

The Three-Dimensionality of The Leopard

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A fascinating photographic exhibit on view at Casa Italiana Zerilli-Marimò until June 19th. Ralph Toporoff speaks to the audience on the opening night and shares his amazing life changing experience. "The Leap of the Leopard: 1963-2013" is in celebration of the 50th anniversary of Luchino Visconti's masterpiece film *Il Gattopardo*. On view for this special occasion are his photographs on the set of the film fifty years ago. Also on display are two original film posters, made available by Posteritati.

There is a single negative thing about the new [Casa Italiana](#) [2] exhibit: that it closes on the 19th of June, leaving only a little time for everyone to see it.

"The Leap of the Leopard: 1963-2013" is a photographic exhibition which opened last Friday in celebration of the 50th anniversary of [Luchino Visconti](#) [3]'s masterpiece film [Il Gattopardo](#) [4]. On view for this special occasion are the photographs taken by [Ralph Toporoff](#) [5] on the set of the film fifty years ago. Also on display are two original film posters, made available by [Posteritati](#) [6].



During the exhibit opening last Friday, the photographer turned cinematographer, Ralph Toporoff, was present to share his memories of the days spent on the set of the film. He passionately recounted the hot Sicillian summer nights responsible for shaping his future work as a cinematographer.

Toporoff stated: "I watched [Visconti] work and that was an incredible experience for a twenty year old photographer, and in the end [it] has greatly influenced my take on making motion pictures." The photographer truly cherishes every bit of time spent on the set of what may be Italian cinema's greatest work to date. A masterpiece that to this day remains a reference to cinematographers, even fifty years post-production.

Toporoff explored the late 2000's obsession with the idea of three-dimensional films, the time when all the cameras were being converted to 3D, emphasizing the 3D qualities of a movie made a half a century ago: "If you want to talk about a 3D movie, take *Il Gattopardo*, now that's a true three-dimensional movie! It had plot, it had character, it had actors, it had substance, it had story and to me this is the essence of a 3D film.... Is the mechanical device of the actual 3D important? In the overall scheme of things, (and as I spent 25 years as a cinematographer and can tell you that 3D is just a tool) when you talk about 3D movies you should talk about movies like this one and not *Avatar*."

The photographer reminisced about the hot summer nights and eventful days spent on the set of the film and proudly explained the behind the scenes of the photographs awaiting viewing upstairs. The intimate setting of Casa Italiana is the perfect venue for this extraordinary collection of photographs. The snug and warm atmosphere of the Casa adds to the clandestine feeling brought on by the behind-the-scenes peek into the work of art that is known as "The Leopard."

Make sure you free up your calendars in the upcoming weeks and see this amazing collection, in existence only due to a typical Italian delay during the travels of a then twenty-year-old American reportage photographer.

The exhibit remains on view from June 2 - June 19, 2013 and is open Mon-Fri 10-5. Visit Casa Italiana's website for more info [>>>](#) [2]

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- [1] <http://test.iitaly.org/files/toporof1370924025.jpg>
- [2] <http://www.casaitaliananyu.org>
- [3] http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Luchino_Visconti
- [4] [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Leopard_\(1963_film\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Leopard_(1963_film))
- [5] <http://www.rtoporoff.com>
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