Pier Paolo Pasolini’s *Salò*: An Expanded Reading

Pier Paolo Pasolini is one of the most important Italian authors of the last century, and one of the few Italian intellectuals who were able to understand the dramatic changes in Italian society and in the globalized world after World War II.

During his lifetime he rapidly became a highly controversial figure, due in part to the inflammatory tone and provocative nature of his analyses of Italian politics and society. Pasolini’s power to engage with his and our present has sometimes been obscured by attempts to read his work too literally. This is indeed the case for his posthumously released and most disturbing film, *Salò, or the 120 Days of Sodom* (1975).

To dispute such myopic readings, this paper will discuss alternative takes on Salò and its significance by contemporary visual artists. Their work will help to assess the relevance of Pasolini’s legacy in contemporary culture, beyond the boundaries of Italy, and provide an “expanded reading” of Pasolini’s film.

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