"Free Film Made Freely: Paolo Gioli and Experimental Filmmaking in Italy"
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"As a premise for my way of making films and working with film, the most important thing is the movie-camera understood almost as a laboratory (for the shooting and printing of films)… I express my love for the cinema through the movie-camera; in terms of time requirements and production costs, I'm beginning to invent them for myself. Free films made freely." (Paolo Gioli)

Given the large amount of attention that the Italian film industry routinely gets from scholars and critics, it is surprising how little we have come to know about avant-garde and experimental filmmaking in Italy. We understand a great deal about avant-garde films in France, Germany, the Soviet Union, and Great Britain, and yet Italy's contributions in this area have been almost entirely neglected by film scholars and historians in the English speaking world. Even in Italy, there is surprisingly little attention given to the filmic avant-gardes, beyond a relatively short list of studies by a handful of scholars – most notably Adriano Apra', Massimo Bacigalupo, Bruno Di Marino, Raffaele Milani, Carla Subrizi, Mario Verdone and a few others. It's certainly not for a lack of films and filmmakers, however. Ever since the Futurist filmmakers Bruno Corra and Arnaldo Ginna conducted their first experiments with music and projected light in the 1910s, Italian visual artists have explored the potential of film as an expressive medium. The list of important filmmakers in the "Italian underground" would include the Futurists Corra, Ginna, F.T. Marinetti, Giacomo Balla, Emilio Settimelli, Remo Chiti (all co-authors of the Manifesto of Futurist Cinema in 1916 and the film, *A Futurist Life*, that resulted from it that same year) but also later filmmakers such as Luigi Veronesi, Cioni Carpi, Silvio and Vittorio Loffredo, Nato Frasca', and a long list of filmmakers associated with the Italian neo-avant-garde, including Paolo Gioli, one of the few contemporary filmmakers still experimenting on celluloid. These names represent a vast continent of audio-visual experimentation that remains greatly under-explored – and almost entirely unknown in North America. In what follows, my goal is shed some new light on experimental filmmaking in Italy, focusing primarily on films made since the 1960s, and to do so by examining some aspects of the work of Paolo Gioli. One of Italy's most important contemporary experimental filmmakers, Gioli inherits the legacies of the European and North American avant-gardes while fashioning a body of work whose unique contributions to the theory and practice of experimental film we are now in a position to recognize.

Neo-Avant-Garde Film in Italy

> Independent cinema…is today a reality in even in Italy. The phenomenon first spread from the United States towards Anglo-Saxon Europe, subsequently touching upon the entire continent. As usual, we are last in this race… This cinema must, slowly but surely, become a cinema of liberation …. This cinema is nothing other than a cinema

of revolt. (Editorial Board, *Ombre elettriche*, 1967)

Even a general understanding of Gioli's films might benefit from some historical contextualization. Avant-garde filmmaking in Italy – that is, the elaboration of a collective mode of independent film production, distribution and exhibition -- had two important historical moments over the last century: Futurist filmmaking, taking place during the 1910s, followed several decades later, by a second, neo-avant-garde film movement identified with the Independent Film Cooperative (the Cooperativa Cinema Indipendente, or CCI) of the late 1960s. While there certainly were filmmakers experimenting in non-commercial film in the decades between these two movements, their work was largely produced outside any clearly defined film movement: most notably by Luigi Veronesi in the 1930s-40s, followed by Silvio and Vittorio Loffredo and Cioni Carpi in the 1950s-60s (Carpi completed many of his films outside Italy, including his outstanding animated film *One Day an Airplane* which he made in Montreal in 1963 with support from the National Film Board of Canada). While the Loffredo brothers would become protagonists in the neo-avant-garde of the 1960s, the work of Veronesi and Carpi was made largely in isolation, and the destruction of many of Veronesi's films during the bombardments of the World War II has made any thorough appreciation of his work rather challenging. Among other things, Veronesi and Carpi represent a tendency of camera-less filmmaking in Italy that culminates, most recently, in at least some of the work of Paolo Gioli.

It was in the early 1960s that many more artists began to experiment with film, thanks to the availability of fairly inexpensive, consumer-grade film cameras, allowing for the production of very inexpensive 16mm and, later, 8mm films. The best known of these filmmakers worked in Turin, Florence, Rome and Naples, and included the Loffredo brothers, along with Alfredo Leonardi, Massimo Bacigalupo, Paolo Brunatto, Nato Frasca', Antonio De Bernardi, Giorgio Turi, Roberto Capanna, Alberto Grifi, Anna Lojolo, Guido Lombardi, Gianfranco Baruchello, Mario Schifano, Luca Patella, Ugo Nespolo, Piero Bargellini, Pia Epremian, Andrea Granchi, Sirio Luginbuhl, Luigi Ontani, Anna Miscuglio, the Vergine brothers (Adamo, Aldo and Antonio), and several others. At least in part inspired by new models of independent film collectives in Europe and North America, several of these filmmakers joined together in May, 1967, to form the Cooperativa Cinema Indipendente (or CCI). The organization of an Italian film cooperative designed to promote the production, distribution and exhibition of experimental films – the elaboration of a parallel market alongside the studio system -- emulated, in particular, the rise of the Filmmakers' Cooperatives in New York City and London. However, even before this, and perhaps more important in terms of the aesthetic developments in Italy, were the first exhibitions in Italy of experimental films from the United States. Of particular importance were programs of American avant-garde films brought to Italy on separate occasions between 1964 and 1967, the first by P. Adams Sitney (who secured his conscientious objector status during the Vietnam war by agreeing with his Draft Board to lecture about film in Europe) and thereafter by Jonas Mekas, founder of the New York Filmmakers' Coop. These programs in particular helped to spark a fertile period of experimentation in Italy. The CCI was legally based in Naples, under Adamo Vergine's

coordination, though its center of gravity was surely Rome. While it was a short-lived project, formally dissolving in 1969, it helped inaugurate a period of intense productivity and innovation in experimental film that lasted long after the formal dissolution of the CCI two years after its founding.

The first program of films by the CCI was shown at the Filmstudio gallery in Rome, which opened in October of 1967 in order to promote independent filmmaking in Italy – and to this day, the Filmstudio is an important outlet for experimental films in Rome (including, most recently, a massive retrospective of the Italian underground cinema in 2003). The film journal most associated with the CCI, and which presented itself most forcefully as the mouthpiece for the Italian underground, was the Turin-based *Ombre elettriche* (Electric Shadows). This journal, which presented itself forcefully in its first issue as one of the mouthpieces of Italian underground film – calling for a cinema of liberation and revolt -- published three issues in 1967, before it too dissolved, due to disagreements over the proper responsibilities (aesthetic vs. revolutionary) of filmmakers. (Other film journals that gave sustained attention to experimental film at this time, thanks in large measure to film critic and historian Adriano Apra', included *Filmcritica* and *Cinema & film*.) The CCI was an attempt by a coordinated avant-garde collective to sustain and promote an alternative cinema in Italy, and to shelter filmmakers from the economic constraints of commercial cinema. One of the interesting results of the new film cooperative was a collectively-authored film entitled *Tutto Tutto nello stesso istante* (Everything, Everything All at Once), made in 1968, in which the activity of the individual filmmakers was subordinated to the aesthetic of the group – a sort of neo-avant-garde, collectivist approach to film production already rehearsed by Marinetti's group fifty years earlier in the making of *A Futurist Life*. It was, however, the only experiment in collective authorship the CCI filmmakers carried out. The CCI filmmakers (along with other filmmakers working in the orbit of the CCI, including perhaps most importantly the Florence School of experimental filmmakers such as Andrea Granchi, Massimo Becattini, and others) produced an impressive quantity of films. Indeed, such productive energies remained generally undiminished through at least the mid-1970s but, with the arrival of portable video (the Portapaks produced by Sony, Akai, JVC, and Panasonic), most motion picture artists abandoned film in favor of the new medium. Indeed, video very nearly sounded the death knell for experimental filmmaking, and not only in Italy.

Like most film movements, the CCI was a short-lived project. It was disbanded by the end of 1969, mainly due to conflicts within the group about what the proper goal of art filmmaking should be, with some insisting that their films should promote social and economic revolution (in the didactic mode of guerilla filmmaking and propaganda for the political parties and movements of the Left) while others defended the principle of artistic freedom: the notion that art should remain the domain for non-dogmatic expression. Emblematic in this regard is experimental filmmaker Massimo Bacigalupo's suggestion, in an important description of the rise and fall of the CCI (of which he was a central figure), that "you don't have to talk about the king in order to make political films." The aesthetic and ideological passions underlying Bacigalupo's statement were those that had contributed to the break-up of the group – and indeed such schisms are emblematic of the

ideological and aesthetic tensions that conditioned all of the arts during the late 60s and 70s, as any study of the literary neo-avant-gardes, for example, would readily show. Be that as it may, the CCI's experiment in creative and economic autonomy for experimental filmmakers would have lasting effects in the years that followed, not least of all among feminist film collectives of the decade that followed (i.e. the Feminist Film Collective set up in Rome by Anna Miscuglio, and the Nemesis collective led by Lina Mangiacapre in Naples). By 1980, certainly, whatever was left of avant-garde energies would be directed towards video, with groups such as Videobase (emerging directly from the CCI) and Studio Azzurro leading the way.

Paolo Gioli: Free Films Made Freely

Paolo Gioli emerges against the backdrop of this moment of ideological and aesthetic (dis)integration associated with the CCI, and his first films date precisely from 1969, the year of the CCI's formal dissolution. Since that year, Gioli has made well over 30 films, almost exclusively using the 16mm film gauge, with occasional use of Super 8mm and video. As we shall see in what follows, one of the distinguishing aspects of Gioli's work is his deconstructive attitude towards motion picture technology, as seen in his early tendency toward hand-painted films as well as in his unusual manipulations of camera mechanisms and optics, and his very unique interest in constructing his own pin-hole movie cameras from readily available materials for several of his films. Gioli's engagement with the mechanisms of motion pictures and the formal constraints of the medium results in a body of work that belongs to the "structuralist" tendency of experimental filmmaking – a tendency that, with the exception of Gioli, never gained serious traction in Italy, as it did elsewhere in Europe and North America. Ever suspicious of technology and the consumerist culture that constrains motion picture artists, Gioli belongs to a history of avant-garde filmmaking whose roots are in early 20th-Century Europe while its most recent products result from an on-going transatlantic dialogue about the expressive capacities and ethical responsibilities of the cinema.

Born in 1942 in a small town in northern Italy named Sarzano, near the city of Rovigo, Gioli attended art school at the Academy of Fine Arts in Venice, where he studied painting and specialized in portraiture. During this time, Gioli developed his knowledge of European avant-garde film, watching films by Vertov, Richter, Ruttmann, and others at the Archives of the Venice Biennale and at the Galleria di Cardazzo. Gioli was especially struck by what he saw as the combination of film and painting in Richter's abstract animations from the 1920s (i.e. *Rhythmus 21*). Gioli's first impulse to make films dates from this period of study in Venice, and his filmography confirms the decisive influence of the European avant-gardes.

In 1967, Gioli was awarded a John Cabot Fund scholarship, which enabled him to travel to New York City, where he set up a painting studio and spent the next year working and immersing himself in the Manhattan art scene. During the one year he spent in New

York, he encountered the work of North American experimental filmmakers associated with the New American Cinema. Gioli has recalled watching experimental films at a little cinema in Manhattan that he stumbled upon by chance -- and to which he never returned after a police raid soon thereafter. In the summer of 1968, after his visa had run out and in the political climate that arose after the assassinations of Martin Luther King and Robert F. Kennedy, Gioli was forced to leave the States by the U.S. Immigration Office. However, sometime in the months before his departure, Gioli had the good fortune to befriend an international lawyer named Paolo Vampa whom he met at the Rizzoli Bookshop in Manhattan. Since their meeting, Vampa has played an enormously productive role in Gioli's artistic career, combining the essential functions of producer, agent, and collector.

It was Vampa who supplied Gioli his first movie camera, a 16mm Paillard Bolex that Vampa had received as a wedding present around this time and promptly traded to Gioli in return for art. Gioli has written eloquently about this camera, describing how he uses it the way the first Lumiere cameramen did in the late 1800s: as a machine for shooting film and as an optical printer. However, it is important to note that Gioli's first film, *Traces of Traces*, which he made in 1969 after his return to Italy, was made without a movie camera, applying pigments to clear leader, using his fingers, hands, arms and other body parts, as well as paint brushes and, perhaps, rubber stamps. *Traces of Traces* is a record of the impressions made by the artist's body, including the texture of skin and contours of the flesh – and we should not forget that the Italian word for film is *pellicola* (from *pelle*: skin). Gioli makes his first film-*pellicola* as an analogue of skin, both conceived as the interface between the human being and the outside world. It is a film that announces one of the central concerns of all of Gioli's work to follow: the human body, desire, and the physical and psychological processes involved in sense perception. To that end, Gioli set out to make films as tactile experiences, tracing the traces of the maker's hands, the way a ceramicist's hand is visible on the finished vessel. This is a painter's film, in the way he works up the surface, making the celluloid into a recipient of embodied gestures. Ultimately, what is presented visually can be seen as a registration of a pulsating energy taking form, becoming visible – we might call his first film a representation of thinking as haptic encounter with objects, a registration of perceiving. It is visually stunning contribution to the tradition of hand-painted films whose most significant practitioners include Ginna, Corra, Veronesi and Carpi, in Italy, and Stan Brakhage, Harry Smith, and Norman McLaren in North American.

Gioli's preoccupation with perception will be found in all of his films, certainly – and his most recent film, *Rothkofilm* (2008), is a homage to a painter whose ambition was to counter the "visual laws" that were institutionalized during the Renaissance with the "tactile mode" of modern painting. Among Rothko's amibition was to make paintings that were not "illusions" of objective reality but rather objective "facts" in themselves, such that he is able to suggest that modern painting, such as his own, might encroach upon the domain of the sculptor: "the picture is a thing of paint on a flat surface, and there is no need to make it appear as something else..." Gioli, too, makes films that call upon a tactile response in his viewers – we might call them "things of imprinted celluloid" -- and to do so requires that he do battle, as Rothko did for painting, with the "naturalist" and "illusionary" burdens of his

medium – in this case, its photographic basis. And nowhere is the question of perception more central than in the films he makes without a movie camera, using his own home-made pin-hole cameras, or using his Paillard Bolex after stripping out the shutter mechanism, replacing it with various external shutters, including the human hand as well as fascinating devices he builds in his studio. The films that result, including his astonishingly beautiful *Pinhole Film*, subtitled *Man without a Movie Camera*, are surely among Gioli's most significant contributions to experimental filmmaking.

Gioli's experiments in pin-hole cinematography took place after 1970, following his return from the United States and his eventual transfer from Sarzano to Rome. By the time Gioli arrived at the nation's capitol, in search, he says, of an avant-garde that might accommodate him, he found that the CCI had already disbanded, at least formally. Gioli was introduced to what was left of the CCI group by fellow filmmaker Alfredo Leonardi, but by then, he has said, "everything had become politicized." While continuing to work in film, he also began experimenting with photography – making photographs with what he called "stenopeic" devices (from the Greek *stenos opaios*, narrow aperture). He began building many different sorts of pin-hole cameras from very unusual materials, including boxes of various dimensions, shipping tubes and containers, sea-shells, loaves of bread, walnuts, saltine crackers, perforated soup ladles, buttons, traffic cones, cheese graters, salt shakers, and the human hand. He also experimented with large-format pin-hole cameras using large sheets of Polaroid positive film – certainly his favorite film all, which he has called "the human incunabulum of human history" -- and he was an early practitioner of Polaroid transfers. (The history of the artistic use of Polaroid film must reserve a significant chapter for Gioli's experiments with that now-obsolete and much-mourned film.) Indeed, outside the world of filmmaking, Gioli is well-known for his photographic experiments using pin-hole devices, and there are several catalogues of his photographs in circulation. But what is interesting, and quite unique, is how he extended his experiments in pin-hole photography to motion pictures.

Gioli has made several pin-hole motion picture cameras since the early 1970s, and indeed, he has been working on his great masterpiece of pin-hole cinema, *Pinhole Film (Man without a Movie Camera)*, on an off since 1973. *Pinhole Film* is made with a very unusual camera fashioned from a 1 1/2 foot-long rectangular tube whose entire length has been perforated with pin-hole apertures along one side, such that multiple exposures can be made on lengths of 16mm film that pass through the tube between a film cartridge at the top and a take-up reel at the bottom. With this device, Gioli says, he "explores" what is in front of him, recording the world without the interference of optical lenses, and without the imposition of a single, stable perspective. Moreover, since the stenopeic camera lacks the usual shutter mechanism, using only a hinged door operated by hand to control exposure times, there are no frame-lines. (This suppression of the frameline is also found in other films, such as *Filmfinish* [1989] and *Images Overtaken by Duchamp's Wheel* [1994], made with either shutter-less cameras or with external shutter devices). Given the rudimentary nature of the shutter device on his pin-hole camera, the exposures on the film strip – according to my count, each exposure of a length of 16mm film in *Pinhole Film* created 47 frames, or just over two seconds of projected image at 18fps -- merge together in diffused

lap-dissolves of very simple images of windows, bodies, household objects, tree and plants, that are remarkable for their auroral beauty. The irregular dimensions of the apertures, the slight variations in the distance between apertures and in the length of exposure, all combine to lend Gioli's images their fragile intensity. This strong sense of fragility is heightened all the more by the occasional flash of light leaks that threaten the image with obliteration. The vulnerability of Gioli's images, produced by the direct exposure of film to the artist's surroundings, communicates an experience of a world of tremendous energetic intensity – an intensity that Gioli's celluloid, like his eyes, can apprehend and "capture" but only at its own peril.

Such profoundly aesthetic motivations, however, coexist with ideological ones as well, and these should not be discounted. Gioli insists that one of his motivations in making films without the camera technology – or using what we might call "prepared" cameras, with significant alterations to mechanical and optical components -- was to avoid what he termed the consumerist technology of the cinema: he wanted "to make free films freely." And Gioli has stated his criticisms of the Italian commercial cinema, and its funding mechanisms (or lack thereof) very clearly over the decades. Furthermore, he has insisted on the importance of exercising personal control over every aspect of filmmaking, including film development, editing, and printing. This is an attitude he inherits from earlier avant-garde practices.

Furthermore, Gioli does not hesitate in many of his films to express political messages – usually concerning war, social regimentation, and consumerism, as seen such films as *Anonimatografo* (1972), *Filmarilyn* (1992), or *Children* (2008). The latter film's parallel montage of White House photographs of JFK holding his infant daughter Caroline on his lap intercut with the piled bodies of napalmed children in Vietnam provides challenging messages regarding war and media politics, from Vietnam to Iraq. And yet his filmmaking is not only motivated by such political and economic concerns. Or rather, he refuses to distinguish aesthetic exploration from the necessity of ideological renovation – he does not, like the editors of *Ombre elettriche*, see aesthetics ("poetry") as post-revolutionary ornamentation.

Thus, even in the films like *Pinhole Film* in which Gioli seems to be mainly involved in structural investigations of the medium and "poetic" expressions of fragile revery, Gioli's work remains animated by profound ethical concerns. Clearly Gioli's experiments with pin-hole and prepared cameras represent a sustained reflection on the aesthetic capacities and enabling technologies of photography and film. Indeed, the film seems to express his desire to return to the origins – to a time before the institutionalization of the medium as narrative entertainment – and thus to offer the cinema a chance for a new beginning, a fresh start. Yet ultimately Gioli's investigations center on the physical and psychological processes of perception and cognition, an examination of how we sense things (not only visually), and how those things arrive through the senses of the body to be processed through language and concepts and finally to be registered in memory. The ethical basis of Gioli's art is found in its focus on the body and its sensual encounter with the earth. For Gioli, the film camera locates – in the mysterious, apertured interior of the *camera obscura* -- an analogous encounter with the earth as it registers itself onto light-

sensitive materials. And this analogy between the camera and the human body – the body with its apertures and orifices, with its skin – will be the dominant leitmotif of all his films, beginning with his first gesture of pressing his pigmented body to clear celluloid. This concern for human body and the psychological and physical forces that constrain it, this commitment to the body's sensational potential, is what provides Gioli's work with its ethical foundation.

Gioli's ethical and aesthetic interest in film as a surface upon which the earth imprints its image – he speaks of the "writing" (*scrittura*) of the movie-camera -- also leads to his subsequent meditations on motion and the historical development of motion pictures out of the camera obscuras of the Renaissance and various other optical devices and retinal toys of the 19th-century. Indeed, these are the interests that will become ever more central to Gioli's work, especially after his experiments in stenopeic cinema, as seen in films such as *Little Decomposed Film* (1986). In this film's re-animation of Edweard Muybridge's sequences of social outcasts and the physically abnormal whose naked bodies are photographed against the measured grid of Muybridge's stage, Gioli combines a disturbing Foucaultian meditation on the scientific use of film technology for social engineering together with an examination of the central paradox of the cinema: the fact that there is nothing moving in motion pictures, besides the regulated flow of 18 to 24 frames of celluloid per second through a projector (indeed, Gioli's film *Perforated Operator* from 1979 represents one of the greatest meditations on the sprocket hole ever produced). However, Gioli's cinema takes us even further back than the creation-myth of proto-cinema – through the Thaumatropes, Phenakistoscopes and first chronophotographic devices -- back towards the birthplace of photographic images, the first positive Heliographic image of a window in Joseph Niepce's studio. (Niepce's image is in fact reprised in the opening section of *Pinhole Film*, entitled "Window.") And it is at that moment of photographic invention, it seems, that Gioli locates the splitting of nature between the earth and its representation, between reality and its picture, as cinema's primordial wound, to which the history of its development can be seen to respond. It is a wound that gives rise to the desires for visual reconciliation, and thus for marketable narrative and ideological satisfactions, that have fueled cinema since the elaboration of motion picture technology -- or rather, for Gioli, since the invention of the sprocket hole and the frameline. Yet it is also the source of creative imagination and linguistic invention – the "poetry" that emanates from the interstices between signifiers and signifieds. It is a splitting that is thematized, in films such as *Traumatograph* (1973), through images of lacerated bodies, bloodied noses and mouths, and the sliced eye of Bunuel's *Andalusian Dog* – a film, and a surrealist tradition based on a Freudian philosophy of split subjectivity, to which Gioli pays homage very frequently, as in *When the Eye Trembles* (1989). Moreover, lacerated consciousness is also rendered visually through the artist's frequent use of heavily layered imagery and split frames that conjoin positive and negative images of Gioli's contorted and agonized face in specular symmetry, as found in *According to My Glass Eye* (1972). That is, in Gioli's often frantically cut films, the procedures of editing and montage -- including the vertical montage of collaged, optically printed film strips in *Commutations with Mutation* (1969) --

seem ever to repeat the splitting away of human consciousness from nature, with each cut reenacting the animating wound of the alienated modern(ist) artist. However, in a perhaps paradoxical fashion, Gioli's pin-hole cameras, with their film strips immediately exposed to the world, express the artist's regressive desire for a clearing away of alienating consciousness and a return to an *energeia* of nature – to an experience of conceptually unbound phenomena -- that tempts the artist with the promise of knowledge, though at the cost of oblivion. Paradoxes such as this attest to the depth of Gioli's experimentation across four decades and more than thirty films; and they suggest the extent to which Gioli inherits and reworks the legacies of the surrealist avant-gardes as well as the New American Cinema he first encountered in New York City in the late 1960s.

One of the last of the generation of filmmakers to emerge from the period of the neo-avant-gardes of the 1960s – when the Italian underground flourished, briefly, in dialogue with developments in North America – Gioli's work represents a continuation of avant-garde investigations of the aesthetic and technological materials of the medium. The avant-garde legacy is clearly signified, throughout Gioli's filmography, in his frequent quotations from Duchamp, Vertov, Eisenstein, Richter and Bunuel. What he inherits from such artists, and the movements they were associates with, is an engagement with the structural aspects of the cinema and with the psychology of visual perception studied against the development of photographic technologies since the 19th Century. Certainly, the publication of a two-disk DVD set (produced by Paolo Vampa and available through RaroVideo.com) has helped to increase awareness of his work among film scholars and audiences alike. And as the recent increase in attention dedicated to him at cinematheques in Madison, Toronto, New York, Paris, and Hong Kong would indicate, Gioli is rapidly being recognized as one of the most important experimental filmmakers working in Europe since the 1960s, and it is arguable that he is the most significant experimentalist working in Italy today. Indeed, a retrospective of Gioli's work will feature at the Pesaro Film Festival in June of 2009, where Gioli also plans to premier his most recent productions. Ever refusing to divorce poetics from ideology – and stubbornly insisting on a "do it yourself" creative autonomy that is exemplary in its resistance to any fetishization of technology -- Gioli makes art in which aesthetic experimentation might be a prelude to psychological and ideological renovation. To that extent, each of his films – though none more than his pinhole films -- express a desire for a new beginning, a fresh start, both for filmmaking and for sense perception. And perhaps this, most of all, is the task of avant-garde and experimental film artists from Futurism to today: to make films that take spectators to very edge of human understanding, to the very limits of their own selves, where they can open their eyes, perhaps, and see what is there.

For his attention to early Futurist film experiments and an excellent survey of European avant-garde filmmaking, see Antonio Bisaccia, *Punctum fluens. Comunicazione estetica e movimento tra cinema e arte nelle avanguardie storiche* (Rome: Meltemi, 2002).

From the December 1967 founding editorial of the journal of Italian underground cinema

Ombre elettriche, reprinted in *Bianco e nero* (May-August 1974), pp. 152-53.

On the films of Carpi and Veronesi, with a selection of writings by both, see *Luigi Veronesi e Cioni Carpi alla Cineteca Italiana*, L. Caramel and A. Madesani, eds. (Milan: Il Castoro, 2002).

For an excellent history of experimental film in Italy during this period, see Bruno Di Marino, *Sguardo, inconscio, azione: Cinema sperimentale e underground a Roma (1965-1975)* (Rome: Lithos, 1999); see also Adriano Apra', "L'underground," in *Prima della rivoluzione: Schermi italiani (1960-1990)* (Venice: Marsilio, 1997).

On experimental film in Florence and Tuscany, see Silvia Lucchesi, *Cinema d'artista in Toscana 1952-1980* (Prato: Centro L. Pecci, 2004).

See Massimo Bacigalupo's Introduction to the special issue on Italian experimental film in *Bianco e nero* , nos. 5-8 (May-August 1974), p. 8.

For an excellent introduction to feminist filmmaking in Italy, with a very useful essay on the history of women's film in Italy by Anna Miscuglio, see *Off Screen: Women and Film in Italy*, edited by Giuliana Bruno and Maria Nadotti (London: Routledge, 1988).

On the history of video in Italy, see *Elettroshock: 30 anni di video in Italia (1971-2001)*, edited by Bruno Di Marino and Lara Nicoli (Rome: Castelvecchi, 2001).

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Mark Rothko, *The Artist's Reality: Philosophies of Art* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004), pp. 51-52.

See *Paolo Gioli: Gran Positivo nel crudele spazio stenopeico*, edited by P. Costantini, S. Fuso, S. Mescola, I. Zannier (Florence: Fratelli Alinari, 1991).

See the essay "Scritti per un rettangolo bianco" found in the booklet, edited by Luigi Vampa, accompanying the DVD set *Film di Paolo Gioli* (RaroVideo/Interferenze, 2005), p. 29.