

Italian Fascism and Its Colonial Film Archive

Mainz, October 27–28, 2022

On the centenary of the rise of fascism in Italy, the workshop *Italian Fascism and Its Colonial Film Archive* focuses on the pivotal role of cinema in persuading Italian audiences of the outcomes of the fascist mission in East Africa and to attest to the so-called civilizing mission in the recently proclaimed Italian Empire. We will investigate the documentaries and newsreels of the state-funded Istituto LUCE, realised at the time of the particularly brutal military conquest of Ethiopia, as an emblematic example for the imbrication of film as modernist technology with colonial infrastructures and fascist ideology. The exoticism and eroticism usually employed in colonial documentaries, moreover, compels us to question the historical colonial archive from an intersectional and decolonial feminist perspective. We will be discussing issues relating to Italian historiography, including the historical amnesia and mythicisation of the colonial past that characterise Italy's collective memory to this day, and together attempt to shed light on the central role of unequal gender relations in colonising practices, in the promulgation of the Racial Laws during the fascist era, and in shaping the wider colonial imaginary.

Event overview

Thursday 27th, 17.30-19.30

Public film screening

Kino CinéMayence (Schillerstraße 11, 55116 Mainz)

ALL'ARMI SIAM FASCISTI! (To Arms, We Are Fascists!), Lino Del Fra, Cecilia Mangini, Lino Micicchè, Italy 1962, 106', original version with English subtitles.

Introduction: Fabian Tietke (film critic and historian, Berlin) & Cecilia Valenti (Johannes-Gutenberg University Mainz)

ALL'ARMI SIAM FASCISTI! was a political intervention at the time of its production and remains so today. Less than fifteen years after the end of the Second World War and the death of Mussolini, the conservative politician Tambroni formed a government with the support of the fascist Movimento Sociale Italiano (MSI). Protests flamed up all over the country that faced brutal repression. Several protestors were shot. In reaction to these events, Cecilia Mangini, Lino del Fra and Lino Micicchè shaped found footage of the rise of fascism and its reign into what would be one of the first filmic surveys of fascism in Italy. The images of the film are combined with a multifaceted commentary by Franco Fortini. ALL'ARMI SIAM FASCISTI! is an early example of a militant compilation film, one of the crucial forms of political cinema in the 1960s, and yet it is completely forgotten outside of Italy today.

Friday 28th, 9.30-13.30

Workshop

Landeszentrale für Politische Bildung, Gerty-Spies-Saal (Am Kronberger Hof, 55116 Mainz)

Chair: Cecilia Valenti

9.30-9.45

Welcome address and introduction

9.45-10.45

Elena Petricola (Women's Archive in Piedmont), "Women and Men in Italian Colonialism"

10.45-11.15

Coffee break

11.15-12.00

Fabian Tietke (Berlin), "The Colonial in the Cinema of Fascist Italy"

12.00-13.00

Giuseppe Fidotta (University of Groningen), "The Cinematic Geographies of the Empire: Fascist Documentary, Infrastructure, and the Avant-garde"

13.00-13.30

Concluding remarks

Organised by Fabian Tietke and Cecilia Valenti

Registration required. Please send an email to: workshopmainz@gmx.net

In cooperation with the Landeszentrale Politische Bildung, Rheinland-Pfalz & the Institut für Film-, Theater-, Medien- und Kulturwissenschaft at the Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz

