

Amedeo Modigliani- dessin à boire

**Villa Mazzarosa – Segromigno in Monte (Capannori)
from May 1st to June 28th 2009**

From May 1st to June 28th 2009, the Villa Mazzarosa, in Segromigno in Monte will host the exhibition *Modigliani: dessin à boire*, organized by the Comune di Capannori to celebrate the one hundred year anniversary of Amedeo Modigliani's return to Italy from Paris (1909/2009).

This exhibit is dedicated to a previously unexplored part of Amedeo Modigliani's oeuvre, namely the improvised drawings that he used—mostly in Paris, but also during his return trips to Italy—as currency, in exchange for drinks. Perhaps because of their utilitarian function, or possibly because they were deemed of little value, many of them have been lost or were destroyed. In fact, once, Modigliani, disheartened because he could not find buyers for his works, took a pile of his drawings, punched a hole through them with a pencil, put a string through the hole, and hung them in the bathroom to be used as toilet paper.

These drawings have not been published in catalogues or monographs. They were scattered in various places, and until now scholars tended to view them as a marginal part of his oeuvre. It is our hope that this exhibit will serve not only as an opportunity to view these drawings of Modigliani, but will also become the focal point for new scholarly studies.

An important didactic component of the show is the presentation of these works in their original cultural context. Visitors can view a sketch that Modigliani scribbled on a wine order from one of his favorite establishments—one also frequented by some of the most prominent artists of the twentieth century. This small drawing recaptures a magical moment in time, comparable only to the renaissance, when art was created in taverns, inns, and other public places of both high and low culture, a time when art was organically linked to the culture of wine and food in an informal atmosphere of camaraderie among artists.

The didactic panels, with illustrated wine orders and information about the culture of wine will appeal to the general audience. They will also help scholars and Modigliani enthusiasts to develop a deeper understanding of the artistic milieu of his time.

On the ground floor of the Villa, visitors will be greeted by the reconstructed facade of the Rosalie Bistro. Upon entering the bistro one is transported back in time: we see Amedeo in large pictures, drinking at the bar, or, surrounded by a group of fellow artists, toasting to the good life.

This exposition is one of the most important events in the *Year of Modigliani*, the year when the *Archivi Legali*, currently in Paris, will be returned to Italy, honoring the wishes of the heirs.

The location of the exhibit in Capannori is significant. After all, Modigliani returned to Italy in 1909, specifically to spend time in the region of Lucca. He wanted to visit the marble quarries used by Michelangelo, and to examine closely historic sculptures in the area. Both the exposition and the accompanying catalogue emphasize the importance of this region for Modigliani.

Although Modigliani viewed himself primarily as a sculptor, his poor health prevented him from realizing many sculptures. The lamentably few works he did create are mostly in the permanent collections of museums throughout the world. Thanks to the generous permission of Jeanne Modigliani, daughter of the artist, and founder of the *Archivi Legali*, we are able to exhibit bronze versions of the original marble sculptures. According to the Bern Convention, these bronze versions are considered authentic and

original works, when prepared under the supervision of the family, and authenticated by them. This is the case with the sculptures displayed in the Villa.

Modigliani's works are presented in several rooms on the first floor of Villa Mazzarosa, graciously made available by the owners. At the heart of the exhibition there are over fifteen important drawings by Modigliani. These drawings are complemented by a display of the works of Modigliani's teacher, Guiglelmo Micheli and fellow students, including Lorenzo Vani, Renato Natali, Oscar Ghiglia, and Llewelyn Lloyd. The ensemble of works proves once and for all the thesis, already championed in the Catalogue of the Modigliani exhibit of 2000 at the *Museo d'Arte Moderna della Città di Lugano*, that Amedeo's artistic formation occurred in Italy. The inclusion of selected writings by Lloyd offers first-hand contemporary insights into Amedeo's Italian years.

A special attraction of this exhibit is the visual dialogue between pictures, documents, and photos of the period, as well as the models Modigliani used, and the places he frequented. Original documents, some unpublished, are displayed in the library of the Villa Mazzarosa.

The exhibit also includes paintings by French artists who were Amedeo's friends. It is important to note that even though Modigliani's artistic formation was Italian, he found his definitive style during the last years of his young life in France.

As part of this tribute to Modigliani, Dr. Girolamo Morelli has created a special "Modigliani" wine, and in conjunction with the Modigliani Institute they have designed a label commemorating the hundred-year anniversary of Modigliani's return to Italy. Bottles are on sale at the Villa.

The exhibit is open Thursdays for groups of at least ten people with a reservation. Friday, Saturday, and Sunday it is open to the general public from 10:00 to 12:00 and from 15:30 to 20:00. Wines and local specialties from the region of Lucca will be available for sale at the Bistro located on the ground floor of the Villa. At the Villa Mazzarosa, and at other Villas of Capannori, there will be musical events featuring works from Modigliani's time.