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Realism from Italy – Socialism from Eastern Europe: The Sense of Place in the 1950s

The article is about paintings and graphic art that circulated between Italy and Eastern Europe, principally the Soviet Union and Poland, in the 1950s. Selected images are various landscapes and images of land occupations. Those images were at the crossroad between different spaces and different scales and were concerned with the representation of space, topography, and place. The main problem is therefore the spatial issue, with its corollary dynamics: close and far / mobile and immobile / North and South. How the here and there was represented?

In its iconographic resources, the Istituto storico in Modena owns two interesting small photographs, one captioned “Pavullo, 15.Agosto. mostra Italia-URSS” (fig. 1), the other “Pavullo, 15.Agosto. mostra del comune” (fig. 2).

Pavullo is a rural town located in the Apennine mountains, between Bologna and Florence, in the red heart of 1950's Italy. In both photographs we see outdoor exhibitions of small images on improvised panels – in the first case two panels are each held by a piece of metal used to hold a wooden shutter, in the second, several panels are held together by irregular pieces of wood. It is difficult to see clearly what is shown, it seems to be mostly images of architecture. The anonymous photographer was not interested in showing details, rather the whole exhibition, with all its surrounding elements: pennants, a man and scooters, high trees, and a construction site.

The two photographs offer a good introduction to spatial issues in communist visual culture. They draw attention to the local scale (here the corner of a rural street and an empty space next to a construction site) – this low-key propaganda was part of visual culture, next to high art and huge events like the “festa de l'Unità” in Italy's main cities, with their impressive murals and innovative propaganda displays. The two photographs also draw the attention to the relationship between *here* (Pavullo) and the *socialist abroad* (the Soviet Bloc). They give evidence of the geographic jump that was a crucial feature of communist culture. Small images on a wooden panel in an Italian village conveyed the idea of the gigantesque spaces in the Soviet Union. Promethean Soviet urbanism (as it was staged by propaganda material) was getting closer to the Italians, it was accessible and approachable – the local press mentions self-made models of socialist architecture, Italian citizens holding the idealized Soviet city in their hands. There is an evident contradiction between the local and the international,

and because it is contradictory, art historians might be tempted to choose one and neglect the other. But I advocate holding the two together and to consider the contradiction as an important source of understanding for images born in this context.

In this article, I will follow the geographical questions opened by this modest photography from Pavullo. I have selected paintings and graphic art that circulated between Italy and Eastern Europe, principally the Soviet Union and Poland. I have chosen images that were at the crossroad between different spaces and different scales and which were concerned with the representation of space, topography, and place. How was the *here* and *there* represented? The answers should contribute to defining the sense of place established in the 1950s by realism¹.

Artistic circulations happened in the climate of the Cold War, of mutual fears and misunderstandings – elements that we find in every history of exchanges, but that were reinforced by an intense international ideological competition. Communist Italians formed different relationships to the socialist East depending on their previous and present experiences, on what they knew from the reality of dictatorships, on what they decided to believe and on how they reacted to revolts (in East Germany in 1953, in Budapest in 1956). Similarly, Eastern Europeans could hold different opinions about Italy, they might also idealize what is on the other side of the Iron Curtain and not find in Italy what they expected. But the essential point is that, for Italians, a socialist life existed somewhere abroad, and, for Eastern Europeans, partners could be found in the Western part of Europe.

Questioning the sense of place offers a different geography of art than that focused on centers and peripheries, terms that will be avoided here. Regarding circulation between Italy and Eastern Europe, the main discussed topic so far has been the attractiveness of Italian realism². According to these studies, Italian communist art was like a breath of fresh air for Eastern European art worlds. Realist creations from Italy appeared more interesting than the ones from Soviet Union. This is evident in the collections of Eastern European museums, where more Italian, Belgian and French images are to be found than Soviet ones. Italy can therefore be presented as an artistic center in the 1950s (as it so often was in the past). The goal of this article is not to participate in this discussion, I have not selected images that were praised in Eastern Europe; I have rather selected images that explore the spatial issue, with its corollary dynamics: close and far; mobile and immobile; North and South.

A last point should be addressed in the introduction: the place of Renato Guttuso in this history. Guttuso was, by far, the most present Italian artist in socialist

Eastern Europe. He was a member of several academies of arts, and, in the 1950s, he was the only Italian to have solo exhibitions. Because of his omnipresence, other artists risk being overshadowed. But, as is often the case with realism in the 1950s, next to a big name, we find a lot of lesser-known artists. It is not possible to ignore Guttuso, but this article will not focus on him exclusively, and will not present him in a purely Italian context³.

The presence of a foreign place

In 1954, a Guttuso exhibition opened in Warsaw, as it would at several other points in the Soviet Bloc. The main text of the catalogue was written by Ryszard Stanisławski, an important art critic in Poland⁴. In his text, Stanisławski describes the relationship of Guttuso to the space, in a very ideologically orthodox manner. He celebrates Guttuso as great realist because he knows the reality that he represents, he knows the people and their environment. This was a very common idea, practically a cliché, about the method of realism: the image is the result of the presence of the artist in one place. The strength of realism was its ability to be embedded in a social milieu, reflecting it and giving artistic form to it. The artist was supposed to have spent time with common people (workers, women, children), to have discussed with them, to have sympathy for them. But it was also based on observation of spatial environments: the work environment, the interior of private spaces, the public spaces where people meet. For antimodernist artists, art critics and ideologues, this argument could be used to attack modern art, which was accused as having loose or even no connection with any place.

When an exhibition of Italian realism was organized in Eastern Europe, remote places came closer to visitors. For the exhibition *Wystawa Grafików Włoskich* [Exhibition of Italian Graphic Art] at the gallery Foksal in Warsaw in March-April 1953⁵, the list of the titles reveal a lot of different geographical names: Italian cities, big and small (Bologna, Cremona, Reggio, Brisighella, Comacchio), regions (Polesine, Lucania), political sites (portella della Ginestra, where protestors were killed in 1947), and antifascist European memory sites (Buchenwald in Germany). In the archival file about the exhibition, we can read the draft of a text in Polish. The name of author is not indicated (she appears to be Italian, writing “we Italians”), nor is the use of the document, although it was probably aimed at publication (however I have not found a published version)⁶. It is full of communist rhetoric. Entitled *Oni zwyciężą* [They Will Prevail], it speaks about the two main issues for realism: representing work and representing the struggle of the working class oppressed by capitalism. But the text also tackles geographical issues in two

ways. First Italy is presented not as a center nor as a developed country, but on the contrary as a backward country – backward because of the action of the Christian Democrat governments and the disastrous results of the Marshall plan. Secondly, it states that the views of Umbria, Calabria and Sicily, are not typical landscapes, they are not meant to be consumed by bourgeois viewers and they are not picturesque. On the contrary, they were supposed to be images of transformation and struggle, they represent fields of resistance for the working class.

We see how this new kind of landscape looked in the catalogue, which presents several reproductions, in particular a drawing by Gasparini Giansisto with the Polish title *Powódź w Polesine* [Flooding in Polesine] (fig. 3).

Giansisto's drawing is very likely about the spectacular flooding of the Polesine in 1951, but it is undated. We see a row of trees along a road, typical of the region, but here they are flooded and are useless landmarks. This is an image of desolation and confusion. The image is particularly confused in the center, where we see indistinctly the reflection of a person carrying another person on her back, the back of a reluctant cow and what is maybe the reflection of a tree. Rather than a field of proletarian struggle, Polish spectators are here confronted with views of unreadable landscapes, and uncertain political meaning.

Flooding was an iconographic motive of realism at this time, common in Eastern and Western Europe, with ideological contents. In Eastern European countries, images of flooding had to show the authorities helping the populations facing the natural disaster – the Soviet Red Army might be involved, evidence of the alleged internationalist solidarity. Images of capitalist Western Europe were, on the contrary, expected to show the fact that the populations were left helpless. But this iconography was actually more complex: after the death of Stalin in 1953 and the publication of *Оттепель* [Thaw] by Ehrenburg in 1954, images of flooding could have a new political meaning, visualizing the uncertain period, full of hopes and anxieties – the period when the ice melt announces spring, but also creates flooding and new dangers.

Occupation – being there, being here

In 1973, the Soviet trade union of agricultural workers offered its Italian partner, the Federbraccianti, a present (fig. 4): a marquetery which is a copy of Guttuso's painting *Occupazione delle terre incolte in Sicilia* (1949).

The original painting had been acquired by the East German Academy of Arts, which lent it to the Galerie Neue Meister in Dresden (nowadays, it lends it to the Museum of bildenden Künste in Leipzig). The painting became very popular

across the socialist bloc as it was frequently reproduced in all kind of publications (in East Germany, for example, it was in the list of diapositive slides available for schools, next to images by Velázquez, Courbet, Kollwitz and Siqueiros)⁷. The wooden object of 1973 is testimony of the circulation of such image forming a loop: a canvas painted in Italy went to East Berlin and, as reproductions, all over the socialist bloc; then a wooden copy was made in Soviet Union and sent to Rome. The image went through radical changes: several changes in materiality, several changes in size (the original is a big canvas of more than 2x3 meters, the various reproductions could be tiny). The object from 1973 provides an opportunity to look again at this iconic image of the socialist world.

The original painting raises many questions, as art historian Lara Pucci has noted⁸. It is the final step of his series on this topic. Stylistically, Guttuso went from neocubism in the late 1940s (visible in the small painting *Marsigliese contadina* (1947), acquired by the Szépművészeti Múzeum in Budapest⁹) to something that can be called socialist realism in the early 1950s. Pucci reminds us of the enigmatic destiny of another realist painting, *Occupazione di terre in Sicilia* (1953), which was shown in Eastern European exhibitions dedicated to Guttuso and then destroyed and cut in several pieces for unknown reason. Most of all, Pucci shows that national concerns became more and more present in Guttuso's series and she delivers a stimulating and nuanced reading of the national dimension of the painting acquired by East Berlin:

Guttuso's peasants are now contextualised by the land that is the object of their struggle, but despite the title's insistence on the Sicilianness of this scene, landscape represents a kind of Italian anywhere, or everywhere. Rather than being regionalised, Guttuso's landscape is symbolically nationalised by the swathes of green, white and red stretching down the hillside, linking the *tricolore* carried by the second peasant group in the top left of the canvas to the red flag at the head group closest to us¹⁰.

The painting is thus national – in this perspective, it participates in a very long tradition where art is supposed to construct nation¹¹. And also to the efforts of Italian communists to present themselves as true patriots, contrary to accusations of being Moscow's puppets. But, precisely because it is national, it produces “an Italian anywhere”, neglecting regional realities and making it, in a way, unrealistic.

I would like to add that the representation of space in this image can also be related to the very nature of occupation. Let us quickly recall that, according to the Segni decree of 1946, local authorities could decide to allow the growing of uncultivated (*incolte*) land and to draw up a list of people who could benefit from it, which provoked vivid debates about what is uncultivated land, leading sometimes

to occupations¹². For people participating in or attending to it, occupation was a local event questioning spatiality, challenging the usual landmarks, blurring the frontier between authorized and unauthorized spaces. Information about the process of such events in Sicily can be found in the archives of the Comitato di Solidarietà democratica di Palermo, an institution close to the communist party which provided lawyers to people accused of occupation¹³ – these sources are judiciary and therefore focused on the legality and illegality of these actions and on the acts of violence. But they can give some hints about the spatial experience.

Those protesting could gather in front of the *camera del lavoro*, or the *caserma dei carabinieri*, or the building of the *commissione comunale* in charge of the problem. Then, they may form a procession. In a document regarding an occupation in 1953 near Palermo, it is said:

At ore 11,40, circa di oggi, 23 corrente, in Bagheria, dopo riunione presso quella camera lavoro, intervenuti, in numero di 150 circa, usciti dal locale in piccoli gruppi, formavano subito dopo un corteo mentre commissario dirigente servizio CP seguito da agenti e carabinieri ingiungeva, come di rito, scioglimento, da vie laterali gruppi dimostranti iniziavano improvvisamente sassaiola ad cui seguiva pronta reazione elementi dell'ordine che pervenivano immediato scioglimento corteo¹⁴.

The rest of the document reveals that the procession covered only 100 meters, and did not go on to the disputed field. In many cases, there was no procession: people simply went to a field, each on his own, and start working the land. According to a document about another occupation in 1950, «gli occupanti divisi in gruppi, cominciarono a lavorare, zappando e arando il terreno, senza usare alcuna violenza a quelli che eravamo sul posto, che non potevamo evidentemente impedircelo»¹⁵.

Therefore, contrary to the images, there were rarely processions, human waves sweeping across the countryside. The reality of these local events was people standing in one place and only moving a little. Rather than a largescale movement, occupation was a series of small movements with the purpose of staying on a site. Something like “being there, being here”.

We do not know what Guttuso knew about these local realities. He was not in Sicily during the movements of occupation, he did not observe them directly, even if he was familiar with the landscapes, being born in Bagheria. But it is still fruitful to look at his painting through the lens of mobility and immobility. Figures are moving from left to right, a cart seems in motion. But simultaneously, other elements on the right immobilize the scene: a man with a hand next to the frame of the picture is closing the movement and the man in the foreground

on the right seems to be still, he is planting a stick in the ground. The fact that the spectator can see the entire group contributes to making it a multicolored motionless group.

When we look at the different versions Guttuso did of this scene, it is clear that he hesitated between different solutions: *Marsigliese Contadina* is a frieze, with people along the plane of the image – the painting captures part of a larger crowd that passes by. The missing painting *Occupazione di terre in Sicilia*, represents a group marching towards the spectator, following the model of the *Il Quarto Stato* by Giuseppe Pellizza da Volpedo (1898). In comparison, the painting acquired by East-Berlin is ambivalent, it presents something like a halted movement.

Through material transformation, the Soviet marquetry of 1973 brings some additional differences. The marquetry makes more visible one feature of Guttuso's painting: the geometrization of forms. The original image is composed from the juxtaposition of a great number of irregular geometric forms. In this sense, the technique of marquetry fits well with Guttuso's way of painting, underlining outlines and isolating each shape. Each element appears as autonomous and self-sufficient.

The Soviet marquetry produced another visual difference by the simple fact that it transformed every color into the color of the wood. The very intense and vivid tones of the original painting (which offers a true explosion of color) is no longer visible – the Soviet reproductions of the painting which circulated in the socialist bloc were already characterized by a specific visuality, by pale and vaporous colors. In the original painting, the red flag is particularly visible and makes the woman who carries it stand out – thanks to the pop of this color, she becomes the main figure. In Guttuso's series about occupations, the red flag and leading woman are also subjects of hesitation. In his neocubist images, the female leading figure is clearly central, like the woman in Delacroix's *La Liberté guidant le peuple* (1831). In the realist images, the role of the leading figure is more discreet. In the museo Guttuso in Bagheria, we can see sketchy drawings, where the woman faces the protestors, calling them out. In the marquetry on the contrary, she is practically invisible, the group has no leader. The red flag and the leading figure is now one form among many others, which contributes to closing the group in on itself, and to its immobility.

Another Italian painting which went to Eastern Europe was *Robotnicy rolni* [Agricultural Workers] (fig. 5), by Giuseppe Zigaina (1951), which was acquired by the National Museum in Warsaw. It is one of the many paintings made by Zigaina after the strike of the *braccianti* along the river Cormor in Spring-Summer 1950¹⁶.

This painting has a similar way of playing with the frontier between being here and going somewhere. A group on the left is arriving without haste. Between them and three men in discussion, two small wagons sit on train tracks – a standing shovel in the middle has a strange handle and the line of the train track weirdly disappears in the ground. Bicycles, the main mode of transportation for workers, four of them clearly visible here, embody the unstable immobility, standing but on the verge of falling. The bike on the left sits in a hole. The discreet visual instability is also suggested by the maintained relationship to neocubism, that was very present in Italy in the immediate postwar years, before being criticized by Togliatti himself at the Palazzo Re Enzo in Bologna in 1948. The blue, brown and grey colors, the edges of the wagons and parts of the bicycle which protect the wheel, the Picassian visage of the man facing the spectator, these all build a thwarted cubism in the realm of realism.

The sense of instability is also suggested by the general mood. Workers are calm and placid – if it is a strike (by no means certain from just looking at the image or the Polish title), it is a peaceful one. The numerous shovels in the painting contradict the quiet ambience; a shovel was not only a tool, it could also be used as a threatening weapon during strikes and occupations. The local police in Collesano in Sicily wrote in a report that a protestor told them: «non mi rompere i coglioni, se non te ne vai ti do un colpo di pala»¹⁷ – referring again to mobility and immobility, the police have to move, the protestor stays where he is.

Mountains

The visualized topography in Zigaina's painting is also interesting, it draws the attention to the mountains. The landscape here is formed uniquely by hills. We can only guess at the narrow valley through which the men come. At this period, mountains played a specific political role (as they had during World War II): they were seen as places outside of control, where authority was only partially applied. In a report of the prefecture of Modena, we can read about the communist propaganda and the «invasione arbitraria di terreni»:

Particolare cura viene rivolta dal partito ai comuni della montagna, dove la propaganda estremista ha sempre ottenuto scarsi successi. Numerosi attivisti, provenienti tutti della "bassa modenese" sono stati invitati nei comuni dell'Appennino, per svolgervi attività propagandistica. Vi è pericolo che tale azione trovi terreno facile tenuto conto che grave è il disagio economico in cui versano le popolazioni della montagna, dove la disoccupazione raggiunge cifre molto elevate e dove poco o nulla si è fatto in lavori pubblici con finanziamento governativo¹⁸.

Neither the communist party nor the prefecture seemed to have control of the elusive populations from the mountains, who are perhaps the ones depicted by Zigaina. The painting would then be an image of the populations coming from the mountains to the plains, those populations that had a variable commitment both to work and to political contestation.

In Zigaina's painting, the visual treatment of the hills is specific. On the left, they are a row of small mounds; on the right, the relief is represented by long lines of paint. Zigaina avoids the representation of a clear division between high mountains and the plain, common attributes of the landscape in northern Italy. The hills look more like a wave. They look the same as Guttuso's hills that represent Sicily. The photographer Pietro Donzelli spoke of the *terra senz'ombra* of the Po delta¹⁹. With Guttuso in Sicily and Zigaina in Friuli, we have rather mountains without shadows, or mountains as shadows, forming an Italian mountainous anywhere.

The different Italy, the North/South markers

But the main intriguing feature of Zigaina's painting is certainly its general coloration. It is dominated by dark, metallic and cold tones, that cannot be explained only as reference to cubism. The somber purple clouds and solemn green forests seem to be reflected everywhere, on the mountains, on the clothes and on the faces of the men. Let us note the absence of red in the painting, the red of the Italian flag and the red of the communist agitation, the color that politicized so many realist paintings from this period. With this general aspect, the painting has a Northern dimension, underlining the fact that Zigaina paints a local context different from those alluded to before: we are at the river Cormor, in the region of Friuli around Udine, where Zigaina lived. The artist made visible the difference with situations in Sicily and in the Pianura Padana, the two main centers of political actuality then and the areas that were the most often represented in realism.

When the painting came to Poland, the Northern characteristic of it went unnoticed. Regional differentiation was actually a tricky issue when "Italian" art was exhibited in a socialist country. Regarding the southern dimension, documents about the Guttuso exhibition in the Polish city of Lublin in June 1954 offer a glimpse at this problem²⁰.

According to the three available photographs of the layout of the exhibition (figg. 6, 7, 8), the room's white walls begin with the painting *Bezrobotny* [*Unemployed*], a teenager lying with his arm on his head, suffering from unemployment and the

heat (fig. 6), and finish with portraits of a half-naked boy wearing a basket in a sulfur mine and an old man in rags begging (fig. 8). The next room with black walls is shown from different angles in illustration 7 and 8: in the first we see an image of a woman screaming and an actual bouquet of flowers, that are no longer visible in illustration 8. In the middle of the exhibition, clearly visible in the illustration 6 and 7, hangs a painting with the Polish title *Sycylijska kobieta z osiołkiem* [*Sicilian Woman with Donkey*], a new Sicilian mountain landscape. Overall the exhibition presents an image of impoverished Southern Italy, reopening the *questione meridionale* in a Polish museum. There are no images of other parts of Italy. Nevertheless, in the written Polish sources available on the exhibition (the press review and the long general report written by the director of the museum), there is no mention of a regional dimension nor indeed of Italian geographical diversity. As in the case of Zigaina's painting, the regional characteristic is both evident and absent.

The mirror, the truth, the reunified world

Instead, in the aforementioned report, the director of the Lublin museum gives a very precise analysis of the exhibition audience and exact numbers of its composition: 2453 individual visitors (1900 individuals having an intellectual job, 300 young people, 253 workers and peasants), and 14205 visitors in 118 groups: 11 groups of peasants, 5 of workers, 70 of school pupils, 2 of soldiers, 15 of graduates for plastic art and pedagogy, 2 of art historians, 3 of economic schools and 10 of professional training. She writes that

spontaneous (*samorzutne*) discussions and loud (*głośne*) exchanges took place at the exhibition, in which artists, art historians and the public visiting the exhibition in large numbers participated. There was talk of the great power of expression and truth emanating from the artist's work. Many people after seeing the exhibition left with a deep conviction about the injustice of the capitalist system, the misery of the unemployed and the exploitation of young boys and girls²¹.

The text fits perfectly with the official expectations, especially the last portion about the evils of capitalism.

But the adjectives «spontaneous» and «loud» are unusual in this kind of rhetoric, inviting one to hypothesize (without any possibility of confirmation): what if these spontaneous and loud discussions came from the fact that visitors saw images reminding them of the current Polish situation? These figures were after all present in Poland at the time: skinny workers, a lonely peasant woman

lost in the landscape, beggars, the unemployed, half-naked miners (in the mines in Poland, miners could work naked, as elsewhere). They were very rarely represented, but the audience of the exhibition lived among them. If we accept the hypothesis that the visitors saw their own situation in the exhibition, it means that Italian images were realist, in the sense that they corresponded to the harsh reality that visitors experienced. The same question can be asked in front of the drawing by Giansisto (fig. 3): how foreign and remote is this image of disastrous flooding for a Polish spectator? Southern reality depicted by Guttuso or Padanian reality drawn by Giansisto could apply to Eastern Polish realities. These images of foreign spaces could serve as mirrors. The truth that the director alludes to in her text may not only be the truth of capitalism, but also the truth about the situation of the working class in all of Europe.

In one of the many conferences he held about popular art, Carlo Levi said in 1951: «ogni volta che leggerete in un libro o che vedrete in un film, in un quadro, qualche cosa che suona con l'inconfondibile senso della verità, vi troverete di fronte a un'espressione dell'arte contadina, di quella che annuncia la fine della crisi del nostro tempo: la possibilità di un mondo riunificato e senza terrore»²². The way the world was sometimes reunified, through this «senso della verità» was maybe not what the authorities (communist Italian or Polish authorities) expected.

Conclusion

In 1968, the National Gallery Zachęta in Warsaw opened the exhibition *Współczesna sztuka włoska [Contemporary Italian Art]*²³. The catalogue opens with a painting of 1949 by Giulio Turcato about the ruins of Warsaw²⁴. The exhibition presented twentieth-century Italian modern art: futurism, creations by Gino Severini, Giorgio de Chirico, Mario Sironi, Giorgio Morandi and many contemporary creations by Lucio Fontana, Giuseppe Capogrossi, Cy Twombly, Mario Ceroli, etc. Many art works dealt with space, exploring the dynamics of avant-gardes which go beyond the frame of the image, interacting with what is around the image, questioning the environment. What Fontana called *concetto spaziale*, translated as *myślenie przestrzenne* in Polish, certainly met the interest of creative Polish neo-avant-gardes.

Realism of the 1950s was absent (Guttuso was represented through his paintings of the early 1940s, for instance *Crocifissione* from 1941). In the Polish art world in 1968, realism was seen by many as outdated. In comparison with the spatial creations of Giuseppe Capogrossi²⁵, an exhibition like the Guttuso's in

Lublin in 1954 seems poor; realism confines art to the traditional canvas, giving again and again the illusion of a place inside the frame of a picture – it is deprived of any of the powerful spatial dynamics that are often to be found in avant-gardes. Nevertheless, as I have tried to show in this article, realism can be food for thought and an opportunity to make observations, despite its disappointing character.

The Italian exhibition in Warsaw took place in March 1968, when the Prague Spring was sprouting at another point of the Soviet Bloc, questioning the possibilities and impossibilities to redefine communism, cracking “the sense of truth” about communism, fracturing communist Europe, redefining the sense of place elaborated in Italy, Poland, Czechoslovakia, and the Soviet Union.

- 1 I use the term *realism* and avoid *socialist realism* and *neorealism*. *Socialist realism* can still be controversial and considered as derogatory. The use of the word *neorealism* today is no less problematic; coming from the field of cinema, it is nowadays used for very diverse creations, sometimes with the purpose of making previous “socialist realism” legitimate.
- 2 About Bulgaria, see Д. Аврамов, Летопис на едно драматично десетилетие. Българското изкуство между 1955–1965 г., Sofia, 1994, pp. 42-49 and pp. 385-387; H. Ноева, “Чуждестранните изложби в галерията на ул. „Раковски“ 125 през 1950-те години. Селекция и дискусии”, in «Проблеми на изкуството», 2, 2002, pp. 76-83. About Romania, see M. Predescu, *Utopie și heterotopie în arta din România anilor 1950–1970. Variatiile canonului artistic*, Cluj, 2018, pp. 185-186. About Poland, see K. Murawska-Muthesius, *How the West Corroborated Socialist Realism in the East: Fougeron, Taslitzky and Picasso in Warsaw*, in «Biuletyn Historii Sztuki», 65, 2, 2003, pp. 303-329.
- 3 For recent research on Guttuso in Italy, see *Renato Guttuso. Nuovi studi*, ed. by B. Tomassi, Milano, 2019; C. Perin, *Guttuso e il realismo in Italia 1944-1954*, Milano, 2020.
- 4 From 1966 to 1990, he was director of the prestigious Museum Sztuki in Łódź and was very active in maintaining international connections with other museal institutions in the world.
- 5 Archiwum Akt Nowych (AAN), Komitet Współpracy Kulturalnej z Zagranicą w Warszawie, 2/175/0/6.1/270, Wystawa grafików włoskich w Polsce w 1953 roku.
- 6 It is not the introduction text in the catalogue, which was written by Julian Strykowski, a writer and journalist, who was in Rome after the war and was expelled from Italy because of his novel on Italian peasants.
- 7 «Liste der Dias für die Klasse», in *Kunsterziehung*, 1, 1972, p. 19.
- 8 L. Pucci, *Terra Italia: the peasant subject as site of national and socialist identities in the work of Renata Guttuso and Giuseppe de Santis*, in «Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes», 71, 2008, pp. 315-334.
- 9 <https://mng.hu/mutargyak/foldfoglalas-sziciliaban/> (consulted on 08.08.2022). The original Italian title means *Peasant Marseillaise*, but the title in Hungarian is simply *Occupation of the land in Sicily*. Translated titles were frequently different from the original ones, revealing or on the contrary hiding the localization of the action.

- 10 Pucci, *Terra Italia*, cit., p. 326.
- 11 On this issue for postwar Italy, see: *Nascita di una nazione. Tra Guttuso, Fontana e Schifano*, exhibition catalogue (Firenze, Palazzo Strozzi, 16 March – 22 July 2018), ed by L.M. Barbero, Venezia, 2018.
- 12 About the history of occupations in Sicily, see, among many others, F. Renda, *Movimenti di massa e democrazia nella Sicilia del dopoguerra*, Bari, 1979; F. Pezzino, *Il lavoro e la lotta. Operai e contadini nella Sicilia degli anni 40 e 50*, Catania, 1987; N. Mignemi, *terres occupées, terres disputées: la province de Caltanissetta de la Libération à la réforme agraire*, in *Coopératives et mondes agricoles. France et Italie (1880-1950)*, Rennes, 2017, pp. 243-289.
- 13 The fund was donated to the Gramsci Institute of Palermo in 1983. About the history of the committee and the donation of the fund, see «*Bollettino Istituto Gramsci Siciliano*», a. XVII, 1999, numero unico.
- 14 Istituto Gramsci Siciliano (IGS), Comitato di Solidarietà democratica di Palermo, b. 11, f. 15, Procedimento penale contro V.S., 23 gennaio 1953.
- 15 IGS, Comitato di Solidarietà democratica di Palermo, b. 11, f. 11, Esame di V. P. i S. da Campofiorito, 28 maggio 1950.
- 16 About this group of paintings, see the catalogue of the exhibition at the Museo di Santa Giulia in Brescia: M. Goldin, *Zigaina. Opere 1942–2009*, Treviso, 2008.
- 17 IGS, Comitato di Solidarietà democratica di Palermo, b. 11, f. 13, Legione territoriale dei carabinieri di Palermo, stazione di Collesano. Processo verbale di denuncia presentata della Guardia Municipale G.S. (no date, probably 1953).
- 18 Archivio centrale dello Stato (ACS), Ministero dell'interno, Gabinetto, archivio generale, relazioni dei prefetti e dei carabinieri 1944-1952, busta 210, Relazione mensile, Modena, Aprile 1950.
- 19 *Pietro Donzelli. Terra senz'ombra, il delta del Po negli anni cinquanta*, ed. by R. Valtorta, R. Siebenhaar, Milano, 2017.
- 20 AAN, Komitet Współpracy Kulturalnej z Zagranicą w Warszawie, 2/175/0/6.1/271. The museum in Lublin does not own more documents about the exhibition, I thank Katarzyna Szymańska for her a research into it.
- 21 AAN, cit., Sprawozdanie z organizacji wystawy prac Renato Guttuso (11.06.1954).
- 22 ACS, Fondo Carlo Levi, b. 76, conferenza, 3 aprile 1951.
- 23 The catalogue, documentation photographs and diverse publications are available online: <https://zacheta.art.pl/pl/wystawy/wspolczesna-sztuka-wloska-100-dziel-od-futuryzmu> (consulted on 08.08.2022)
- 24 The catalogue introduction addresses issues of what will later be called the geography of art: it discusses how and why some artistic productions have been Europeanized and universalized, while other have remained provincial.
- 25 <https://zacheta.art.pl/pl/mediateka-i-publikacje/wspolczesna-sztuka-wloska-100-dziel-od-futuryzmu?galeria=5> (consulted on 08.08.2022).



Fig. 1: Istituto storico di Modena, fotografie b. 13, "Pavullo, 15. Agosto. mostra Italia-URSS".



Fig. 2: Istituto storico di Modena, fotografie b. 13, "Pavullo, 15. Agosto. mostra Italia-URSS".



GASPARINI GIAN SISTO

Powódź w Polesine

Fig. 3: Drawing by Gasparini Giansisto reproduced in the catalogue Wystawa Grafików Włoskich. Archiwum Akt Nowych, Komitet Współpracy Kulturalnej z Zagranicą w Warszawie, 2/175/0/6.1/270.



Fig. 4: Archivio storico Donatella Turtura, fondo Federbraccianti, marquetery with the title: "al IX congresso della Federbraccianti dal sindacato dei lavoratori agricoli dell'URSS / IX Конгрессу Федербраччанти от профсоюза сельхозрабочих СССР. Mosca – 1973 – Roma".



Fig. 5: Giuseppe Zigaina, *Robotnicy rolni*, 1951, oil on canvas, 200x150cm.
Muzeum Narodowe w Warszawie, fot. Krzysztof Wilczyński.



Fig. 6: Photography of the Guttuso exhibition in Lublin in 1954. Archiwum Akt Nowych, Komitet Współpracy Kulturalnej z Zagranicą w Warszawie, 2/175/0/6.1/271.



Fig. 7: Photography of the Guttuso exhibition in Lublin in 1954. Archiwum Akt Nowych, Komitet Współpracy Kulturalnej z Zagranicą w Warszawie, 2/175/0/6.1/271.



Fig. 8: Photography of the Guttuso exhibition in Lublin in 1954. Archiwum Akt Nowych, Komitet Współpracy Kulturalnej z Zagranicą w Warszawie, 2/175/0/6.1/271.