



August 22, 2019

**Press Release (for immediate release)**

**A New Exhibit in Italy:**

**Astra Zarina in Civita  
(*Astra Zarina a Civita*)**

The Civita Institute, in collaboration with the Comune di Bagnoregio, Italy and the Museo Geologico e delle Frane, are opening an important new exhibit on the life and work of American/Italian architect Astra Zarina (1929-2008), focusing on Zarina's decades of work, historic preservation and collaboration in revitalizing the internationally-renowned hill town of Civita di Bagnoregio, located north of Rome, Italy. This unique exhibit opens to the public the afternoon of August 25, 2019 (the 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Astra Zarina's birth), at the Palazzo Alemanni, a city-owned museum building located on the central piazza of Civita di Bagnoregio.

The first woman to be awarded the prestigious Rome Prize in Architecture (American Academy in Rome, 1960), Zarina went on to establish the University of Washington's Rome Program, the UW Italian Hill Towns Program and the UW Rome Center, located near Campo dei Fiori. She was also one of the founders of The Civita Institute, based in Seattle and Civita di Bagnoregio.

Beginning in the early 1960s, Astra Zarina began restoring ancient historic houses in Civita di Bagnoregio, after the decline of the town following the physical and economic destruction in the aftermath of World War II. She eventually collaborated with many families living in Civita to rebuild their homes. By carefully researching historic building patterns and the use of local materials, she successfully adapted many of Civita's buildings to new uses and a new era. In doing so she helped establish a high standard of restoration that continues in work by others in Civita. Working with the Civita Institute and the World Monuments Fund, she helped in the efforts to list Civita on the World Monuments Watch list of endangered sites. Importantly, Astra Zarina's architectural work helped to weave together families and place, adding renewed vitality to the physical, cultural and social fabric of Civita.

The exhibit includes an extensive array of historical photographs, primarily drawn from The Civita Institute archives. Additional images in the exhibit are courtesy of New York-based photographer Brian Stanton, Sam Bryan and the National Institute for Holocaust Documentation, and by Vanni Attili of Sapienza Universita' di Roma. These images summarize Astra Zarina's life history, with images of Civita citizens, along with the architectural restoration work in Civita that was completed by Zarina, including collaborations with her husband, American-born architect Anthony Costa Heywood.

The Civita Institute thanks its donors and its Board of Directors for their significant contributions in making this exhibit possible, including the following Directors for their substantial volunteer efforts: Iole Alessandrini (exhibit design and installation), Clark Pickett (video content and timeline, with Jordan Hughes video editing/assembly), Sharon Mentyka (timeline editing and communications, with Cinzia Rocchi providing Italian translations), and Nancy Josephson (exhibit project manager).

The Civita Institute (incorporated as the Northwest Institute for Architecture and Urban Studies in Italy, or NIAUSI) was co-founded by Astra Zarina in 1981. Through its educational programs, residencies and fellowships, the nonprofit organization focuses on promoting and inspiring design excellence through education and cultural exchange between the United States and Italy, with a particular focus on the study and research into Italian hill towns and their lessons of design, historic preservation and environmental sustainability. The organization is based in Seattle (USA) and at its historic facilities in Civita di Bagnoregio, Italy, where its library and archives are housed, all of which were donated in 2013 by the estate of Astra Zarina and by Anthony Costa Heywood to The Civita Institute.

For more information about the exhibit and The Civita Institute, please visit [www.civitainstitute.org](http://www.civitainstitute.org).

**THE CIVITA INSTITUTE**

USA: 1326 FIFTH AVENUE SUITE 650 SEATTLE, WASHINGTON 98101

ITALY: VIA DELLA MAESTA' CIVITA DI BAGNOREGIO (VT) 01022

Tel & Fax 206.625.1511 email: [info@civitainstitute.org](mailto:info@civitainstitute.org) [www.civitainstitute.org](http://www.civitainstitute.org)