



MUSEO
ITALO AMERICANO

NEWS
LETTER

OCTOBER • DECEMBER 2023

RICCARDO ROSSATI

VILLA ARCONATI AND IMAGINARY WORLDS

Organized By



FONDAZIONE
AUGUSTO
RANCILIO
Villa Arconati

11.16.2023

03.31.2024

Members Opening 11.28.2023

Preserving Our Italian Heritage & Culture

MUSEO ITALO AMERICANO

2 Marina Blvd.
Fort Mason Center, Building C
San Francisco CA 94123

MUSEO FUTURE HOME

940 Battery St.
San Francisco, CA 94111
By appointment Only Wed. - Fri.

Hours: Tue. - Fri. 12 - 4 | Sat. - Sun. 10 - 4

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Grazie Members!

The list on this page includes donations received from **June 1, 2023 to August 31, 2023** and are exclusive of donations made to the Capital Campaign. Our sincere apologies if any names were inadvertently omitted.

Clara & Joseph Barbaccia, Jeanne & Donald Dana, Ruth & Dan DeNardi, Julie Dickson, Sandra Gulli, Lar Landa, Carolyn Lopez, Maxwell Hanrahan Foundation, Eileen Mougeot, Alida Morzenti, Bobby & Tito Patri, Nola Pardi Proll, Lorraine & Kevin Shuba, Kathleen & Joseph Silvestri.

BRAVO – News

As we approach the final weeks of our documentary exhibition, *Bravo - Celebrating San Francisco Opera: Its Italian Roots and Legacy*, we wish to express our deep appreciation to two special speakers: Barbara Rominski, Director of Archives at the San Francisco Opera and Professor Alexandra Amati, Italian Musicologist. Barbara's remarkable storytelling talent not only captivated our audience during the lecture, but also unveiled hidden treasures within the Opera's archives. Alexandra examined the differences in men's and women's music since the birth of the opera genre, as well as the ways in which misogyny and antifeminism have influenced the development of operatic plots, casting, and staging over the centuries.

We are also delighted to invite you to our upcoming one-day symposium: **Italian Opera In San Francisco: Then & Now**, scheduled for October 14th, from 10:30 AM to 3:30 PM. The deadline for enrollment is October 8th. This symposium promises a captivating journey through fascinating aspects of our city's love affair with opera and the Italians who made it all happen, featuring insightful discussions on various topics, such as Merola's visionary role in bringing opera to San Francisco, the enchanting tale of how Verdi's "Ernani" captured San Francisco's heart, the enduring influence of Italian diva Claudia Muzio, and many other enthralling stories from the past that continue to resonate today.

Our esteemed panel of speakers includes Kip Cranna, Dramaturg Emeritus of San Francisco Opera; Lori Harrison, Master of Properties at San Francisco Opera; Jeffery McMillan, Public Relations Director at San Francisco Opera; Marina Romani, Lecturer at UC Berkeley; Barbara Rominski, Director of Archives at San Francisco Opera.

Secure your spot now by visiting our event page at <https://sfmuseo.org/event/opera-symposium/> or by contacting the Museo directly at info@sfmuseo.org or 415.673.2200



Celebrating San Francisco Opera
Its Italian Roots and Legacy

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↑ Dino Borgioli (as Pinkerton), Maestro Gaetano Merola, and Alfredo Gandolfi (as Sharpless) on the set of *Madama Butterfly*, 1934. *Historical Archive Collection of the Museo Italo Americano. Gift of Alessandro Baccari*



← Salvatore Baccaloni as Dr. Bartolo in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, 1938. *Gift of Alessandro Baccari. Historical Archive Collection of the Museo Italo Americano*

New Exhibition: *Riccardo Rossati - Villa Arconati & Imaginary Worlds*

The Museo Italo Americano is delighted to present **Riccardo Rossati - Villa Arconati & Imaginary Worlds**, an exceptional exhibition featuring the works of an Italian artist, whose vision is characterized by surreal and imaginative qualities. This exhibition offers a captivating blend of two distinct themes: the enchanting Villa Arconati, nestled near the city of Milan, and a series of visionary artworks that transport viewers to imaginary cities and places. These paintings offer a window into the artist's unique perspective and his ability to evoke emotion through his vivid and fantastical creations.

Each series is known for its surreal and imaginative visions, created with a style that exudes a mysterious and magical quality. Rossati's confident and fluid brushstrokes create a dreamlike world capable of emotionally engaging the viewer. While the works may initially appear to depict reality, his art takes viewers into a mysterious and fantastical realm where nature reigns supreme. The gardens' baroque architecture is depicted as vigorous, exuberant, and unstoppable, with water cascades replacing traditional pathways and creating a spectacle of energy and beauty. Water plays a significant role in his art. Torrents invade the internal spaces of the villa, resembling natural pathways between rocks. This water penetration gives rise to natural and unique environments, revitalizing these ancient spaces and enhancing well-being.

Villa Arconati, also known as **Castellazzo Degli Arconati**, is a significant historical estate situated in the district of Castellazzo within the town of Bollate, located to the northwest of Milan, Italy. This majestic rural palace and its accompanying gardens hold great historical and architectural importance. For many centuries, it was a place inaccessible to most and open only to a select few privileged individuals. However, today, due to the restoration efforts and cultural transformation undertaken by the **Augusto Rancilio Foundation**, Villa Arconati opens its doors to all who wish to experience its timeless allure. The project initiated by Count Galeazzo Arconati in 1610 to expand and enhance Villa Arconati was a significant undertaking that transformed the villa from a humble countryside residence into one of the most magnificent and imposing noble estates among the Milanese patricians. It earned the title "royal villa" as early as the 1600s, thanks to its opulence that rivaled the splendor of royal residences. This formidable endeavor spanned almost 150 years, culminating in the transformation of the estate from a humble countryside villa into a palace referred to as "The little Versailles of Milan" in 18th-century guides. Villa Arconati's transition from a grand Baroque palace to a multifunctional space that hosts cultural events and meetings demonstrates its ability to adapt and remain relevant in contemporary times while preserving its historical charm. It is a testament to the enduring appeal of Italy's cultural and architectural heritage.

Riccardo Rossati - Villa Arconati & Imaginary Worlds is organized by Fondazione Augusto Rancilio and with the support of Gallerie Kiron, in collaboration with the Italian Cultural Institute of San Francisco and with the patronage of the Italian Consulate General in San Francisco.

→ From the top:

- Main Entrance, Villa Arconati also known as *Castellazzo Degli Arconati*
- Portrait of Riccardo Rossati, 2023 - Photo courtesy Elio Pellegrini
- Riccardo Rossati, *Arconati immaginaria I*, oil on canvas, 2019



Centennial Celebration of the Columbus Branch of Bank of America

On Tuesday, August 15, 2023, the Museo participated in the centennial celebration of the Columbus Branch of Bank of America in North Beach. Museo board member Mark Schiavenza made remarks during the program on behalf of the Museo echoing the other salutes to the Bank's founder, A.P. Giannini, and sharing the ways in which the Museo will permanently recognize Giannini in its future home at 940 Battery Street.

Opened in late 1922 as a branch of the Bank of Italy, the Columbus Financial Center has been a pillar of the community ever since. To mark the occasion, Bank of America showcased a bronze bust of Giannini to be on permanent display in the office. Commissioned in 1949, artists Holger and Helen Webster Jensen designed a heroic style bust of A.P. Originally unveiled by his daughter and granddaughters in 1950, the bust has remained a cherished artifact of the bank.

Following the celebration, the Museo hosted Gioia Corigliano McCarthy, San Francisco-East Bay Market President, members of her team, Dr. Gloria Duffy, President & CEO of the Commonwealth Club, and her husband Rod Diridon Sr., known as the "father" of modern transit service in Silicon Valley, for a private tour of the Museo's future home at 940 Battery Street.

The Museo is grateful to Heidi H. Racherla, Senior Vice President, San Francisco-East Bay Market Manager at Bank of America, for including us in this event and looks forward to future opportunities to partner with the Bank toward our mutual goal of keeping the legacy of A.P. Giannini alive and accessible for future generations.



↑ The bronze bust of A.P. Giannini, founder of Bank of America, by Holger and Helen Webster Jensen. *Picture courtesy of Heidi Racherla*



↑ Group picture taken inside the Columbus Branch of Bank of America in North Beach. *Picture courtesy of Heidi Racherla*



↑ Opened as a branch of the Bank of Italy in 1922, now the Columbus Financial Center of Bank of America. *Picture courtesy of Heidi Racherla*



↑ Museo's Managing Director, Sandra Bagnatori, Museo Capital Campaign Counsel, Mecca Billings, and Museo Board Treasurer, Mark Schiavenza, and special guests from Bank of America and the Commonwealth Club outside the Museo's future home at 940 Battery Street. *Picture courtesy of Heidi Racherla*