

Being Italian? Two Events on Cinema and Italian Heritage



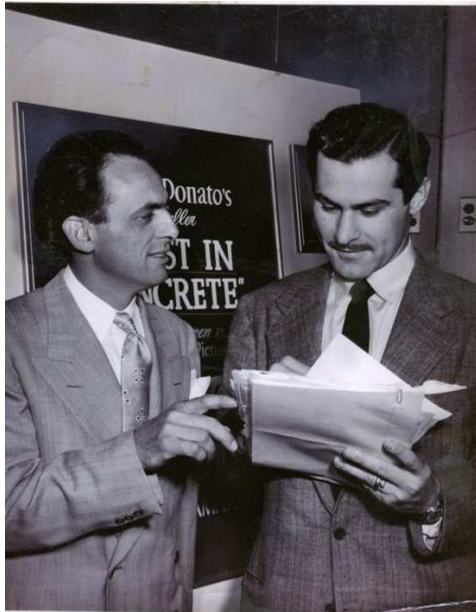
Saturday, December 13, 2025, 12 pm

MAKA

Maka is a thought-provoking documentary that chronicles the extraordinary journey of Geneviève Makaping — an anthropologist, journalist, and the first Black woman to serve as editor-in-chief of an Italian newspaper. Tracing her migration from Cameroon across the desert and the Mediterranean Sea to her arrival and life in Italy, the film captures both her personal resilience and her reflections on race, migration, and representation. Through an engaging blend of interviews, archival images, and reflective storytelling, the documentary crafts a powerful meditation on visibility, identity and belonging. (Italy, 2023, 52 mins, Italian/English with subtitles | Dir. Elia Moutamid)

with director Elia Moutamid and screenwriter Simone Brioni

[Free | RSVP Required](#)



Saturday, December 20, 2025, 12 pm

CHRIST IN CONCRETE

In *Christ in Concrete*, blacklisted director Edward Dmytryk delivers a searing and poetic portrait of working-class struggle, adapted from Pietro Di Donato's acclaimed novel. The film follows Geremio, a proud Italian American bricklayer in 1930s New York, whose faith and humanity are tested amid brutal labor conditions and the crushing weight of poverty. Told with striking realism and spiritual intensity, *Christ in Concrete* stands as a powerful meditation on sacrifice, dignity, and the soul of the immigrant experience. (USA, 1949, 114 mins, NR, English | Dir. Edward Dmytryk)

with Marc Fasanella, Fred Gardaphé and Loredana Polezzi

[Free | RSVP Required](#)

Being Italian? Two Events on Cinema and Italian Heritage

These two free events, supported by Long Island Grants for the Arts, explore the complex legacy of Italian mobilities and the changing meaning of 'Italianness', both in Italy and on Long Island. Through cinematic storytelling, they trace narratives of migration, labor, and identity across generations, illuminating how movement shapes experiences of citizenship, ethnicity, and belonging.

The series features a screening on 20 December of *Christ in Concrete* (1949), directed by Edward Dmytryk and based on Pietro Di Donato's seminal novel of the same title (1939). Di Donato, who lived in Northport and Setauket, captured the struggles and resilience of Italian American laborers in the early 20th century. His work remains a cornerstone in the cultural memory of Italian American life. Guest speakers include Marc Fasanella, son of Di Donato's lifelong friend, the artist and activist Ralph Fasanella; Fred Gardaphé, curator of *The Collected Stories of Pietro di Donato* (2025); and Di Donato scholar Loredana Polezzi, D'Amato Chair in Italian and Italian American Studies at Stony Brook University.

Maka (2022), a documentary directed by award-winning Italian Moroccan filmmaker Elia Mouatamid and written by Simone Brioni, a Centerport-based screenwriter, will be screened on 13 December. The film focuses on Geneviève Makaping, an Italian Black writer, journalist and educator whose life-story reclaims the narrative about migration to Italy and speaks out against the media representation of immigrants. Director and writer will take part in a discussion about the film and its representation of a changing Italy, as well as the development of their creative collaboration.

Maka and *Christ in Concrete* offer a compelling lens through which to examine the intertwined histories of departures and arrivals, and the evolving meanings of 'home'. They invite reflection on the enduring impact of migration on local communities like Huntington, and on the broader Italian diaspora in the USA.

By exploring new and old Italian migrations, to and from Italy, the events will also trace the genesis of *Dardanelles*, a forthcoming documentary largely set in Huntington, which takes the life and work of Pietro Di Donato as a departure point for a reflection on identity, heritage, and the continuing resonance of the Italian diasporic experience. An exclusive preview of *Dardanelles*, a forthcoming documentary, which is a continued collaboration between Brioni and Moutamid, will be included in the two events, with the authors discussing the journey that took them from *Christ in Concrete* and *Maka* to this new project.

This work is supported by Long Island Grants for the Arts through funds provided by the office of the Governor and the New York State Legislature, and administered by The Huntington Arts Council.

