



Italian Film FOCUS

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Cinema Labia - Cape Town



Italian Film Focus 2019

Prof. Antonio Falduto, Chairperson Associazione Controluce

The nineteenth edition of the ITALIAN FILM FOCUS of Cape Town will present eight of the most recent and appreciated films of Italian production. The city is no longer portrayed as an extreme place of marginalization and violent conflict, but as an opportunity to meet. There, characters float and sometimes drown among existential and economic crises, fears and small satisfactions, family disagreements and great loves (that almost never last), possible dreams and funny manias...

A corollary of "urban experiences" that show us how inadequate, clumsy and therefore amusing we really are. Whether it is the issue of physical and mental disability or the inability to deal with one's own children, this cinema favors the investigation of daily life. Stories that could very well be of our neighbour, that don't need striking gestures, heroism or gunfire to be interesting and engaging...

It takes sensitive and experienced filmmakers, capable of entering lives and homes to reveal what has always existed, with a personal eye/lens that becomes vision and a representation of multifaceted individualities. So we have Francesca Archibugi who signs a film on family dynamics, with names of caliber like Paolo Virzi and Francesco Piccolo. Furthermore we have Gabriele Salvatores, who also relies on a top screenwriter such as Umberto Contarello, a former collaborator of Bernardo Bertolucci and faithful pen of Paolo Sorrentino, to tell us about the intense relationship between a father and a "different" son.

This theme is also addressed by a much younger director, Federico Bondi, with a delicate yet effective touch, without ever surrendering to sentimentality. Here too, an elderly father and a teenage daughter with down-syndrome start on a search journey, in the end it's no longer clear

who is leading who and who is "following". The father/teacher-son/pupil relationship is found once more in THE CHAMPION, another promising debut, with Accorsi always playing his part with thoughtful measure and credibility.

We will hear gunfire from the more mature directors. More precisely, the shot of an ancient shotgun, (the "lupara") closing the plot just as it is meant to do, with the villain's death, the "mafioso". This happens in the only movie in costume that will be presented: ASPROMONTE, LAND OF THE FORGOTTEN by Mimmo Calopresti. But it is not enough to kill the mafia member, or to rebel. The last ones leave because there is nothing left to fight for and the only solution left is to run away. In the intriguing comedy AN ALMOST ORDINARY SUMMER the roles are inverted. Fathers reveal to their children what they themselves would not like to hear, all the while looking for a normality that does not exist. The talented Anna Foglietta is not her reassuring self in PARENTS IN PROGRESS. She plays the role of a generous mother who organizes her child's party with meticulous mania, a party that is going to disintegrate in front of the shocked children when all the parents give in to their cumulative neurosis.

The list of Italian films cannot be considered complete without a film about the universally famous and most cinematographically narrated Italian criminal phenomenon, the Mafia. But this time there are no shootings and explosions, we need the eye of an intellectual like the Sicilian director Roberto Andò, weaving different levels of narrative and temporality. He plays with identities, with true and false, in life as well as

in art. *STOLEN CARAVAGGIO* is in fact the story of a very famous painting by Caravaggio stolen by the Mafia and about the alleged blackmail to the government: if you don't make a deal with me, I will destroy your most beautiful things besides your best servants, your magistrates and policemen. Unfortunately in 1993 this threat was actually carried out for real with the bombings in Via dei Georgofili near the Uffizi museum in Florence, in the two churches of S. Giovanni in Laterano and S. Giovanni in Velabro in Rome, and in the Gallery of Modern Art in Milan.

Another brilliant work, presented at the Venice Film Festival, is *THE MAYOR OF THE RIONE SANITA'*, a filmic re-reading of Edoardo de Filippo's theatrical text by a prestigious director such as Mario Martone, who as a matter of fact originates from theatre himself. Here the internal fight within the mafia family that controls the densely populated district of Naples, illustrates the existence of a widespread cultural substrate where the laws of the state run in parallel with other archaic codes. Oppression and violence are hidden behind an apparent kindness and attention to the needy.

This year Italy has lost one of its greatest filmmakers, Bernardo Bertolucci. He is remembered with a brief excerpt of an interview of a few years ago on the subject of cultural diversity that was very dear to him.

So we will see a roundup or an overview, you choose, that is current and very rich, where laughter is tinted by a bitter aftertaste, where your feelings are touched, but without ever taking yourself too seriously. In short, it's a "Human comedy" made in Italy. A real "delicacy" not to be missed!



Italian Film Focus 2019

Fabio Troisi, Director Italian Institute of Culture in Pretoria



Cinematography is one of the forms of art that most contributed to the identity of Italian culture. Authors such as Fellini, Antonioni, De Sica, Visconti, shaped modern and contemporary Italian taste and image in a way comparable to Michelangelo, Raffaello and Leonardo da Vinci in the ancient times.

The same can be said about our projection overseas: Italian cinema has been, at least since the 1950s, one of the most popular forms of arts abroad, has attracted enormous interest both from the general public and from academics; has influenced generations of filmmakers all over the world.

South Africa is no exception in this regard. Italian movies has always been popular not only among the Italian-South African communities, but also among other linguistic and cultural groups since its discovery, and particularly after the end of the Apartheid regime in 1994.

The Italian Cultural Institute in Pretoria is therefore proud and honored to present to the audience of Cape Town the 19th edition of the Italian Film Focus, the longest-established event dedicated to Italian movies in South Africa: a not-to-be-missed appointment for the lovers and connoisseurs of the “seventh art” in the Mother City, a unique opportunity to appreciate and enjoy some of the best product of contemporary Italian film industry.

Buona Visione!

Italian Film Focus 2019

I am particularly pleased to introduce to you the XVIII edition of the Italian Film Focus, organized by Controluca Association with the support of the Consulate of Italy in Cape Town and the Italian Cultural Institute, which will take place from 28th November until 3rd December at the Labia Cinema. The festival represents an extraordinary opportunity to discover the latest masterworks of the Italian cinema and to build bridges of cooperation between the Italian and South African industries.

This year's programme aims to offer a comprehensive picture of the multifaceted and changing nature of the Italian societal trends. This is perfectly reflected in the choice of films like "Dafne" by Federico Bondi, which highlights the stunning evolution of a young woman suffering from Down syndrome, "Vivere" by Francesca Archibugi, an unconventional contemporary Roman family story, "Aspromonte" by Mimmo Calopresti, a stunning picture of a forgotten village in Southern Italy, "Croce e delizia" (An almost ordinary summer) by Simone Godano, a humorous comedy on two families with competing values and visions spending their holidays together in the Italian seaside, "Volare" by the great and eclectic director Gabriele Salvatores, "Il Campione" (The Champion), "Una storia senza nome" (Stolen Caravaggio) and the remake of the legendary comedian Eduardo de Filippo's "Il Sindaco del Rione Sanità" ("The Mayor of Rione Sanità") by Mario Martone. The festival will also pay tribute to one of the great "maestri" of the Italian cinema, Bernardo Bertolucci, who passed away last November, by showcasing an exclusive conversation between Antonio Falduto and himself.

As usual, some of the films will be introduced by directors, actors or producers, which will lead interactive and networking sessions with the

Emanuele Pollio, Consul of Italy in Cape Town

specialized and the general public. I am therefore absolutely convinced that the XVIII Italian Film Focus will offer another great occasion for strengthening the cultural, social and economic links between Italy and South Africa and to promote the most recent protagonists of the Italian cinema in the unique context of the Mother City.



New Pathways of Italian Cinema: Season 2018 - 2019

Giovanni Ottone, film critic

Over the last decade Italian cinema has been characterized by new trends and themes. The essential aspect is the significant revival of film genre. First of all, there is yet another renaissance of comedy, with different patterns and variations of regional identity, resulting in works of different originality and quality. The revival of the comic and the comic-dramatic genre is backed by the commercial success of films made by established “specialist” directors, such as Enrico Oldoini, Neri Parenti and Carlo Vanzina, and by new filmmakers, such as Sydney Sibilia, Luca Miniero, Massimiliano Bruno, Giovanni Veronesi, Paolo Genovese and Manetti Bros. These works are interpreted by actors who became famous in the 1980s and 1990s (and who in some cases are their own directors), such as Carlo Verdone, Christian De Sica, Massimo Boldi, Aldo, Giovanni & Giacomo, Leonardo Pieraccioni, Antonio Albanese, Vincenzo Salemme and Claudia Gerini, or by “new comedians”, such as the star performer Checco Zalone, Claudio Bisio, Alessandro Siani, Edoardo Leo and Paola Cortellesi. Other genres to be considered are: ‘melo’ and existential drama, with different social and generational characterization, including many films dedicated to young people, to women, to immigrants or migrants, to the dwellers of the overcrowded and deteriorated proletarian suburbs of Rome and Naples and to people who are on the margins of society; thriller and ‘noir’, that in some cases are characterized by precise references to political current affairs, with timid re-enactments of the cinema of civil commitment of the 1960s

and 1970s; gangster movies that are dedicated to the Italian criminal mafia organizations, in particular to the Neapolitan camorra, the Calabrian ‘ndrangheta and the Sicilian cosa nostra, and many of them are inspired by the crude realism of the famous crime drama television series Gomorra (2014 - 2019), which freely adapts the homonymous best seller by Roberto Saviano, published in 2006; forays into fantasy and science fiction, sometimes exploitation films. And finally some very accomplished and successful films pay homage to multiple genres by creatively mixing different codes and canons.

We provide some essential data of 2018 - 2019 Italian cinema season, considering the film industry, the market and the public (source: Cinetel Report 2018 and preliminary updates 2019): a picture of lights and shadows. To put in short terms: viewer numbers and box office takings dropped in 2018, but national cinema productions continue to rise. In fact in 2018, 528 new full-length films were distributed in cinemas (- 8 compared to 2017), of which 210 were Italian (including about 30 majority co-productions with other countries), making up a share of 39.7% of the total percentage (40.6% in 2017). According to preliminary data considering the first 9 months, 270 Italian full-length films were produced in 2019. During 2018 the public audience in 1205 Italian cinema sites, which include 3505 screens (mark well, in Italy between 2000 and 2017 about 950 cinemas, with a total of

about 1,200 screens, were shut down), recorded a total of 85,903,642 admissions (- 6.89% compared to 2017), taking around € 555,445,372 at the box office(- 4.98% compared to 2017 and the lowest result since 2006). On the other hand, the presence of Italian productions at the box office (including co-productions) grew, taking €127.8 million in 2018 (+ 23.86% compared to the previous year) for a share of 23.02% of total box office takings (compared to 17.66% in 2017) and an increase in attendance of 17.92% (19.9 million in 2018 compared to 16.8 million in 2017), representing an overall audience market share of 23.19%. American productions saw a drop in revenue with a total of 60.04% (in comparison to 66.35% in 2017), taking around €333.5 million at the box office (€ 387.8 million in 2017, - 14%).

We report some significant full-length feature films of the 2018 - 2019 season, including some of the works selected for the Italian Film Focus Festival in Cape Town. *Dogman*, by Matteo Garrone, is inspired by a brutal news event, a ruthless murder that took place in 1988. This film is raw, dirty, gloomy, claustrophobic, tragic, desperate and, at times, heartbreaking. Garrone moves between genres, combining drama, 'noir', horror and comedy. He portrays a marginalized humanity, living in a shabby and desolate neighborhood. The narrative displays a complicated relationship between victim and executioner in the name of an unhealthy "friendship", of simplified desires, of obsession and of ambiguous redemption, brilliantly avoiding the simplified drift of the revenge thriller. *Boys Cry* (*La terra dell'abbastanza*), first film by brothers D'Innocenzo, Damiano and Fabio, is a 'noir' that takes place in rundown neighborhoods of the Roman suburbs, where blue collars workers and unemployed youngsters, criminals





marginalized people live together. It describes the tragic journey to hell of two seventeen year old boys, who are good friends since childhood. It combines coming of age film in the world of crime, melodramatic buddy movie and a sociological and anthropological portrait, including obvious violence, touch of trash, agitated narrative rhythm and precarious aesthetics. Unfortunately there are too many stereotypes about friendship, betrayal, repentance, feelings of guilt and the codes of the underworld. Pio d'Emilio's first film, *If Life Gives You Lemons (Un giorno all'improvviso)*, is a well-written and pieced together dramatic coming of age film. Set in a crime ridden city of the South, it conveys the difficult and twisted existential itinerary of a seventeen year old boy and his very beautiful and sweet mother, who is frail at heart, suffering from an obsessive-depressive psychoneurosis. The description of the social context and of the relationships between Antonio and his mother and between the protagonist and his companions are believable. Even the topic of homosexual blackmail inflicted upon the teenager is treated with an effective choice of confidentiality, avoiding sensationalism. *Euforia (Euforia)*, the second work by the actress and director Valeria Golino, is a drama focused on illness and on the complicated relationship between two brothers diametrically opposed in terms of principles and ideas. Matteo is a cynical and reckless Roman entrepreneur while Ettore is an idealistic, introverted, sensitive and frustrated teacher who lives in the province. The film tries to represent a crucial existential dialectic and deals with the topic of the death, bringing up the ethical issue of white lies for the purpose of good. However it turns into a pastiche, a mix between elegant drama and "intelligent" bourgeois comedy, with a superficial characterization of the characters and improbable feelings and emotions. And the

narration is dissipated in a series of meetings, farewells, sketches and simple metaphors. *We Will Be Young and Beautiful* (Saremo giovani e bellissimi), the first work by Letizia Lamartire, is a convincing and original family drama set in Ferrara, a small provincial town. It describes a complex and problematic mother-son relationship. At 18 Isabella is on her way to become a successful singer, but then she gives birth to a child and chooses to take care of him alone. At 43 she continues to behave as a young non-conformist rock star, with the myth of freedom and dreams of establishing herself in music scene. She regularly performs in a small club with her guitarist son's young band. Mother and son live a symbiotic and conflictual relationship of morbid complicity, with odd quarrels. She is an attractive, sexy, fragile and immature woman. Bruno is captivated, nearly seduced and allows himself to be manipulated. Letizia Lamartire articulates the narrative effectively without reducing it to predictable cheap psychology. *The Traitor* (Il traditore), by Marco Bellocchio, is the Italian entry for the Best International Feature Film at the 92nd Academy Awards in 2020. It is a visionary, tragic and melancholic chronicle work: a powerful fusion of period melodrama and civil cinema focusing the Sicilian mafia during the years (1980 - 1995) of head-on collision with the Italian State. Bellocchio recreates the story of Tommaso Buscetta, known as Don Masino, an important mafia member and killer. After his arrest in 1983, the powerless and bankrupt Buscetta is hunted by rivals of the Corleone gangs and begins to reveal cosa nostra organization charts, secret rituals, activities and crimes to judge Giovanni Falcone. This makes him the first Italian collaborator of justice in history to accuse those mafia leaders who had already killed two of Buscetta's children and other relatives. Thanks to the

depositions of Buscetta and Totuccio Contorno, the police succeeds in enforcing hundreds of arrests that destabilize cosa nostra. In 1986 the famous maxi-trial begins in the Palermo bunker courthouse. During this trial Buscetta is a key witness of the prosecution, which results in heavy penalties to mafia leaders and followers: 19 life sentences and sentences for a total of 2665 years of imprisonment. After the mafia bomb attacks that killed the judges Giovanni Falcone and Paolo Borsellino, Buscetta lays again as a witness in the 1992 trials against Salvo Lima and Giulio Andreotti, well known politicians accused of ties with the mafia. Through various narrative levels and different interpretations, Bellocchio masterfully combines details of the facts and of the criminal trials, a clear representation of the political gaps of Italian society and intimate family drama. He perfectly succeeds in highlighting the contradictions of a cumbersome, ambiguous and controversial character, that is never represented as an antihero. Always keeping the right distance, Bellocchio studies and characterizes him, revealing his weaknesses, his opportunism and arrogance, his moments of despair and the loneliness which is suffered with anger. He avoids an easy psychological interpretation and, above all, builds a magnificent epilogue confirming that Buscetta (played by Pierfrancesco Favino with excellent skills) was always a mafia killer, a man who betrayed the criminal organization, but unable to change his own attitude. *Piranhas* (La paranza dei bambini), by Claudio Giovannesi, is inspired by the reality of the new Neapolitan juvenile delinquency formed by gangs of adolescents who try to replace the camorra clans which are affected by police arrests. The story is set in the proletarian neighborhoods of downtown Naples in 2006. Some fourteen and fifteen year old

boys want to make quick and easy money, buy new designer clothes and motorbikes and have access to the most notorious discos. They trust their friendship and think that their only chance is to risk it all. They choose crime despite the awareness of the risk of getting killed. Taking advantage of the power vacuum, they gain control of the territory and behave like populist bosses deciding to free small retailers and street vendors from extortion. Giovannesi offers an interesting coming of age film with a cast of very young new actors. Unfortunately the narration is marked by inconsistencies, paradoxes, continuous prosaic nuances and too many stereotypes of Neapolitan crime which have already been seen in other films.

The Mayor of the Rione Sanità (Il sindaco del Rione Sanità), by Mario Martone, is an adaptation, placed in the present Naples, of the famous homonymous play by Eduardo De Filippo, which was staged for the first time in 1960. The forty year old protagonist, Antonio Barracano, is a "man of honor" who has done and still does unscrupulous business even with the camorra. He is determined to keep order in his neighborhood, in order to avoid violent deaths and the intervention of the police. Therefore he sorts out disputes between those who turn to him by placing himself as an arbitrator. The unquestionable decisions he takes are inspired by his personal "moral code of justice" and by his lack of confidence in the ability of men to understand each other and to recognize their respective wrongs and responsibilities. But one day he becomes a victim of his own hybris and of the ambition to act as a "peacemaker". Martone proposes truthful themes without being didactic: the contradictory of human nature, family, guilt, honor, responsibility, justice and revenge. The staging is

eminently cinematographic in terms of use of the space, frames, sense and time of the drama and outstanding direction of the excellent cast of actors. Aspromonte: Land of the Forgotten (Aspromonte - La terra degli ultimi), by Mimmo Calopresti, is an existential drama with precise anthropological roots. Set in the late 1950s in a small isolated Calabrian mountain village, in the Aspromonte area, it tells a story of contrast between tradition and progress in southern Italy. Africo lacks adequate infrastructure, and the film highlights the difficulties in solving atavistic problems of service shortages and in overcoming heavy prejudices. These problems are exacerbated by the negative role of politics and crime. Mimmo Calopresti comes back to his own land and proposes an archaic epic that is overall quite credible and well articulated. The film offers a precise social and political pattern, tempered by a non-trivial depiction of the characters. Dafne, Federico Bondi's second work, is a surprising and convincing dramatic comedy. It is a coming of age film with an unforgettable protagonist. Dafne has Down syndrome, she is in her thirties and is very proud of her job in a supermarket. She is a lively, honest and incurable optimist and is candidly honest and mordant in her relationships with others. After the sudden death of her mother, she commits herself to consolidate the relationship with her elderly depressed and apathetic father. Unusual words and gestures lead them to work together to overcome their great loss. Screenplay is punctual and rich of intelligent comic nuances and Bondi develops a simple but elaborate staging, inspired by the Ermanno Olmi's films. The Champion (Il campione), a first work by Leonardo D'Agostini, is a comedy that combines satire on society with the teen movie, and anthropological and generational portrait with moral tale. Christian Ferro is nineteen year old and was born and

raised in the proletarian outskirts of Rome. He is a talented striker of the famous Roma soccer team, but he is spoiled, arrogant and shady, as well as quarrelsome and insubordinate. He pulls one prank after the other, feeling protected by the huge amount of money he earns and by the consolidated fame and popularity. The football club president forces Christian to study in order to prepare the final high school exams and entrusts him to Valerio, a serious and well educated teacher in his forties who went through a tough time over a serious family drama. The two very different characters clash, but gradually space grows for mutual understanding, and at last, for solidarity. D'Agostini chooses buddy movie pattern and shows a captivating disenchanted and unpretentious approach, managing the story with a certain confidence, including successful football game sequences. *Volare (Tutto il mio folle amore)*, by Gabriele Salvatores, is a dramatic comedy that develops like a road movie, with tormented affections, feelings of guilt and unlikely catharsis. Vincent is a 16-year-old autistic teenager, very lively and disarming because he is unable to control his emotions and reactions. He lives in a large villa, and is loved and looked after by his overprotective bourgeois parents: his mother Elena and her life partner Mario, who adopted him. Out of the blue, one evening, Willi, Vincent's biological father, turns up on the doorstep. He is a mediocre cover songs singer who hangs around the province: a pleasure-seeking and anarchistic individual. He introduces himself to meet the son whom he had never seen. In the end he decides to take Vincent along with him to Croatia where he is scheduled to perform. But the escapade, which was meant to last only a couple of days, is prolonged, turning into a picaresque adventure of "joyful" vagrancy that leads the two to know each other for better





or for worse. Salvatores reiterates the themes of his cinema: friendship, tolerance towards the diverse, escape and travel. He makes use of three seasoned and willing actors, Claudio Santamaria, Valeria Golino and Diego Abatantuono, and of the energetic and irreverent newcomer Giulio Pranno. *Vivere*, by Francesca Archibugi, is a tragicomic drama, which is focused on stress and anxiety in an extended family clan of Roman middle class. Mary Ann, a 20-year-old Irish student of art history, moves temporarily to Rome and is hired by the Attorre family as an au pair girl. She finds herself witnessing and participating in the dynamics of ordinary unease, but also of vulgar hypocrisy, which characterize the lives of her forty year old employers. Luca is an unsuccessful freelance journalist who works in an online magazine. He is a man who likes to play the victim, but he is chronically unreliable towards his family and professional commitments. On the other hand he is always available to betray his wife with newly met young women. Susi, his wife, busy and exuberant, careless and dupe, is a dance teacher for obese ladies. She is a victim of her husband's intellectual charm, but insecure about their relationship. The two are parents of Lucilla, a child that is suffering from periodic severe psychosomatic asthma attacks. The story rushes into a pochade when Mary Ann is seduced by Luke, who emotionally blackmails her. At the same time Susi is assiduously courted by a famous pulmonologist who is taking care of Lucilla. Francesca Archibugi proposes a sentimental theatrics, showing an escalation of sketches, which often become a caricature, including uncontainable desires and improbable fragility. The characters, pleasantly immature and irresponsible, are trapped in a net of frustrated good intentions, failures, lies and guilt. Finally the narrative leads to a vaguely

melancholic and didactic epilogue. An Almost Ordinary Summer (*Croce e delizia*), second work by Simone Godano, is a light and amusing comedy that addresses the issue of homosexuality. It focusses on a very up to date topic: civil unions between people of the same sex. The film tells the story of two mature men who fall in love, choose to live together, and intend to formalize their relationship. Carlo, owner of a fish shop, is a fifty year old widower with two children and two grandchildren. He is a solid, serious and sincere person who believes in the correctness of relations with others. Tony is in his sixties and divorced. He is father of two daughters whom he often neglects because he leads a disordered life following his libertine attitude. He is an eccentric bourgeois, spoiled and very wealthy thanks to his art dealer activity. They meet, they date and, with mutual surprise, in spite of their very different social class and nature, they discover that they love each other. Eventually they disclose their relationship, and intention to get married, to their respective families who had reunited for the occasion. Penelope, Tony's daughter, and Sandro, Carlo's son, both adults, do not welcome the news and join forces to sabotage the marriage project of the two parents. Simone Godano creates a lively and pleasant film, managing a cast of good actors. He combines the depiction of the romantic relationship between the two protagonists with the unfolding of family dynamics in which ancient animosity and prejudice flare up. The Stolen Caravaggio (*Una storia senza nome*), by Roberto Andò, is a highly narrative comedy - thriller. The multifaceted plot concerns the movie business, the art market and the connections between politicians and criminals. 38-year-old Valeria ghost writes screenplays for Alessandro Pes, a successful author, who is a charming but lazy and untalented 50-

year-old guy. One day she meets Rak, an enigmatic septuagenarian who seems to be well-informed about her life. He offers her an irresistible tale that could develop into an excellent script for a film. It is the story of the theft of the "Nativity with Saints Lawrence and Francis of Assisi", a big painting by Caravaggio stolen by the mafia in 1969 from the Oratory of San Lorenzo in Palermo and never found by the police. At the end of a tortuous and tedious revolving door of twists, Valeria discovers the key to solve the mystery of the missing painting. Roberto Andò organizes a game of mirrors and false enigmas that is apparently refined but honestly quite artificial. He also brings back up the themes of his cinema which is cultural-rich and never moralistic: multiple identities, the relationship between truth and fiction, the acceptance or the avoidance of responsibility. Moreover, the film, with a taste of retro, carries out an ambitious reflection concerning the professional circle of Italian cinema, putting focus on those who conceive, write and make films, who are often financed through unusual and questionable payments.

Giovanni Ottone is an Italian film critic, a specialist in Latin American, Iberian, Scandinavian, Turkish, Romanian and Israeli cinema. He has published articles and essays in various film magazines and books in Italy, UK, France and Brazil. From 2007 to 2016 he was a consultant to the selection board of the Pesaro International Film Festival and from 2018 till now he is a member of the selection board of the RIFF (Rome Independent Film Festival).

Bernardo Bertolucci

Bernardo Bertolucci, (born March 16, 1940, Parma, Italy—died November 26, 2018, Rome), Italian film director who was perhaps best known for his film *Last Tango in Paris* (1972), the erotic content of which created an international sensation.

Bertolucci was raised in an atmosphere of comfort and intellectualism. His father—a poet, anthologist, teacher of art history, and film critic—was a strong early influence. Bertolucci's early childhood interest in films came as a result of attending frequent screenings with his father. His first two films, shorts about children, were filmed when Bertolucci was 15 years old. His first book, *In cerca del mistero* (1962; "In Search of Mystery"), won the Premio Viareggio, one of Italy's top literary awards. A short time later he embarked on his film career as assistant director to Pier Paolo Pasolini. After his work on Pasolini's *Accattone* (1961), Bertolucci left the University of Rome without graduating and set off on an independent study of film.

In 1962 Bertolucci made his first feature film, *La commare secca* (The Grim Reaper), which he filmed on location in Rome. The film brought him recognition as a promising young director but was a box office failure. His second feature, *Prima della rivoluzione* (1964; Before the Revolution), fared no better commercially but won notice at the Cannes film festival. Unable to obtain financial backing for his film projects, Bertolucci directed documentary films and worked with Julian Beck and his Living Theatre on *Agonia* ("Agony"), *Amore e rabbia* (Love and Rage), and other productions. His next film, *La strategia del ragno* (1970; The Spider's Stratagem), reflects an increasing interest in the

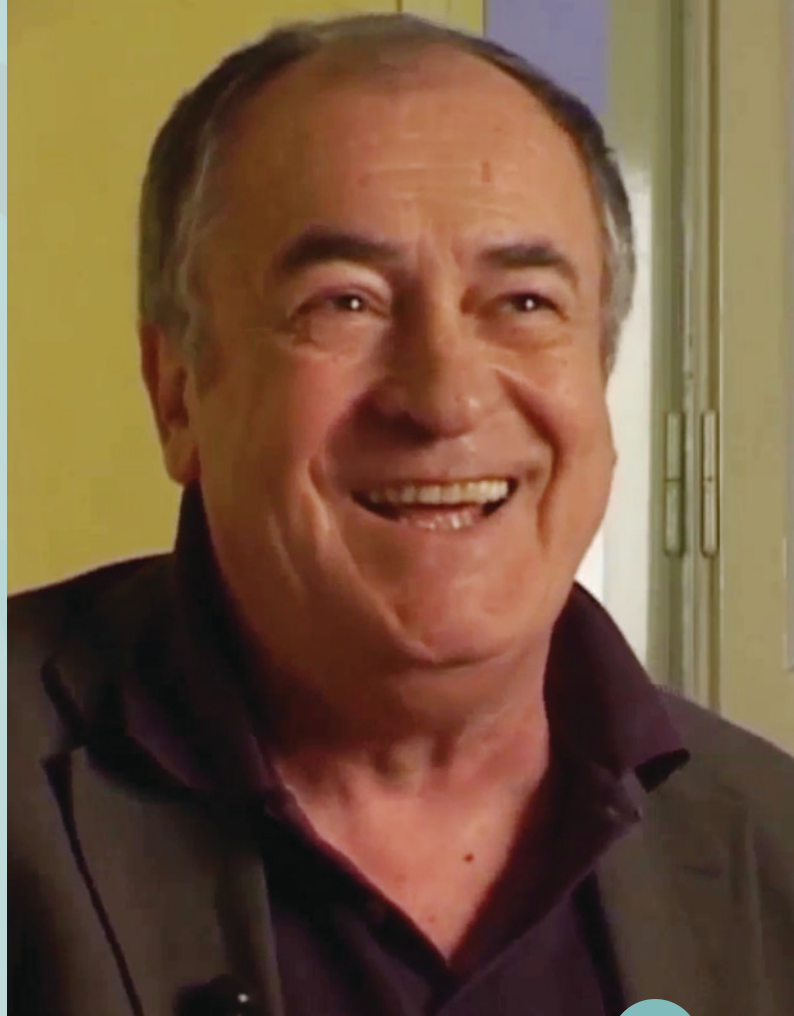
interior life of his characters. His *Il conformista* (1970; The Conformist) is the film in which Bertolucci attained full maturity as a director. The film's protagonist is a young civil servant who attempts to deal with his own inadequacies through conformity to the prevailing social order in Fascist Italy under Benito Mussolini. *Ultimo tango a Parigi* (Last Tango in Paris), released two years later, portrayed a level of eroticism previously considered taboo in general-release films in its study of an affair between a middle-aged widower (Marlon Brando) and a young actress.

Bertolucci's later films included the grandly scaled *Novecento* (1976; 1900), the intimate *Luna* (1979; "Moon"), and *La tragedia di un uomo ridicolo* (1981; The Tragedy of a Ridiculous Man). He scored a notable critical success with *The Last Emperor* (1987), an epic portrayal of the tragic life of P'u-i (Pu Yi), the deposed last emperor of China; the film won nine American Academy Awards, including those for best film and best direction (by Bertolucci). In 1990 he directed *The Sheltering Sky*, an adaptation of Paul Bowles's novel of the same name. Subsequent films included *Stealing Beauty* (1996), which centres on an American teenager's visit to Italy, and *The Dreamers* (2003), an erotic thriller about an American student in Paris during the student protests of 1968.

Encyclopaedia Britannica

<https://www.britannica.com/biography/Bernardo-Bertolucci>

To celebrate director
Bernardo Bertolucci
one year after his death
(26 November 2018),
ControLuce presents a
brief interview by
Antonio Falduto with
Bernardo Bertolucci



Bernardo Bertolucci

Italo Spinelli, film director and artistic director of Asiatica Multimedia

It must have been the early seventies when I saw Bernardo for the first time. I was at lunch with Elsa Morante at Babingtons in Piazza di Spagna, a Tea Room of refined clientele. We talked about Bertolucci and the huge success of *LAST TANGO IN PARIS* (Ultimo Tango a Parigi). Elsa reproached Bertolucci for taking advantage of the Hollywood star system with the presence of Marlon Brando. I was enthusiastic and totally overwhelmed by *LAST TANGO*, when, as if by magic, Bernardo materialized, entering Babingtons with a couple of friends. The appearance of this handsome young man with a broadly brimmed dark hat, left Elsa and me almost confused.

Bernardo approached our table, smiling and greeting Elsa seductively, Elsa introducing us in return. The two of them exchanged a few more jokes, then Bernardo joined another table with his friends. I could not take my eyes off this young, so adored, famous, beautiful and so irresistible director.

Those were years when in Rome you could still breathe - between Via dell' Oca, Via del Babuino, Piazza di Spagna and Piazza Navona – the air brimmed with ideas and passions, with civil commitment and enjoyment of life. The privileged protagonists who circulated in these spaces were Alberto Moravia, with his novels including *THE CONFORMIST* (Il conformista), which Bernardo ultimately turned into a cinematic masterpiece, Elsa Morante, who had already published *HOUSE OF LIARS* (Menzogna e sortilegio) and *ARTURO'S ISLAND* (L'isola di Arturo) and was writing *LA STORIA*, and Pier Paolo Pasolini who had passed from literature to cinema with *ACCATTONE*, a film in

which Elsa appears in a small cameo. And Bernardo, in his early twenties, played his part as the assistant director of Pier Paolo's first film. It was a literary and artistic world of intellectuals of bourgeois culture who met for lunch and dinner in a cultured, open, provincial and at the same time cosmopolitan Rome, which today has completely disappeared as if sunken into the abyss.

I had seen Bernardo's first films, like his cinematographic debut *THE GRIM REAPER* (La commare secca), a Roman subject of Pasolini. Director of close-ups of religious, pictorial and anthropological inspiration, through Bernardo transformed into poetry cinema, with a constantly moving camera. Then came Parma, the sweetness of life *BEFORE THE REVOLUTION* (Prima della rivoluzione). Already before meeting him personally, for me he had become a cult director.

A second physical encounter with his cinema occurred coincidentally, again in Rome, in an evening of the end of the seventies, in Piazza Cavour, in the Prati district. Returning from the "Bar della Pace", I saw Piazza Cavour incredibly illuminated. It was a spectacle of lights in proportions that I had never seen before. Entire facades of buildings, the Waldensian church, the palm trees and even the paved street were entirely flooded with light with reflections of daylight on the pavement of the square. I asked some people that were presumably of the film crew about what was happening and when they told me that it was filmmaking in progress, I was stunned and dazzled, and lingered, observing for a couple of hours. At some point, after a joyful agitation from the crew and orders given in Italian and English, a boy ran out of the cinema Adriano

on the side of the square, into to the center of powerful spotlights with a crane mounted on a trolley that anticipated him.

When I saw LA LUNA, the transition of the young protagonist at Piazza Cavour and the race out of the cinema Adriano, didn't even last a minute, it was a transition. Yet that square illuminated by Storaro seemed to me like a majestic setting for an entire film and not one of the many sets that only run for a few seconds. That was when I realized how Bernardo could be an emperor even of Hollywood, with extraordinarily rich international sets, filled with his very own personal and inimitable creative freedom.

My acquaintanceship with Bernardo Bertolucci began twenty years ago. In fact, I had the continued privilege of sharing convivial moments, thoughts, emotions and visions with him. Bernardo went to the cinema almost every day for a long time. Then in the large and cosy living room of Bernardo and Clare's home in Via della Lungara, which we called the Orson Welles room, we saw dozens of films together. I was always anxiously waiting to hear his opinion. He was always so faithful to the rule of Jean Renoir: "Don't waste time talking badly about the films you hate. Talk about the films you love and share your pleasure with others instead". He knew how to share about the images of a film that he loved, by making poetry. He was attentive to all details and ambiguities of the authors he loved: Renoir, Max Ophuls, Godard, Rossellini, John Ford, Antonioni, Duklas Sirk, Bergman, Chaplin, Howard Hawks, Sergio Leone, Kubrick, Satajit Ray, Elia Kazan. Every shot of a movie that he loved could encompass his whole admiration. Strong in his love for cinema, he repeated that those who love are allowed everything. For Bernardo it was of primary importance to reinvent and rediscover cinema continually, and his sense and pleasure for discovery accompanied him always and everywhere. Bernardo was always sincere when he expressed himself with cinema, faithful to the intermittency of his heart. He especially loved the elements of time and





light about cinema, and he was also certain that films needed to be made about the women one loved.

The inception of the Film Festival “Asiatica” in 2000, which happened thanks to Rossana Rummo who at the time was Director of the Cinema Department of the Ministry of Entertainment, gave Bernardo and me further opportunity to share ideas about a film festival in Rome that would bring rejuvenation to the capital. We wanted to present fascinating surprises that came from new cinemas: from Taiwan, Iran, Hong Kong and the Chinese independent cinema. In a pleasantness that only he knew how to offer, we chatted about the mutation that cinema was going through, with the new technologies and with emerging Asian cinema that experimented with new languages. When I returned from my incursions in Asia, my first thought was to show Bernardo what I had discovered. We were enthusiastic about some Tibetan, Indian, Turkish and Filipino film, about an Iranian documentary or the discovery of a new director such as Asghar Farhadi, or a new film by Hou Hsiao Hsien. I had the pleasure of introducing Bernardo to Hou Hsiao Hsien in India, on the occasion of a Festival in Hayderabad, where they were both invited as guests: Bernardo to receive a life achievement, and Hou Hsiao Hsien for his film FLOWERS OF SHANGHAI. There were no translators but Bernardo was still able to praise the films he liked, persistent in trying to point out to Hou Hsiao Hsien that, in addition to the protagonists of the story who smoke opium, he also really appreciated the movement of the camera, which seemed to be under the effect of opium as well.

With how much enthusiasm he had appreciated the daring re-discovery in Tehran of LE VENT DES AMOREUX by Albert Lamorisse: a documentary of 1978 on Iran, which had disappeared with the revolution, and which I had fortunately recovered. In 2002 I had the privilege of following the genesis and the realization of the episode TEN MINUTES OLDER, a 10-minute short film in black and white. It was

produced by Wim Wenders and addressed to the theme of time, that Bernardo said, was "wonderful, metaphysical and, at last, terrible". The opportunity to be on a set where everyone, without exception, expressed the happiness of working on a film for Bernardo, seemed to be part of a sort of collective falling in love.

The project was to be shot in Rajasthan, but for various reasons, including health, the short film was shot in an "indianized" Agro Pontino, an area of former swamps south east of Rome. This was because the cue was a kind of parable found in the Mahabharata. It was a story we had both already heard from Elsa Morante and that Bernardo had already mentioned in a sequence in BEFORE THE REVOLUTION (Prima della rivoluzione).

The Indian parable had become the story of a clandestine immigrant who finds a girl to marry, works at a service station and has children but in the end everything is swept away. Bernardo said that unfortunately all this was only a dream, given the destruction and annulment of different cultures in the name of an alleged homologation that was spreading. The way we shared, however, remained the same. Falling in love with cultures, getting closer to cultures that were different from our own. "Instead of striving to erase them or destroy them in the name of an alleged homologation, we must try in every way to cultivate them, allowing them to fully express themselves".

At the second edition of "Asiatica", at the Palazzo delle Esposizioni in 2001, Bernardo decided to participate, not only by meeting young Asian directors, but by blessing us with a magnificent 8-minute short film of his site inspections made in China for THE LAST EMPEROR (L'ultimo imperatore). It was shot by himself, in 1985, and was entitled "Video Carlolina dalla China" (video postcard from China). He called it "the little ant", that he wanted to give to us as a gift to contribute to that edition.

His friendliness was endless. The welcoming generosity with which he knew how to entertain his friends, talking about politics, characters and books, telling stories, discussing sexuality, music and, above all, cinema. After dinners at his home he sent you home to sleep with a kind of happy awareness that you were going to wake up in a different world.

An awakening in the future, where, if it was right to rebel in the past, it will be even more so today.

"I left the ending ambiguous, because that's what life is." B.B.

ITALO SPINELLI, film director and artistic director of Asiatica Multimediale. Italo Spinelli is a director and actor, known for Gangor (2010), Roma-Paris-Barcelona (1989) and Corsica (1991).

(One year after Bernardo Bertolucci's death)



**An almost
Ordinary
Summer**
(Croce e Delizia)

DIRECTOR: Simone Godano
COUNTRY: Italy
YEAR: 2019
TIME: 100 min

Two very different families spend their holidays in the same house at the seaside: the aristocratic Castelvechios, an open-minded, eccentric but quite selfish family, and the working-class Petagnas, a very tight-knit family which is united around solid conservative values. What brought such distant worlds together? Only the two middle-aged heads of the families, Tony and Carlo, know why! The unexpected announcement of their engagement will disrupt an apparently ordinary summer, and will turn the lives of everyone around them upside down.

Globi d'Oro 2019: Best Actress (Jasmine Trinca)
Seattle International Film Festival 2019:
Contemporary World Cinema



**Aspromonte.
Land of the
Forgotten**
(Aspromonte. La
terra degli ultimi)

DIRECTOR: Mimmo Calopresti
COUNTRY: Italy
YEAR: 2019
TIME: 87 min

At the end of the 50's, in a small village in the valley of Aspromonte called Africo, a woman dies in childbirth, because the doctor doesn't get there in time, as no route connects Africo with the other villages. The inhabitants decide to unite and build a road themselves. All, including children, abandon the usual occupations to carry out the work. In the meantime Giulia, the new teacher of the local school, is trying to teach Italian to the kids, for them to be able to speak, read and write it by the time Africo enters the world via the new road. Aspromonte is an atypical western about the end of a world and the dream of changing the course of events with the strong desire for redemption of a people.

Cinemed - Festival Cinema Méditerranéen
Montpellier 2019: Panorama Longs Métrages
Taormina Film Fest 2019: Teatro Antico



Dafne

DIRECTOR: Federico Bondi
COUNTRY: Italy
YEAR: 2019
TIME: 94 min

Dafne is a witty young woman suffering from Down syndrome. She is a fiercely independent spring of contagious energy, but still lives with her parents, Luigi and Maria. Suddenly Maria dies and the family's balance is shattered. Luigi falls into depression and is tormented by the thought of one day having to leave his daughter alone... But thanks to her job and her lifelong friends, Dafne deals with the loss, with the thoughtlessness of a child and the bravery of a young woman, and she tries to shake her father up. Until one day something unexpected happens: they decide to leave for a hike in the mountains to the town where Maria was born. Along the walk, they discover a lot about each other and they learn, together, how to go beyond their limits.

Berlinale 2019: Panorama - Fipresci Prize
Nastri d'Argento 2019: Special Prize



Stolen Caravaggio
(Una storia senza nome)

DIRECTOR: Roberto Andò
COUNTRY: Italy/France
YEAR: 2018
TIME: 110 min

Valeria is the young secretary of a film producer. She lives a secluded life, and writes anonymous scripts for a successful screenwriter, Alessandro Pes. One day the woman is approached by a mysterious retired policeman who wants to tell her the story of a crime. Valeria uses what she hears to write the scenario for Alessandro Pes's next screenplay which the producers had anxiously been waiting for. Foreign groups show an interest in financing the film and an American director is hired, but the story reveals itself to be a dangerous plot: "Story without a Name", is in fact about the theft of a famous painting by Caravaggio, committed in Palermo in 1969 by the Mafia. Valeria will find herself taking on an unusual role.

La Biennale di Venezia 2018: Fuori Concorso
Belgrade International Film Festival 2019
Denver Film Festival 2019: Italian Showcase



The Champion
(Il Campione)

DIRECTOR: Leonardo d'Agostini
COUNTRY: Italy
YEAR: 2019
TIME: 105 min

Christian is an extremely talented, unpredictable and rebellious football player. After his latest "screw-up", the president of his team decides to assign him a personal tutor, to help him in controlling his temper. Valerio is a shy and solitary professor, the exact opposite of the "Champion". Sparks will fly between the two at first, but soon their relationship will change both for the better.

Annecy Cinema Italien 2019: Prima Cineltaliano! - Cinema Italian Style in Hong Kong 2019



The Mayor of Rione Sanità
(Il sindaco del Rione Sanità)

DIRECTOR: Mario Martone
COUNTRY: Italy
YEAR: 2019
TIME: 115 min

Mario Martone brings Eduardo De Filippo's play *Il Sindaco del Rione Sanità* to the big screen. The director sets the story into present day times, using the text as an opportunity to continue to investigate reality. The protagonist, Antonio Barracano, is a "man of honour" who distinguishes between "decent people and scoundrels"; around him flourishes a fierce, ambiguous and pained humanity, where good and evil confront each other in every character.

Busan International Film Festival 2019: World Cinema
Chicago International Film Festival 2019: International Feature Competition
La Biennale di Venezia 2019: Venezia 76 - Francesco Pasinetti Award, Leoncino d'Oro Award



Vivere

DIRECTOR: Francesca Archibugi
COUNTRY: Italy
YEAR: 2019
TIME: 103 min

In today's Rome, the Attorre family lives in a decent suburb of semi-detached villas. Luca, a frustrated freelance journalist and creative conjurer of fake news, struggles to support Susi, a ballerina who is now reduced to teaching ballet to overweight women, and Lucilla, a quiet and imaginative six year old who suffers from severe asthma. Pierpaolo, the 17 year old son of Luca from a previous relationship, supports them economically. He lives with his well-to-do mother and under the wing of his grandfather who is a powerful man of the law. Family life will be upset by Mary Ann, an Irish catholic student of art history who will be an au pair for little Lucilla for a year.

*Chicago International Film Festival 2019: Comedy
Cinema Italian Style - Los Angeles 2019
La Biennale di Venezia 2019: Out of Competition*



Volare (Tutto il mio Folle Amore)

DIRECTOR: Gabriele Salvatores
COUNTRY: Italy
YEAR: 2019
TIME: 97 min

When Vincent sees his mother Elisa kick out the singing stranger who shows up on her doorstep, he has no doubts: this man is his father. Vincent has already decided to leave when he sees his stepfather Mario console his mother and blame her for letting the stranger in. He sneaks into the stranger's car without knowing the whereabouts of his new destination...

*Busan International Film Festival 2019: Icons
La Biennale di Venezia 2019: Out of Competition*



Bertolucci and Cultural Diversity (Bertolucci e la Diversità Culturale)

DIRECTOR: Antonio Falduto
COUNTRY: Italy
YEAR: 2015
TIME: 8 min

A brief excerpt from the interview with Bernardo Bertolucci on the subject of a film setting and the importance of cultural diversity in stories.

Interview by Antonio Falduto

Thursday, 28 November

18h15 Aspromonte, by Mimmo Carlopresti

Presented by film director Mimmo Calopresti and actor Marcello Fonte.

The film will be preceded by a brief excerpt from an interview with Bernardo Bertolucci by film director Antonio Falduto who will be present at the screening.

Book your complimentary ticket at [Eventbrite](#)

20h30 Vivere, by Francesca Archibugi

Presented by actor Marcello Fonte

Book your complimentary ticket at [Eventbrite](#)

Friday, 29 November

18h15 Volare, by Gabriele Salvatores

The film will be preceded by a brief excerpt from an interview with Bernardo Bertolucci by film director Antonio Falduto who will be present at the screening.

Book your complimentary ticket at [Eventbrite](#)

20h30 Dafne, by Federico Bondi

Presented by film director Federico Bondi.

Book your complimentary ticket at [Eventbrite](#)

Saturday, 30 November

11h30 The Mayor of Rione Sanita by Mario Martone

13h45 An Almost Ordinary Summer by Simone Godano

16h00 Aspromonte, by Mimmo Carlopresti.

Presented by film director Mimmo Calopresti and actor Marcello Fonte.

18h15 Vivere, by Francesca Archibugi

Presented by actor Marcello Fonte.

20h30 Stolen Caravaggio, by Roberto Andò

Sunday, 1 December

11h30 The Champion, by Leonardo D'Agostini

13h45 The Mayor of Rione Sanita, by Mario Martone

16h00 Dafne, by Federico Bondi

Presented by film director Federico Bondi.

18h15 An Almost Ordinary Summer by Simone Godano

20h30 Volare, by Gabriele Salvatores

Monday, 2 December

11h30 Vivere, by Francesca Archibugi

13h45 Aspromonte, by Mimmo Carlopresti

16h00 Stolen Caravaggio, by Roberto Andò

18h15 The Champion, by Leonardo D'Agostini

20h30 The Mayor of Rione Sanita, by Mario Martone

Tuesday, 3 December

11h30 Stolen Caravaggio, by Roberto Andò

13h45 Dafne, by Federico Bondi

16h00 The Champion, by Leonardo D'Agostini

18h15 Volare, by Gabriele Salvatores

20h30 An Almost Ordinary Summer by Simone Godano

Bookings:

For screenings on 28 and 29 November on www.italianfilmfocus.eventbrite.com

For all other screenings at Labia Cinema

Phone: 021 4245927

Mimmo Calopresti

Italian Film Focus 2019 - The Delegates



Mimmo Calopresti film director of ASPROMONTE. LAND OF THE FORGOTTEN

Screenwriter, producer as well as actor, since 1987 he has directed 16 films, working with stars such as Gerard Depardieu and Valeria Bruni Tedeschi, taking part in international festivals including Cannes Film Festival.

- 2019 Aspromonte - La terra degli ultimi
- 2019 Cani Sciolti: Ritratto di Marcello Fonte (Short)
- 2017 Immondezza (Documentary short)
- 2016 La Fabbrica Fantasma (Documentary)
- 2015 Uno per tutti
- 2015 Socrates uno di noi (Documentary)
- 2014 Equilibri precari (Short)
- 2013 Madre di Pietà (Documentary short)
- 2012 Uno al giorno (Short)
- 2010 1960 I ribelli (TV Short documentary)
- 2009 La maglietta rossa (Documentary)
- 2009 L'Aquila 2009 - Cinque registi tra le macerie (Video documentary short) (segment "Perfect Day")
- 2008 La fabbrica dei tedeschi (Documentary)
- 2007 L'abbuffata
- 2006 I Only Wanted to Live (Documentary)
- 2005 Come si fa a non amare Pier Paolo Pasolini - Appunti per un film sull'immondezza (Documentary short)
- 2005 Where Is Auschwitz? (Documentary)
- 2004 Una bellissima bambina (Short)
- 2004 L'ora della lucertola (Video documentary)
- 2003 Happiness Costs Nothing
- 2000 Preferisco il rumore del mare
- 1999 Tutto era Fiat (TV Movie documentary)
- 1998 Notes of Love
- 1995 La seconda volta
- 1992 Remzija (Documentary short)
- 1991 Paolo ha un lavoro (Documentary short)
- 1990 Alla Fiat era così (Documentary)
- 1990 Italia '90: lavori in corso (Documentary)
- 1989 Fratelli minori (Documentary short)
- 1987 Ripresi (Documentary short)

(www.imdb.com)

Marcello Fonte

Italian Film Focus 2019 - The Delegates



Marcello Fonte actor in ASPROMONTE. LAND OF THE FORGOTTEN and VIVERE

Winner as best actor in 2018 Cannes Film Festival and protagonist of the multiawarded film DOGMAN. He is presently busy acting for several Netflix series.

1019 Vivere

Perind

2019 Aspromonte - La terra degli ultimi

Ciccio Italia detto il Poeta

2019 Vinicio Capossela: Il povero Cristo (Short)

2018 Dogman

Marcello

2018 Io sono Tempesta

Il Greco

2017 The Intrusion

Mino

2016 La mafia uccide solo d'estate (TV Series)

- Piccoli eroi (2016)

- Difendere la democrazia (2016)

- Milanciane ammutunate (2016)

- Liggio + 2 (2016)

2015 Asino vola

2013 Die Strasse (Short)

2011 Corpo Celeste

Cameriere al Ristorante

2008 Blood of the Losers (uncredited)

2007 Codice silenzioso

2004 Signora (uncredited)

2002 Gangs of New York

Citizen (uncredited)

2001 Unfair Competition (uncredited)

2000 Una storia qualunque (TV Movie) (uncredited)

(www.imdb.com)

Federico Bondi

Italian Film Focus 2019 - The Delegates



2019 Dafne
2013 Educazione affettiva (Documentary)
2008 Mar nero
2002 Soste Japan (Documentary)
1998 Ora d'aria (Short)

(www.imdb.com)

Federico Bondi film director of DAFNE

He graduated in Literature and Philosophy at the University of Florence and works as director, editor and screenwriter where he specializes in documentaries. The eight works he has produced so far include feature and short films. His film MAR NERO received three prizes at the Film Festival of Locarno in 2008. Other prizes include a "Nastro d'Argento" as best debuting director in 2009.

