AN ITALIAN ART EXHIBITION

Featuring the works of five artists of Italian origin.

ERMINIO AILI
CARLO JACUZZI
RAMON GIRARDI
SEBASTIANO DI MAURO
SAM DI MAURO

From left to right, the General Manager, Transfield Corporation, Mr David Cockburn, the Italian Consul, Dr. Paolo Scartozzoni and the President of the Dante Alighieri Society, Mr Enzo Belligoi at the official opening of the Carlo Jacuzzi Exhibition with a bust of Dante by Carlo Jacuzzi in the foreground.

THE DANTE ALIGHIERI SOCIETY

BRISBANE

celebrates the Centenary of the Foundation of the

SOCIETA' DANTE ALIGHIERI

with

AN ITALIAN ART EXHIBITION

CENTRAL CITY LIBRARY EXHIBITION ROOM

October 3rd - October 17th 1989

Official opening by:
HIS EXCELLENCY, THE GOVERNOR OF QUEENSLAND
SIR WALTER CAMPBELL QC.
PATRON, DANTE ALIGHIERI SOCIETY, BRISBANE

La Societa' Dante Alighieri

The Societa' Dante Alighieri was founded in Italy in 1889 with one aim only :- the diffusion of Italian Language and culture as widely as possible.

Italy had become a nation only 39 years earlier and had regained Rome as capital in 1970. As a statesman of the time said, 'We have made Italy, now we need to make the Italians".

He was referring to the fact that most Italians at that time did not speak Italian, but spoke their local dialect. There was a need for a national language as a unifying force.

Also, at this time, many Italians were migrating to other parts of Europe or to the Americas. It was felt that there should be an organisation which worked at ensuring that Italian language and culture was not forgotten by them in their new country.

The organisation was named after Italy's foremost poet, Dante Alighieri who lived from 1265 to 1321. He is best known for his epic poem, La Divina Commedia, recognised as one of the world's great epic poems.

Dante Alighieri is also regarded as the founder of the Italian language. At that time all educated persons wrote in Latin, the language of the intellectual class.

Dante began to write in the dialect of his native Tuscany. His example was followed by other noted writers of the period, including Boccaccio and Petrarch. The Tuscan dialect became accepted as the language of literature. With the unification of Italy in 1866, it became the official national language.

Today there are over 420 Dante Alighieri Societies in 58 countries with over half a million members, all with the same aim:- the diffusion of Italian language and culture.

The Dante Alighieri Society

Brisbane

The Dante Alighieri Society Inc, Brisbane, was founded before the Second World War but was disbanded in 1940. It was refounded in 1952. It currently has over 350 members.

It seeks to achieve the aim of diffusion of Italian language and culture through two activities:-

1. The teaching of Italian in its school which teaches Italian at four levels to about 250 students each year.

2. The diffusion of Italian language and culture through monthly functions such as music programs, public lectures, art exhibitions, film evenings, and intensive language weekends.

In addition, it prints a monthly newsletter, the Dante News, and an occasional periodical, The Dante Review.

Every two years, together with the Griffith Univertsity, it organises a study tour of Italy, a six week tour of the major cultural and artistic centres of the cradle of Western culture. A group will be leaving Brisbane at the end of November.

This year, as well as being the centenary of the foundation of the parent society, has been a noteworthy year for the Brisbane society. We have sponsored another Dante Society in Queensland, The Societa' Dante Alighieri of the Gold Coast, a very active and enthusiastic new society.

One thing that the Brisbane Dante Alighieri Society has lacked has been its own premises. It has always operated from temporary quarters. For the past three years it has conducted its classes at the Kelvin Grove Campus of the Brisbane College of Advanced Education while its library, resource centre and meeting rooms have been in a small flat about 2 kilometres away.

However, thanks to the co-operation of the Italo-Australian Centre, Newmarket, this will change next year. The headquarters of the Dante Alighieri Society will be in newly-converted quarters in the Italo-Australian Centre and the Society will have all its facilities as well as its classrooms under the one roof.

The work of the Society in the diffusion of Italian language and culture will then be able to proceed more effectively.

1989 Executive

President	Enzo Belligoi
Vice-President	Belinda McKay
Hon Secretary	Antonia Simpson
Hon. Treasurer	Ian Finlayson
Editor	Kathleen O'Keeffe
Director of Education	Carlo Zincone
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Member	Richard Stephens
Member	Maurizia Turco
Past President	Don Dignan
Consigliere a vita	John Grandsen

The Exhibition

The idea for this exhibition came about in a sense by chance. The Sede Centrale (central headquarters) of the Societa' had prepared an exhibition of materials associated with the works of Dante Alighieri, copies of some of his books, books about him, and a photographic display of his life and times.

It had planned to send this exhibition to Australia early in October with Brisbane first on the list. However, plans were changed and this exhibition now will not come until next year. The Brisbane Dante Society was faced with the problem of finding a substitute exhibition.

The policy of the Brisbane Dante Society has always been to seek to recognise and bring to the notice of the public the work of Brisbane artists of Italian origin. It takes the view that not all Italian culture comes from Italy. There are many Italian migrants and descendants of Italian migrants who have enriched Italian culture in Australia.

Towards this aim, the Dante has over the years presented La Bella Italia, a concert featuring Italian music played by young Brisbane musicians and singers.

Last year it co-sponsored with the Brisbane College of Advanced Education and the State Library, an exhibition of the collection held by the Brisbane C.A.E. of the works of Erminio Aili, a "naive" artist discovered by staff of the College. Aili was an Italian migrant to Queensland who took up artistic endeavour after retirement. This year the Society presented an exhibition of the works of Carlo Jacuzzi, another Italian migrant who decided to express his creativity in concrete sculpting after retirement.

When it was became necessary to find a substitute for the promised material from Rome, it was suggested why not have an exhibition of the works of a number of artists of Italian origin to give Brisbane a taste of the cultural contribution made to Australia by Italian migrants.

Thus came about the idea for this Italian Art Exhibition.

The Artists

When it came to the selection of the artists who were to be represented in this exhibition, a number of difficulties had to be overcome.

Firstly, it would be almost impossible to locate all artists of Italian origin in Brisbane.

Secondly, time constraints meant that the exhibition had to be put together rather quickly.

This meant that the exhibition, in no way could be seen to be a definite representation of the contribution of artists of Italian origin to the culture of Brisbane.

It was decided to select artists that would meet a number of criteria :-

Time in a historical sense. The exhibition should represent early migrants through to young descendants of migrants.

Artistic styles. There should be included a range of styles and extent of artistic training.

Geographical representation of Italy itself. Italy consists of a range of cultures which vary as you travel from north to south.

Convenience. Because of time constraints, works had to be located quickly.

With these criteria in mind, five artists and their works were located who met these criteria as closely as possible in the time available.

The artists represented include a pre-Second World War migrant, a migrant from the immediate post-war period, a migrant from the late sixties and two sons of a migrant.

The styles range from a completely untrained "naive " artist, a sculptor in concrete who attended some art classes after retirement, a graduate of an Italian art academy who leans towards suurealism in his painting, a graduate of the Queensland College of art whose painting is in the abstract style and a ceramicist, also a graduate of the Queensland College of Art who uses a semi-abstract style to express his love for the vernacular architecture of Brisbane.

Geographically, three regions of the north of Italy are represented while two artists are sons of a migrant from Sicily in the far south of Italy.

From the point of convenience, the works of all artists represented were located in Brisbane.

Details regarding the artists and photographs of some of their works shown in the exhibition are reproduced in the following pages, Unfortunately, it was not possible to obtain photographs of all works.

Sebastian Di Mauro

Sebastian Di Mauro was born in Innisfail, the son of an Italian migrant from Sicily.

He studied art at the Queensland College of Art and trained as a teacher at the Brisbane C.A.E. He graduated Bachelor of Arts from the Queensland College of Art in 1987.

Sebastian is currently a lecturer in art at the Queensland College of Art.

Sebastiano Di Mauro has had a number of solo and group exhibitions. He has been commissioned by the ABC to produce an album cover.

His works are held in a number of collections, including the Museum of Contemporary Art, the Logan College of T.A.F.E., the Brisbane City Council and the Queensland Symphony Orchestra.

Sebastian has since early days been concerned about the relationship between the environment and the human race and this is depicted in his work.

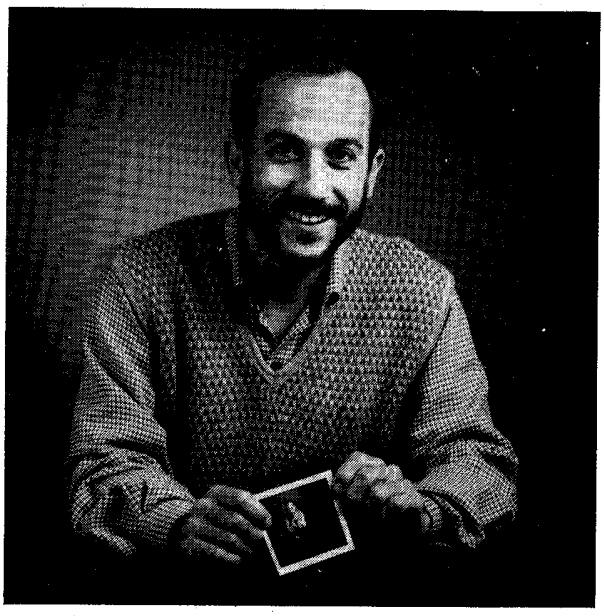
The impact of civilisation on the landscape provided the stimulus for the "River and Bridge Series" with the bridge and the city buildings used as a symbol of our attempt to subdue nature.

The "Transience Series" used the seascape to demonstrate how volatile and changeable nature can be.

The more recent "Passage Series" moves away from the landscape and examines human existence: creation- death- regeneration.

The presence of a grid acts as a frame, like a door, or a window, through which one can perceive.

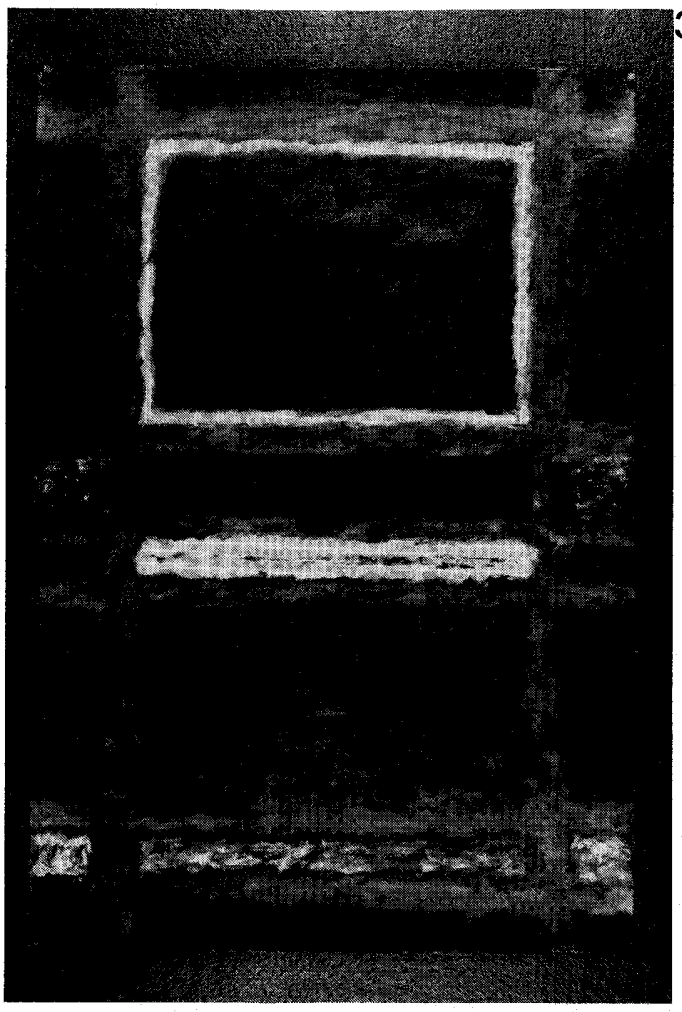
The structure at times appears strong, defensive and in control, whilst in others it is softened, overwhelmed and manipulated. The images could easily be titled self-portraits with the grid indicating the presence of the artist.



THE WORKS

1. Transience No. 7
2. Transience No. 13
3. Passage I (Homage to Rothko)
4. Passage II (Homage to Rothko)
5. Passage No. 3
6. Passage No. 15
7. Passage No. 25

Above works courtesy of the Roz macAllan Gallery.



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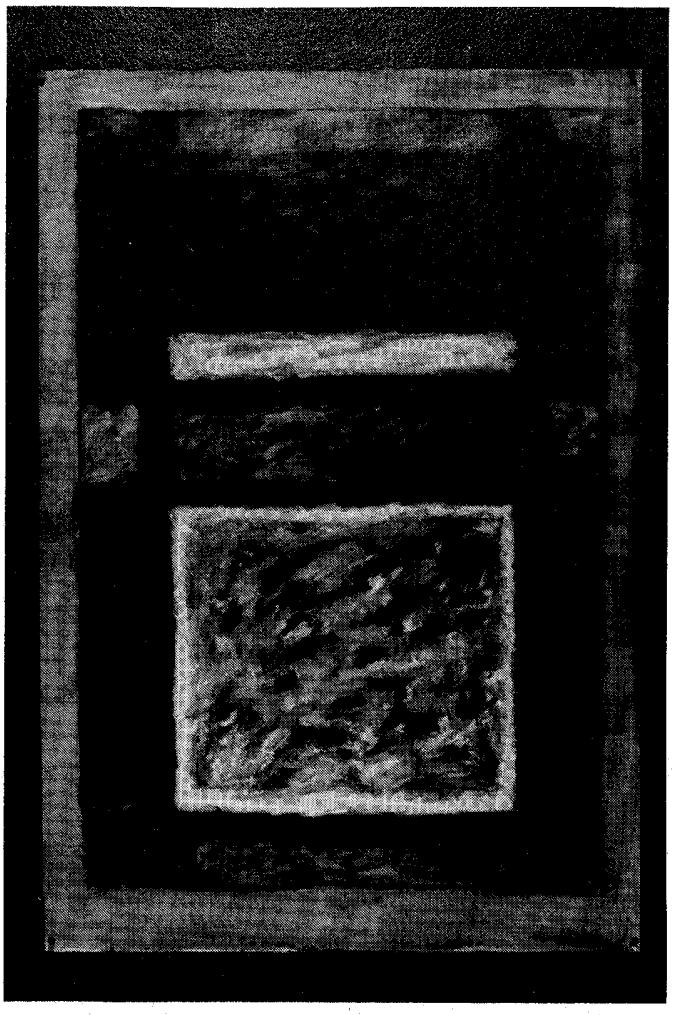

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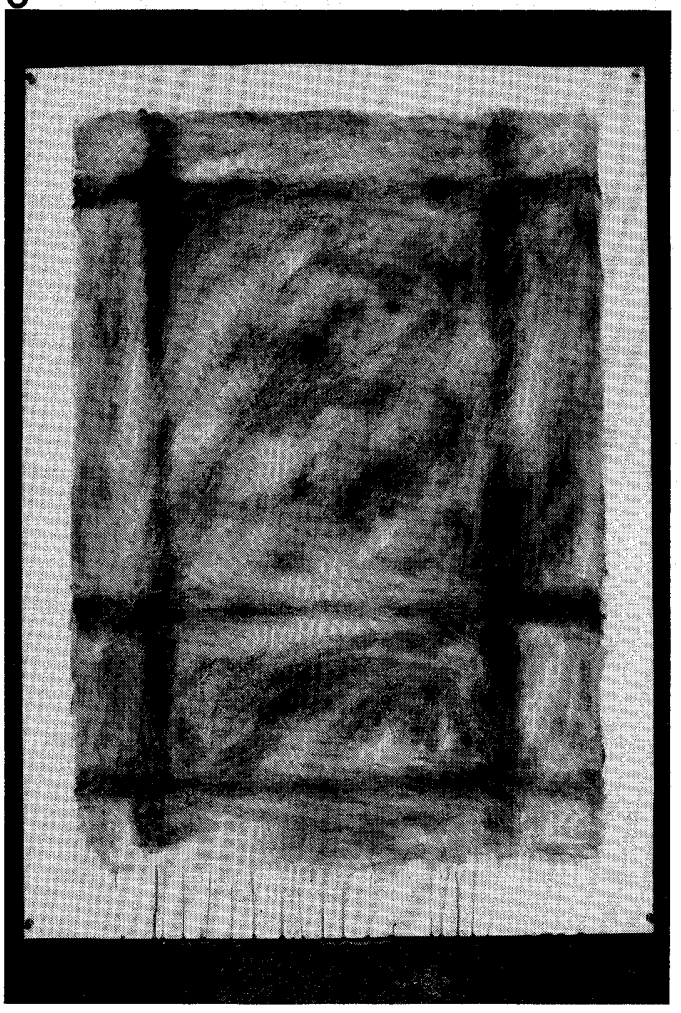

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Celebration of the Centenary

The Societa' Dante Alighieri was founded in 1889 with the aim of diffusing Italian language and culture as widely as possible.

The Societa' will be celebrating the centenary of its foundation with functions in Rome from 22nd October to 26th October.

The Brisbane Dante Alighieri Society has decided to celebrate this centenary with a series of functions to be held in the City Hall, Brisbane, over two weeks, from 3rd October to 17th October.

The functions are an art exhibition from 3rd to 17th October, a public lecture on 5th October, a public lecture on 12th October and a flute-piano concert on 14th October.

The public lecture on 5th October will be delivered by Dr. Franco Vicenzotti, Director, Italian Institute of Culture, Sydney, on the topic, "Luci e ombre nell'Italia contemporanea". This lecture, which will be given in Italian, will describe the current political, social and economic scene in Italy.

The lecture will be held in the Foyer of the Ithaca Auditorium at 8 p.m.

The public lecture on 12th October will be delivered by John Gatt-Rutter, Lecturer in Italian at Griffith University, on the topic, "Dante and the Divine Comedy". This lecture will be given in English in the Foyer of the Central City Library, also at 8 p.m.

The concert will feature two young Italian musicians, Francesca Pagnini, flautist, and Paola Mariotti, pianist. Their concert will include music by Italian composers, Casella, Busoni, Sarti and Donizetti.

The tour of Australia by these two young Italian musicians has been sponsored by the Italian firm Agusta S.p.A., a firm which specialises in building planes and helicopters and which also has a dedication to sponsoring Italian culture.

The functions organised by the Dante Alighieri Society of Brisbane have been planned to give Brisbane a taste of the cultural heritage of Italy.

Acknowledgments

This exhibition is the result of willing co-operation of a number of organisations and individuals.

The organisations are the Dante Alighieri Society, the Brisbane City Hall Art Gallery and Library, the Art Department of the Brisbane College of Advanced Education and the Roz macAllan Gallery.

A special thanks is due to printer, Tony Reggi for assisting with the preparation of this catalogue.

Thanks are due also to the artists for agreeing to allow their works to be shown in this exhibition.

The Society expresses its sincere thanks to its patron, His Excellency, the Governor of Queensland, Sir Walter Campbell, Q.C. for recognising the importance of this occasion to the Society and agreeing to officially inaugurate the celebrations of the centenary of the Societa' Dante Alighieri.