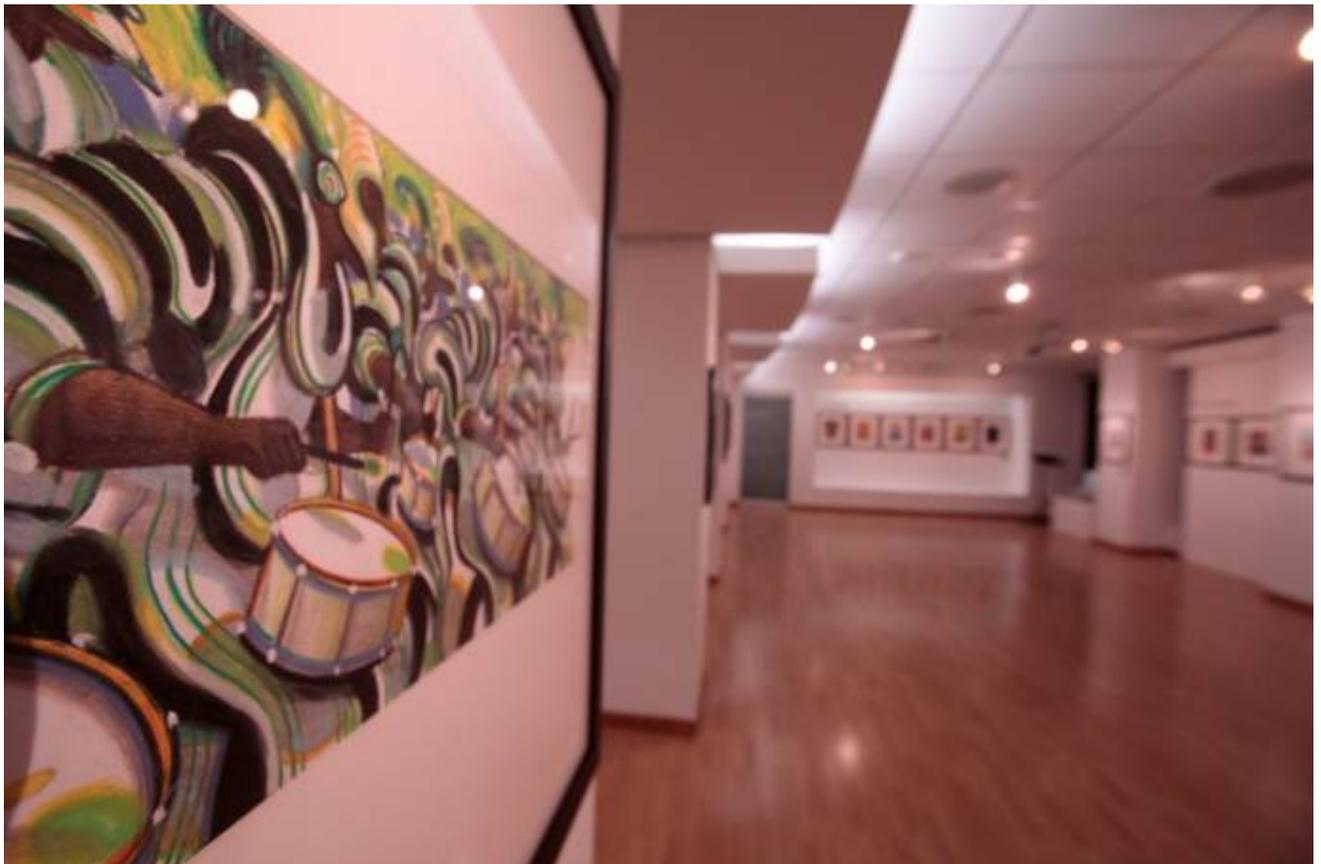


Drawing and Designing the Italian Way. Chicago Welcomes Lorenzo Mattotti

Natalia Nebel (June 08, 2010)



The artwork of Lorenzo Mattotti, illustrator, comics and animation artist, on view at the Italian Cultural Institute of Chicago through July 30. Mattotti's first solo exhibit in Chicago features the entire spectrum of his work from his thirty year long career: his high fashion illustrations for Vanity Fair; his renderings of New York City and Rio de Janeiro's lively streets; his blissfully intertwined couples and solitary readers; his surreal landscapes and assorted, curious and colorful night creatures.

An exhibit covering a vast range of Lorenzo Mattotti's artwork opened at the [Italian Cultural Institute of Chicago](#) [2] on May 25th to an appreciative audience. Given the luminosity and positive energy of Mattotti's work, it isn't surprising that the atmosphere on this opening night was positive and relaxed, with visitors mingling easily and sharing quite openly and enthusiastically their impressions about the drawings and illustrations on display.



Certainly it isn't everyday that visitors to the Institute can enjoy an exhibit that fills the entire office space - not only the Institute's beautiful gallery, but the corridors and library walls as well. In fact, as director Tina Cervone pointed out in her opening remarks, the full spectrum of Mattotti's artwork is on view: sixty-three drawings, comic book narratives, poster designs and illustrations, as well as his splendid covers for [The New Yorker Magazine](#) [3], [Internazionale Magazine](#) [4], and [Cosmopolitan](#) [5].

Mattotti's career spans over thirty years and his artistic development can be traced in this exhibit. Born in Brescia in 1954, Mattotti studied architecture in Venice before deciding to turn his talents to comics art. He is now internationally known for a signature style made of vibrant colors and flowing compositions. His credits include children's books, graphic novels and animation films.

On entering the Institute gallery with Mattotti's work lining the walls, the intensity and purity of Mattotti's colors give people an immediate psychological lift. He cites Giotto, Francis Bacon and the Fauve artists as inspirational sources, and so it's no wonder that the overall effect is one of brilliance and luminosity. Like the great masters of the past that he studied in his formative years, Mattotti makes available one self-contained world after another in each illustration he creates, providing a visual narrative that takes viewers to places that are utterly strange and yet somehow familiar. Figures and landscapes are dreamlike, whimsical, full of play and occasionally laced with menace. Speaking about Mattotti's images, Pulitzer prize winning comics artist Art Spiegelman said it best: "It seems I have already seen them in my dreams."

Mattotti is one of those rare artists who has achieved success in the commercial and artistic world while remaining true to his vision. Whether creating fashion illustrations for [Vanity Fair](#) [6] or edgy black and white graphic novels, there's a sweetness and melancholy in Mattotti's sensibility that always come through. This is because the spiritual dimension of his works is very strong; there's always depth beneath the glossy surface. As one of the visitors attending the opening night observed, "Mattotti knows how to convey sadness and loneliness behind gorgeous facades."

This exhibition will run through July 30, 2010. Gallery hours are Monday through Friday, 9 am to 1 pm and 2 pm to 5 pm.

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