



Dante Alighieri Society

Promoting Italian language & culture in Canberra

May -
Jun
2023

Dante Review



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Promoting Italian language & culture in Canberra

Cultural presentation by

Armando Corvini

My life as a mountaineer

*From Val Rosandra to the Himalayas
and in between*

Thursday 11 May, 8pm

at Italian Cultural Centre

80 Franklin street Forrest ACT

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**It's funny, but Shakespeare is
teaching me Italian stories**

Michael Curtotti



*The Seeds and Fruits of English Poetry, Ford Maddox Brown
(pre-Raphaelite painting 1845-51)*

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Gli oggetti ...parlano

Sandra Zucchini Catizone



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to preserve and disseminate italian language and culture

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Membership Fees for 2023

Individual Membership: \$50
Concession Membership: \$25
Junior (16 years and under): \$15
Membership for the Dante Musica Viva Choir is an additional \$10.

Upcoming Events

Cultural presentation on May 11 – "My life as a mountaineer - From Val Rosandra to the Himalayas and in between" by Amando Corvini

E' stata la mano di Dio, di Paolo Sorrentino, film night with the ANU Italian Cultural Society scheduled for the 26th of May, Cultural presentation to celebrate *Rassegna MAECI "Fare Cinema"* week. **Guest speaker Gino Moliterno**.

Regular Events

Dante Musica Viva Choir rehearsals on Thursdays from 5pm to 7pm.

Conversation classes for Term 2 beginning Thursday 27th April (7 to 9pm).

Language classes for Term 2 beginning Monday 24th April.

Library

The Dante library is open during office hours.

Office Hours

The office hours of the Dante Alighieri Society of Canberra Inc. at the Italian Cultural Centre in Forrest are Mondays to Wednesdays 12:00pm to 6:00pm, Thursdays 1:00pm to 7:00pm and Fridays 11:00am to 4:00pm. For all enquiries, please call the office on (02) 5117 3996 or send us an email to info@danteact.org.au. If your inquiry requires immediate attention, please call our Secretary Sam on 0414 745 942. Visit us at www.danteact.org.au and click 'like' on Facebook to be up to date!

2023 Term Dates

Please see the term dates for 2023:

Term 1: Monday 30th January to 31st March

Term 2: Monday 24th April to 23rd June

Term 3: Monday 17th July to 15th September

Term 4: Monday 9th October to 8th December.

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JOANNA BISA: INSEGNANTE APPASSIONATA DELLA LINGUA ITALIANA

Joanna Bisa



volevo sempre imparare una lingua ma non c'era l'opportunità. Mi sono diplomata nel 1989 e mi sono spostata a Sydney per studiare Istruzione d'esercizio fisico all'Università di Sydney. Lì ho alloggiato per tre anni al Wesley College, dove vivevo con molti altri ragazzi provenienti da paesi rurali. È stato un tempo indimenticabile!

Dal 1993 al 1997 ho insegnato presso la scuola secondaria di Sydney Girls a Sydney come insegnante di esercizio fisico. Nel 1996 però ho preso una pausa di lavoro e viaggiato con lo zaino all'estero per un anno. Era la mia prima volta in Italia e penso che durante questo viaggio sia iniziata la mia passione per la lingua. Viaggiavo con quello che allora era il mio ragazzo e sua sorella. Più tardi, sono diventati mio marito e cognata e se quell'anno io non avessi viaggiato e non fossi stata in Italia, forse non avrei scoperto questa passione per la lingua.

L'avevo cominciata a imparare quando ero a casa con i miei figli (ora hanno ventuno e venti anni rispettivamente). Per iniziare, studiavo presso la Società Dante Alighieri a Canberra una volta alla settimana, per molti anni, poi ho continuato con le classi private con una meravigliosa insegnante, Pauline Adams di Canberra. Lei è ancora molto appassionata e paziente e alla fine è stata lei che mi ha spinto ad iscrivermi all'Università nazionale australiana per continuare lo studio d'italiano. Mi sono diplomata d'arte italiana. Più recentemente, ho studiato presso l'Università per stranieri di Perugia, ottenendo CVCL CELI 3 e continuo oggi presso l'Università per stranieri di Siena CILS C1.

Dal 2014 al 2016 ho fatto l'insegnante d'italiano presso la scuola bilingue a Yarralumla, mentre stavo ancora studiando. Lì ho conosciuto molti insegnanti dedicati con cui ho lavorato per qualche anno in un ambiente molto particolare. La scuola si sforza ancora di insegnare il programma statale in inglese e in italiano che è sfidante, sia per gli studenti, che per i maestri. È stata un'esperienza incredibile.

Poi, nel 2016, c'è stata l'inaugurazione della mia scuola privata 'Italian with Jo', con l'iniziativa di un programma d'italiano presso la scuola di

Mi presento, sono Joanna Bisa, sono un'insegnante presso La Società Dante Alighieri a Canberra e imprenditrice. Sono una maestra molto appassionata, di origine australiana. Sono una mamma di due figli, si chiamano Sam e Nicholas. Sono sposata con Dan, imprenditore edile e di origine Italiana, e insieme abbiamo un cane, Iroh, di razza Cavalier King Charles, di quattro anni, con cui mi piace molto fare le camminate su Red Hill. Ho sette galline che vivono in uno spazioso pollaio, in fondo al nostro giardino, accanto ad un melo ombroso. Ho molti passatempi, amo tanto cucinare, mi piace correre su Red Hill, giocare a tennis, leggere i romanzi italiani, guardare le serie TV italiane, ma quello in cui mi impegno sempre è l'italiano.

Sono nata a Sydney nel 1971 e sono cresciuta a Bowral, un paese fra Canberra e Sydney nel Nuovo Galles del Sud. Mio padre faceva L'Agrimensore e ha avuto un'azienda privata per molti anni a Bowral, e mia madre faceva l'infermiera in una scuola secondaria a Mittagong, nella zona. Da piccola giocavo sempre a tennis nei tornei nella regione del sud, mi allenavo con mio fratello e sognavo di fare da grande la tennista. A scuola

Programma BSSS Italiano (Board of Secondary Studies) ed Internazionale Baccalaureate Italiano come supplenza. Dal 2019 al 2021 ho insegnato Il Programma IB italiano ab initio presso la scuola di Canberra Grammar, con grande successo.

Oggi, continuo a insegnare a casa con molti studenti diversi, di giorno e di sera. Mi sento molto fortunata di essere parte di una famiglia italiana con cui riesco a parlare e imparare, ed anche avere un passatempo che è diventato una carriera.

Joanna Bisa: passionate teacher of the Italian language

I am Joanna Bisa, a teacher for the Society Dante Alighieri in Canberra and a business owner. I am a very passionate teacher of Australian heritage. I am a mother of two sons, Sam and Nicholas, married to Dan, a property developer and private business owner and together we have a Cavalier King Charles dog, Iroh with whom I love to walk up red hill, every day. I have seven hens who live in a spacious coup in the base of our garden, next to a very shady and old apple tree. I have many hobbies, I

love to cook, I like to run up red hill, play tennis, read Italian books and watch Italian television series, but the thing that occupies most of my time is Italian!

I was born in Sydney in 1971, and grew up in Bowral, a small town in the Southern Highlands in New South Wales. There my father worked as a surveyor and had his own private practice for many years and my mother worked as a nurse at a private girls' school in Mittagong. From a young age I played tennis, competing in tennis tournaments around the region. I would train with my brother. I dreamed of being a professional tennis player one day!

At school I always wanted to learn a language but there was not the opportunity. In 1989 I finished high school and was accepted to study Human Movement Education at the University of Sydney the following year. There I lived on campus at Wesley College for three years, with many other students from country areas. It was an unbelievable experience!

From 1993 until 1997, I taught Physical Education at Sydney Girls High School. In 1996 however I took a break from work deciding to go backpacking overseas for a year. It was



during this trip that I visited Italy for the first time. I think that during this trip my love for Italian began! I travelled with my boyfriend at the time and his sister, who later became my husband and sister-in-law, and I think now that if I had not done that trip overseas and gone to Italy that year, I may never have discovered my love for Italian.

I had started learning Italian when I was at home with my babies, who at that time were around to two and three years of age; now they are twenty-one and twenty years old respectively. I started learning at the Society Dante Alighieri in Canberra once a week, which I did for many years, then I began taking private lessons with a wonderful teacher Pauline Adams from Canberra; a very passionate and patient teacher who eventually pushed me to go and further my studies at the ANU. There I completed a Diploma of Arts in Italian. More recently I have completed further studies through Perugia University for Foreigners attaining CVCL CELI 3 and am currently studying CILS C1 at Siena University for Foreigners.

Whilst studying I have taught in various positions. I taught for several years at Yarralumla Bilingual school as a relief teacher in Italian. There I met many extremely dedicated teachers with whom I worked closely and learned from for several years. The school continues to strive to teach the ACT curriculum in both English and Italian which is a challenging environment for both the teachers and students alike. Teaching there was an incredible experience. Later in 2016, I launched my private teaching business "Italian with Jo" by initiating an Italian Program at Canberra Grammar School. In 2018 I taught for several months, Board of Secondary studies (BSSS) Italian and International Baccalaureate (IB) at Narrabundah College, as a relief teacher. From 2019 until 2021 I then taught IB ab initio Italian at Canberra Grammar School, with great success. Today my private business continues to thrive teaching from my studio at home, a variety of students during the day and in the evenings. I feel extremely lucky to be part of an Italian family with whom I speak this language, and likewise to have my passion develop into a career.

L'ANGOLO DELLA LINGUA

Yvette Alberti

The Italian verb *toccare* has many uses and meanings. The most common is to touch (physically) for ex. *Non toccarmi: sono tutto sporco di fango dopo l'escursione* = don't touch me: I'm still muddy after the hike; *non toccarti gli occhi con le mani sporche* = don't touch your eyes with dirty hands; *dì ai bambini che non tocchino i bicchieri di vetro* – tell the children not to touch the glasses

But it can also be used to indicate it's somebody's turn to do something eg *questa settimana tocca a lui lavare il bagno* = this week it's his turn to wash the bathroom/toilet; *a chi tocca mescolare le carte?* = whose turn is it to mix the cards?

And in other contexts, it means to have to do something eg *ci tocca uscire a prendere il latte se vogliamo farci un cappuccino* = we have to go out to buy milk if we want to make a cappuccino; *mi tocca comprare un nuovo computer perché questo non funziona più bene* = I have to buy a new computer because this one isn't working well any more [note the use of *funzionare* for the English to work when referring to mechanical/electrical/electronic objects]

There are also many figurative uses of *toccare*, similar to those in English eg *è meglio non toccare la politica altrimenti si rischia litigare* = it's best not to touch politics or we risk an argument; *la sua storia mi ha toccato il cuore* = her/his story touched my heart/moved me; *non bisogna mai toccare la famiglia degli amici* = never touch/criticise the family of friends.

Practise some of these uses in your future conversations.

THE ELUSIVE LEONARDO

Sergio Sergi*

Se non è vero, è ben trovato
If it's not true it should be
Italian Proverb



This is a story of the magical transformation of a painting bought at an auction in New Orleans in 2005 for \$US 1175 and sold at auction in London in 2017 for \$US450 million. What painting can this be? How did the magic happen?

It is called “Salvator Mundi”, the Saviour of the World. It is a “half figure” of Christ with one hand raised in blessing and the other holding a transparent orb. It is 26 inches high and 18 inches wide (65cm x 45cm). It is painted in oil on a walnut panel.

This image of Christ as a handsome aristocratic European, instead of a strong rugged carpenter of Semitic ethnicity was a popular theme from the late Middle Ages and particularly during the Rinascimento. Relatively small paintings, like this, were a popular “devotional” picture hung in private chapels the wealthy who commissioned such works.

There are today some thirty versions of the Saviour of the World done by a variety of hands over a period of several decades during the Rinascimento (15th Century) and after. Most of them are now on display in Art Museums throughout Europe and North America. Our interest is in one particular version and its complicated and tortuous history.

Isabella d'Este (1474 - 1539) Duchessa di Mantova, commissioned Leonardo da Vinci, in 1504, to paint a Salvator Mundi devotional

painting for her. Isabella's sister, Beatrice, was married to Ludovico Sforza II Moro, Duke of Milano. Leonardo was employed by Il Moro to strengthen the fortifications of his Castle. Isabella corresponded in very warm terms with Leonardo and commissioned other works from him, in particular, “La Scapigliata”, the Woman with Loose Hair, painted in oil, amber and white lead paints on a small poplar wood panel.

Almost all of Leonardo's paintings are done onto carefully prepared poplar (pioppo) panels. The seasoned planks are laminated together and held



in place with glue and wooden pegs. The surface is carefully smoothed and then treated with gesso, egg white and resins. It is then polished to an extremely smooth surface, on which the paints are applied in layers to create the signature sfumatura effect of suffused light radiating from the painting. “Sfumatura” is smoke in Italian but

* Concise text of the conference held for the Dante Alighieri Society at the Italian Cultural Centre on March 23, 2023

indicates the nuanced toning down of colours, perfect for the other effect of which Leonardo was the master, the chiaroscuro, light and dark, often imitated by the likes of Caravaggio, but never surpassed.

Of the 19 paintings attributed to da Vinci, 10 are universally accepted and all of these are painted on poplar panels. There are a further 9 paintings that are widely accepted as Leonardo's and all but one are also on poplar panels, only one is on a walnut panel. The Salvator Mundi is also painted on a walnut panel, originally held together with wooden pegs. However, the d'Este Salvator's panel has, on the reverse, a large knot, the size of a pigeon's egg. The presence of this knot would make the walnut panel unique in all of Leonardo's works.

As for the composition of the image, the Royal Collection at Windsor Castle, of Leonardo da Vinci's works, including his diaries, contains two preparatory red chalk drawings of a figure which has some resemblance to the Salvator Mundi, but they are sketches, not realized drafts for the work.

Two well-known artists worked with da Vinci during the early years of the 1500s, Giovanni Beltraffio (1467-1516) and Bernadino Luini (1480-1532). Both men worked in da Vinci's bottega and painted a range of works including devotional pictures. It is likely that Beltraffio and probably Luini worked on the Salvator Mundi and that da Vinci may have dabbled with the work, especially since it was commissioned by Isabella d'Este, with whom he had a cordial relationship.

Now the narrative goes dark: the picture, if it is the same as the one in Isabella's chamber, re-emerges some hundred years later in the possession of Queen Henrietta Maria, wife of Charles Stuart, Charles I of England. No further details of the ownership of the d'Este Salvator Mundi, can be authenticated and the links are tenuous. But if this work came to England, it was probably part of a number of devotional works painted during the Rinascimento, which were given or at times sold to Queen Henrietta by the Spanish Ambassador to the Court of King Charles Stuart. Charles I himself, in 1628 and 1629, bought a large collection of Old Masters from the Duke of Mantova, a descendent of Isabella d'Este.

After the execution of Charles I by the

parliamentary forces of Oliver Cromwell, in January 1649, the Royal residences were closed and all the household items, including the artworks, were sold in 1651 to help defray the debts of the Stuart monarchy. It is likely that the d'Este Salvator Mundi was included in this fire sale. Henrietta was sent back to France where she lived, in much reduced circumstances, until 1666 when the Stuarts were restored and her son became Charles II, King of England and Scotland.

With the restoration, efforts were made to reassemble the possessions which had been sold by Cromwell's officials. It is on one of these lists of paintings that a Salvador Mundi is mentioned, but it is attributed to Giovanni Antonio Beltraffio and it remained so for the next 350 years.

Charles II bequeathed the Royal Art Collection to his successor, his brother James whose mistress, Catherine Sedley, had a daughter with him. She married the Duke of Buckingham, who displayed some of the Royal Collection in Buckingham Palace's corridors. Including, it maybe supposed, the d'Este Salvator.

In 1763, Buckingham Palace and all of its contents were bought by George III. Once again, this work is lost.

In 1823, the d'Este Salvator Mundi was bought at auction, along with other pictures regarded as superfluous to Buckingham Palace, by the super eccentric and fabulously wealthy William Beckford.

While still in his early teens, Beckford inherited one million pounds in cash, the opulent Fonthill Abbey, two other stately estates and 3000 slaves on several sugar plantations in Jamaica. He spent the next sixty years working his way through this immense fortune.

When he became bankrupt, Beckford's art collection was dispersed and the Salvator Mundi appears (as a Beltraffio) in a list of works owned by the unscrupulous dealer, Sir John Charles Robinson. In 1900, he sold this picture to the cloth manufacturer, Sir Francis Cook, who displayed it in his London home, Doughty House, the home of the Salvator Mundi for the first half of the 20th Century.

In 1958 Cook's great grandson sold the family

silver, along with everything else. Sir Francis Ferdinand Maurice Cook was, like Beckford, an “artist”. The “Salvator” is listed in the auction catalogue as “possibly a Leonardo” but still a “Beltraffio”.



The buyer of the Salvator was an American furniture manufacturer, Warren Kunz, who was visiting Europe to buy old master pictures for his home in New Orleans. Kunz paid 45 pounds at auction, a low bid thus it is possible he was the only bidder.

And now, the magic begins. Robert Simon and Alex Parish operated in the penumbra of the old masters art market. They trawled through sale catalogues, attended auctions, picked over deceased estates and kept an eye out for any pictures that are of nebulous provenance, that can be cleaned up, put in a gilded frame of appropriate vintage and on-sold to people who want a bit of antiquity on their walls.

In 2005, they buy the “Salvator” for US\$ 1175 at an auction in New Orleans. They then spend the next decade removing the word “possibly” from the 1978 catalogue description of “Salvator”.

The painting was “a wreck, dark and gloomy”. They paid to have the picture cleaned and reframed. They tried without any success to on sell it to dealers, art galleries, institutions, collectors and at auction. Eventually, they got lucky and persuaded UK National Gallery in London, to display the work as a “possible Leonardo”. They also retained the services of Martin Kemp, Emeritus Professor of the History of Art at Oxford University, to provide an opinion on the painting. Kemp was known as “Mr. Leonardo”.

Kemp was assisted by one of his former students, Margaret Dalivale who was endeavouring to establish her credentials as a scholar and as a valuer of rare pictures. Kemp’s evaluation included sentences like, “the picture had a kind of presence” and certain features of the Salvator possessed “an uncanny strangeness” and the figure’s hair displayed “an uncanny vortex of hair like living water” - Features, which were “uncannily reminiscent” of da Vinci’s technique.

However, it was when the painting was “restored” that further doubts about its genuineness and provenance were peeled away. This was carried out by Diana Modestini, a New York expert in restoring damaged Rinascimento paintings

In the 2021 documentary film “The lost Leonardo”, the view is expressed that “Salvator is a masterpiece by Diana Modestini”. The meticulous “retouching” took over a year of detailed work, a month spent on the lips alone. It is reported that she was paid over \$US one million for her work.

And now the pace picks up as Simon and Parish persuade Christie’s Auction House, in London, to become involved.

Christie’s takes the “Salvator” on a trip; it is exhibited in New York and Hong Kong and it draws huge crowds. It is then sold at auction in 2012 (now no longer a Beltraffio) to Yves Bouvier, the owner of Natural Le Coultre, Duty Free storage facilities in Switzerland. Bouvier pays US\$80 million to Christie’s.

Robert Simon and Alex Parry are still in the Old Masters market. Martin Kemp is now well into his 80’s and Margaret Dalivale has distanced herself from the “Salvator” affair.

The “Salvator” is described as genuine in the Christie’s catalogue. After a few months Bouvier

sells the freshly re-labeled “Salvator” to a Russian oligarch, Dmitry Ryboloulev, for US\$127.5 million, a



Mohamed Bin Salman's 500 million euro yacht, “Serene”

It has been revealed that the actual buyer of the “Salvator” was Crown Prince Mohamed bin Salman, Prime Minister of Saudi Arabia, appointed by his father King Salman.

The Crown Prince is perhaps better known for the involvement in the murder and dismemberment of the Saudi journalist for the “Washington Post”, Jamal Kashoggi in October 2018.

The new owner wanted “Salvator” to be on display in a large gallery next to the Louvre’s most famous and 100% genuine acknowledged Leonardo – the Mona Lisa. This would ensure that the provenance of was beyond dispute. The Louvre refused.

“Salvator” was to be the centerpiece of the opening of the Louvre Abu Dhabi but he did not show up. Where is he? It is speculated that he is on board Mohamed Bin Salman’s 500 million euro yacht, “Serene” – bought from a Russian vodka manufacturer, currently cruising the Red Sea. Or possibly that he is in a secure storage facility in Switzerland, a similar facility to those owned by Yves Bouvier so the story is “to be continued...”

mark-up of some 55%. Not surprisingly, Ryboloulev heard of how he was cheated on the price and has pursued Christie’s and Bouvier vigorously through the courts, with considerable success. Ryboloulev, made his money from cornering the world fertilizer market. His future is uncertain as he has fallen out with Vladimir Putin, President of Russia.

On 15th November, 2017 “Salvator” is back on the hustings, when Christie’s in London auctioned it as a genuine da Vinci. The buyer was the Saudi Arabian Cultural Infrastructure which includes the Louvre, in Abu Dhabi, the Saudis closest ally. The price was \$US 450 million.

The Abu Dhabi Louvre has signed an agreement with the Louvre Paris until 2037 for US\$1.3 billion for the use of its name and loans of some works for their art treasure house in the desert, an astonishing building.

The Saudi bidder most probably believed that the underbidder was the Qataris, mortal enemies of the Saudis. However, the underbidder was most likely the Chinese billionaire Lin Yiqian, who started his commercial life making handbags and now owns the Long Museum in Shanghai.



IT'S FUNNY, BUT SHAKESPEARE IS TEACHING ME ITALIAN STORIES

Michael Curtotti



Bust of Shakespeare in Verona at the mythical tomb of Juliet.

It's curious to find the heart of Italy in the soul of England, but so it is. For Shakespeare put it there. For years now, I've been hunting down Italian stories, and the last thing I expected was that Shakespeare would give me the breakthrough I was looking for. The most desperate loves, the vilest deceptions, the most delightful cross-dressing dalliances and the bitterest revenge. Shakespeare found them in Italian novellas and adapted them to the London stage.

I have to admit, although the journey has been fun, it's not so easy to plunge into the ocean of Italian literature, not knowing where it might take you or in which direction to head. Every exploration always brought something new to light, but still something seemed elusive. It didn't make sense to me the way English literature makes sense. Something seemed missing. Where were the ripping yarns? (Credit: Palin and Jones).

Of course, that is all very subjective, and has got everything to do with the fact that I grew up in Australia. Despite some wonderful teachers growing up, there were simply no mentors I was lucky enough to meet who might have introduced Italian literature and Italian stories. So for me, Italian literature was like a great puzzle. A huge box of treasures that you poured out on the table, not sure where one piece fits with another.

Yet, slowly bits and pieces began to fall into place. There are lots of books that claim to tell you the story of Italian literature. But like other great 'national' literatures, the national myth making can hide as much as it reveals. Until recently, for example, you might struggle to find a single woman named among the 'canonical' figures of Italian literature, despite the fact that they are there and they are astonishingly important not just to Italy but as heralds of modernity.

What was I missing? I would ask myself this, even as I gradually mapped out the vast landscape of Italian stories (literature). Dante's poetry was a must, and great fun to explore. He is historian, satirist, political commentator and philosopher all rolled into one. He gave us the language, showed us how to use it, and has some great love poetry to boot. Italian fairy tales are fun to explore, and there are some great Italian collections. They give us a sense of what children heard late at night. Discovering some of Italy's female writers and poets of past centuries smashes preconceptions that might be held about gender relations in Italy (or its feminist might have been). Those female writers are still under appreciated, e.g. Laura Terracina who took up the feminist bent of Ludovico Ariosto and put it on steroids. There is so much more of course (not least 20th and 21st century literature). They're on the bucket list. But still it felt like something profound; a vast gap in the canvas that I couldn't fill.

Shakespeare to the rescue

A couple of years back, I discovered that Shakespeare (and other English writers of his generation) were greatly influenced by stories that came out of Italy. Good historians of English literature know it; but as in Italy's case, some parts of the story are put up in lights and other things are, well, barely mentioned in polite company. Very interesting and surprising, I thought, and maybe it could be the subject of a couple of great articles, but that too languished in the "work on it later" drawer, until recently.

If history was written in a more even hand, names like Matteo Bandello and Cinthio would be as well known to us as Shakespeare. For Bandello's version of Romeo and Juliet inspired Shakespeare and it is beautiful in its own right. The major plot line of Shakespeare's *Much Ado About Nothing* is also taken from Bandello. *Othello* was drawn by Shakespeare from one of Cinthio's novellas, as was *Measure for Measure*, and there are other examples. And while Shakespeare deserves credit; for he often takes these stories to another level and has made them immortal, the Italian originals are so profoundly written into his plays, that Shakespeare cannot be regarded as the only author. He is a masterful adapter of their stories for the stage.

Here was the missing piece. This was where the Italian stories had been hiding; still waiting to be

explored.

Novellas are form of literature that's not familiar to us today. We of course love novels. These are typically much longer stories that we might read over a few day, weeks or even months. Novellas are somewhere between short stories and novels in length and they can be read in a single night. They make much more sense, when we remember that the TV and mass entertainment simply wasn't available in the past. A novella could be read (and was most likely read out loud to a gathering) in a single evening and provided a great way to pass the time in company.

In fact, we see this very model written into the novellas themselves. Writers like Bandello would introduce their stories (sometimes pretend) that they had heard the story from so and so one evening at some eminent person's residence. Boccaccio also in his *Decameron*, used this form of literature. Shakespeare loved novellas too. He mined Italian novellas for material to put on stage. This becomes more obvious when we think about how many of his plays are set in Italy. And, if you are looking for a place to start to come to grips with Italian literature, you could do a lot worse than starting with those Italian stories that Shakespeare has made world famous. He chose some of the best. So yes, Shakespeare, is teaching me about Italian stories. He has inspired me to work on translating some of them into English (a work in progress).

A longer version of this article appears on Michael's website at: <https://beyondforeignness.org/9932>

GLI OGGETTI ...PARLANO

Sandra Zucchini Catizone

Sempre, gli oggetti, hanno parlato della vita degli uomini che li hanno creati ed usati.

I reperti archeologici, anche antichissimi, ci dicono degli usi di popolazioni ormai estinte e ci raccontano una quotidianità che, proprio grazie ad essi, possiamo immaginare con notevole verosimiglianza.

Anch'io, coi miei 77 anni, posso ripercorrere un passato, sfocato nei ricordi, ma reso più vivido proprio attraverso alcuni oggetti che i miei nonni, genitori, suoceri hanno usato regolarmente nella loro vita, non tanto lontana nel tempo, ma tanto diversa nella prassi.



Pignatte e boccali

Sono oggetti che nascono o in un'area contadina, semplice, ma pratica e volta all'essenziale, senza fronzoli, o in un'area più urbana e borghese che, oltre alla funzionalità, pensa anche alla bellezza che può permettersi, magari proprio grazie al lavoro dei ceti più umili.

Partendo da zone meridionali e contadine ecco allora le varie "pignatte", alcune annerite dal fuoco del focolare su cui rimanevano varie ore per cuocere fagioli e cotenne (perché si sa che del maiale non si butta nulla, ma proprio nulla).

Altre sono più raffinate e decorate ed erano un prezioso scrigno per conservare sott'olio le prelibate soppressate da regalare solo e soltanto agli amici più cari o alle persone di riguardo,

come segno di riconoscenza profonda...



Oliere, setacci e attrezzo per fare la pasta alla chitarra

E a proposito di olio, ecco l'oliera di alluminio, il metallo povero per eccellenza, (riprodotta poi in chiave più moderna), essa pure annerita e appiccicosa per l'uso prolungato sulla mensa di tutti i giorni, o la lampada votiva ad olio, appunto, che serviva per illuminare l'angolo con le immagini dei cari defunti e veniva regolarmente alimentata a mano a mano che lo stoppino si consumava.

Anche al nord, comunque, la civiltà contadina era molto simile a quella meridionale, nell'utilizzo dei prodotti locali, nel riciclo degli avanzi e spesso, purtroppo, nella miseria generale delle famiglie.

Ecco allora i vari paioli di rame per fare la polenta (da cui l'appellativo polentoni), cibo che sazia al momento, ma che al massimo si poteva insaporire solo con una toccata ad un'aringa affumicata che, posta al centro della tavola, era il companatico per tutta la famiglia, spesso troppo numerosa.

Mentre poi di giorno gli uomini lavoravano i campi, le donne in casa provvedevano a preparare i pasti, utilizzando i vari setacci per la farina,



Lampada ad olio

impastando e tirando la sfoglia con tagliere e mattarello, o usando strumenti particolari per paste speciali, ad esempio gli spaghetti alla chitarra.

Anche il pane era prezioso per sfamare tutti in ogni momento e venivano preparate grandi pagnotte, spesso cotte nel forno comune del paese, che erano la scorta settimanale ed erano poi riposte

nella madia, avvolte in teli grezzi per conservarle meglio.

Mentre poi sul fuoco, come detto, cuocevano legumi e altro, le donne si dedicavano anche alla preparazione del corredo per le ragazze della famiglia, tessendo e ricamando lenzuola, federe, asciugamani, arricchiti da frange ed iniziali e stirati amorevolmente coi pesanti ferri a carbone.

Queste attività erano spesso svolte in comune con altre “comari” ed erano un ottimo pretesto per chiacchierare, spettegolare, cantare, sorseggiando un caffè.

Nei tempi passati, questa bevanda era fatta con cicoria o altre miscele casalinghe, con l’acqua bollita sul focolare e versata con particolari caffettiere, oggi oggetto di collezionismo.

Per gli uomini, invece, il passatempo più diffuso (e unico) era l’incontro con gli amici all’osteria, per una partita a carte, una fumatina, ed un quartino, o più, di vino locale.

A questo proposito, una curiosità: nella bellissima mostra dedicata a Cressida Campbell tenutasi alla NGA di Canberra, c’è un magnifico quadro con lo stesso contenitore che i miei suoceri usavano abitualmente come caraffa per il vino

durante i pasti (forse per qualche avo italiano in comune?).

Accanto al vino, anche il latte, magari appena munto con l’ausilio di uno sgabellino che permetteva una maggiore comodità nella mungitura, era fondamentale nell’alimentazione quotidiana.

I vari pentolini di alluminio erano messi sul fuoco a bollire e richiedevano una attenta sorveglianza per evitare che il latte fuoriuscisse, sprecandolo.

Quando poi la lunga, faticosa giornata finiva, ci si avviava a letto per il meritato riposo.

Lontane dalla cucina, cuore pulsante della casa, le altre camere erano fredde, specie in inverno.

Per riscaldare l’ambiente si usavano i bracieri, pieni appunto di braci guizzanti che, consumandosi, lentamente emanavano un po’ di tepore.

Spesso però era necessario scaldare anche le lenzuola e si usava il “frate”, un attrezzo in legno su cui si poggiava un pitale di braci.

La luce di una candela nel suo portacandele, illuminava infine di luce fioca gli ultimi gesti della giornata.

Quanto “raccontato” fino ad ora ritrae, sia pure in modo generico e sommario, soprattutto la vita dei contadini o dei ceti più umili in un’Italia unita, suo malgrado, più dalle modeste condizioni della sua gente che dagli interventi dei governi centrali di Roma.

Sempre, comunque, i ceti più alti, nobiliari prima e borghesi poi, si sono distinti anche nell’utilizzo degli oggetti della vita quotidiana: pratici, sì, ma ora anche eleganti ed esteticamente mirabili. A riprova di ciò, si vedano alcuni esempi di riproduzioni di oggetti in uso in una delle corti più raffinate del Rinascimento, quella degli Estensi di Ferrara: brocca, piatto e angioletto in ceramica con decorazione a graffito, vassoio di rame per i pranzi pantagruelici dei convitati.

Altri campioni di bellezza e decoro sono anche le ceramiche di Faenza, universalmente ammirate, e qui ricordate con un vaso dalla tipica decorazione blued oro e da una coppia di piatti col tipico motivo a garofano.



Pentolini in alluminio



Caffè e Caffettiere



Paoli di rame e Braciare



Litro e Quartini



Quartino alla maniera di Cressidra Campell



Brocca e piatto ferraresi, Vaso di Faenza



Angioletto ferrarese in ceramica



Vassoio di Rame



Ceramiche di Faenza

CULTURAL PRESENTATION BY ARMANDO CORVINI

MY LIFE AS A MOUNTAINEER FROM VAL ROSANDRA TO THE HIMALAYAS AND IN BETWEEN

**Thursday 11 May, 8pm
at Italian Cultural Centre
80 Franklin street Forrest ACT**



Armando Corvini, born in 1939, is a well-known mountain climber who moved from Italy to Australia in the 1960s and settled in Canberra in the early '70s.

He started a family with his Australian wife Jenny in the capital and then his own marble business, and rekindled his life-long love of climbing and caving here.

It was after the war, that Armando developed a love for the Dolomites, a satisfaction that would stay with him forever, but also for which he had paid a huge price.

During his adolescence, he went often to Val Rosandra, which was approximately 20 kilometres from the centre of Trieste. As well as the climbers, who looked like spiders across the cliffs, he would later grow up to scale these mountain ranges like an expert. In 1950, he enrolled himself in scouts so that he could continue pursuing his outdoor activities with his contemporaries.

As a rock climber in Italy and in Australia, Armando had not tried ice climbing, a very popular pastime in the north of Italy. In the winter of 1982, he took a course specifically to scale Blue Lake close to Kosciusko National Park and very quickly came to love the activity. He quickly learned enough to start instructing and would accompany groups most weekends to scale the ice. His capable foreman allowed him to do this, whereby he entrusted his work to him on weekends.

Eventually Armando took some expeditions to Nepal to scale the Himalayas. He was the first Italian to take Australian expeditions. The first group he took in 1988 and the highest peak

they climbed was 7,200 metres. Unfortunately, during one expedition, the group had to endure a terrible storm that lasted ten days. Armando suffered frostbite during that expedition, and he was returned and hospitalised in Canberra, losing as a result his fingers and toes. He endured several surgical procedures attempting to repair the damaged limbs and was eventually able to return to complete his last climb in 2003.

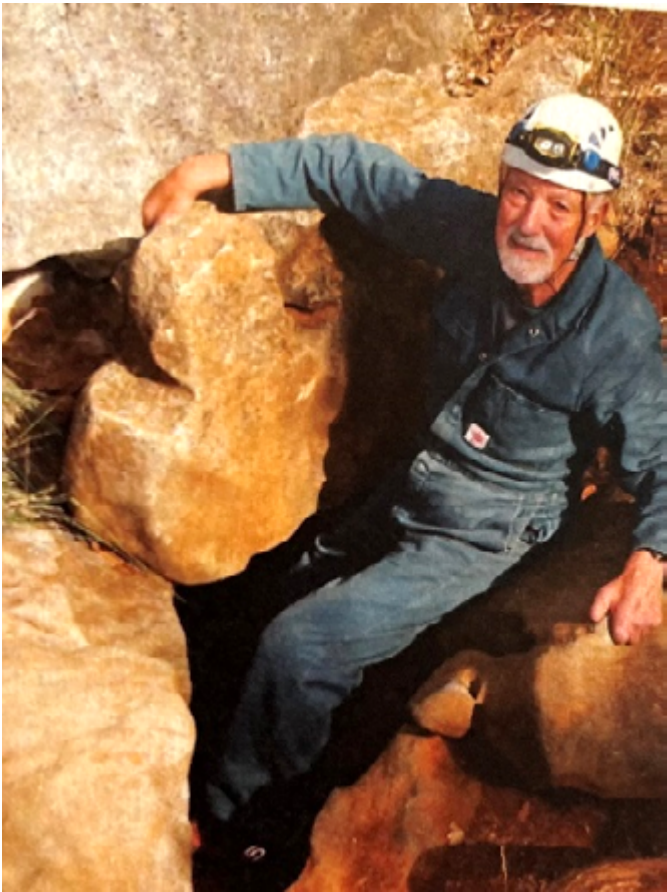
Due to these injuries Armando was not able to work with his hands anymore.

Eventually Armando decided he needed to find

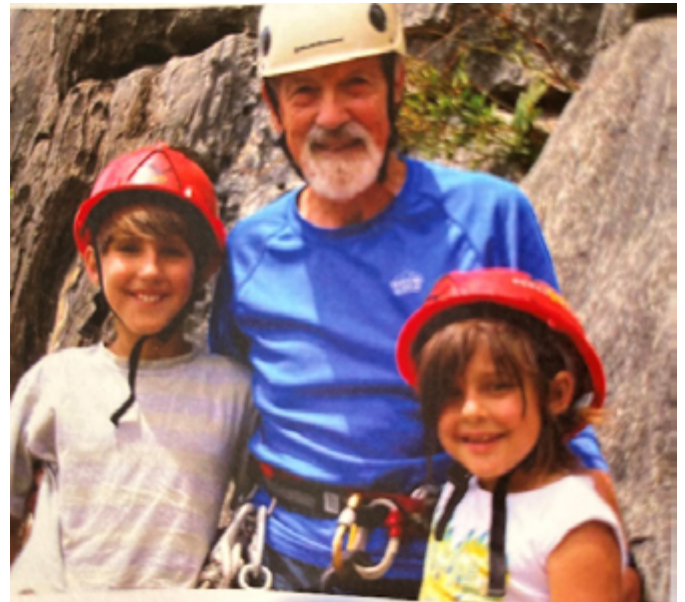


something for himself again and he wanted to give himself to others. Once physically stronger, he approached the YMCA of Canberra as a volunteer. Here, he felt useful, helping those in need of physical assistance and rehabilitation.

As he became stronger, he was later asked to take small groups of rock climbers to White Rocks in Queanbeyan. He started taking groups of beginners and later took more advanced climbers.



Armando worked as an instructor between the years of 1997 and 2005 which he says were some of the best years of his life, as he was able to return to doing the thing he loved, whilst also managing to overcome the fear and trauma that had engulfed him, a repercussion from the trek in Nepal.



He continued to volunteer at Ginninderra College in climbing and caving. His last volunteering was in 2005 at YMCA. He remained unable to fulfil his love for this sport and soon after built a company called Guided Outdoor Adventures, which is still active. It is a government-accredited organisation and accompanies school groups and passionate climbers to white rocks and Wee Jasper.

While he has climbed awesome peaks in Italy's Dolomites as well as in the Himalayas and New Zealand, these days Armando continues to explore his passion by teaching young children how to climb.

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THREE ITALIAN STREAMING SERIES:

L'ORA: INCHIOSTRO CONTRO PIOMBO, NON MI LASCIARE, AND ROSSO COME IL CIELO

Julie Docker

Recently I discovered some Italian miniseries streaming on SBS on Demand, which I would highly recommend.

The first is 'L'ora Inchiostro contro piombo', an Italian mini-series of ten episodes, televised from 8 June to 6 July 2022 in Italy on Canale 5.

Directors are Piero Mersin (ep.1-2, 8-10), 'Ciro D'Emilio (ep.3-6), and Stefano Lorenzi (ep.7).

Each episode centres on real events: in August 1958 in Palermo, L'ora, a courageous newspaper based in Palermo, published daily reports about the rise of the Mafia Boss Luciano Leggio in Corleone after the murder of the previous boss, Michele Navarra.



In each episode, a journalist is given a task: for example, two must report back on a secret meeting of the Sicilian Mafia with the arrival of group of American mobsters in a flashy hotel in Palermo. One female journalist, with aplomb, inventiveness and effrontery, works out how she will proceed: she dresses as a prostitute to join the meeting seated



around a huge table with the other prostitutes, one being a friend and informant. Of great human interest is the introduction to the office of two very young local junior apprentices to journalism, one from Corleone, which will become too the Mafia base for storing heroine; and further dramatic interest is to be found in the personalities of all the journalists, for, as the dramatic tension rises, relationships and marriages start to implode, the journalists don't get paid for months because the Communist Party, their employer, says there is no money, even though local sales are excellent.

Every morning extraordinary information is shared with discussion lead by the talented editor-in chief, himself based on the real-life director, Vittorio Nistico, who directed the paper between 1954 and 1975. This is dangerous investigative journalism; in return, the aim of the Mafia will be to destroy the paper. The acting is excellent, while the grainy black and white feel of a documentary makes this



streaming series outstanding.

The second 'serie', *Non mi lasciare* (2022), *Don't leave me*, is a modern 'poliziesco', or police drama. The crime is one worth combatting: the abduction and sale of children on the dark web now taking place in Venice. Enchanting Venice you are thinking, Rialto and San Marco! Yes and no, for Venice is also close to the coastal area called the Polesine, a vast area of the Po delta of land and marshes where once there was an orphanage for boys.

Immediately we are presented with two of the local investigating police, Vittoria Puccini as Elena Zonin, a young Venetian woman in charge of the investigation,

but who now lives in Rome, and Alessandro Roja as Daniele Vianello, her deputy; when very young they were in love, and his wife was once Elena's best friend. Clearly such a dynamic creates a huge tension of its own! And yet, the two colleagues keep a respectful distance, they stand together on the bow of their motoscafo as they head towards the Polesine to explore the orphanage and men who live nearby, and added interest is supplied by the office politics.

As danger mounts we admire how Elena's desire for information leads her to befriend a Venetian street boy; later, she ably organizes a plan to use the internet to set up a trap. We observe the captured boy, too, admire his bravery and wily intelligence, which grows into a gradual dependence on his captor, so the psychology of both protagonists and minor characters gains greater depth and fascination as the film progresses.

The third series, *Rosso come il cielo*, *Red like the Sky*, given public release in Italy in 2007, I found also to be enchanting. It is the study of a recently blinded boy, Mirco, when an accident with his father's gun blinded him at ten years of age. Mirco is from a happy Tuscan family, yet, by law, he must go and live in a religious institution for blind boys in Genova, not his own city, but one which now has political movements desiring change. Sadly, the blind boys in his class, unlike him, were blind at birth and had been taught braille which Mirco did not know, but all were placed in a situation which had no outlet for creativity and the possibility of contacts with their own society. Mirco, on the other hand, is creative and socially alert, and the interplay between him and the boys with a young sympathetic teacher leads to real change where his creativity, enjoined to that of the rest of the class, can play a role. The whole drama is moving and psychologically fascinating and was based on a true story: *Mirco Menace* became one of Italy's most famous cinematic sound editors.



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RENZO PIANO: ARCHISTAR E NON SOLO

Luigi Catizone



L'Uomo Vitruviano di Leonardo

Come è noto, l'Italia ha, anche in campo architettonico, una importante tradizione plurisecolare, a cominciare da Vitruvio (circa 80 a.C. - circa 15 a.C.), con il suo trattato in 10 Tomi "De Architectura" e con i suoi studi sulle proporzioni del corpo umano su cui si basa il celeberrimo "l'Uomo Vitruviano" di Leonardo da Vinci.

pochi coloro che, a livello internazionale, possono fregiarsi di questo titolo.

Per stabilire quali siano gli architetti italiani contemporanei più famosi nel mondo, possiamo far riferimento al Premio Pritzker, prestigioso riconoscimento per gli architetti, creato nel 1979, allo scopo di rendere omaggio ai maggiori talenti mondiali. Il primo italiano che compare è Aldo Rossi (1931-1997), vincitore nel 1990, seguito da Renzo Piano, nato a Genova nel 1937, premiato nel 1998. Se poi facciamo riferimento alle opere architettoniche di italiani che hanno lasciato il segno in questi ultimi decenni nel volto delle città più importanti nel mondo, dobbiamo citare sicuramente Massimiliano Fuksas, Gae Aulenti ed

Ancora segnaliamo Giotto (1267-1337), con il suo Campanile di Santa Maria del Fiore a Firenze e ancora Filippo Brunelleschi (1377-1446), con, tra le tante cose, la Cupola di Santa Maria in Fiore a Firenze.

Ricordiamo poi Leon Battista Alberti (1404-1472), con Palazzo Rucellai e la Facciata di Santa Maria Novella a Firenze; il Palazzo Municipale e l'incompleto Campanile del Duomo di Ferrara; il Tempio Malatestiano a Rimini e tanto altro. Noto anche l'opera di Donato Bramante, con molte opere disseminate tra Milano, Pavia, Roma, Napoli e Cassino.



Renzo Piano

Di Andrea Palladio (1508-1580) è famoso il Teatro Olimpico di Vicenza e le innumerevoli Ville in Veneto, tra cui ricordiamo "La Rotonda".

Non possiamo inoltre dimenticare Gian Lorenzo Bernini (1598-1680) famoso per Palazzo Barberini a Roma e, soprattutto, per il Colonnato di Piazza San Pietro.

Nei decenni più recenti molti sono stati nel mondo gli Architetti che hanno costruito opere memorabili che sono diventate vere e proprie icone.

Per essi è stato creato il termine Archistar, un neologismo recente che si usa per indicare un architetto molto famoso in tutto il mondo e autore di progetti particolarmente spettacolari. Sono



Il Campanile di Giotto e la Cupola del Brunelleschi a Firenze

Ettore Sottsass.

Tra tutti, Renzo Piano è forse quello più conosciuto e che ha creato opere molto significative un po' ovunque. E' nato il 14 September 1937 a Pegli, provincial di Genova.

La sua prima importante opera nasce dalla partnership con Rogers dal 1970 al 1977. E' il progetto high-tech per il Centre Georges Pompidou (1977) di Parigi, fatto per sembrare una "macchina urbana". Oltre alle originali



Una veduta del Centre Georges Pompidou

caratteristiche architettoniche, che talvolta hanno suscitato qualche critica, il Centro Pompidou ha



Auditorium Parco della Musica, Roma

comunque contribuito a rivitalizzare l'area quando è diventato un punto di riferimento di fama internazionale.

Negli anni seguenti, tantissime sono state le realizzazioni di Renzo Piano e ne ricordiamo solo alcune nelle foto che seguono e che danno l'idea dell'originalità e dell'importanza di questa Archistar.

Forte è il legame con la sua Genova. In particolare ricordiamo che ha “regalato” il progetto del nuovo ponte “Genova San Giorgio” realizzato in tempo record, in sostituzione del ponte Giorgio Morandi tragicamente crollato il 14 agosto 2018 causando la morte di 43 persone.

Tra le innumerevoli altre opere progettate e realizzate da Renzo Piano, vi sono anche: l'Aeroporto Internazionale di Kansai, in Giappone, situato su un'isola artificiale nella Baia di Osaka; la New York Times Tower, sede del famoso giornale; il Nichols Bridgeway di Chicago; il NEMO, il grande Museo delle Scienze olandese; il Centro Commerciale “Vulcano Buono” di Nola (Napoli); lo Stadio San Nicola di Bari.

Da ricordare anche che nel 2006 diventa il primo italiano inserito in Time 100, l'elenco delle 100 personalità più influenti del mondo, nonché nell'elenco delle dieci persone più importanti nel settore Arte e Intrattenimento.

La sua opera di Architetto, che tanto ha fatto onore all'Italia, e il suo impegno civile sono stati

riconosciuti con la nomina a Senatore a vita della Repubblica Italiana, da parte del presidente Giorgio Napolitano il 30 agosto 2013, assieme al Maestro Claudio Abbado, a Elena Cattaneo, una scienziata specializzata nei temi medici e della genetica, e al premio Nobel per la Fisica Carlo Rubbia.

Appena insediato, ha iniziato a pensare come potesse rendersi utile nella nuova veste. Alla fine, come egli stesso racconta, arriva alla decisione che “l'unico vero contributo che posso dare è continuare a fare il mio mestiere anche in Senato e metterlo a disposizione della collettività. Mi sono ricordato di una scena del film *Il postino* con Massimo Troisi, quando il personaggio di Pablo Neruda spiega: sono poeta e mi esprimo con questo linguaggio. Io invece sono un geometra genovese che gira il mondo e costruisco usando il linguaggio che conosco, quello dell'architettura. Ecco cosa posso fare”.

E' così che nasce il Progetto G124 (dal codice che identifica la stanza di Palazzo Giustiniani al Senato assegnata all'Architetto e Senatore a vita Renzo Piano), con lo scopo di occuparsi delle periferie urbane, che “sono la città che sarà, la città che lasceremo ai figli”.

Come riportato sul sito del G124 (Homepage – G124 (renzopiano124.com)), il Progetto prevede un gruppo di lavoro costituito da giovani architetti (tutti sotto i 35 anni e retribuiti con lo stipendio del Senatore) che, coordinati da tutor e aiutati da altre figure professionali (sociologi, antropologi, economisti, critici, urbanisti...), hanno il compito di produrre studi di “rammendo” su una periferia in un anno di lavoro. Non esistono candidature per la selezione del quartiere che sarà studiato dal G124: è il gruppo stesso a vagliare opportunità e possibilità e a decidere dove concentrare gli sforzi.

I progetti già realizzati sono 9: Arcella, Padova; Mazzarona, Siracusa; Niguarda, Milano; Rebibbia, Roma; Marghera, Venezia; Giambellino, Milano; Borgata Vittoria, Torino; Librino, Catania; Viadotto Gronchi, Roma. I progetti in corso di realizzazione sono 7: Commenda Est, Rovigo; Rione Sanità, Napoli; San Paolo, Bari; Crocetta, Modena; Guizza, Padova; ZEN 2, Palermo; Ex Mattatoio, Sora.

Notizie dettagliate delle sue opere sono disponibili sul sito Renzo Piano - Wikipedia / Renzo Piano - Wikipedia



Il tetto ondulato della California Academy of Sciences di Renzo Piano nel Golden Gate Park, San Francisco



Santuario di San Padre Pio da Pietrelcina a San Giovanni Rotondo, Italia



Centro Culturale Tjibaou, Nouméa, Nuova Caledonia



Zentrum Paul Klee, Berna



Il team del G124 Project



The Shard (già London Bridge Tower)



Il Porto di Genova



Potsdamer Platz, Berlin



Ushibuka Haiya Bridge, Kumamoto, Japan



Piano's Centro Botín in Santander, Spain



Viadotto Genova San Giorgio



Sede dei vari progetti (alcune indicazioni si sovrappongono)



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