



*Conference*

***Transatlantic Modern Consumerisms:  
Italian Goods and Commercial Cultures in Postwar America, 1949-1972***

Università di Scienze Gastronomiche, Pollenzo, Bra (CN), Italy, June 25-26, 2021

**Call for papers**

The University of Gastronomic Sciences Pollenzo, Polytechnic of Milan, Roma Tre University, and University of Eastern Piedmont organize a joint interdisciplinary conference on the **influence of modern Italian culture and goods on postwar American consumerism, taste, and lifestyles**.

The period under consideration is delimited by two landmark exhibits held at the New York City's MoMa introducing a "new Italian culture" to the American public: "Twentieth-Century Italian Art" (1949) and "Italy: The New Domestic Landscape" (1972). The 1950s and 1960s have traditionally been characterized as the **heyday of mass production, mass consumerism, and mass culture in the transatlantic space and the "Americanization" of Europe** within the global political context of the Cold War. However, in the opposite direction, the postwar also saw the **emergence, manifestations, and meanings of an Italian style** (eventually called *Made in Italy*), distinctly "Italian" and "modern," which originated in Italy and traveled to the United States via a transnational infrastructure for cultural and commercial exchange.

While the products of U.S. mass production and mass culture, from Hollywood to Coca-Cola, invaded European markets and minds, new **Italian commodities and commodified experiences—in the four Fs of fashion, film, food, and fiction and beyond—entered U.S. commercialism and the global consciousness of urban, sophisticated, north American consumers**.

The conference *Transatlantic Modern Consumerisms: Italian Goods and Commercial Cultures in Postwar America* aims at examining and discussing which **Italian items of fashion, film, food, fiction, design, art, popular music, tourism, and other languages and industries** were introduced to, circulated among and **commodified for American audiences**.

The conference pursues the recognition of a **modern style associated to Italian cultural artifacts and iconographic people** (movie stars, artists, designers, writers, etc.) and **intertextual discourses on Italy, the Italians, and the qualities of Italian goods**.

The conference looks at the ways and strategies in which such styles and discourses were **commercialized into consumer goods and experiences** and appropriated as **markers of distinction in the identity formation of different social groups** and subjects **in the United States** (middle-class, women, African Americans, youth, gay and lesbian, Italian Americans, etc.)

Finally, the conference will look at the work of the different **actors, public and private**, involved in the **promotion of Italian goods, artistic products, ideas, and imaginaries among postwar U.S. audiences** (from Italian Chambers of Commerce in the United States and the Italian Trade Agency to American department stores, marketers and advertisers, exhibit organizers, film critics, food, wine, and restaurant reviewers, etc.)

Accordingly, the conference especially welcomes **paper proposals** that present and discuss:

- business and cultural histories of specific Italian products, material and/or cultural artifacts, in their journey from their place of production to their commercialization in postwar United States;



- discourses on Italian identities articulated in different languages and industries (fashion, film, food, fiction, design, etc.) and commodified into Italian consumer products and experiences commercialized in postwar United States;
- actors, individuals and agencies, public and private, Italian and U.S., involved in the promotion of Italian goods, experiences, and imaginaries among postwar U.S. publics
- U.S. markets and consumers' perception, appreciation, and use of Italian goods and cultural artifacts.

The conference encourages the submission of **paper proposals** from different fields of analysis, including (but not limited to): History; Cultural Studies; Consumer, Advertising, and Marketing Studies; Fashion Studies; Film Studies; Food Studies; Design Studies; Art History; Tourism Studies; Music Studies; Sport Studies; Migration and Diaspora Studies; Diplomatic and Transatlantic Studies; Social and Cultural Anthropology; Folklore Studies; Heritage Studies.

The conference is part of the interuniversity **National Interest Research Project (PRIN) *TT – Transatlantic Transfers: The Italian Presence in Post-War America*** of the Polytechnic of Milan, Roma Tre University, University of Eastern Piedmont, and University of Gastronomic Sciences Pollenzo, co-funded by the Italian Ministry of Education, University and Research (MIUR). The Research Unit of the University of Gastronomic Sciences Pollenzo will cover, partly or in full, the travel expenses of the selected speakers.

**Publications:** The revised proceedings of the conference will be published in Italian in the open-access online publication produced by the PRIN research group and the PRIN official website. Selected revised and edited papers will be published in English on a peer-reviewed academic journal as a part of a special issue, subject to their passing the journal's independent peer-reviewing. Alternatively, the publication of an edited collection for a University Press will also be considered if the number of publishable contributions (expandable to other contributions from non-conference participants) suggests pursuing the option.

**Paper Proposal Format:** Title, abstract of no more than 500 words, and a short bio (100 words), submitted in a Word (.doc or .docx) file to [s.cinotto@unisg.it](mailto:s.cinotto@unisg.it) by **April 1, 2021**.

#### **Deadlines and Key Dates:**

April 1, 2021: Submission of proposals  
April 21, 2021: Notification of acceptance  
June 21, 2021: Submission of full papers  
June 25-26, 2021: Conference