The ICCC reopens its doors - Here's what you need to know
By Mégane Primault

Life at the Milford House is slowly getting back to normal and we are looking forward to hosting more events.

On Wednesday, June 17th we hosted our first event since the closing of our Center due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and how glad were we to see you again. After putting precautions in place to avoid the spread of the virus, guests were able to sit down and enjoy the Italian comedy “Ti Presento Sofia” (Let Me Introduce You to Sofia), movie part of our 2020 Contemporary Italian Film Series.

Even though we had to cancel a lot of events due to the pandemic, the number of online classes grew and students were able to keep learning from the comfort of their home. Here are our upcoming online classes:

**Italian for beginners - A1S1**
Tuesdays, July 7 to August 18
4:00 to 6:00 p.m.
[Click here for more information]

**Grammar Review + Conversation**
A2 Level - Friday, July 10
4:00 to 5:30 p.m.
[Click here for more information]

**Grammar Review** - B2/C1 Level
Friday, July 17 - 4:00 to 5:30 p.m.
[Click here for more information]

**Italian for travelers**
Beginner Level
Wednesdays, July 22 to August 26
5:00 to 7:00 p.m.
[Click here for more information]

On another note, and despite our doors reopening, it is with great sadness and heavy hearts that we are announcing the cancellation of the 2020 Houston Italian Festival which was scheduled for October 8-11, 2020. We have come to this decision after lengthy consideration of all the facts as we know them today regarding Covid-19 and its impact on the community, especially as it relates to the gathering of many participants. The Center during this current health crisis has taken into consideration the health and welfare of all our associates, volunteers, exhibitors, vendors, and guests in making this difficult decision.

We are working thoroughly towards next year’s edition and we will welcome you in 2021 for the 43rd edition of the Houston Italian Festival.

If you would like to be a part of the festival planning committee or become a volunteer for the 2021 Houston Italian Festival, contact Ray Miller at info@iccchouston.com or Alessandra Pistone at accounting@iccchouston.com. We would love to have you by our side and hear your ideas.

We sincerely hope that the members of our community are safe and healthy during this uncertain time and we are grateful for your support.

The ICCC Team.
"42 for 42" Houston Italian Festival Campaign - Thank you to our donors
By the ICCC Team

"42 for 42" Campaign 2020

The Houston Italian Festival’s 42 for 42 Fundraising Campaign kicked off in March with a letter to all members and friends of the ICCC. After cancelling the festival, the members of our community listed below decided to let the Center keep their donations. We thank all of them for their support. The ICCC wouldn’t be what it is today without you.

Stephen Aiosi
Kathy Albert
Dee and Jim Avioli
Nick and Margie Bacile
Brad and Gayla Baker
Margaret and John Bannon
Barbara Barcelona
Gloria Fossati Borreca
Tom Brandino
Nancy and Bill Brown
Mr. and Mrs. Michael Buttitta
Giorgio Caflisch
Mary Choroszy
Joe and Brenda Cialone
Dr. Philip L. Cimo
Sharon Cosimano and Ray Brady
Larry Cuccinniello
Mr. David and Mrs. Rosemarie De Vido
Charles and Tania DeJohn
David L. DeMaggio
Gary DeSerio
Denise DiMiceli
Vincent and Margie DiPuma
Timmy and Stacey Domino
Gloria Secontino Dulworth
Fatica Family
Laura Ferro
David and Elaine Fontaine
Barney Francescon
Steve and Joyce Gallette
Ayn and Francisco Garza
John Gealy
Edward Gentempo
Pam and Mike Graham
Sandra Celli Harris
Mr. and Mrs. Roger Jones
Mario and Virginia Lucchesi
John L. and Louise Maida
Gina M. Marrinucci
Ray and Maureen Miller
Mary Milloy
Tony and Gloria Montalbano
Fred Nevill
Diane Nizza and Federico Zegarra
David and Kathleen Nuzzo
Carolyn Panebianco
Frankie and Rosanne Pizzitola
Franco Posa
Paul and Elvie Pustizzi
S.A. Rooney
Emilia and Michael Rumore
Ross J. Salvaggio
Norman and Carolee Schenk
The Sinacori Family
Robert Tucci
Roy and Dominique Varner
Mr. and Mrs. William Walters/Pa,
and Bob Walters

Houston Italian Festival sponsors become donors - We thank you
By the ICCC Team

We would also like to thank our initial festival sponsors as they decided to turn their sponsorships into donations to help our Center during these challenging times. We thank you for your generosity.

Brenda and Michael Benigno - Umbria Regional Flag
Livia Bornigia and Carl Scott - Marche Regional Flag
Nancy and Bill Brown - Artichoke Booth
Controlled Air Service - Lombardia Regional Flag
Paul and Linda Coselli Family - Toscana Regional Flag
Cusimano Architect - Main Wine Booth
Joseph D’Addesio, MD - First Aid Station
Daughters of Italian Heritage - Meatball Sandwich Booth
David and Rosemarie DeVido - Trentino-Alto Adige Regional Flag
DiPuma Printing and Promotional Products Co. - Bocce Ball Tournament
Wayne Duddleston Foundation in Honor of Margie DiPuma - Lazio Regional Flag
Louis Ditta Family in Memory of Carl Ditta - Emilia Romagna Regional Flag
Greg and Terri Ebel - Piemonte Regional Flag
Greg and Terri Ebel - Tarantella Dancers
The Furlan and Echeverria Families - Veneto Regional Flag
The Greco Family - Green Bean Booth
Hughes Watters, Askanase LLP - East Ticket Booth
ICCC Board and Executive Director - Volunteer Check In
ICCC Board and Executive Director - Grounds
Italy in America - General Banner
Ray and Maureen Miller in memory of Josephine Colangelo - Abruzzo Regional Flag
Pelletizer Knives Inc - La Piccola Cucina
Marita and Angelo Parrish - Sardegna Regional Flag
Troiani Law Firm - Puglia Regional Flag

We have $500-sponsorships still available that could be turned into donations for the Center. Your donation will be featured in the September/October edition of the La Voce and also turned into a Facebook post as a thank you. Click HERE or HERE if you would be interested.

Calabria Regional Flag
Friuli-Venezia-Giulia Regional Flag
Liguria Regional Flag
Molise Regional Flag
Sicilia Regional Flag
Valle D’Aosta Regional Flag
Cannoli Booth
Children's Tarantella
Italian Travel Movies
Italian Market
Italian Sausage
I Madonnari Art
Pasta Dish
new iccc members
Benvenuti! The ICCC wishes to welcome the following new members and invites them to stay fully engaged with all of the wonderful programs and events that the ICCC has to offer. For more information about becoming a member and joining the ICCC family, click HERE or contact Alessandra Pistone, Business Director, at 713-524-4222 ext. 6 or at accounting@iccchouston.com.

Ms. Vanya Boranova
Ms. Valerie Bossow
Ms. Chyrell Botts
Mrs. Greylin Gimenez
Mrs. Ellen Grodjesk and Family
Ms. Estefania Labanca
Ms. Denise Long
Ms. Hadia Mawlawi
Ms. Micheline Newall
Ms. Doris Ramos
Mr. Hector Romero
Ms. Rebekah Villano and Family

All’ICCC (At the ICCC)

Dear Friends,

During these last few months, the ICCC remained active with its staff working remotely, and offering classes online for adults and children. After Gov. Greg Abbott announced the first phase of reopening, we slowly tried to go back to a semi-normal activity.

On June 17th, we officially reopened to the public with the movie “Ti Presento Sofia” (Let Me Introduce You to Sofia), a comedy shown in Italian with English subtitles.

A small but very enthusiastic crowd came to watch the film. It was so moving to see these brave and generous people sitting there, respecting social distancing, and wearing their masks. We thank all of them for their precious support.

As you probably know, the City of Houston removed the statue of Christopher Columbus from Bell Park and decided to store it in a warehouse for the time being. The monument will be cleaned and restored by its sculptor. The statue was a donation of the Italian Federation to the City of Houston in 1992.

On another note, it is with great sadness that we are announcing the cancellation of this year’s Houston Italian Festival. After many discussions and meetings, we conveyed to cancel the 2020 Festa Italiana in regards to the current circumstances. We are already planning the 2021 Houston Italian Festival and making sure that next year’s edition will be one to remember.

If you would like to support the Italian Cultural & Community Center by making a donation or becoming a member, click here.

Thank you for your support and stay safe.

Grazie Mille,
Monica Ercolani.

2020 ICCC Board of Directors

Officers
Monica Ercolani President
John M. Carrabba 1st Vice President
Sandra Celli Harris 2nd Vice President
Raluca Dalea Treasurer
Bernard Marino Secretary
Margret Norton Assistant Secretary
Livia Bornigia Past President

Board of Directors
Thann Rae Dauterive
Gary DeSerio
Sheila Echols-Smesny
Tracy Lalasz
Mary Milloy

“la voce italiana”
Published six times a year (January, March, May, July, September and November) by the Italian Cultural & Community Center (ICCC) of Houston.

1101 Milford Street,
Houston, Texas 77006

La Voce Italiana is a benefit to ICCC members and followers. La Voce Italiana can be found at www.iccchouston.com/news/la-voce/

For more information, please call 713-524-4222 ext.4 or email marketing@iccchouston.com

”
Lauren Ohler: ICCC Merit Based Scholarship

Lauren graduated from Bellaire High School in the top 6% of her class. She maintained a rigorous academic schedule consisting of nearly all AP courses in her junior and senior year. She plans to attend UT, pursuing a BS in Cell and Molecular Biology, and is interested in an advanced degree or medical school. She is inspired by the interconnectedness of life as experienced through the study of biology and believes that biology can teach natural solutions to solving many of the world’s problems.

Lauren is well-rounded in her extracurricular activities, with notable competitive achievements in both cross-country and choir and numerous volunteer and leadership roles. She founded and led an initiative to revitalize a green space at her school as a means for classmates to experience how plants adapt and evolve to survive. She also volunteered with special needs students, Evelyn’s Park, and Girl Scouts.

Even with all of these activities, the candidate still managed to achieve academically, with awards including AP Scholar with Distinction and Commended Student of the National Merit Scholarship Program. She also participated in UH G.R.A.D.E. Camp, focusing on engineering, Texas A&M Honors STEM Camp and National Student Leadership Conference. Lauren’s great-great-grandparents on her mother’s side sailed from Sicily, arriving through Ellis Island.

"As a recent graduate of Bellaire Senior High School, I am so excited to continue my academic journey at The University of Texas at Austin, studying biology. Along with rigorous academic courses, I participated in cross country, choir, ultimate frisbee, and Best Buddies. In my free time, I enjoy hiking through national parks, babysitting, and playing lots of board games. Thank you ICCC for helping to fund my further education!"

Vincent Galvan: ICCC Merit Based Scholarship

Vincent graduated from Bellaire High School in the top 7% of his class. This student successfully completed 10 AP courses in his junior and senior years. He plans to attend Texas A&M studying engineering.

Vincent served in leadership roles in a number of different organizations throughout his high school career including Italian National Honor Society, Italian Club, Project Infinite Green and "Cardinals Take Flight," a study abroad promotion and fundraising organization as president and founder. Additionally, he coordinated volunteer projects with the Leo Club, People for Animal Welfare and Safety, and Houston Food Bank through the Italian National Honor Society.

Vincent provided mentorship to students via tutoring through National Honor Society and to incoming freshman as a Cardinal crew leader.

Impressively, he achieved a score of 5 (out of 5) on all AP exams, earning the AP Scholar with Distinction Award. After deciding to honor his Italian heritage by beginning to study the Italian language as a Freshman, he received the National Italian Examination Gold Award ranking in 3rd place nationally. Vincent is Italian through his paternal grandfather (100%) and grandmother (50%).

Funding has been provided to the ICCC from the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) as part of the 2020 Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act of 2020.
Italian Language Classes - Full Schedule

**A1S1 - Italian for beginners**
Tuesdays, July 7 to August 18, 2020
4:00 to 6:00 p.m. | Click [HERE](#) to register

**Grammar Review - A2 Level**
Friday, July 10, 2020 | 4:00 to 5:30 p.m.
Other available classes: July 24, August 7 and August 21
Click [HERE](#) to register

**Grammar Review - B2/C1 Level**
Friday, July 17, 2020 | 5:00 to 7:00 p.m.
Other available classes: July 31, August 14, August 28
Click [HERE](#) to register

**Italian Summer Camp (ages 6-10)**
Monday through Friday, July 20 to 31, 2020
2:00 to 3:00 p.m. | Click [HERE](#) to register

**Summer Italian Boot camp**
Monday through Friday, July 20 to 31, 2020
3:15 to 4:15 p.m. | Click [HERE](#) to register

**Italian for Travelers Class**
Wednesdays, July 22 to August 26, 2020
5:00 to 7:00 p.m. | Click [HERE](#) to register
# JULY 2020

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**Italian for beginners - A1S1 (online class)**

Whether you want to learn Italian to go on vacation, for work or study, or simply to learn a new language, this Italian for beginners class will help you discover one of Europe's most beautiful languages.

- **Time:** every Tuesday from July 7 to August 18 - 4:00 to 6:00 p.m. | **Price:** $202.50 for Members and $225 for Non-Members | **Place:** Online

**Grammar Review + Conversation - A2 Level (online class)**

This class is dedicated to grammar and conversation. The first hour will be focused on grammar and during the last 30 minutes of the class you will get the chance to have a conversation about what you learned and/or reviewed.

- **Time:** July 10 and 24 - 4:00 to 5:30 p.m. | **Price:** $20 for Members and $25 for Non-Members | **Place:** Online

**2020 Contemporary Italian Film Series**

We will be screening *Ma Cosa Ci Dice Il Cervello* (Don't Stop Me Now.) The movie will be shown in its original Italian with English subtitles. Tickets on sale online and at the door (cash will not be accepted.)

**Plot:** Giovanna is a plain-Jane mum, who divides her time between her boring accounting job and her daughter's school commitments. But underneath this dull façade Giovanna is, in fact, a secret agent involved in a dangerous international mission.

- **Time:** July 15 - 7:00 p.m. | **Price:** $10 for Members and $15 for Non-Members | **Place:** ICCC Houston

**Grammar Review - B2/C1 Level (online class)**

Come meet people with your language level and practice your grammar in a relaxed and joyful environment.

- **Time:** July 17 and 31 - 4:00 to 5:30 p.m. | **Price:** $20 for Members and $25 for Non-Members | **Place:** Online

**Italian for travelers - beginner level (online class)**

This course will focus on how to approach people and ask simple questions on touring the city, dining out, shopping, and much more. Role-playing and basic conversation are also part of this class.

- **Time:** every Wednesday from July 22 to August 26 - 5:00 to 7:00 p.m. | **Price:** $247.50 for Members and $275 for Non-Members | **Place:** Online

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The health and safety of our members, visitors, and staff are our top priority. We will continue to monitor the situation closely and follow the guidelines issued by CDC, the Houston Health Department, as well as local, state and federal authorities. Note that the movie listed below might be cancelled if an executive order issued by the City of Houston prohibits gatherings of all kind. If the event proceeds, we will make sure to welcome you safely. Click HERE to see the precautions our Center is taking to avoid the spread of the virus.
### AUGUST 2020

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**Grammar Review + Conversation - A2 Level (online class)**

This class is dedicated to grammar and conversation. The first hour will be focused on grammar and during the last 30 minutes of the class you will get the chance to have a conversation about what you learned and/or reviewed.

- **Time:** August 7 and 21 - 4:00 to 5:30 p.m.  
- **Price:** $20 for Members and $25 for Non-Members  
- **Place:** Online

**Grammar Review - B2/C1 Level (online class)**

Come meet people with your language level and practice your grammar in a relaxed and joyful environment.

- **Time:** August 14 and 28 - 4:00 to 5:30 p.m.  
- **Price:** $20 for Members and $25 for Non-Members  
- **Place:** Online

**2020 Contemporary Italian Film Series**

Join us in 2020 for our Contemporary Italian Film Series, recent releases from Italy screened in Italian with English subtitles, all premiering in Texas. Tickets on sale online and at the door (cash will not be accepted.)

We will be screening "Il Bene Mio" (My Own Good.) The movie will be shown in its original Italian with English subtitles.

- **Plot:** A small Italian village Provvidenza was destroyed by an earthquake. Several people died. The rest of the community set up a new village near-by. However, Elia refuses to leave his old house.

- **Time:** 7:00 p.m.  
- **Price:** $10 for Members and $15 for Non-Members  
- **Place:** ICCC Houston

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The health and safety of our members, visitors, and staff are our top priority. We will continue to monitor the situation closely and follow the guidelines issued by CDC, the Houston Health Department, as well as local, state and federal authorities. Note that the movie listed below might be cancelled if an executive order issued by the City of Houston prohibits gatherings of all kind. If the event proceeds, we will make sure to welcome you safely. Click [HERE](#) to see the precautions our Center is taking to avoid the spread of the virus.
Italians prepare for summer close to home
By Ilaria Verunelli

Italians are saying goodbye to their traditional vacation on the seaside, on the mountains or in some foreign art city. Traditionally, Italians take their annual vacation during summer with August being the month with the highest peak of people leaving the cities to relax and leave for a domestic or foreign resort. However, after having impacted for months the lives of most of the families worldwide, the global pandemic has shifted the way Italians will spend their 2020 holidays, too.

According to a recent survey, more than half of Italians won’t go on vacation this summer: around 24 million individuals have in fact decided to remain at home, mostly as a consequence of the economic and health impact of Covid-19. Data emerge from a poll performed by mUp Research e Norstat. The difference with respect to past years is impressive: in 2008 the Italians that renounced to travel for the holidays was equal to 8 million, a number that is one third of the one observed this year. According to the survey, almost 7 million of individuals (28.7% of the sample) won’t travel because of their fear of being infected; this concern is even stronger for the people who live in the south of Italy and on the islands. However, health is not the only concern: for 43.7% of the interviewed people, that equals around 10.6 million of Italians, the main reason is the affordability of the vacation.

For families who have 3 members the percentage is even higher, 51.3%. Other 10.2 million of Italians (42.3%) will stay at home because they are discouraged by the rules established by the DPCM (the Decrees of the Head of Government that settled the rules to contain the pandemic). Moreover, for a smaller percentage of Italians, there is no choice: after being forced to take vacation to respond to the health emergency, they don’t have more days to spend on holidays. According to OECD, the potential shock caused by the pandemic on international tourism may vary from 60 to 80%. The COVID-19 pandemic could cause the loss of 50 million jobs worldwide in the sector, the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) states.

According to the same source, the tourism industry currently accounts for 10% of global GDP. When the industry will recover is hard to say, but WTTC believes it could take up to 10 months. For the Italian economy this could be a very high toll: tourism represents around 13% of GDP. A beloved destination for many foreign people, with cities like Roma, Venice, Florence that populate the imagination with the unforgettable images of art and movies, Italian tourism will probably experience one of the hardest times this summer.
3 easy home-made pestos

1- Pesto alla Genovese – basil pesto
Basil pesto from Liguria, uses fresh basil leaves, Italian salty cheese, pine nuts and extra virgin olive oil. The best pasta-pesto combination is trenette or linguine (long thin flat ribbons) or trofie (short, thin, twisted pasta)

**Ingredients (2 portions)**
- 25g basil leaves, removed from stalk
- 1 tbsp pine nuts
- 1 garlic clove, peeled
- 1/4 tsp sea salt
- 3 tbsp parmesan
- 100ml extra virgin olive oil

**Directions**
1. Toast your pine nuts in a frying pan until they slightly go brown. 2. Add the pine nuts, basil and garlic into the food processor. Now you pulse it in the food processor carefully and not for too long otherwise the basil will become bitter. Pulse until it’s all roughly chopped up. 3. Now add the parmesan. Give it another pulse. 4. Now pour in your olive oil carefully while you pulse it again carefully. 5. Pour into a bowl and season with salt.

2- Pesto alla Trapanese – cherry tomatoes & almonds
Another pesto that has a long-ingrained history is the Sicilian pesto - alla Trapanese - from Trapani a town on the western coast of Sicily.

**Ingredients (2 portions)**
- 12 basil leaves
- 12 cherry tomatoes
- 1 garlic clove, peeled
- 2 tbsp pecorino romano, caccio ricotta or parmesan
- 25g flaked almonds
- 50ml extra virgin olive oil
- Sea salt
- black pepper

**Directions**
1. Lightly toast your flake almonds in a frying pan until they slightly go brown. 2. Halve and deseed your cherry tomatoes. Roughly chop them up. 3. Add the almonds to the food processor. Blitz until roughly chopped. 4. Add the chopped tomatoes, garlic and basil leaves. Blitz again in the food processor. 5. Pour in the olive oil while you finish blitzing in the food processor. 6. Pour the sauce into a bowl. Finish by adding the pecorino romano and mix well into the ingredients. Season with salt and pepper.

3- Pesto di noci – walnut herb sauce
Sauce from Liguria: many herbs, especially basil are used together with walnuts to make a lovely sauce.

**Ingredients (2 portions)**
- 50g shelled walnuts
- Dry sage, rosemary and oregano
- 6 basil leaves
- 1 garlic clove, peeled
- 2 tbsp pecorino romano, caccio ricotta or parmesan
- 60 ml Extra virgin olive oil
- Sea salt
- Black pepper

**Directions**
1. Add walnuts into the food processor. Blitz into a food processor until roughly chopped. 2. A pinch each of sage, rosemary and oregano. Plus the garlic and basil leaves. Blitz again. 3. Pour in the olive oil, while blitzing again. 4. Pour into a bowl. Add and mix the pecorino cheese. Season with salt and pepper.
ICCC clubs and organizations

Italy in America Association (IIAA)
By Betty Donellan | Len Trombetta, president

Our online meeting was held on May 14th where the topic, “All You Ever Wanted to Know About the Italian Language-In An Expresso Cup” was presented by Bianca Cunningham and very well attended.

Bianca has instituted a series called, “Fragments of Italian” wherein we are learning new and useful phrases to practice at home. The series will resume again this fall.

As summer is upon us, we will resume our meetings in September and hope to have a Ferragosto dinner in August. More will be forthcoming to our members. We have also instituted a dropbox for members to send in their favorite recipes. It has proven to be a huge success as many members are trying out new recipes at home. I like my home cooking and enjoy eating at home versus going out these days. Safety is a priority.

We also welcome new member Lorrie Dannecker who recently moved to Houston. We can’t wait to greet her in September, hopefully, when we’ll all be able to meet one on one again safely.

Have a wonderful summer.

Ciao and Arrivederci!

Daughters of Italian Heritage
By Deborah Graustein | Jeannie Trapolino, president

How are the Daughters dealing with virtual meetings vs. in-person meetings? We are trying to make the best of it by using the platform Zoom. It is working, as we continue to learn. I think the self-quarantine has reminded us we are social animals and crave face-to-face communication.

Thanks to members who provide good ideas so we can keep the organization as close to normal as possible, we continue to meet virtually. Our nation, on the other hand, will not return to the closest version of normal, according to the professionals, until a vaccine is widely available to the public; therefore, we accept this new way.

On June 10, we had our annual "Celebrating Italy" meeting via Zoom. Thank you to Flavia Scalzitti and Michelle Belco: they created an excellent presentation. Even though we did not have the taste and smell of the food, we had pictures, recipes, and wonderful presenters. June Hostess Team made it all seem yummy and enticing.

Typically July is our restaurant outing, and August would be our month to begin our planning for Festa, so instead, we are going to prepare for DOIH 2021-2022 new officer candidates and review of bylaws. Thank you to JoAnna Porche for updating the DOIH-website.

As COVID-19 sends the globe into crisis, let’s continue to pray during the pandemic.

When we resume monthly in-person meetings on the second Wednesday of each month at 7:00 pm at the Italian Cultural and Community Center at 1101 Milford St. (In the museum district), we guarantee dinner and an opportunity to make some wonderful new friendships. Contact Anna Messer: anna4ever29@att.net, or visit our website: www.ciaodiva.org.
How UNESCO World Heritage Works
By italicsmag.com | Click HERE to read the full article

Italy has reigned supreme within the UNESCO World Heritage Program and is its undisputed leader. Italy is consistently the leading country in the UNESCO World Heritage Program, so it would be worthwhile to learn a little bit about how the program works.

Italy is a leader in at least two senses. First, it has long held the number one spot among all nations that participate in the program (all but a few that are failed states or otherwise alienated from the international community) in terms of the number of inscribed sites that it can claim, which currently sits at 54, forty-nine cultural and five natural (I'll delve into this distinction in a later piece). Second, and more important in my opinion, it was the locus of an event that lies at the very heart of the program, namely the flood that struck Firenze in 1966, which threatened an untold number of cultural treasures, rare manuscripts among them, and ignited an international movement to protect, preserve and valorize places, buildings and objects that attest to the highest cultural values of not only a particular nation but of the world at large and of humanity in general.

The books that were damaged and threatened by the flooding of Florentine libraries belonged not just to Florentines, nor solely to Italians, or so the argument went, but to global humanity itself. It was a striking claim, and a contentious one, but it sparked the creation of a hugely successful international program that perhaps more than any other can claim to be truly global. Again, all but the most troubled and troubling of nations participates in the program (including the United States, whose participation has been inconsistent in recent history for political reasons).

The phrase that UNESCO World Heritage uses to describe properties that it has inscribed onto its list is “outstanding universal value”. To assess this value, the program uses ten selection criteria that aim to individuate how a particular building, place or landscape represents the values of not just an individual nation but of the world at large. Formulating a conception of value that applies to all people of the world was no small feat and it is a topic that is prone to debate and discussion. At the core of the problem is one essential question: What does it mean to be a human being?

What makes the UNESCO World Heritage Program more than just a philosophical project, however, is its remit and mandate to materialize this philosophical discussion and assessment in the form of inscribed properties: real buildings, real places and real landscapes (a more detailed discussion of the typology of properties will have to wait for another time). This is why the program is so appealing and exciting, because human beings and nature itself have produced a startling array of fascinating buildings, places and landscapes, and by all current measures, no nation is the home to more of these than Italy, il bel paese.

The first cut in judging the worthiness of a property comes in a dynamic pairing: authenticity and integrity. What UNESCO World Heritage means when it speaks of authenticity is to what extent the current structure exhibits its original material form. One may stand before a beautiful stone castle and admire its perfect lines that testify to the cultural values of a particular place and time, but if that castle has been destroyed and rebuilt several times over the course of its existence, the question arises as to how faithfully it has retained its authenticity. Is that stone the same stone that was put in place 700 years ago? Did it perhaps come from the same quarry as the original stones? Is it at least the same type of stone? How was it worked, with modern tools and techniques or with those that were in use during the period in which it first arose? These questions are often difficult to answer but problematic responses do not necessarily disqualify a property. The ultimate decision is inevitably a judgement that is made after much examination, discussion and discernment among the UNESCO World Heritage committee members and the external evaluating bodies that assist them.

The other criterion in the pairing is integrity. A heap of stones may indeed be authentic in their materiality and placement, but to what extent do they make an entire building? To be inscribable, a building must be not only true in its substance but also complete in its construction, or at least reasonably so. Again, this assessment is always the result of a judgement that must necessarily be somewhat flexible in its application of the selection criteria, because no building or place has remained unscathed or unchanged over the course of its lifetime. Indeed, since change is inevitable, the buffeting of wind and rain, and the effects of use and pollution, all take their toll on the integrity of the original structure, and in fact make authentic contributions to it. This raises the question of when the construction of a building is complete, or at least when its true authentic nature is set and stabilized. Again, it is a always a difficult assessment to make, and in the end a judgement that is somewhat subjective in nature and one that is affected by personal bias and political motive [...]