MoMA PRESENTS A COMPREHENSIVE U.S. RETROSPECTIVE OF DIRECTOR ROBERTO ROSSELLINI

Major Retrospective Includes Many Rare Films along with Exhibition of Posters and Photographs

ROBERTO ROSSELLINI

November 15–December 22, 2006
The Roy and Niuta Titus Theaters
The Celeste Bartos Theater

ROSSELLINI ON PAPER

November 15–April 9, 2007
The Roy and Niuta Titus 1 and 2 Theater Galleries

NEW YORK, October 11, 2006—The Museum of Modern Art presents the first comprehensive American retrospective of the work of master filmmaker Roberto Rossellini. The films in Roberto Rossellini, which is presented November 15–December 22, 2006, in The Roy and Niuta Titus Theaters and The Celeste Bartos Theater, include such seminal Neorealist titles as Roma Città Aperta (Rome Open City, 1945), and Paisan (1946), along with less well-known work including his six-hour television epic L’Eta di Cosimo de’ Medici (The Age of the Medici, 1972). Many of the titles are new prints, including MoMA’s restoration of Paisan. Roberto Rossellini is accompanied by Rossellini on Paper, an exhibition of posters from the director’s films drawn largely from the Martin Scorsese Collection and Wesleyan University Cinema Archives, on view in The Roy and Niuta Titus 1 and Titus 2 Theater Galleries. Rossellini’s daughters, Ingrid and Isabella, will introduce the screening of Rome Open City on November 15. This retrospective, co-organized by Laurence Kardish, Senior Curator, Department of Film; and James Quandt, Senior Programmer, Cinematheque Ontario, Toronto, is presented in collaboration with Cinecittà Holding (Rome). Rossellini on Paper is organized by Ron Magliozzi, Assistant Curator, Research and Collections, Department of Film.

Roberto Rossellini (Italian, 1906–1977) was a key artist of the mid-twentieth century whose contribution to cinema—particularly in his stunning adaptations of Neorealist strategies, as in Rome Open City, and Paisan—is inestimable and whose influence on other directors, such as Michelangelo Antonioni, Jean-Luc Godard, and Martin Scorsese, is profound. Over his 40-year career, Rossellini’s films seem to take several broad turns, from his Neorealist masterworks about war and its immediate aftermath to the extraordinary melodramas he made with Ingrid Bergman to “didactic” works made for television about men whose ideas altered the course of western civilization (Jesus, Socrates, Blaise Pascal). Rossellini’s films are characterized by their inflection of “actuality” (shooting on location and casting everyday people alongside professional actors),
recognition of the mystery of human behavior, belief in spiritual transcendence, and desire to stimulate audiences’ curiosity.

The exhibition will screen several of Rossellini’s early films such as the earliest extant work, the short film Fantasia sottomarina (Underwater Fantasy, 1938), as well as the features La nave Bianca (The White Ship, 1941) and L’uomo dalla croce (The Man of the Cross, 1943), both of which he filmed during World War II. Films featuring Anna Magnani and Ingrid Bergman, two actresses who featured prominently in Rossellini’s career and private life, are also included, such as Rome Open City, L’amore (1947–48), Stromboli, Terra di Dio (Stromboli, 1949), Europa ’51 (The Greatest Love, 1952), and Viaggio in Italia (Voyage in Italy/Strangers, 1953). Bergman, who was inspired by the director’s early works, wrote to him in the late 1940s and Rossellini, who later married the actress, cast her in a number of memorable features and shorts.

The exhibition of posters, family photographs, and correspondence in Rossellini on Paper, documents the director’s career and draws from the Martin Scorsese Collection, Wesleyan University Cinema Archives, and the collections of Dave Kehr and the Museum’s Department of Film. It surveys the graphic presentation of his work internationally, and provides a rare glimpse into his creative process and off-screen life. Among the highlights in this exhibition is correspondence with Ernest Hemingway and Howard Hughes as well as an early letter to Ingrid Bergman, whom he subsequently married, outlining his plans for their work together.

On Monday 4 December at 8:30 p.m., Tag Gallagher, author of The Adventures of Roberto Rossellini: His Life and Films (1998, Da Capo Press, New York), will present an illustrated lecture on Rossellini.

Roberto Rossellini is presented in collaboration with Cinecittà Holding (Rome) and is made possible by generous grants from Fendi and Agnes Gund and Daniel Shapiro. Additional support is provided by The Italian Cultural Institute (New York) and the New York State Council on the Arts, a State agency. Presented with the support of the Menil Collection (Houston), National Film and Television Archive (London), Kino International (New York), Harvard Film Archive, Swedish Film Archive, New Yorker Films, Miramax Films, The Criterion Collection, Kramsie (Gibraltar), Tag Gallagher, and Martin Scorsese.

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**ROBERTO ROSELLINI**

**SCREENING SCHEDULE**

All films directed by Rossellini and from Italy, unless otherwise noted.

**Wednesday, November 15**

5:00  **Scorsese on Rossellini.** Excerpted from *Il Viaggio in Italia (My Voyage in Italy).* 1999. Italy/USA. Directed by Martin Scorsese. Rossellini is given pride of place in Scorsese’s documentary about his relationship with Italian cinema. Scorsese discusses Neorealism and Rossellini’s early films, illustrating his ideas with numerous film clips. Approx. 100 min.

7:30  **Roma Città Aperta (Rome Open City).** 1945. Screenplay by Rossellini, Sergio Amidei, Federico Fellini. With Anna Magnani, Aldo Fabrizi. An emotional bombshell when first released, *Rome Open City* was shot on Rome’s streets shortly after the German Occupation and pieced together from the bits of 35mm film that Rossellini was able to scrounge. The action takes place during the final desperate months of the Occupation, rendering the title somewhat ironic. New restoration by the Cineteca Nazionale. In Italian, English subtitles. 105 min.

*(Introduced by Ingrid and Isabella Rossellini)*

**Thursday, November 16**

6:00  **Paisà (Paisan).** 1946. Screenplay by Sergio Amidei with Rossellini, Klaus Mann, Federico Fellini, et al. *Paisan* includes six stories, all shot on location, that move from Sicily and the 1944 Allied landing to the north of Italy as the Germans gradually retreated. Some of the narratives capture the traumatic and murderous process of liberation (Sicily, Florence, the Po Valley) while others capture the confusions of a newly liberated but devastated society (Naples, Rome, Romagna). Print restored by MoMA. In Italian, English, German; English subtitles. 116 min.
**Germania Anno Zero (Germany Year Zero).** 1947. Italy/Germany. Screenplay by Rossellini, Carlo Lizzani, Max Kolpet. With Edmund Moeschke, Ernst Pittshau. Shot among the ruins of postwar Berlin, this rarely seen film recognized the infectious power of Nazi ideology that lingered after the physical destruction of Germany. A 12-year-old boy, one year younger than the Third Reich itself, commits a horrendous crime. “Whether he excites pity or horror I do not know, nor did I wish to know” (Rossellini). In German, English subtitles. 73 min.

**Friday, November 17**

**6:00 Francesco, giullare di Dio (The Flowers of St. Francis/Francis, God’s Jester).** 1950. Screenplay by Rossellini, Federico Fellini, et al., based on I fioretti de San Francesco and La vita di Frate Giampro. With Aldo Fabrizi, Arabella Lemaitre, and Franciscan monks. “It was important for me then to affirm everything that stood against slyness and cunning...I believe that simplicity is a very powerful weapon... The accent is entirely on Saint Francis’s whimsical, unruffled approach to the crudities and trivialities of everyday life” (Rossellini). In Italian, English subtitles. 75 min.

**8:00 Il Messia (The Messiah).** 1975. Italy/France. Screenplay by Rossellini, Silvia D’Amico Bendico. With Pier Maria Rossi, Mita Ungaro. Never released in the USA and shot in part in Tunisia, Rossellini’s vision of Christ, born a Jew to a very young mother, is that of a courageous, socially disobedient man whose words and actions, not necessarily his miracles, were revolutionary. “But he who said ‘the Sabbath is made for man, not man for the Sabbath’ has made a political discourse of fundamental importance” (Rossellini). In Italian, English subtitles. 145 min.

**Saturday, November 18**

**2:00 Stromboli, Terra di Dio (Stromboli).** 1949. Screenplay by Rossellini, Sergio Amidei, et al. With Ingrid Bergman, Mario Vitale. Bergman, impressed by Rome Open City and Paisan, wrote to Rossellini that if ever “he needed a Swedish actress who spoke English well,” she was ready to work with him. Rossellini responded with Stromboli, about an Eastern European refugee who quits a postwar displaced persons camp by marrying an unrefined fisherman from the titular small volcanic island, and soon falls into despair. 105 min.

**4:00 Viaggio in Italia (Voyage in Italy/Strangers).** 1953. Screenplay by Rossellini, Vitaliano Brancati. With Ingrid Bergman, George Sanders. An estranged married couple returns to Naples to close their home, and a miracle, of sorts, occurs. “It is a very bitter film basically. The couple take refuge in each other in the same way as people cover themselves when they’re seen naked, grabbing a towel, drawing closer to the person with them...” (Rossellini). 75 min.

**6:00 Europa ’51 (The Greatest Love).** 1952. Screenplay by Rossellini. With Ingrid Bergman, Alexander Knox. A neglectful mother of some social standing begins to care for the poor when her son’s suicide attempt exposes the emptiness of her life. However, her intense involvement in charitable work alarms her husband and friends. Rossellini told Bergman, “I am going to make a story of St. Francis and she’s going to be a woman and it’s going to be you.” 100 min.

**8:00 Second Episode of La lotta dell’uomo per la sua sopravvivenza (Man’s Struggle for Survival).** 1967–69. Directed by Renzo Rossellini Jr., Roberto Rossellini. Screenplay by Roberto Rossellini. For three years Rossellini and his son worked on a twelve-part series for Italian television about man’s search for food and the subsequent development of civilization. The first episode deals with man as a hominid; the second follows the shift from wily hunter in the
fourth ice age to the subsequent birth of agriculture. English voice-over, no dialogue. 55 min.

Followed by a 1971 conversation between Rossellini and a Rice University anthropologist about the first appearance of agriculture in what is now Iran. 10 min.

**Sunday, November 19**

**1:15** Rossellini: Early and Late

*Il était une fois... Rome Ville Ouverte (Once Upon a Time... Rome Open City).* 2006. France. Directed by Marie Genin, Serge July. A chronicle of the making of *Rome Open City*, featuring interviews, excerpts, and archival footage with, among others, Roberto Rossellini, Isabella Rossellini, Ingrid Bergman, Vittorio Mussolini, Federico Fellini, François Truffaut, and Anna Magnani. In Italian, English; English subtitles. 54 min.

Footage from the unfinished multi-episode film project *Science*. c. 1973. USA. Under the patronage of Dominique and Jean de Menil, Rossellini made a series of 16mm interviews with scientists at Rice University (Houston). Excerpts show Rossellini explaining his project to scientists and an interview with the de Menils. Approx. 40 min.

**3:30** Roma Città Aperta (*Rome Open City*). See Wednesday, November 15, 7:30

**5:30** Paisà (*Paisan*). See Thursday, November 16, 6:00

**Monday, November 20**

**6:15** Second Episode of *La lotta dell’uomo per la sua sopravvivenza (Man’s Struggle for Survival)*. See Saturday, November 18, 8:00

**8:00** Rossellini: Early and Late. See Sunday, November 19, 1:15

**Friday, November 24**

**4:30** Germania Anno Zero (*Germany Year Zero*). See Thursday, November 16, 8:15

**6:00** Viaggio in Italia (*Voyage in Italy/Strangers*). See Saturday, November 18, 4:00

**7:30** Stromboli, Terra di Dio (*Stromboli*). See Saturday, November 18, 2:00

**Saturday, November 25**

**2:00** Blaise Pascal. 1971. France/Italy. Screenplay by Rossellini, Marcella Mariani, Luciano Scaffa, Dominique de La Rochefoucauld. With Pierre Arditi. Tag Gallagher writes in *The Adventures of Roberto Rossellini* (1998): "Blaise Pascal is so much a horror movie...Everything is drenched in suffering, torture, fear, superstitious dread; everyone is writhing in desperate faith, self-mortification and pain... Such was Jansenism from the Roman point of view... We follow Pascal from age seventeen, as he emerges out of his father’s shadow, until his death at age thirty-nine in 1662..." In Italian, English subtitles. 130 min.

**4:30** Il Messia (*The Messiah*). See Friday, November 17, 8:00
7:30 **India Matri Bhumi (India/India ’58/India, Mother Land)**. 1958. India/Italy/France. Screenplay by Rossellini, Sonali Senroy Das Gupta, Fereydoun Hoveyda. In this magisterial four-part film, Rossellini slyly assumed a documentarian's approach to fiction based on observation. The film explores centuries-old ways of life, the rhythm of everyday domesticity, the changes progress brings to the natural environment, and “intelligence in the behavior of animals.” In Italian and various Indian dialects; English subtitles. 90 min.

**Sunday, November 26**

2:00 **Dov’è la Libertà? (Where Is Liberty?).** 1954. Adapted from an idea by Rossellini. This dark satire starring Toto, a comic actor much beloved in Italy, is, according to Rossellini, *Europa ‘51*’s inverse: an innocent copes with the meanness and ruthlessness of postwar society. A mild-mannered man, having served twenty years for slitting the throat of a friend who seduced his wife, is released from prison. What he finds on the outside is so disheartening and discouraging he attempts—with little success—to return to jail. In Italian, English subtitles. 91 min.

4:00 **Francesco, giullare di Dio (The Flowers of St. Francis/Francis, God’s Jester).** See Friday, November 17, 6:00

5:45 **La Macchina Ammazzacattivi (The Machine to Kill Bad People).** 1945–52. Screenplay by Rossellini, Sergio Amidei, et al. With Gennaro Pisano, Giovanni Amato, and the people of Amalfi. A photographer in Amalfi discovers his camera can petrify his subjects. "Perhaps my most original film" (Rossellini). Peter Brunette, author of *Roberto Rossellini* (1966) finds this comedy “particularly interesting because it stands the conventional view of Rossellini as an ultra-realist on its head.” In Italian, English subtitles. 83 min.

**Monday, November 27**

6:00 **Desiderio (Desire/Woman).** 1943–1946. Directed by Rossellini, Marcello Pagliero. With Elli Parvo, Massimo Girotti. In the spirit of Visconti’s early and influential Neorealist melodrama *Ossessione* (1942) Rossellini in 1943 began shooting a dark drama of illicit passions, *Freight Yards*, with two of *Ossessione*’s major talents, the screenwriter Giuseppe de Santis and the star Massimo Girotti. Allied bombers interrupted Rossellini’s shooting of *Freight Yards*, and after the war his colleague Marcello Pagliero completed this fatalistic narrative about a call girl under the new title *Desiderio*. In Italian, English subtitles. 79 min.

7:45 **Dov’è la Libertà? (Where Is Liberty?).** See Sunday, November 26, 2:00

**Wednesday, November 29**

6:00 **La Macchina Ammazzacattivi (The Machine to Kill Bad People).** See Sunday, November 26, 5:45

8:00 **Desiderio (Desire/Woman).** See Monday, November 27, 6:00

**Thursday, November 30**

6:00 **India Matri Bhumi (India/India ’58/India, Mother Land).** See Saturday, November 25, 7:30

6:00 **Blaise Pascal.** See Saturday, November 25, 2:00
Saturday, December 2

8:00  **Angst/La Paura (Fear).** 1954. Germany/Italy. Adapted by Rossellini, Sergio Amidei, and Franz Graf Treuberg from a story by Stefan Zweig. With Ingrid Bergman, Mathias Wieman. *Fear,* shot in two versions, English and German, was the last film Rossellini and Bergman made together. A bourgeois melodrama of infidelity and emotional cruelty, inflected with expressionist moments, *Fear* was made because Rossellini was interested in Germany ten years after *Germany Year Zero,* in the idea of reconstruction both material and moral, and in “the importance of knowing how to confess.” English version. 82 min.

Sunday, December 3

Celebrating Italy’s centenary, this spectacle witnesses the Risorgimento and Guiseppe Garibaldi’s liberation of the south of Italy from the Bourbons which led to unification. “Of all my films I’m proudest of *Viva l’Italia.* I consider it important as a work of research, the most carefully done of all my films” (Rossellini). In Italian, English subtitles. 129 min.

Monday, December 4

6:00  **Viva l’Italia (Garibaldi).** See Sunday, December 3, 5:30.

8:30  **Tag Gallagher on Roberto Rossellini.**

Wednesday, December 6

8:30  **L’uomo dalla croce (The Man of the Cross).** 1943. Written by Rossellini, Asvro Gravelli. With Alberto Tavazzi, Roswitha Schmidt.
The last of the three features Rossellini made during World War II is based on an incident on the Russian front where Father Reginaldo Giuliani, a chaplain with the Italian army, tends to a wounded soldier and takes shelter in a farm along with soldiers, Russian peasants, and a Soviet commissar. The film was dedicated to “the heroic chaplains fallen among the Godless in barbaric lands” (Rossellini). In Italian, English subtitles. 77 min.

Friday, December 8

3:15  **L’uomo dalla croce (The Man of the Cross).** See Wednesday, December 6, 8:30

6:15  **Jeanne au bucher (Giovanna d’Arco al rogo/Joan of Arc at the Stake).** 1954. France/Italy/Great Britain. Music by Arthur Honegger; text (poem) by Paul Claudel. Rossellini’s first color feature, shot in a Neapolitan opera house, is a motion picture adaptation of his successful staging of the eponymous oratorio. Rossellini called it “not at all filmed theater; it’s cinema and I’d even say neorealism, in the sense I’ve always intended.” Truffaut thought the film “avant-garde.” Sung in French with Ingrid Bergman’s voice dubbed by Claude Nollier. English subtitles. 80 min.

8:15  **La nave Bianca (The White Ship).** 1941. Written by Rossellini and Francesco De Robertis.
Rossellini’s first feature film is a patriotic one, a documentary (with added love story) shot on “true locations” about wounded Italian sailors and the admirable nursing care given to them on hospital ships. In Italian, English subtitles. 71 min.

preceded by Fantasia sottomarina (Underwater Fantasy). 1938. Italy. Rossellini.
The earliest extant Rossellini film about undersea creatures as shot through an aquarium. 10 min.

Saturday, December 9

1:00 Jeanne au bucher (Giovanna d’Arco al rogo/Joan of Arc at the Stake). See Friday, December 8, 6:15

3:00 La nave Bianca (The White Ship).

Fantasia sottomarina (Underwater Fantasy). See Friday, December 8, 8:15


Rossellini focuses not so much on the biography of the fifth-century theologian but uses the words and deeds of the early church father as a lens on the period in which the Imperial City, Rome, now sacked, begins to be replaced by the Heavenly City and Christian promise. Photographed among the Roman and Greek ruins of Pompeii, Hercalaeum, and Paestum. In Italian, English subtitles. 117 min.

7:30 Era notte a Roma (It Was Night in Rome). 1960. Italy/France. Written by Sergio Amidei, Rossellini et al. With Leo Genn, Giovanna Ralli, Sergei Bondarchuk, Renato Salvatori.

This rarely revived melodrama, like Rome Open City is set toward the end of the Nazi occupation. It imagines three Allied soldiers—American, British, and Russian—as escaped prisoners of war, hidden, much to her discomfort, by a woman who is a black marketeer. Notable for Rossellini’s extensive use of the Panicor zoom lens. In Italian, English; English subtitles. 120 min.

Sunday, December 10

1:00 L’amore. 1947–1948.

Comprises two medium-length films both starring Anna Magnani: Una voce umana (The Human Voice), adapted by Rossellini from Jean Cocteau’s one-act monologue, and Il Miracolo (The Miracle) written by Rossellini, Federico Fellini, and Tullio Pinelli. In the former film, a desperate woman on the phone pleads with her lover—whose speech is unheard by the audience—not to reject her. In the latter, a simple-minded shepherdess meets a stranger who impregnates her with what she believes is the child of God. 80 min.


In the 1820s a Roman princess falls in love with a young revolutionary determined to free Italy from papal rule. Interference by the producer, who imposed his mistress on the film, and removed scenes with other actresses caused Rossellini to denounce the film, but many Rossellini admirers claim there remains enough of the artist for this period melodrama to be of interest. In Italian, English subtitles. 118 min.

5:15 Il generale Della Rovere (General Della Rovere). 1959. Italy/France. Written by Indro Montanelli, Sergio Amidei, Rossellini, from an actual event. With Vittorio De Sica, Hannes Messemmer, Sandra Milo.

One of Rossellini’s most critically and commercially successful dramas is also one of his most traditionally realized. During the Nazi occupation of Rome, a swindler is arrested and is forced in prison to impersonate General Della Rovere, the leader of the partisans whom
the Germans already executed and whose soldiers they need to identify. In Italian, English subtitles. 130 min.

**Monday, December 11**

6:00  *L’amore*. See Sunday, December 10, 1:00

**Wednesday, December 13**

3:00  *Socrate (Socrates)*. 1970. France/Italy/Spain. Written by Rossellini, Marcella Mariani, Jean-Dominique de La Rochefoucauld, from Greek texts of the era. With Jean Sylvere. Using Plato’s dialogues as source material, Rossellini covers the last five years of the philosopher’s life, from Sparta’s victory over Athens in 404 B.C. to Socrates’s mandated suicide. Socrates the truth seeker alienates his fellow citizens with his undercutting dialogues: Rossellini recognizes that while society forgives murderers, it persecutes anyone who threatens it by thinking differently about the world. In Italian, English subtitles. DVD projection. 120 min.

6:00  *Era notte a Roma. (It Was Night in Rome)*. See Saturday, December 9, 7:30

8:15  *Il generale Della Rovere. (General Della Rovere)*. See Sunday, December 10, 5:15

**Thursday, December 14**


The most acclaimed and extensively released of Rossellini’s didactic films, and one of cinema’s great political films. A timorous young man, the Sun King, learns how to exercise power. Louis, according to Rossellini, “uses the superficiality, coquetry, and vanity of the people, nothing else.” In French, English subtitles. New 35mm print. 98 min.

**Friday, December 15**


With Tunisia standing in for the Holy Land and Osta Antica for Rome, Rossellini charts the early history of Christianity. The film follows the journeys and preachings of the apostles as they convert and baptize the people, argue the words of Christ, and interact with secular authorities. Made in five episodes. English version. 280 min., with one 20 min. intermission.

**Saturday, December 16**

1:00  *La prise de pouvoir de Louis XIV (The Rise to Power of Louis XIV)*. See Friday, December 15, 1:00

8:30  *Shorts by and about Rossellini.*

*The Chicken (Ingrid Bergman)*. 1952. Italy. Written by Cesare Zavattini. With Ingrid Bergman as herself. Episode from *Siamo donne*. In English. 17 min.

**Ilibatezza (Charity).** 1962. Italy. With Rosanna Schiaffino, Bruce Balaban. Episode from *RoGoPaG*. In Italian, English subtitles. 33 min.


**My Dad is 100 Years Old.** 2006. Canada. Guy Maddin. Cowritten by and starring Isabella Rossellini. 17 min.

**Tuesday, December 19**

5:00  *Vanina Vanini.* See Sunday, December 10, 3:00

7:30  *Shorts by and about Rossellini.* See Saturday, December 16, 8:30

**Wednesday, December 20**

1:30  *Agostino d’Ippona (Augustine of Hippo).* See Saturday, December 9, 5:00

6:00  *Attid degli apostolic (Acts of the Apostles/Les actes des apotres).* See Friday, December 15, 1:00

**Thursday, December 21**

1:30  *Socrate (Socrates).* See Wednesday, December 13, 3:00

6:00  *L’Eta di Cosimo de’ Medici (The Age of the Medici).* 1972. Written by Rossellini, Marcella Mariani, Luciano Scaffa. With Marcello Di Falco, Virginio Gazzolo. This three episode television film was originally conceived by Rossellini as two separate films about the early Renaissance—one about the exile from and return to Florence of arts patron Cosimo de’ Medici, and the other about Leon Battista Alberti, philosopher, mathematician, and architect, whose ideas influenced Florentine arts. In English. 254 min., with one 20 min. intermission.

**Friday, December 22**

1:00  *L’Eta di Cosimo de’ Medici (The Age of the Medici).* See Thursday, December 21, 6:00