



a documentary film on Carlo Levi and the Lucania that belonged to him

By
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a Giovefilm Production
Sponsorship of Carlo Levi Foundation

This film-documentary explores the relationship between Carlo Levi, Jewish physician, political activist, writer and painter from Turin, and the Lucan people he met during his confinement during Fascism. Those people inspired and loved him, as he loved them, throughout his life and beyond. That relationship took shape in images, colors and words, in his paintings, whose pictorial material still reaches us very vividly, and also took shape in his memorable book: "Christ stopped at Eboli", a book that had a profound impact on Italian culture, a real watershed.

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We will travel to the painter's heart of Carlo Levi's relationship with the beloved Lucania: through the "telero", a grandiose painting, 321x1865 cm., called: "Lucania61", it is the magnificent canvas that Carlo Levi painted to describe the region of Basilicata and to honor his Lucan friend, the poet and politician Rocco Scotellaro. This immense painting was commissioned to Carlo Levi by the Organizing Committee for the celebrations of the centenary of the Unification of Italy in Turin. Mario Soldati, curator of the exhibition Italy161, asked Levi to create a work representing the Basilicata region inside the Pavilion of the Italian Regions. On April 1960, Carlo Levi organized a "journey to Lucania" together with his friend Mario Carbone, a very talented photographer, to refresh his memory of the faces, the land, the stories lived by exiles between 1935 and 1936...

In the film, Levi's journey becomes our journey. And this journey is the real co-protagonist of events. It will be told what his life was like as an exile in the small town of Alliano; poet, painter and doctor in the beloved Lucania, Levi will always be next to his humble peasants, workers, shepherds, women and extraordinary children, so many times

portrayed in his touching paintings and books. And where at the end of his earthly journey, he chose to rest in peace.

The "telero" painting is an accurate anthropological "photography", as much poetic, as historical, of the Lucan people. And it's also an act of love for that part of southern Italy that seemed to Levi to have been forgotten by history and by God. It is a work in the form of three Dante canticles, with three large different expressive sections, respectively conceived as a kind of Hell, Purgatory and Paradise.

LUCANIA 61

The large canvas is kept in the Levi Room of the National Museum of Medieval and Modern Art in Matera, housed in the Palazzo Lanfranchi.

In the film we will look at the suggestions of this famous painting, commented by Carlo Levi himself:



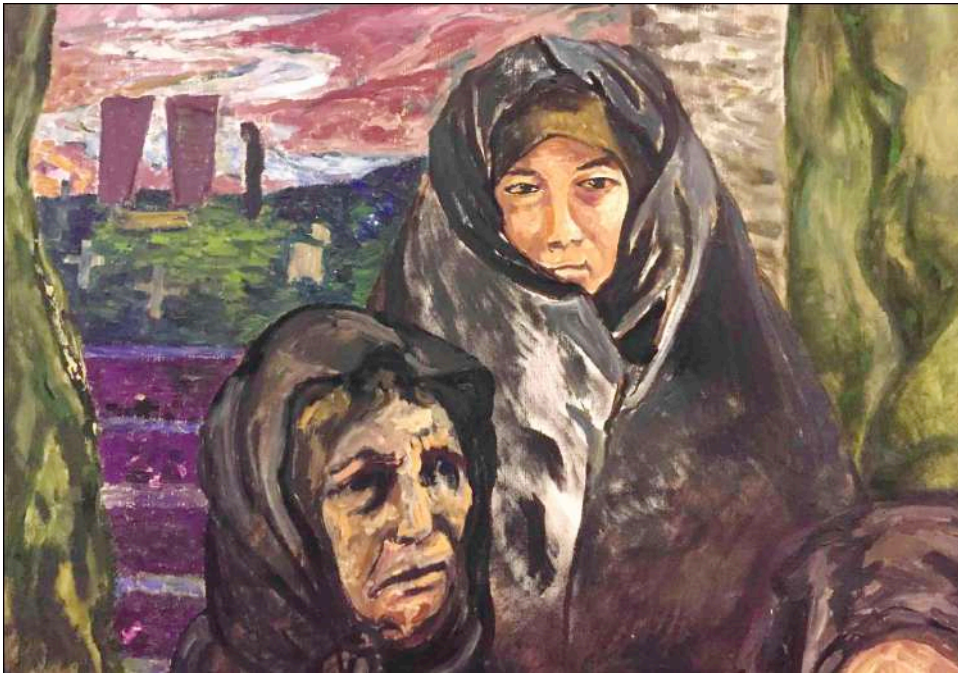


“Here's the painting, let's look at it now together in its parts in a simple and direct way as I hope I painted it. Here we have Lucania with its human content, its ancient pain, its patient work, its courage to exist. A whole country lives in this work, in the stories and in the faces of its characters. Starting from the millenary stillness, outside of history, these people face existence and their path, like that of the painting, is, in a short space, very long as a passage of centuries. The common thread of this path is Rocco Scotellaro, the poet of peasant freedom. There appears a boy with a freckled face, full of melancholy hope; a man in the square, with the companions of a world that has opened up, dead in the cave from which time begins...”



We're in the green cave, in the presence of death. The women stand around the white-faced corpse, huddled in ancient mourning: and the mothers weep for their dead son. The two mothers, the earthly and the heavenly, weep and tell the story of

their son's life, with their ancient faces, a collection of love and sorrow. They tell of birth, of poverty, of a life spent for others, of kindness, of poetry, of a cruel death...



With the mothers are the women wrapped in the veils of costume and the young women in tears or locked in the black of mourning and life and with them the lonely figure of the bitter old vice-mayor and the old woman who seems prescient; all around the great spiral of female figures, like a black flight of birds, up to the sorceress, high up, where the sky shows. From the opening of the cave a distant valley appears: it is the cemetery and the tomb of Rocco...





In the cave, among the family and the animals, the lamentation is lost and turns into sleep. A large peasant woman with skin dried by the sun and earth holds the sleeping child in her arms. In the green shadow of the cave, in the sleep of the scratching donkey, among the tools and supplies, among the bread and dumplings, next to the old fortune teller, a little girl with a bandaged leg looks with intense black eyes. And look at the monk dressed for vows and the women watching the sleep and the sighs; the children are tight in the beds, lying, crossed or in the arms



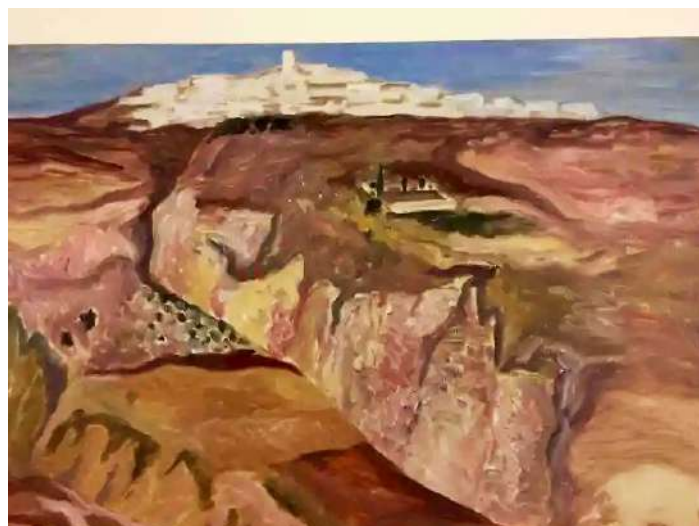
of the women and the goats surround the hanging cradle, where a baby sleeps. And the darkness of the cave swarms with forms...



But the hours go by. It's daylight out there. The alley is the life of the neighborhood. Feet move and pass. The one who leads, the one who sits working in front of the door, the one who breastfeeds, the one who feeds the baby, the one who lays the laundry, the one who talks, the one who listens...



A large pregnant woman, white in her apron, under the eyes of the busy companions and the boys with melancholy faces leaning on the stilts, rises on the naked landscape, next to the boys, to the young teenage Rocco. She is still the mother among the children who hold her in their hands and the animals, beneath the white country high on the hill, in the merciless midday sun...





It's about time. Shadows are advancing. The peasants go up again as they do every evening to the already dark country. Long lines with the donkeys and goats, as if they were linked to a movement that has been repeated every day for ever, to the movement of the animals, to the space between meals, to the noise of the hoofs of the mules on the ground, to the edge of the finishes, to the waving of the baskets and baskets...

A farmer precedes the cattle, the woman, the child. It's the color of velvet, muddy cloth, earth. His woman is tall, cradled with her child, as in a flight to Egypt, white as the clay of the desolate mountains. And behind comes the long black line, goats, women, sheep, clay and shadows, under the desert of fields, towards the square...



The square is full of people listening to Rocco speak. At the window, far away and isolated, look out from their time the great dead of Lucania, the ancient southerners, Fortunato, Nitti, Dorso...



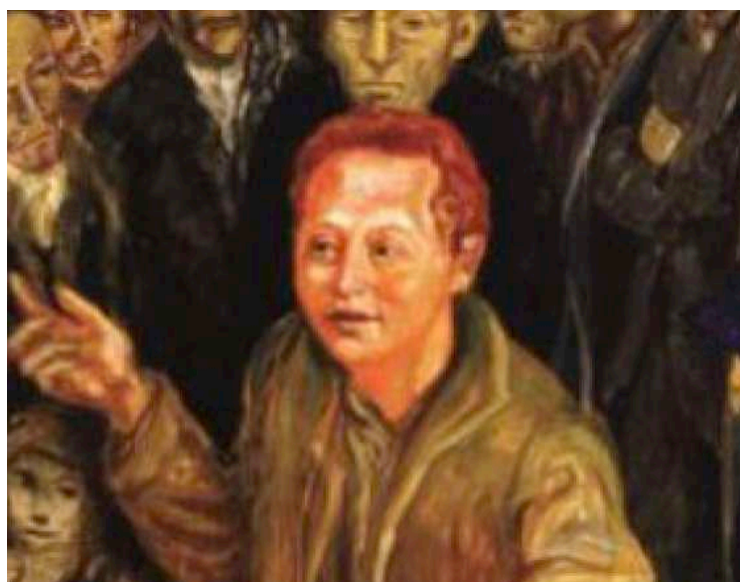
Below them stands on the wall the curved line of the unemployed and the old, waiting men, hopeless, down to the unemployed by the color of the whips closing down the line and the picture, and to the dog sleeping as dead...

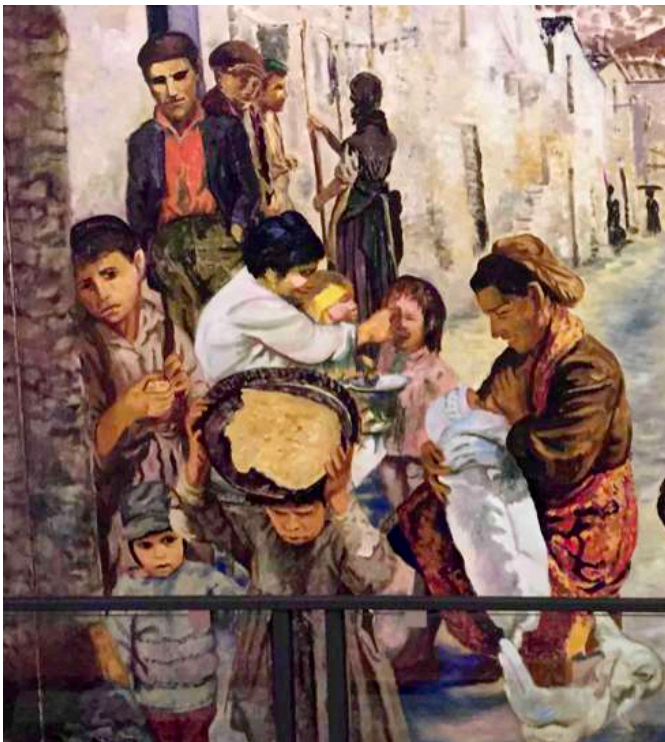


In the square, in the shadows of the churches, the elderly talk the eternal discourses. In groups or singly they lean on the stick, in stillness. And the men wait, their faces on their hands, their hands clasped or on their knees, their useless hands that can't find work...



But in front of them is another world that is born: on Rocco's face the light of an inner energy that expresses itself newly sparkles: around that luminous center the great spiral of men unfolds who find in the word for the first time the meaning and value of existence. Here they are, the comrades and the brothers, the characters of the story, the real protagonists...





What does Rocco say? Is his a rally, a political speech or is it a poem that he emphasizes with the gesture of his hand? Perhaps both together, perhaps he says his verses, his peasant Marseillaise: The heads of the bandits still appear on the poles / and the cave / the green oasis of sad hope / the cave / the green oasis of sad hope / lindo keeps a cheek of stone ... / But on the paths you do not turn back. Other wings will flee from the grass of the grave, for after the passing of time, the dawn is new, it is new.



The dawn is new for these men: here are young and old, shepherds and workers and children, willing to listen and listen to themselves, witnesses and protagonists: here are the peasants and poets, and among them the greatest, Umberto Saba and among the crowd the author and the characters of "Christ stopped at Eboli" and those of "Uva puttanella", a crowd that grows, that becomes infinite: a world is born with the word and the image. (Carlo Levi)... It was a great day.



The film will investigate to shed light on the future of a community that is becoming aware of its origins and its best strengths, and that is preparing for the challenges of the future. A difficult challenges ahead. And that's where Levi puts his self-portrait, for those people he loved, like a traveler who has stopped, and whose legacy marks a before and an after for the redemption of that land and perhaps of the entire South.

This is **Lucania 61**, this is its powerful soul that transmits emotion today as it did then, with a vibrant civic sense of freedom, redemption and justice given to us by Carlo Levi and its love for his country, Italy.

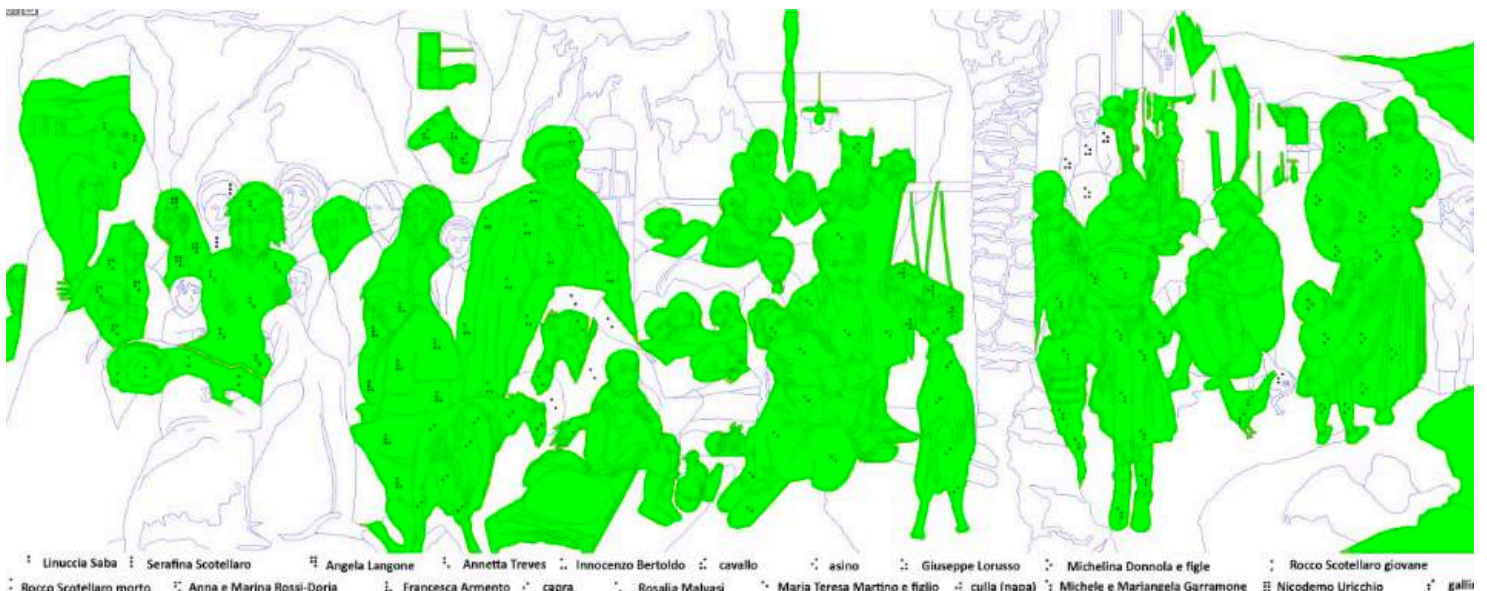
Our film will follow that trail, through the numerous and precious documents, and testimonies able to return to the public today, the portrait, the work and the genius of a great artist who always fought for freedom and beauty in all its forms.

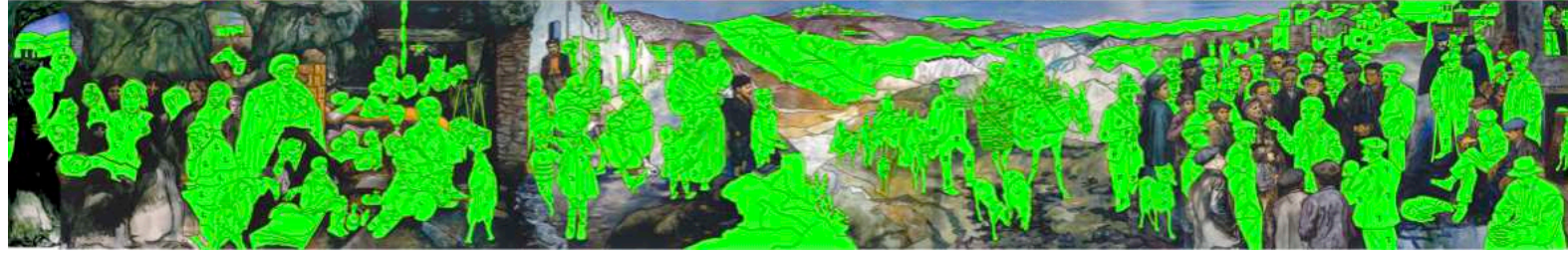
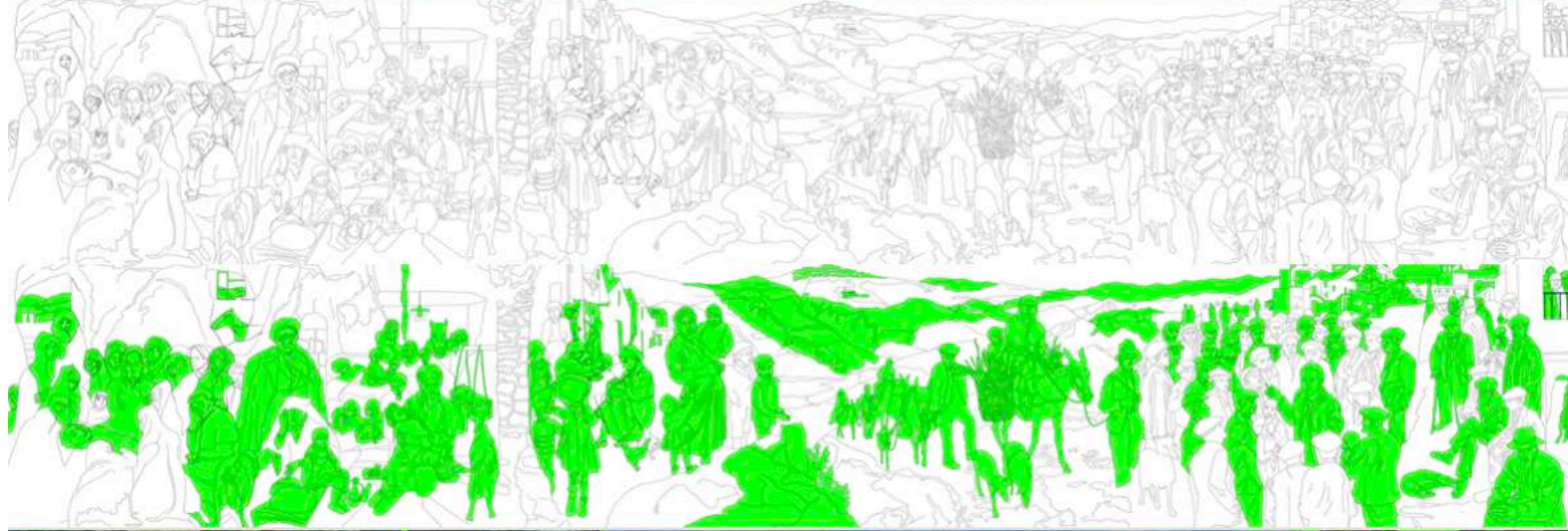
In its investigation of Lucania61, the film gives us a picture of a humanity on the move, which this time has not stopped, and instead it's about discovering the power of cooperation, solidarity and collective work.



The "civil" sense of a pictorial vision that takes form for the viewer, even for what he can't see, and what we'll find out will be put in a position to "read" the great Levi's canvas thanks to technology and Braille code. A remarkable scientific achievement that seems to be consistent with the sense of the painting itself.

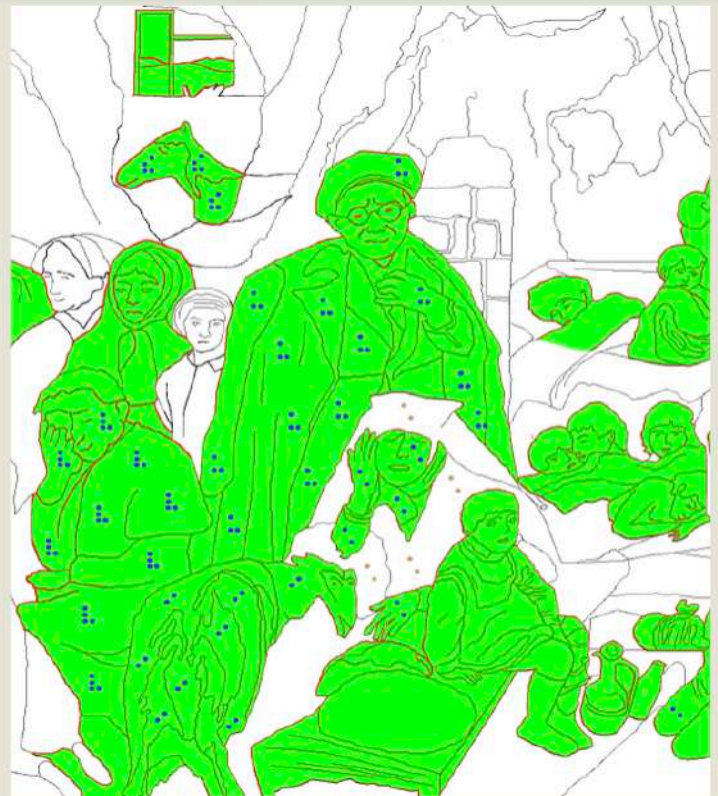
3D Braille map of the painting for the blind.





Photoshop: levels correspondences

- H=0: background level
- H=1: level of contours for empty segments
- H=2: Braille level for empty segments
- H=3: level of contours for full segments
- H=4: level full segments
- H=5: Braille level for empty segments



Indeed the journey of Carlo Levi is a journey of incessant discoveries and extraordinary encounters in the land of Lucania and beyond.

The great painter Renato Guttuso said that if Giuseppe Verdi had been a painter, he would have made Lucania61. An uninterrupted "Và pensiero" for Lucania, an act of love towards those lands where, even though Levi himself suffered the drastic limitation of freedom, he was able to return, with words and colors, the **human brotherhood** that fights and generates life, and its mystery.



con parole e con colori

(with words and with colors)

a documentary film on Carlo Levi and the Lucania that belonged to him

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“Le parole sono pietre.”
[Carlo Levi]



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Carlo Levi Foundation