitalist power.

These are the milestones guiding the visitor through a unique journey to uncover or rediscover Pasolini. This journey begins by entering the **imposing "Chimneys room" exceptionally turned into the nave of an imaginary Roman cathedral**, evoking a visual and architectural world much loved by Pasolini. Once in, it is possible to follow in the steps of his creative process like in a craftsman's workshop.

"Officina" (literally "workshop") is the key-word used by art critic Roberto Longhi, who played a crucial role in Pasolini's artistic evolution, in his famous 1934 essay on the painting of the Ferrara school. "Officina" is also the title of the magazine founded by Pasolini, Roversi and Leonetti in Bologna in the Fifties. *Officina Pasolini* is the title of this exhibition. Inside this workshop the visitor will discover the multi-faceted work of the craftsman Pasolini.

Pasolini experimented several art forms and every section features several materials including photos, videos, paintings, drawings, film footages, audio-visual materials, footages of theatrical performances, original texts and set costumes.

The exhibition unfolds along **9 thematic areas**:

1) THE YOUNG YEARS, THE EDUCATION WITH ROBERTO LONGHI

The exhibition opens with his education in Bologna, the years of **Roberto Longhi**. This section includes not only some **original documents retracing Pasolini's educational pathway**, but also the drawings that in the academic year 1938-39 the young student, measuring himself with painting, saw as a "desert island in the middle of a dark night", a master who "made us watch paintings as if they were a film".

The exhibition tries to convey the key role played by Roberto Longhi in Pasolini's education, through a selection of **Longhi's portraits made by Pasolini himself** (among them there is one, never publicly seen before, from a private collection owned by **Bernardo Bertolucci**), the making-of photos taken by **Dino Pedriali** while Pasolini was making these very same portraits, the autograph manuscript of ***Che cos'è un maestro***, a text celebrating the educational talent of Roberto Longhi:

Longhi was first of all a man, then a teacher (our own) just because he had nothing to be scratched away from his educational surface to find the person: he was exactly how you saw him, a superior being: being a super being, he stood out like an idol, like a character of the Comedy. For a young boy having to do with such a man meant rediscovering culture as something different with respect to conventional educational culture. He spoke like nobody else. His words were fresh. He had unparalleled irony. His curiosity was unprecedentedly outrageous. His oratory was unconditional. For a young boy, feeling oppressed and humiliated by the conventional educational culture, by the conformism of Fascist society that was a real revolution.

This section investigates the relationship between Pasolini and Bologna through the photos of Antonio Masotti documenting *Intellettuale*, a performance by Fabio Mauri that saw also the participation of Pier Paolo Pasolini. The film *The gospel according to Matthew* was screened on his body. This point in time links up with the history of MAMbo because this performance took place on May 31, 1975, within a series of cultural events organized to celebrate the opening of the Galleria d'Arte Moderna di Bologna in that same year.

2) THE MYTHS

The large nave, whose imaginary windows have been replaced by multimedia fixtures, is devoted to the Myths featured in Pasolini's works: the Mother, a key figure for his inspiration; *Christ*, a reference figure with which Pasolini establishes a sort of complex identification process; the *Classical Tragedy*, an archetype developed by his films and his plays; the *lost civilizations*, from the ancient farming world of the Friuli area, to the streets kids of Rome's poverty-stricken suburbs, to the archaic civilizations of faraway lands, in particular of the Middle East.

Pasolini was able to poetically mythologize the things he felt most attracted to, turning them into the most meaningful elements of his work. Some places, like Casarsa, Rome's poverty stricken suburbs, the African world, the South of Italy, were at the centre of his poems and films, and were represented in such a way to become the most meaningful part of his experiences. Thus, his whole life appears today as a collection of myths, places, legendary figures used by him as symbolic masks to talk about himself.

The Friuli area

Discovered at the beginning of the Forties as the place of origin of his mother Susanna Colussi, the Friuli area plays a key role in Pasolini's work and thought. Unlike Bologna, the city of his father, of bourgeois culture, of conventional educational knowledge, the Friuli area is a place of poetic enchantment: he uses Friulian, the local dialect (learnt through a dictionary) for his first official poetry collection, *Poesie a Casarsa* (1942).

The mother

Susanna Colussi, Pasolini's mother, is constantly present in his work, from poetry to cinema. In the poems from Friuli his mother is often described as a mother-child, the mirror image of her son. Mother and child form a whole, bonded by indissoluble love. When he shoots *Il Vangelo secondo Matteo*, Pasolini asks his mother Susanna (and his cousin Graziella) to star into one of the most excruciating scenes of the film: the arrival of Mary at the foot of the cross during Christ's agony.

All the mothers in Pasolini's films are unhappy, sinful mothers who err on the side of too much

love: Mamma Roma (Anna Magnani), Medea (Maria Callas), the mother figure in *Theorem* (Silvana Mangano), Giocasta, in *Oedipus Rex* (again Silvana Mangano, the actress who succeeds to Pasolini's mother).

Christ

When he starts as a film maker, Pasolini uses **Christ as a model for his characters coming from deprived suburbs**: Accattone (Franco Citti in Pasolini's debut film), Ettore Garofolo (*Mamma Roma*), Giovanni Stracci (*La ricotta*) are literally Christ figures from poverty-stricken suburbs and as such they reprise Christological gestures. Then in 1964 Pasolini shoots *The gospel according to Matthew* a film telling the story of a real Christ, a pugnacious, strong, angry, revolutionary character who wants to radically change the life of poor people, a Christ who seems to finally redeem the unhappy life of the other characters preceding him.

The classical tragedy

Since his very first young trials, **Pasolini shows a great attention for ancient tragic theatre and Greek myths**. *Edipo all'alba* is the title of an outline of a play where Oedipus' tale is reviewed according to the incestuous love between Ismene and her brother Eteocle. In 1960, upon **Vittorio Gassman's request, Pasolini translates Eschilo's Oresteia** in order to be staged in Syracuse.

In *Medea* (1969) Pasolini makes a thematic shift and focuses on the archaic figure of the witch whose world is against the technological world of her seducer Theseus. Here Maria Callas experiments the civilization conflict that Pasolini used to investigate in his essays.

Also *Appunti per un'Orestide africana* (1969) is an allegory for the transition from an archaic world, without rules, to a modern one regulated by the rational Law introduced by Goddess Athena.

The life in poverty-stricken suburbs

"I did not choose it, it was more like a **destiny's constraint**: considering that usually people tend to tell about the things they know, I could not help telling about **Rome's poverty-stricken suburbs**." The discovery of such places was to Pasolini like the discovery of a new world and a new language made of the Roman dialect spoken by the people living in slums in primitive and almost pagan condition, he portrayed them through the magnifying lens of his cynical and joyful humour and his spontaneous lexical creativity. Pasolini dived into that world, depicted it in tales, poems and two successful, picaresque novels, *Ragazzi di vita* (1955) and *Una vita violenta* (1959), enhancing the wild vitality of young people who used to live without moral rules, therefore inevitably doomed to perish.

In the film *Accattone* (1961) this world is depicted through a neat black and white contrast, long takes, intense close-ups, voluntarily evoking the static nature of primitive Italian art. The following film *Mamma Roma* (1962) tells the moment in time when these deprived suburbs get connected to the city and as a consequence they lose their original identity. The main character in the film (played by Anna Magnani) is a former prostitute who hopes to join the middle-class in order to have a better future for her and her baby Ettore. However, the move from the countryside to the brand new buildings of Casal Bertone will tragically determine the boy's destiny which was the same for of all the lumpenproletarian young people.

The lost civilizations

The Third World to Pasolini represents a utopian world with a still pristine, archaic and popular culture, opposed to the typical western-culture oriented bourgeois world. Since the beginning of the Sixties the author often travels to India and Africa together with Alberto Moravia, Elsa

Morante and Dacia Maraini. These trips result in some poetic texts based on the most intense aspects of the African world (colours, smells, lights) while the travel to India leads to a sort of essay-like report, *L'Odore dell'India*.

The Third World is also the ideal setting for his reinterpretation of the **A thousand and one nights** full of popular carnality and sensuality, free from every form of religious repression and fully soaked in magic culture.

3) THE ICONS

His icons transfiguration, from the Marilyn Monroe of *La Rabbia* to the Totò of *Uccellacci e uccellini* and criticism to homologation are the main themes of the section *Pasolini and his time*.

These characters acquire a new dimension thanks to Pasolini's expressive choices. **Marilyn Monroe**, in the beautiful sequence devoted to her in *La Rabbia*, becomes the symbol of an ancient and authentic beauty, which is altered and turned into something fake by capitalist society. **Maria Callas**, starring as Medea, stops being the opera diva to become a deeply humiliated woman, withdrawn into her pain and, most of all, deprived of her mythical voice. Even with **Anna Magnani**, in spite of the frictions on the set of *Mamma Roma*, Pasolini succeeds in detaching the diva from what she stood for.

As far as **Totò** is concerned, the result is so extraordinary that it totally reshaped the actor's image. Pasolini's Totò, who co-starred in three films together with Ninetto Davoli (*Uccellacci e uccellini*, *Cosa sono le nuvole?*, *La Terra vista dalla Luna*), becomes a good-natured philosopher, a smart and sweet father, an inventive lumpenproletarian who survived the radical transformation of his surrounding world and who adapted to it in a funny, smart and melancholic way.

4) CRITICISM OF MODERNITY

If in the Sixties Pasolini already announced the arrival of a "New Prehistory", from 1973 his criticism of modernity reaches its deepest phase resulting in a series of articles published on the newspaper "Corriere della Sera", fully reproduced in the exhibition:

Medium classes have radically - I would say anthropologically - changed: their positive values are not any longer reactionary and clericalist values but hedonist and consumerist values resulting from an American-style modern tolerance. The Power itself - through the "development" of the production of unnecessary goods, the imposition of a craving for consumerism, fashion, information (especially, and most of all, television) created these new values making the old ones obsolete. The paleo-industrial and farming Italy collapsed, it does not exist any longer, and was replaced by a vacuum probably waiting to be filled by a full gentrification process.

(Italians are not the same, June 10, 1974)

Hedonism and standardization resulted in a new generation of young people totally absorbed by the middle-class, which shaped the only identity dominating Italy in the Seventies. This phenomenon, that Pasolini kept analysing and investigating, by examining thoroughly its anthropological aspects (from language to corporality) was defined by him as an "unprecedented catastrophe" resulting in some of the most important texts gathered in *Scritti corsari* and *Lettere luterane* but also in the shocking vision of a young degraded generation in the unfinished novel *Petrolio*.

5) THE “PETROLIO” WORKSHOP

The following section deals with the *Laboratorio Petrolio*. This work, which has remained hidden for twenty years was published only in 1992 and in a conversation with Moravia, Pasolini himself defined it as his “will”. According to the original project, the novel had to appear as an unfinished, disjointed work even if his author’s death leaves many questions and doubts open. In October 1975 Pasolini asked photographer **Dino Pedriali**, maker of portraits of Andy Warhol and Man Ray, to take a series of **photographs of him, available on display, in Rome, Sabaudia and most of all in Chia**. These portraits - so beautiful and iconic that some of them have become over the years the **image par excellence of the poet** - maybe were designed to make up the jumbled visual world of *Petrolio*.

CIRCLES

The exhibition then unfolds along **three Circles** diving into the infernal “**development without progress**” of the contemporary world.

6) THE VISIONARY CIRCLE

The *Visionary circle* hosts the infernal settings of the following works: *Il Decameron*, *Racconti di Canterbury*, *Salò and Petrolio*. Over the last years of his life Pasolini often used Hell (beyond the dantean’s vision) as a metaphor to depict a hallucinating world made of real and concrete horror. In the film *Il Decameron*, “the best Giotto’s disciple” dreams of an afterlife made by hellish torments and ruled by the Virgin Mary. The same vision will be reprised and further developed in the underworld journey preceding the end of the *Racconti di Canterbury*, inspired by Bosch and Brùgel’s paintings. In *Salò* the present turns into such an atrocious world of hell-like torture and pain that horror becomes “inexpressible”. In the novel *Petrolio* the circles of a new Hell include the visions of the homologated young generation of the Seventies.

7) THE BOURGEOISIE CIRCLE

The *bourgeoisie circle* reaches its best depiction in *Salò o le 120 giornate di Sodoma*, his posthumous film where he stages what he defined as the “**anarchy of power**”.

We may say that **the bourgeois middle-class is the real protagonist of his life work**. To Pasolini the bourgeoisie is the class that has been imposing irreversibly its values and behaviours upon society since the early Fifties. Subdued to pure economic beliefs, false moralism, empty appearances, the bourgeoisie’s rise begins when the archaic, authentic, century-old values are dismantled and replaced by a new set of values entirely and exclusively based on economic power. The middle-classes enter Pasolini’s cinema with *Teorema*, a movie devoted to the core essence of the bourgeoisie, the family, an entity that collapses as soon as a foreign element penetrates it and unmasks it. In the film *Salò o le 120 giornate di Sodoma* four villains allegorically embody the bourgeois power. This is a kind of anarchical power where anybody can decide, buy, manipulate and destroy without being held accountable of anything. Young people are the main target of this destructive work; they are the real victims of neo-capitalist society, as Pasolini explains in several ways in his *Scritti corsari*, the essential work to understand the deeply shocking sequences of *Salò*.

8) THE TV CIRCLE

And finally comes the *TV circle*: “No Fascist centralism- so goes the **original typewritten text taken from the article *Contro la televisione* and on display at the exhibition** - was able to achieve what the centralism of consumerism achieved. We can state that the tolerance promoted by the hedonist ideology supported by the new power is the worst form of repression in the history of humankind. How could such a repression take place? Two revolutions, deeply

affecting the internal bourgeois organizational structure, made it possible. On the one hand, there was the infrastructure revolution and on the other, the information system revolution. Roads and motorized vehicles strictly connected the periphery to the Centre, eliminating any physical distance. However, it was the other revolution that had the most radical and deepest impact. Through television the Centre was able to standardize a country that used to be extremely diverse and rich in original different cultures. This destructive homologation process flattened away any form of genuineness and pragmatism. It imposed - as I said - its own models, which matched those of the new industrialization. A “consuming man” is not enough, consumerism must be the only viable ideology, and no room must be left for anything else.”

9) PASOLINI AFTER PASOLINI

The TV Circle leads us to the final part of the exhibition, devoted to Pasolini’s death that is recalled through the original TV news reports of November 2, 1975

Since then forty years have passed, during which Pasolini’s memory was not only kept but sometimes also underestimated, recovered and reinterpreted from several points of view. That is why the very final part of the exhibition features a group of authors, artists and intellectuals to whom the heritage of Pier Paolo Pasolini was key.

The exhibition also includes a painting made by Mario Schifano based on Pier Paolo Pasolini’s face and also a drawing by the Iranian filmmaker Abbas Kiarostami.

Further information:

www.cinetecadibologna.it - www.mambo-bologna.org

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The complete press kit can be downloaded upon registration from:

<http://www.mambo-bologna.org/ufficiostampa/cartellestampa/>

Istituzione Bologna musei is supported by:

EXHIBITION INFO SHEET

Exhibition	<i>OFFICINA Pasolini</i>
Opening Period	18 December 2015 - 28 March 2016
Opening times	Tuesday/Wednesday/Friday, 12-18 h Thursday/Saturday/Sunday/public holidays 12-20 h
Venue	MAMbo - Museo d'Arte Moderna di Bologna via Don Minzoni, 14 - Bologna
Tickets	Standard (Exhibition only) € 6 Concessions € 4 (Concessions with MAMbo, Amici e Sostenitori della Cineteca di Bologna, owners of Carta Più Feltrinelli, Gender Bender Card) Standard (exhibition + museum) € 10 Concessions (Exhibition + museum) € 8
Promoters	Fondazione Cineteca di Bologna, in conjunction with Istituzione Bologna Musei MAMbo - Museo d'Arte Moderna di Bologna, Università di Bologna - Scuola di Lettere e Beni culturali
Within	Più moderno di ogni moderno. Pasolini a Bologna (promoted by the Municipality of Bologna) and Pasolini 1975-2015 (Ministry for tourism and cultural heritage)
Curated by	Marco Antonio Bazzocchi, Roberto Chiesi, Gian Luca Farinelli with the collaboration of Antonio Bigini, Rosaria Gioiaprogetto lighting by Luca Bigazzi
With the support of	Fondazione del Monte, Gruppo Hera, Gruppo Unipol
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Mounting	Artigiana Legno
Lighting	Viabizzuno

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