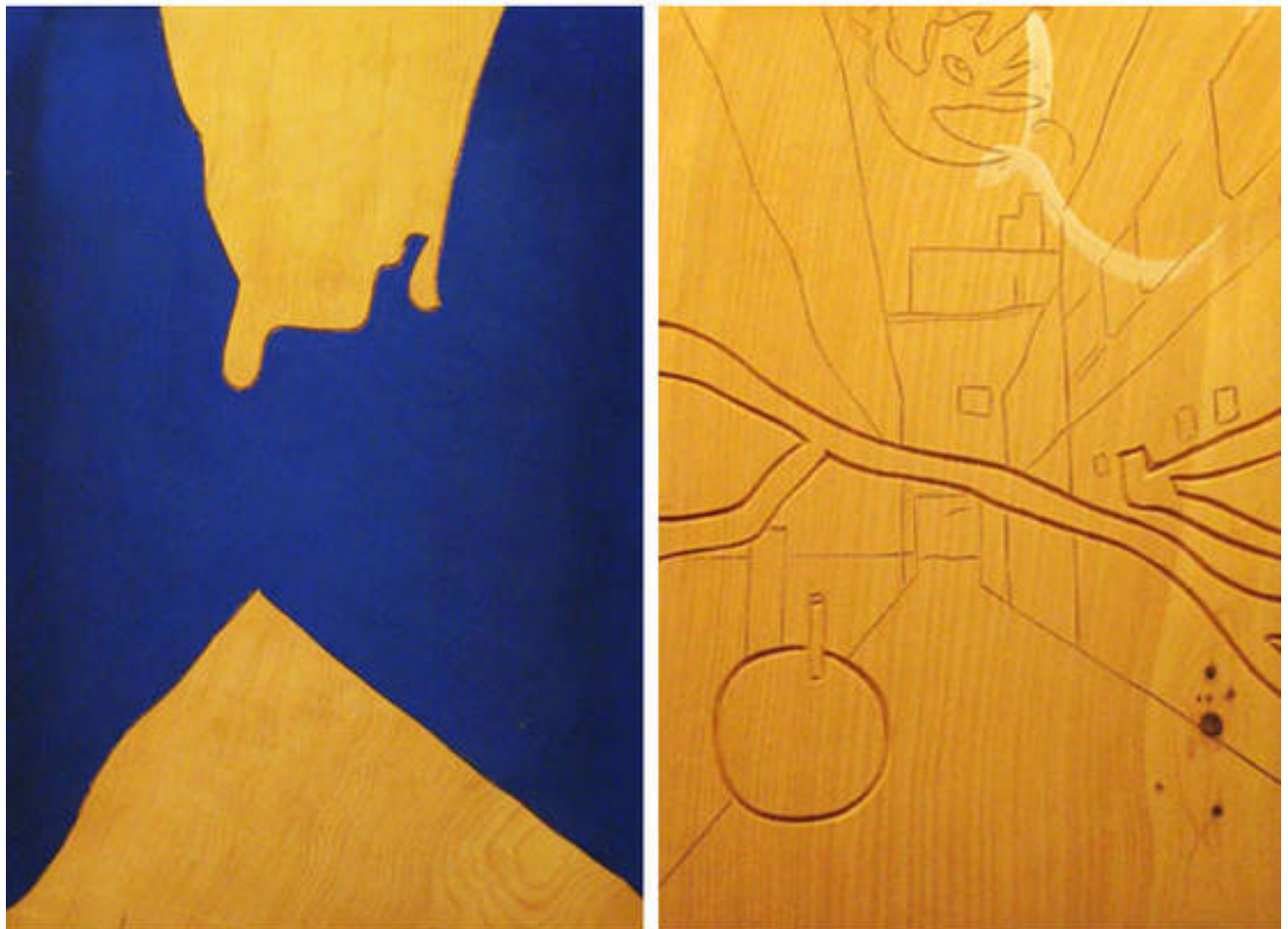


## Auteur Puzzle. Italian Art from Marrakesh to NY

Carmen Cutugno (May 11, 2010)



Corrado Levi exhibits his works at Casa Italiana Zerilli-Marimò: twenty-two palettes, incisions on cedar wood, created during a two-year period, performed by young artisans in Marrakesh under the watchful eye of the artist.

Take an alley in Marrakesh, Rue de Medina, and an Italian artist, Corrado Levi, who has lived in that street for ten years. Ask him to look at the alley, from the same perspective, but through the eyes of twenty-two different Italian artists of the Twentieth Century. What is the result? The exhibit inaugurated a few days ago at [Casa Italiana Zerilli-Marimò](#) [2], entitled Marrakesh Revisited.



So it is a series of twenty-two palettes, created during a two-year period, in which the author tries to interpret, through the lens of irony, a peculiarity of each artist he is inspired by, without trying to reproduce their styles and techniques.

The works are incisions on fragrant cedar wood, carried out by young artisans in Marrakesh under the watchful eye of the artist, who worked on them afterwards painting them partially or completely, or performing extra-pictorial interventions.

These works, clearly intended as an homage to the Italian art of the 20th century – and especially those artists always “sensitively close” to Corrado Levi for emotional connections – would be perfectly able to stimulate the intuitive abilities of those art lovers or experts who would enjoy trying to figure out all the “auteuristic clues” individually disseminated.

Are you art lovers? Do you wish to try solving a funny artistic puzzle? Then try thinking of a small train that runs and fumes on top of the roofs of Marrakesh, with a triangular flag on the ground that you are used to see waving in the paintings of the author whose name is the solution to our puzzle.

Did you guess already? Yes, him! It’s an homage to the father of metaphysical painting, the genius of absurd combinations. It’s Rue de Medina dedicated to [Giorgio De Chirico!](#) [3]

Ready for the next palette... and the next puzzle? The Marrakesh alley now appears divided in half: a clean vertical line marks the border of the two facades that mirror each other. This palette, the twelfth in expositive order is a clear reference to the artist who, more than anyone else, “ponders on the double”; the dedication can only be to Michelangelo [Pistoletto](#) [4].

If you have entered the spirit of the “game” and its artistic dynamics have begun to intrigue you, then nothing is left but for you to continue playing by going to Casa Italiana Zerilli-Marimò, where you can observe the other twenty palettes that Corrado Levi has collected there through May 28, as he already did in the past at the [Rabat dell'Istituto Italiano di Cultura in Marocco](#) [5].

Corrado Levi has been reconciling for many years his artistic passion with his profession of architect and University professor at the Faculty of Architecture of the University of Milan, and it is this overlap of different activities to have led him during the last ten years to live between Marrakesh and Milan.

“In Marrakesh, unlike New York or Milan, there’s a sweetness and depth of time that I can’t find anywhere else... and when I speak about depth of time I don’t mean a form of mysticism at all!”

This is what Corrado Levi told us, adding: “It was living by living in Marrakesh, thinking about these artists, most of which I met and followed personally, that I retraced their work, extracting from each one that which for me could not be renounced. So I reproduced the impossible things of De Chirico; I divided the work in half like Pistoletto... when you are far away you see things more lucidly!”

When we ask him to tell us about Marrakesh his eyes light up and his narration becomes an authentic stream of consciousness.

“My love for Marrakesh began kind of by chance! Ten years ago I decided to spend Christmas somewhere warm; I thought about many different places, but Marrakesh was the cheapest!

Then... then I fell in love with it, and decided to stay. The house I had taken initially was too small, so after some time I got a larger one. Then, since I am an architect, after all, I decided to tear that one down and build a new one which adapted itself perfectly to my needs.”

From that moment on Corrado Levi began to live between the Moroccan city and the capital of Lombardy, where he still teaches Composition in the [Faculty of Architecture](#) [6]. “What kind of relationship do I have with my students? I believe that what you give will come back to you. What I’ve always tried to do is to teach beginning from their ugly things. For this I follow Nietzsche: one must begin from the ugly things to create the beautiful ones. It’s a maieutic process, in which I’m the one to demand mainly from my students, and improving myself through my relationship with them.



I'm the one really taking the exam!"

Finally we ask him what made him decide to mount this exhibit here in New York: "I believed that this city was the most suitable place for rethinking these Italian artists. The purpose of this exhibit of mine is actually to promote Italian art. If you follow the clues you will find some of the most important names of our Twentieth Century art history.

Plus, to be perfectly honest, New York helped me to become brave. Here you can dare, you have the opportunity to experiment, something that in Italy you are not allowed to do so freely.

In this city you can also afford to make a mistake, but if you do something right it certainly gets noticed!"

## **Marrakesh Revisited**

**Exhibition by Corrado Levi**

**Curated by Marina Urbach**

**4th May - 28th May 2010**

**Mon - Fri 10 am - 5 pm**

**Casa Italiana Zerilli-Marimò**

**24 West 12th Street**

**New York, NY 10011-8604**

**Telephone: (212) 998-8730**

**Fax: (212) 995-4012**

**Email: [casa.italiana@nyu.edu](mailto:casa.italiana@nyu.edu) [7]**

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## **Links**

[1] <http://test.iitaly.org/files/cover21273610856jpg>

[2] <http://www.casaitaliananyu.org/>

[3] <http://www.dechirico.org/>

[4] <http://www.pistoletto.it/>

[5] [http://www.iicrabat.esteri.it/IIC\\_Rabat/Templates/HomePage.aspx?NRMODE=Published&NRNODEGUID={8617376C-3D87-441A-86B5-CF7A1A6098A5}&NRORIGINALURL=%2fIIC\\_Rabat&NRCACHEHINT=NoModifyGuest](http://www.iicrabat.esteri.it/IIC_Rabat/Templates/HomePage.aspx?NRMODE=Published&NRNODEGUID={8617376C-3D87-441A-86B5-CF7A1A6098A5}&NRORIGINALURL=%2fIIC_Rabat&NRCACHEHINT=NoModifyGuest)

[6] <http://www.arch.polimi.it/>

[7] <mailto:casa.italiana@nyu.edu>