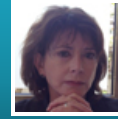


THE VIEW FROM ROME
WHAT'S HAPPENING IN ITALY IN ENGLISH



di Kay Wallace

20 MAR 2020

Life under lockdown: Art for the quarantined heart



Infected: 37,860. New cases: 4,670. Recovered: 5,129. Deaths 4,032. Total affected: 47,021.

There is little in the way of good news from Italy. As each day passes, the views from our windows increasingly resemble a scene from a dystopian sci-fi movie. Soldiers patrol the streets of Milan to keep people in their homes. In Bari, drones are being used to spot those congregating illegally. Tomorrow, roadblocks will be set up around Rome to stop people entering or leaving.

Fondi, a city in Lazio south of Rome that dates back at least to 338 BCE, has been declared a “Red Zone” after a coronavirus cluster was identified. Two have died, 47 are positive and a further 760 are in isolation at home.

Also in Lazio, but closer to home, two convents were isolated Friday, one in Rome where 19 of the 21 nuns have tested positive, and one at Grottaferrata in the Castelli Romani where some 40 nuns tested positive.

I could go on. Medical professionals in the north are already at war, and others, particularly in Puglia, are gearing up for the battle. As for the rest of us, there’s not much we can do except stay home and try to keep each other’s spirits up. Italians are using all their renowned *fantasia* to find new ways to divert and distract their fellow citizens.

Tonight sees the start of a series of “home cinema” screenings, “[Marco Asilo - the hospitable house](#)” in the Pigneto-Prenestino area of Rome. Romans cannot leave home to go to the cinema so a series of films will be projected from a roof-top terrace onto neighbouring buildings.

Organized by Marco G Ferrari, Lyric de la Cruz and Donatella Della Ratta, the first “hospitable house” event was held on February 14th. Marco Asilo invited poets, performers, filmmakers and musicians to put on a performance for an audience of friends and neighbours. Each performed in a different part of the apartment (bedroom, kitchen, bathroom, living room, entrance and terrace).

The evening ended with a terrace screening of an excerpt from Marco G Ferrari’s experimental film *Porta Maggiore* with live music by Igor Legari and Giacomo Ancillotto, and the inspiration for a further series of “home performances” for life under quarantine. Every Friday and Sunday, Marco Asilo will project a series of silent, experimental films from his terrace to cheer up the neighbourhood. These will be followed in the coming weeks by poems and performances.

Pigneto-Prenestino is one of Rome’s hippest areas, and the event is supported by local art and activist groups like Ex Snia and the Forum Territoriale del Parco delle Energie.

In addition to lifting some of the weight from our quarantined hearts, the organisers are also promoting [Rigenera](#), a series of “slow” artistic happenings, images, sounds, poetry and food with minimal environmental impact. It is planned for September. We hope from the depths of our quarantined hearts that it will be held and we are free to attend.

For further information: Ddr@mediaoriente.com

With the support of Ex Snia and the Forum Territoriale del Parco delle Energie.

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