

THE DEPARTMENT OF FRENCH & ITALIAN
PRESENTS

EUGENIO REFINI

Johns Hopkins University

The Theater of Conscience: Drama, Education and Spiritual Practice in Late Renaissance Venice

About the talk:

This paper aims to explore the interaction of allegory, drama, and spiritual practices in the literary production of the medical doctor and natural philosopher Fabio Glissenti (1542-1615). More specifically, I will focus on the ways in which theatrical metaphors such as the *theatrum mundi* were revived both in Glissenti's *ars moriendi* entitled *Athanatophilia* (Venice: 1596) and in his morality plays. Drawing on the same materials employed within the *Athanatophilia*, Glissenti's plays were written with didactic and devotional purposes for female orphans based in the Venetian hospitals. By looking at these works, I will highlight the interplay of theatrical genres - particularly the evolution of the *commedia erudita* tradition - and religious culture that informs them. More specifically, I will show how Glissenti's writings relate to concurrent developments of devotional literature such as the tradition of the 'spiritual exercises' revived by Ignatius of Loyola, contemporaneous spiritual drama, and emblem books.

About the speaker:

Eugenio Refini is one of the most dynamic and innovative scholars of the Italian Renaissance and early modern literature today. He is Assistant Professor of Italian at Johns Hopkins University and author of *Per via d'annotationi: Le glosse inedite di Alessandro Piccolomini all'Ars Poetica di Orazio* (Lucca: Pacini Fazzi, 2009) and the forthcoming *Vernacular Readings of Aristotle from the Age of Dante to the Advent of Print* (under contract with Cambridge University Press).



Friday, Oct. 19, 2018

2:30 pm

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