The 1935 song “Faccetta Nera,” a paean to the Fascist imperialist enterprise in Africa, addresses the “little black face” that is the anonymous Abyssinian woman, an object of Italian colonial desire. This jaunty march with its suggestive miscegenation proclaims a gendered liberation of African women with the line “our law is slavery of love” (la legge nostra è schiavitù d’amore). The song was made famous by tenor Carlo Buti and eventually became a staple of festa band repertoires among the diaspora. In contemporary Italy black women are routinely taunted and humiliated with this Fascist-era tune.

The song is but one example of the myriad ways in which the body figures in discourses and cultural productions concerning Italy’s histories and identities, within and well beyond the country’s geopolitical boundaries.

This interdisciplinary conference recognizes the body in its literal, metaphorical, and hybrid constitutions as found in the modern nation-state of Italy, the larger Italian diaspora, and among former colonies. It builds on the array of seminal work on body politics mainly developed in women’s and gender studies where corporeal imaginaries construct and reposition identity and agency.

Italy and italianità, with its complex position within a Western hegemony—connected to colonialism, transnational migration, and larger discourses of power—is a particularly interesting locus for focusing a series of critical interventions around the body.

Cover painting: Casa degli Uccelli (2013) by Angela Valeria.
FRIDAY, APRIL 27, 2018

9:30–10:45 am

Corporeal Inscriptions

The Body Damned, the Body Saved, the Body Glorified: Portrayals of the Body in Dante’s *Commedia*, ALFRED CRUDALE, University of Rhode Island

Paola Masino’s Short Story “A Modo Loro”: A Critique of the Effects of Fascism’s Gender Policies and the Demographic Campaign on Italian Women, TRISTANA RORANDELLI, Sarah Lawrence College

A Shade of Black in Italian Women’s Writing: Body, Food, and Identity in Igiaba Scego’s “Salsicce,” FRANCESCA CALAMITA, University of Virginia


11am–12:15 pm

**Keynote:** Colonial Heritage, Aspirations, and Embodied Representations in Martina Melilli’s *Mum, I’m sorry* (2017), GIULIA GRECHI, Academy of Fine Arts of Naples

**Italian Biopolitical Tales of Contamination, Migration, and Colonialism**

Fascist Bodies on the Fourth Shore: Societal Entanglement within the Imperial Space, ROBERTA BIASILLO; Rachel Carson Center

Belgian Carbon Metabolism and Coal Lives: Italian Miners’ Corporeal Experience and Their Bodily Resistance Practices, DANIELE VALISENA, Royal Institute of Technology

Toxic Bios: Storytelling as Subversive Bodily Experience, MARCO ARMIERO and ILENIA IENGO, KTH Environmental Humanities Laboratory

1:30–2:45 pm

**Italian Women: Their Bodies Are Our Bodies**

*Quando Sono Italiana* (When I am Italian), JOANNA CLAPPS HERMAN, Author

The Cripple, EDVIGE GIUNTA, New Jersey City University

The Body and Blood, NANCY CARNEVALE, Montclair State University


SATURDAY, APRIL 28, 2018

9:30–10:45 am

**Performing Bodies**

Tattoos, Italians, and *Italianità*, JOANN LUHRS, Brooklyn College, CUNY

Italian American Performance, Healing, and Hip Hop, NATALIE MARRONE, Duke University

Me, Myself, and I: Defining the Individual According to Vito Acconci, ANTHONY CAVALUZZI, SUNY Adirondack

11am–12:15 pm

**Bodies in History and Memory**

Material Intimacies and Remembrance as Embodiment: Women and Transnational Migrants between Appalachia and Calabria, JOAN SAVERINO, University of Pennsylvania

Illegal Bodies? Unauthorized Italian Immigration to the United States and Adjustment of Status in the Twentieth Century, DANIELLE BATTISTI, University of Nebraska Omaha

2:30–4:15 pm

**Violations and Resistance**

The Violation of a Nation: Rosetta and Cesira in Vittorio De Sica’s *La ciociara*, CHIARA DE SANTI, Farmingdale State College

“I Do Not Love You!” How Franca Viola Used Her Body To End the Medieval Code of *Matrimonio Riparatore*, LION CALANDRA, Journalist

The Practice of Infibulation Among Migrant Baby Girls in Italy, MICHELA VALMORI, Notre Dame University

3–3:50 pm

**Sexuality and Gender**

The Scandalous Bodies of Guglielmo Plüschow: Constructing a Homoerotic Mediterranean through Photography, GEORGE DE STEFANO, Author

*WinxClub*, or the “Angelification” of Girls: A Neoliberal-Catholic Project, NICOLETTA MARINI-MAIO, Dickinson College, and ELLEN NERENBERG, Wesleyan University

4:05–4:20 pm

**Written on the Body: Intersectionality in Italian American Women’s Narratives**

Traces of Trauma: Disability and Maternity in Tina De Rosa’s Archive, MARY JO BONA, Stony Brook University, SUNY

“The Very Tenuousness of Every Moment”: Maternal (Inter)subjectivity and the Body of the Beloved Child in Joelle Biele’s *Broom*, CHRISTA BAIADA, Borough of Manhattan Community College, CUNY

“The Time Bomb Sitting Inside my Own Body”: How Corporeality Defies Death in Stories by Rita Ciresi, COLLEEN MARIE RYAN, Indiana University

PROGRAM (subject to change)

**CORPOREAL RESTRICTIONS, EMBODIED FREEDOMS: ITALIAN INTERVENTIONS ON THE BODY**

**Inanimate Bodies**

Pio Fedi’s Tomb of Giovanni Battista Niccolini and the Creation of National Sentiment in Post-Risorgimento Italy, CATERINA PIERRE, Kingsborough Community College, CUNY

Animating the Inanimate: Fortunato Depero’s Futurist Toys and Marionettes, SOPHIA MAXINE ABRAMS FARMER, University of Wisconsin-Madison

4:30–5:45 pm

**Bodies On and Off Screen**

The Racialized Body: *Under the Southern Cross* (1938), ANNEMARIE TAMIS-NASELLO, Fashion Institute of Technology, SUNY

Disembodied Dubbing: The Hybrid Body or the Myth of Aristophanes, ANTONELLA SISTO, Brown University

The Italian Actor as Body in American Cinema, GIULIANA MUSCIO, University of Padua

Embodyed Memory and Oral History: The Bronx Italian American History Initiative, JACQUELINE REICH and KATHLEEN LAPENTA, Fordham University

1:30–2:45 pm

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