

RHUL Travel Award Report – Kate Devine

The support the travel award enabled me to travel to Polignano a Mare in southern Italy to visit the archives of Pino Pascali, an artist associated with the Arte Povera movement of the mid to late nineteen sixties. I was hoping to be able to access some of the artists own correspondence and images of his early commercial work, as well as see the collection of contemporary press articles the archive had collected from during the artist's lifetime. My PhD thesis focusses on expressions of craft in Italian art and design of this period and one particular case study is concerned with images of southern Italy as they were expressed in Pascali's work.

I was able to spend several days in the archive as well as visiting the small museum dedicated to Pascali's legacy. It was also beneficial to talk to the chief curator of the archive who was very helpful in directing some of my research. It was particularly enlightening to see much of the artists early photographic work which he had done when employed as a graphic designer for the food company Cirio, enabling me to draw parallels between some of his more commercially orientated work and his later sculpture. The black and white photographs of Naples and other southern regions were used by Pascali in photomontages for his television adverts, but later in his career, motifs from these images find themselves represented in his art, revealing a persistent use of visual language centred on images of southern Italy.

I was also able to read original letters and telegrams relating to important exhibitions such as Arte Povera group shows, and Pascali's invitation to exhibit and subsequent withdrawal from the 1968 Venice Biennale which was closed down due to protests. In addition to research at the archive, the trip also proved invaluable in getting a sense of where the artist spent much of his childhood, and the landscapes that went on to inspire some of his sculptural works of the mid to late 1960s.