



CULTURES, FASHION AND SOCIETY'S *notebooks* **2016**

www.lifequalitystudies.unibo.it/culturesfashionsociety
culturemodasocieta@unibo.it

All rights reserved
© 2016, Pearson Italia, Milan-Turin

First published: December 2016

9788867741854

The publisher is available to those copyright holders with whom it was not possible to establish contact for the anthological passages, quotes, graphic, cartographic and photographic reproductions pertaining to the property of third parties included in this work, as well as for any unintentional omissions and/or errors of attribution in the references. Unauthorised reproduction by any means in whole or in part or for educational use is forbidden.

Photocopies for personal use of the reader may be made within a limit of 15% of each volume upon payment to the SIAE of the amount envisaged in art. 68, paragraphs 4 and 5 of Italian Law no. 633 of 22 April 1941.

Reproductions made for purposes of a professional, economic or commercial nature or for use other than personal use may be made following specific authorization issued by CLEARedi, Corso di Porta Romana 108, 20122 Milan, e-mail autorizzazioni@clearedi.org and website www.clearedi.org.

Digital production

Andrea Astolfi

Cover design

Ilaria Picardi

Editorial coordination

Francesco Crepaldi, Maria Diletta Strumolo

www.pearson.it

“Cultures, Fashion and Society’s Notebooks”

The “Cultures, Fashion and Society’s Notebooks” are one of the activities which originate from the “Culture Fashion Communication – International Research Group”, to strengthen and give new development perspectives to a network of scholars and experts, who have been studying for several years the phenomena linked to the fashion system, consumer goods and lifestyles with an innovative interdisciplinary method. The Research Group studies the fashion system and lifestyle dynamics as privileged analysis tools of contemporary trends and transformations by looking not only at the virtuous interconnections between social-liberal art disciplines, but also by directing great and ever increasing interest in the contact zones with the cultures of planning and design, computer science, technological applications.

Besides its interdisciplinary feature, the Group has a strong international vocation as it is already supported by a sound network of relationships and collaborations with foreign scholars, who have been active and involved in different ways in the field of cultural and fashion studies for many years.

In like manner to the “Culture Fashion Communication – International Research Group”, this new series (published on yearly basis since 2015) has a multidisciplinary and transversal approach to methodologies and traditional academic knowledge encouraging readings and languages suited for the study of the complex landscape of the contemporary.

Within each Notebook, every year a different editor will be responsible for the publications of the various subjects (monographic essays, miscellaneous collections, conferences and one-day workshops).

“Cultures, Fashion and Society’s Notebooks” is promoted by the Department for Life Quality Studies of the University of Bologna, Rimini Campus.

A special thank is hereby given to UniRimini Spa for their support.

For further information:

www.lifequalitystudies.unibo.it/culturesfashionsociety

www.unibo.it/culturefashioncommunication



Culture
Fashion
Communication

Editorial Board (University of Bologna, Rimini Campus) Daniela Baroncini, Daniela Calanca, Fabriano Fabbri, Mariella Lorusso, Alberto Malfitano, Gustavo Marfia, Antonella Mascio, Giovanni Matteucci, Roy Menarini (Editor), Federica Muzzarelli (Editor-in-chief), Giampaolo Proni, Simona Segre Reinach, Lucio Spaziante, Ines Tolic

Scientific Board Roberta Bartoletti (University of Urbino)
Marco Antonio Bazzocchi (University of Bologna)
Paola Bertola (Politecnico, Milan)
Giovanni Boccia Artieri (University of Urbino)
Laura Bovone (Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, Milan)
Patrizia Calefato (University of Bari)
Flaviano Celaschi (University of Bologna)
Paola Colaiacomo (IUAV, Venice)
Carla Comellini (LILEC, University of Bologna, Ravenna Campus)
Giovanna Cosenza (University of Bologna)
Emanuela De Cecco (University of Bolzano)
Ruggero Eugeni (Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, Milan)
Armando Fumagalli (Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, Milan)
Paolo Leonardi (University of Bologna)
Ada Gigli Marchetti (University of Milan)
Claudio Marra (University of Bologna)
Elisabetta Merlo (Bocconi University, Milan)
Donna Rose Miller (LILEC, University of Bologna)
Maria Giuseppina Muzzarelli (University of Bologna)
Roberta Paltrinieri (University of Bologna)
Eugenia Paulicelli (City University of New York)
Guglielmo Pescatore (University of Bologna)
Samuel Porter Whitsitt (DIT, University of Bologna, Forlì Campus)
Veronica Pravadelli (Roma Tre, Rome)
Giuseppe Scaraffia (La Sapienza, Rome)
Emanuela Scarpellini (University of Milan)
Angelo Turchini (University of Bologna, Ravenna Campus)
Paolo Volonté (Politecnico, Milan)

Notebook 2016

Edited by Roy Menarini

Index

Monographic Essays

1. Wessie Ling, *Korea vs Paris: There Is No Fashion, Only Image or How to Make Fashion Identity*
2. Federica Maria Marrella, *The Female Representation in Advertising Campaigns. The Democratic and Italian Female Body in Dolce and Gabbana. Years 2010-2015*
3. Federica Muzzarelli, *The Photo Booth and the Automatic Photographic Portrait from Criminal and Psychiatric Certification to Imaginary Escape*
4. Ines Tolic, *Selling Mr Architect. How the Modern Shop Transformed Domestic Architecture and Urban Landscapes*

Zone Moda Exhibitions

5. Ines Tolic, edited by, *Bodyscapes: the Body and Its Landscapes from the 19th to the 21st Century*

Celebrity Culture and Media Mutations

6. Antonella Mascio, *The Subject of Food in Media Products: from Television to Online Celebrities (and Back)*
7. Roy Menarini, *Old Is New: Notes about Carrie Fisher and Harrison Ford as Vintage Celebrities in Star Wars: The Force Awakens Reviews*
8. Sara Pesce, *"I Wear Pasolini". Icon-men, Fashion Branding and the Intellectual as Celebrity*
9. Silvia Vacirca, *Monica Vitti, a Pop Diva*

Silvia Vacirca

Monica Vitti, a Pop Diva

 Bruno Mondadori

Monica Vitti, a Pop Diva

Silvia Vacirca

In an interview published in “Bianco e Nero” magazine, dedicated to women in film, Monica Vitti states: «Well, [...] how many times, the screenwriters kept telling me: “Monica, how can I write stories for you? You are a woman, and what does a woman do? She does not go to war, she does not work. What can I do? I can only write a love story. You make children, you suffer, he leaves, you’re hopeless”». ¹ Such a statement, pronounced by the backbone of the Italian comedy, the writers, explains quite well the types of roles reserved for women in the golden age of Italian cinema. Monica Vitti, a successful actress who at the time had already established herself as a comic performer, acknowledges her objective weakness in the film industry balance of powers, together with the misogyny of Italian cinema. However, in 1950s Italian cinema, women had a strong and bursting physical presence, as in the case of the so-called *maggiorate*. In the movie where the expression *maggiorata* was invented, the episode *Il processo di Frine* in *Altri tempi* (Blasetti, 1951), the *maggiorazione* of Gina Lollobrigida, which shows a generous heart-shaped neckline, is described as an handicap. In the closing argument delivered by the lawyer, played by an amazing

1 Bellumori C. (edited by), *Le donne del cinema contro questo cinema*, in “Bianco e Nero”, XXXIII, 1972, nn. 1-2, p. 97.

Vittorio De Sica, since the very beginning beauty is identified not only with the woman, but also with an “other” law, an “other” morality, both rising above everything else, and to which the law itself must submit. According to Stephen Gundle, the 1950s Italian *maggiorate* summarized, from an American point of view, Italian virtues and the new spirit which pervaded the country, thanks to a half-undressed sex appeal coded as naturalistic, simple, spontaneous, opposed to Hollywood glamour artificiality. As Gundle writes, «together with Vespe, coffee pots, sport cars and postcard images of Rome, Naples and Venice, divas represented a country that had left the war behind and presented itself to the world with a brand new face».² Femininity became one of the privileged places to promote the country to an international public, the Americans in particular, that in the meanwhile had become an important marketplace. In fact, 1951, the year *Altri tempi* was released, is considered the year Italian fashion was born, with the organization, in the Florentine residence of Giovanni Battista Giorgini – Villa Torrigiani, in Via de’ Serragli – of the First Italian High Fashion Show, the first presentation of Italian high fashion to six American buyers: Gertrude Ziminsky from New York B. Altman and Company, John Nixon from Montreal Henry Morgan, Ethel Francau, Jessica Daves and Julia Trissel from New York Bergdorf Goodman, Stella Hanania from San Francisco I. Magnin. It is noteworthy that the narrative roles reserved to *maggiorate* were those of mothers, sisters and sons. They embodied familial bonds in their social identity, as an essential component to gain any social weight. During 1950s, in Italy, in legal and economic terms, women were still subjected to men, coming to terms with the country’s violent modernization process.

2 Gundle S., *Figure del desiderio. Storia della bellezza femminile italiana*, Laterza, Rome-Bari 2009, p. 235.

The Italian comedies intertwined cultural modernization with a sexual dimension, in particular with the representation of the female body. Film stars had an important role in shaping national identity. The 1960s opened up a modernisation and emancipation process in which cinema played a decisive role, thanks to its dimension of popular romance and the production of new star images. If masculinity in Italian comedy has been the focus of scholar attention, for example in Jacqueline Reich's *Beyond the Latin Lover: Marcello Mastroianni, masculinity, and Italian cinema*,³ less attention has been dedicated to its actresses. And yet, they are fundamental to think about Italian women's position in society and to re-connect cinema to current trends in society. The comedy genre offers resistance perspectives that challenge the dominant male point of view through the figure of the unruly woman, traced by Kathleen Rowe in *The Unruly Woman: Gender and the Genres of Laughter*.⁴ The profile of the unruly woman is one who breaks the rules of traditional femininity by means of excess and extravagance. Monica Vitti occupies a special place in Italian stardom because she was the one to overcome the unruly woman naïveté. Conscious of her own femininity as a condition crossed by and shaken up by modernity, she has embodied the grief and the pleasure of the Italian woman struggling with the «industrialized world of mass consumption and its contradictions»⁵ and with the serialization and abstraction of her sexuality. Stephen Gundle, speaking about Vitti's Antonioni period, writes: «Her acting style was minimalist and interiorized. In other words, she had completely erad-

3 Reich J., *Beyond the Latin Lover. Marcello Mastroianni, Masculinity, and Italian Cinema*, Indiana UP, Bloomington and Indianapolis 2004.

4 Rowe K., *The Unruly Woman: Gender and the Genres of Laughter*, University of Texas Press, Austin 1995.

5 Gundle S., *op. cit.*, p. 301.

icated the Italian elements of her personality. [...] She was a de-personalized cinematic presence: [...]. This abstracted quality of her presence was more cinematic than personal (unlike Mangano) and, even if she interpreted memorable comedies, she had never been compared to the Italian beauties of the post-war years». ⁶

L'Avventura: a modern diva

Stephen Gundle's analysis is illuminating and worth to examine in depth in order to understand the complex relationship between Italian audiences and a diva that reflected a new image of the country, more complex and contradictory. Her media presence, split between national and international, artistic and commercial, black and white and coloured cinema, small and big screen, drama and comedy, fashion magazines and *rotocalchi*, allowed her to be loved by Italians and Europeans alike, a little less by Americans, whose stereotypical idea of Italy did not suite her. As Gundles makes clear: «Only her full lips and expressive eyes suggested something Mediterranean. [...] But she was too complex and brainy to be welcomed as a national symbol». ⁷ Even if Monica Vitti has never been compared to Italian *maggiore* she has been able to fabricate a brand new model of beauty, hence, a new kind of Italianness, outside of the stereotypes of the Bel Paese. Her performance would have not been possible without her experience with Antonioni which built her icona. In his works with Monica Vitti he used an innovative cinematic language while costume design, beyond its references to current fashions – given the upper class setting – punctuates his stories with a tactile and coloristic

6 Ivi, pp. 301-302.

7 *Ibidem*.

presence. In *L'Avventura* (Antonioni, 1960), the first Antonioni's film to be interpreted by Monica Vitti, fashion and images prevail. *L'Avventura* forges strong associations between Monica Vitti, luxury, effortlessness, Italy and the modern times. Claudia's appearance in *L'Avventura* is fundamental to tell the character's story, since she is devoid of a clear psychological structure springing from coherent and discerned actions, according to the rules of classic American cinema. Antonioni's characters are fragmented, as is their experience of the world. A cinema like that unhinges the traditional cultural hierarchy according to which costume design serves the character's psychology, a vision that assumes the radical transparency of costume, an utopia in itself. In *L'Avventura*, for the first time Monica Vitti is fabricated as a cinematic diva through a carefully studied look, as Adriana Berselli's sketches, preserved at Centro Sperimentale di Cinematografia in Rome, testify. In fact, Monica Vitti turned blonde in order to shoot. In the meanwhile, bloneness had become, also in Italy, a synecdoche of the frivolous world of consumption and the artificiality of Hollywood glamour.

Italian cinema, as Stephen Gundle points out, had trouble finding, during the post-war years, national actresses able to express Italian girls' aspirations and for this reason it turned to foreign actresses. Fashion, to promote its clothes, or the idea of Italian fashion itself, needed a diva that could resonate with national and international audiences. In this context, Monica Vitti was the perfect mixture of fear of modernity (she was terrorized by aeroplanes, trains and she could not drive), emancipation (for a long time she did not marry and she did not have children) and frustrated romanticism. Monica Vitti's success became possible, since 1960, because the neorealist aesthetics was giving way to a fashionable kind of beauty. The actress reports about her initial difficulties in the world of cinema because of her raspy and awkward voice – which allowed her to dub cinematic prostitutes and criminals – and her nose, so straight and aristocratic that it was not well suited

to the average fifties Italian film beauty. She confessed to Laura Delli Colli: «Castellani had chosen me to interpret *Nella città, l'inferno*. “*Bravissima* as an actress”, Castellani said, “but the nose: we need to change that”. Productions were happy to pay for the nose job, but I started to like my nose more and more: if it was not photogenic for them, for me it was my luggage, they had to take me with it or nothing». ⁸ Surprisingly, the initial problem of Monica Vitti seemed to be of a photogenic nature. The turning point came with the screenplay of *Una pelliccia di visone* (Pellegrini, 1956), by Age-Scarpelli: the story of a modest middle class family that wins a mink fur at the Christmas lottery, courtesy of the roman company Mario Caldieri. In this case, the shape of her nose was perfect since she had to play an aristocrat woman. In this small production the connection between Vitti's image and the feminine world of fashion and consumption is traced for the first time. Here, the Italian department store La Rinascente, where the lead character works as a sales person, is at the centre of the plot. In the following movie, *Le dritte* (Amendola, 1958), Monica Vitti plays Ofelia, a cerebral and sophisticated boutique manager. But *Le dritte* is a commercial film and Vitti's image does not have an iconic power.

It is Antonioni who grasps her potentialities and cast her for *L'Avventura* to play Claudia, a young and blasé girl. What the spectator knows about Claudia he knows from her voice, her manners and costumes. In the movie little or nothing happens, the disappearance of Claudia's friend Anna gives way to the love story between Claudia and Sandro, Anna's husband. Vitti's image is drew since the first shots and the role of accessories and clothes is not only fundamental in describing her cinematic identity, but also in giving the movie a sartorial breath. Vitti's costumes are defined by an absence and their silhouette is modernist as is the film's aesthetics. In *L'Avventura* fashion works

8 Delli Colli L., *Monica Vitti*, Gremese, Rome 1987, p. 21.

as a distinguishing system, a strategy to differentiate social classes. Claudia wears modern, minimal clothes, their shape is straight, the waist is low, a remembrance of twenties' fashion look. The first look of Claudia – made up of a checked pencil skirt, a dark grey oversize sweater which, judging by the wardrobe tests, she's wearing from the top wrong, and a vintage bag – is noteworthy because it is miles away from the look of Anna, inspired to the New Look and accessorized with a Gucci bag (as Adriana Berselli reports on the sketch). Claudia's appearance has also the flavour of American college uniforms: a subtle way to hint at her youthfulness and difference from the group of decadent bourgeois. Claudia does not follow women's French fashion because she is young and her cultural references are different. She has an individual style that communicate a minimal, restrained femininity, with a focus on legs and wrists as erotic zones, instead of the breast and the waist. In Adriana Berselli's sketch of this look, there is the note: "lighter hair". In fact, under the yellow colour one can see the initial red choice. The blonde colour represents the final version approved by the director Antonioni, showing the image of Monica Vitti in the making. The second look of Claudia is a black one-piece swimsuit, while Anna, once again, is wearing a bikini designed by Pucci. Later, Claudia will wear a slightly waisted Fordist *petit noir* with a funny trompe l'oeil effect and an ancient decorative brooch attached. In the related sketch we can find two versions of that costume. In order to understand Antonioni's outfit choice it is important to emphasize that the discarded version included a draping on the hips with a huge bow. All Claudia outfits have the characteristic of simplicity and clarity. According to Caroline Evans, in addition to design, also corporal styles may be modernist,⁹ so we can say

9 Evans C., *The Mechanical Smile. Modernism and the First Fashion Shows in France and America, 1900-1929*, Yale UP, New Haven and London 2013.

that Claudia has a modernist body, aware of the rupture with a past that, ironically, she wears as a decorative brooch. Judith Brown, among the features of the mannequin, includes: impersonality, void, abstraction, surface, cleanliness, alienated look, eclipse of subjectivity, cancellation of personality and lack of affection.¹⁰ Monica Vitti and *L'Avventura* share the same characteristics, as pointed out by several contemporary reviews: alienated, cold, impersonal and beautiful. On the other hand, Claudia's weak subjectivity allows the foregrounding of Monica Vitti as an iconic diva with a modern soul. In the film there are at least two scenes in which Claudia, in private, abandons her restrained demeanor to indulge in performance. The first time she is wearing a funny gown with huge pockets. She laughs, dances, sings and finally asks Sandro to confess his love for her. The second time she is crying, at the end of the movie. Claudia often handles clothes, and it is when she's wearing Anna's shirt that she takes her place. Being identifiably different, Claudia's clothing emphasizes her non-involvement in the group as her back is often turned to the group. Examination of Claudia's physical presentation and attire also provides indication of the incongruity between herself and the environment as well as the dissonance of her behaviour and thought. When interacting with the landscapes of Southern Italy, Claudia is physically out of place because of her appearance and dress – even the environment responds to this discrepancy, which makes her feel alienated from the atmosphere. Her professional and modern clothing physically distinguishes her also from the other women dressed in the New Look. Claudia's fashion distinguishes herself and her social reality, enabling her divergent perceptions of reality from others.

10 Brown J., *Glamour in Six Dimensions: Modernism and the Radiance of Form*, Cornell UP, Ithaca and London 2009, pp. 20-43, 145-172.

POP femininity

In 1966 Monica Vitti became a star. From the pages of “Stampa Sera” the film critic Ugo Salvatore writes: «It is not a paradox. Italian cinema has a new star: Monica Vitti, a Vitti who is speaking, laughing, unleashing herself in a miniskirt, an amusing, communicable Vitti».¹¹ As Monica Vitti states, in the same article: «I owe a lot to Antonioni. But it was time to prove that I know how to move lips like Loren, that I possess the womanly virtues of Gina Lollobrigida, the Cardinale hips, the Martinelli legs, and Virna Lisi charme»,¹² a collage of Italian stars. The turning point is represented by *Modesty Blaise* (Losey, 1966), a female parody of the James Bond series, set in the Italian Mediterranean, which stars the chic heroine Modesty Blaise. Some films are the offshoot of an era and Modesty Blaise is the epitome of Swinging London. Critics hated it. Here Monica Vitti turns into a swinging cosmopolitan beauty – the New York Times will call her “The Roman butterfly” – which celebrates her connection with fashion and modernity. Horacio Silva writes in The New York Times: «Losey’s female spy manqué, played by the Italian art-house sexplosion Monica Vitti, has no discernible talent other than the ability to change her clothes and hair color at will – often within the same scene. Vitti’s costume and wig changes, more frequent and ridiculous even than Norma Shearer’s in *Marie Antoinette*, have inspired countless fashion spreads and contributed to the film’s status as required viewing with the fashion set».¹³

11 Salvatore U., *Una vestale in minigonna*, “Stampa Sera”, 9 December 1966, p. 3.

12 *Ibidem*.

13 Silva H., *Why We Love Fashion? It’s Groovy*, “New York Times”, 23 February 2003. http://www.nytimes.com/2003/02/23/magazine/why-we-love-fashion-it-s-groovy-heroine-chic.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0

Simon Doonan, the creative director of Barneys New York, became a Vitti fan after seeing the movie as a teenager in England, while according Linda Wells, “Allure” editor in chief, «*Modesty Blaise* is the perfect fashion movie. It’s good-looking and vapid, completely self-conscious and all style and no substance. And Monica Vitti sounds like Donatella Versace». ¹⁴ Directed by a sophisticated and troubled director as Joseph Losey, with this film Vitti hangs on a nail the modernist black dress to embrace industrial explosions of colour. *Modesty Blaise* continues and strengthens the intimate relationship of Monica with fashion, cars and pop objects. In the opening sequence, wearing the costumes designed by Beatrice ‘Bumble’ Dawson, she is lying on the bed of a retro-pop-futuristic room staged by production designer Richard Macdonald, while the Filipino maid reads her horoscope (Scorpio) and the machine next to her bed is printing the list of her travel wardrobe. But the machine fails: some of the clothes on the list are in the laundry. In response, Modesty laughs and makes fun of the machine, as one would do with a dear friend. The purple makeup, the pompadour hairstyle, parody of the Bardot *chignon bordel*, the yellow satin costume, the pink velvet bed, the walls in optical white, everything in the picture conjures to depict her as a pop icon. In fact, Modesty Blaise was the protagonist of a comic strip created in the early sixties by the British writer Peter O’Donnell with the artist Jim Holdway, which appeared for the first time in the London Evening Standard on May 13th, 1963. It was so successful, in Great Britain and abroad, that O’Donnell was asked to adapt it for the big screen. Unfortunately, the film did not perform well at the box office, in contrast to the novel based on the screenplay written by Peter O’Donnell and called *Modesty Blaise*, with Monica Vitti on the cover. In the film, mod fashions combined with more

14 *Ibidem*.

classic styles with a space-age twist, such as the yellow shantung tunic with the speaker-flower shaped hood that opens up as a butterfly, are proof that by now Monica dwells in the world of style and elegance. The countless changes of costume and hair, the explosion of colours, the flat and decorative backgrounds upon which her figure is cut, together with an anti-naturalistic acting style, give her the consistency of a doll, multiplying her identities forever. The result is a playful inaccessibility of her character, typical of those beings who speak through balloons, as of the plot, labyrinthine as the hairstyles. The importance of style, which is recurrent in her filmography, will be balanced, on subsequent works, by the screenplays written by Rodolfo Sonego and Age-Scarpelli, that will bring to her character the gift of empathy.

The costumes wore by Monica Vitti, in general, are designed to serve the narrative and the character, but they do not disappear altogether, because they are an important star designing tool. How Jane Gaines underlines in her seminal essay *Costume and Narrative*, «Although star designing is thoroughly committed to foregrounding the star, the value of impersonation over personification has still held. The ideal in this way becomes the transformation of the star that plays on a fascination with masquerade while remaining a transformation that stops short of complete disguise».¹⁵ A fact evident in the films interpreted by Monica Vitti, where the costumes, as well as highlighting her erogenous zones, often retains an aspect of caricature, standing out as “costumes”.

It is what happens in *La ragazza con la pistola* (Monicelli, 1968), where the adoption of the English mod fashion by the protagonist,

15 Gaines J., Herzog. C., *Costume and Narrative: How Dress Tells the Woman's Story*, in *Fabrications. Costume and the Female Body*, Routledge, New York-London 1990, p. 201.

as the story unfolds, symbolizes her path towards emancipation, freedom and sanity. The old femininity, slave to tradition and family ties, materializes in the black dress she wears at the beginning and, above all, in her dark wig with its anti-modern long braid designed by Piero Gherardi. In the second half of the film, Vitti wears black vinyl clothing in a simple design, like the raincoat in which she tries to kill her ex-boyfriend. While black means that the process of emancipation is not accomplished yet, the vinyl, artificial fabric *par excellence*, expression of the spirit of the times, works as a prolepsis. It is significant that at the end, when her civil and ironic revenge is fulfilled, Monica abandons the costume excess of the previous scenes, while her style and hairstyle radiate serenity and self-control. In the middle there is the pursuit of fashion and the instability of an identity in formation. Fashion, in this movie, triggers a revolution in the private sphere. It allows the character, and Monica Vitti as a star, to break with traditional values and Italianness – Sicily represents the essence of Italianness. A break which is not painless, as some subsequent films demonstrate: in *Amore mio, aiutami* (Sordi, 1969) she is badly slapped by her husband, in *Gli ordini sono ordini* (Giraldi, 1972) she ends up with a leg in plaster, while in *La ragazza con la pistola*, where she makes a living as a fashion model, her body image is cut into pieces. She happens to talk or sit in marginal places: crushed against a wall – in *Ti ho sposato per allegria* (Salce, 1967) she even speaks through a balloon drawn on the wall – looking out of a window or framed by a door, to emphasize her liminal, elusive quality. Femininity performed as a process, distanced into a parody, is what allows her not to become a mere object of the male gaze. Her lived-excess, performed ironically, is reminiscent of Roy Lichtenstein pop heroines: blonde, neurotic, abstract. As Lichtenstein's 1963 *Drowning Girl*, Monica Vitti is a living parody of soap operas melodramatic heroines, turning the drama of suicide or jealousy in a camp performance. In fact, in *Dramma della gelosia, tutti i particolari in cronaca*

(Scola, 1970), screenwriters' reference point in writing Monica Vitti's dialogues, was not street language but Italian *fotoromanzi*, in order to express the industrialization of emotions. In her films a painful attempt is consumed: experiencing love in modern times.

In *Ninì Tirabusciò, la donna che inventò la mossa* (Fondato, 1970), during an exchange with the crazy futurist, Monica defends her tireless search for love. A few minutes earlier, on the train, he had revealed her his admiration with these words: «The woman's body is a living material. And it has been made for the plastic movement. The "move"¹⁶ is a major innovation». Her "move" is innovative, as the costumes she wears. In the sketches Adriana Berselli drew for the film, she is keen to note that the costumes must look "too new". Up until the newest dress, made of aluminium, making its appearance during the futurist evening. In the file concerning the iconographic material that inspired the work of Adriana Berselli, she has kept some newspaper clippings related to the futurist painter Boccioni and his vision of the modern world. In the women's futuristic fashion manifesto, fashion is identified with the female equivalent of Futurism: speed, innovation, courage of creation. Here, Monica Vitti's relationship with the new is expressed both in her interpretation of the scandalous variety diva Maria Campi and in the costumey appearance of her costumes – reminiscent of Mele department stores in Naples – as displayed in the billboards designed by Cappiello. But *Ninì Tirabusciò* was not about Belle Époque or, at least, not only. It was also about contemporary Italy. In fact, on August 14th, 1971, the magistrate from Palermo Vincenzo Salmeri, while quietly walking in the central piazza Politeama, at the view of the Danish tourist Lise Wit-

16 The "move" is a particular movement performed by the protagonist Ninì Tirabusciò with the rotation of the hips. The audiences in the movie love it.

trock in hot pants, calls two traffic wardens. They will accompany the girl to the nearest public security police station, where she will be reported under article 726 of the Criminal Code concerning acts against public decency. The offence included one-month arrest or a fine ranging from 4 to 40.000 lire. Carlo Casalegno, from the pages of his column “Il nostro Stato”, in “La Stampa” newspaper, intervenes in defense of the girl and of common sense, citing the Vitti “move”: «A complaint that sinks into the ridiculous, raises around a criminal case a climate of farce, recalls too closely the trial against the Ninì Tirabusciò “move”, is not conducive to the prestige of the law. [...] The magistrate from Palermo is neither the first nor the only one to think that the “moral health” of the Italic ancestry must be defended with a crusade against miniskirts, bikinis, female immodesty, contraceptive propaganda, free love. His initiative seems unacceptable to me because it reflects an ideology hard to die: the confusion between sin and crime, between sexual morality and morality tout court». ¹⁷ Monica Vitti was the only Italian diva to embody this spirit of private revolt and translate it into a more acceptable, abstract, pop feminism.

17 Casalegno C., *Moralità e manette*, “La Stampa”, 24 August 1971

References

- Archivio del Centro Sperimentale di Cinematografia, *Fondo Berselli*.
Bellumori C., *Le donne del cinema contro questo cinema*, in “Bianco e Nero”, XXXIII, 1972, n. 1-2.
- Borsatti C., *Monica Vitti*, L'Epos, Palermo 2005.
- Brown J., *Glamour in Six Dimensions: Modernism and the Radiance of Form*, Cornell UP, Ithaca-London 2009.
- Brunetta G.P., *Storia del cinema italiano*, Laterza, Rome-Bari 2009.
- Casalegno C., *Moralità e manette*, “La Stampa”, 24 August 1971.
- Delli Colli L., *Monica Vitti*, Gremese, Rome 1987.
- Evans C., *The Mechanical Smile. Modernism and the First Fashion Shows in France and America, 1900-1929*, Yale UP, New Haven-London 2013.
- Gaines J., Herzog., C. (ed.), *Fabrications. Costume and the Female Body*, Routledge, New York-London 1990.
- Gundle S., *Figure del desiderio. Storia della bellezza femminile italiana*, Laterza, Bari 2009.
- Reich J., *Beyond the Latin Lover. Marcello Mastroianni, Masculinity, and Italian Cinema*, Indiana UP, Bloomington-Indianapolis 2004.
- Ricci C., *Monica Vitti: recitare è un gioco*, Book Publishing, Rome 2016.
- Rowe K., *The Unruly Woman: Gender and the Genres of Laughter*, University of Texas Press, Austin 1995.
- Salvatore U., *Una vestale in minigonna*, “Stampa Sera”, 9 December 1966, p. 3.
- Silva H., *Why We Love Fashion? It's Groovy*, “New York Times”, 23 February 2003. http://www.nytimes.com/2003/02/23/magazine/why-we-love-fashion-it-s-groovy-heroine-chic.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0
- Stefanutto S.R. (ed.), *La Dolce Vitti*, Cinecittà, Rome 2011.
- Vitti M., *Sette sottane*, Sperling & Kupfer, Milan 1993.

Author

Silvia Vacirca teaches *Clothes on Film* at Sapienza University and *Fashion and Media* at Richmond University in Rome. She has worked as style consultant for the TV show *Voglio essere così*. She currently writes for “L’Officiel Italia”, “Flair” and “Rivista Studio”.