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### Beyond being an Italian sculptor

*The exile of Fred Carasso in the Low Countries after the rise of fascism, 1928-1958*

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Summary: Beyond Being an Italian Sculptor. The Exile of Fred Carasso in the Low Countries after the Rise of Fascism, 1928-1958.

With the rise of Fascism in 1922, many Italian citizens left and went into exile in Paris, antifascist capital of Europe, yet others also moved north towards the Low Countries, with one of them becoming known as a sculptor in the Netherlands. The present study considers this context of exile through the scholarly introduction of Federico 'Fred' Antonio Carasso, who was born in Carignano on 2 June 1899 and died in Amsterdam on 7 September 1969. Carasso has thus far been regarded as a minor sculptor, exclusively in Dutch historiography, yet this dissertation argues that viewing him as an individual in exile first, and an artist second, illuminates the impact of exile on a broader scope of activities, focusing on his most active period between 1928 and 1958. Methodologically, this case study proposes that preserved primary materials on less successful and understudied artists enable more perspectives on artistic production and identity formation. Through an understanding of the processes of Carasso's becoming, rather than essentially being a sculptor, the endured impact of his politics on activities beyond the medium of sculpture and his Italian national identity are examined.

Chapter 1 discusses the conceptual framework of art, migration, and identity. Chapter 2 provides the background of Carasso's earlier years against the background of the First World War and its aftermath, which marked the rise of Fascism and Communism in Italy. Chapter 3 examines Carasso's works on paper made in Brussels and his work under the Fred Deltor pseudonym as anti-fascist artist, whereas Chapter 4 focuses on his arrival in Amsterdam in 1934 against the background of the emancipation of the sculptor-artisan. Chapter 5 concerns Carasso's contributions to the Dutch memorial culture after the war, with Chapter 6 turning the focus to the journal *Voce Italiana* aimed at Italian emigrants in the Netherlands. Chapter 7 finally proposes to reconsider the figurative nature of Carasso's sculptural practice through investigating his renewed engagement with Italy after the war through writings and exhibitions. Perceiving his identity as an Italian sculptor in the expanded field of his exile ultimately gives us more insight into the changing meanings and functions of sculpture as interrelated with the politics that were foundational to his forced dislocations.

Sintesi: Oltre l'essere uno scultore italiano. L'esilio di Fred Carasso nei Paesi Bassi dopo l'avvento del fascismo, 1928-1958.

Con l'avvento del fascismo nel 1922, molti cittadini italiani lasciarono e andarono in esilio in Parigi, capitale antifascista dell'Europa, ma altri si spostarono anche a nord, verso i Paesi Bassi, e uno di loro divenne noto come scultore in Olanda. Il presente studio prende in considerazione questo contesto di esilio attraverso l'introduzione accademica di Federico "Fred" Antonio Carasso, nato a Carignano il 2 giugno 1899 e morto ad Amsterdam il 7 settembre 1969. Carasso è stato finora considerato uno scultore minore, esclusivamente nella storiografia olandese, ma questa tesi sostiene che considerarlo prima di tutto un individuo in esilio, e poi un artista, illumina l'impatto dell'esilio su un ambito più ampio di attività, concentrandosi sul suo periodo di maggiore attività tra il 1928 e il 1958. Dal punto di vista metodologico, questo case study propone che i materiali primari conservati su artisti di minor successo e poco studiati permettano di aprire nuove prospettive sulla produzione artistica e sulla formazione dell'identità. Attraverso la comprensione dei processi che portarono Carasso a diventare, piuttosto che essere, uno scultore, si esamina l'impatto duraturo della sua politica sulle attività al di là del mezzo scultoreo e sulla sua identità nazionale italiana.

Il capitolo 1 analizza il quadro concettuale di arte, migrazione e identità. Il capitolo 2 presenta il contesto dei primi anni di Carasso sullo sfondo della Prima guerra mondiale e delle sue conseguenze, che segnarono l'ascesa del fascismo e del comunismo in Italia. Il capitolo 3 esamina le opere su carta di Carasso realizzate a Bruxelles e il suo lavoro sotto lo pseudonimo di Fred Deltor come artista antifascista, mentre il capitolo 4 si concentra sul suo arrivo ad Amsterdam nel 1934 sullo sfondo dell'emancipazione dello scultore-artigiano. Il capitolo 5 riguarda i contributi di Carasso alla cultura memoriale olandese del dopoguerra, mentre il capitolo 6 si concentra sulla rivista *Voce Italiana* rivolta agli emigrati italiani nei Paesi Bassi. Il capitolo 7, infine, propone di riconsiderare la natura figurativa della pratica scultorea di Carasso indagando il suo rinnovato impegno con l'Italia nel dopoguerra attraverso scritti e mostre. Percepire la sua identità di scultore italiano nel campo allargato del suo esilio ci permette di comprendere meglio i significati e le funzioni mutevoli della scultura, in quanto interrelata con la politica che fu alla base della sua forzata dislocazione.

Samenvatting: Voorbij het zijn van een Italiaanse beeldhouwer. De ballingschap van Fred Carasso in de Lage Landen na de opkomst van het fascisme, 1928-1958.

Met de opkomst van het fascisme in 1922 gingen veel Italiaanse burgers in ballingschap in Parijs, hoofdstad van het antifascisme, maar anderen trokken ook noordwaarts naar de Lage Landen, waarbij een van hen bekend werd als beeldhouwer in Nederland. De huidige studie beschouwt deze context van ballingschap aan de hand van de wetenschappelijke introductie van Federico 'Fred' Antonio Carasso, die op 2 juni 1899 in Carignano werd geboren en op 7 september 1969 in Amsterdam overleed. Carasso is in de Nederlandse geschiedschrijving tot nu toe uitsluitend beschouwd als een minder belangrijke beeldhouwer, maar dit proefschrift stelt dat de impact van zijn ballingschap op een breder scala aan activiteiten duidelijk wordt wanneer we hem in de eerste plaats bekijken als een individu in ballingschap en in de tweede plaats als een kunstenaar, tijdens zijn meeste actieve periode van 1928 tot en met 1958. Methodologisch laat deze case study zien dat bewaard primair materiaal van minder succesvolle en bestudeerde kunstenaars meer perspectieven biedt op artistieke productie en identiteitsvorming. De blijvende impact van zijn politiek op activiteiten voorbij beeldhouwkunst en zijn Italiaanse nationale identiteit worden onderzocht door te kijken naar Carasso's wordingsprocessen tot beeldhouwer, in plaats van hem in essentie als zodanig te beschouwen.

Hoofdstuk 1 bespreekt het conceptuele kader van kunst, migratie en identiteit. Hoofdstuk 2 geeft de achtergrond van Carasso's vroegere jaren tegen de achtergrond van de Eerste Wereldoorlog en de nasleep daarvan, die de opkomst van het fascisme en communisme in Italië markeerde. Hoofdstuk 3 onderzoekt Carasso's werken op papier die hij in Brussel maakte en zijn werk onder het pseudoniem Fred Deltor als antifascistische kunstenaar, terwijl hoofdstuk 4 zich richt op zijn aankomst in Amsterdam in 1934 tegen de achtergrond van de emancipatie van de beeldhouwer-kunstenaar. Hoofdstuk 5 onderzoekt Carasso's bijdragen aan de Nederlandse herinneringscultuur na de oorlog, terwijl hoofdstuk 6 zich richt op *Voce Italiana* gericht op Italiaanse emigranten in Nederland. Hoofdstuk 7 stelt tenslotte voor om de figuratieve aard van Carasso's beeldhouwpraktijk te heroverwegen door zijn hernieuwde betrokkenheid met Italië na de oorlog te onderzoeken door middel van geschriften en tentoonstellingen. Door te kijken naar zijn identiteit als Italiaanse beeldhouwer in de grotere ruimte van zijn ballingschap wordt meer inzicht verkregen in de veranderende betekenissen en functies van beeldhouwen, in relatie tot de politiek die ten grondslag lag aan zijn gedwongen verplaatsingen.

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