

24th edition

Italian Film FOCUS



JOHANNESBURG - Ster-Kinekor Rosebank
CAPE TOWN - Cinema Labia

27 NOVEMBER - 2 DECEMBER 2024

THE LARGEST SHOWCASE OF RECENT ITALIAN FILMS IN AFRICA



Italian Film Focus 2024

It is a great honour and privilege to present you the 24th edition of the Italian Film Focus, which brings to South Africa six of the most recent and acclaimed Italian cinematographic productions, and the possibility to interact with some Italian producers, screenwriters and actors.

This year's selection includes "Vermiglio", which recently won the Venice Film Festival's Silver Lion Grand Jury Prize and has been designated as Italy's candidate for the best international feature film category of the 2025 Academy Awards.

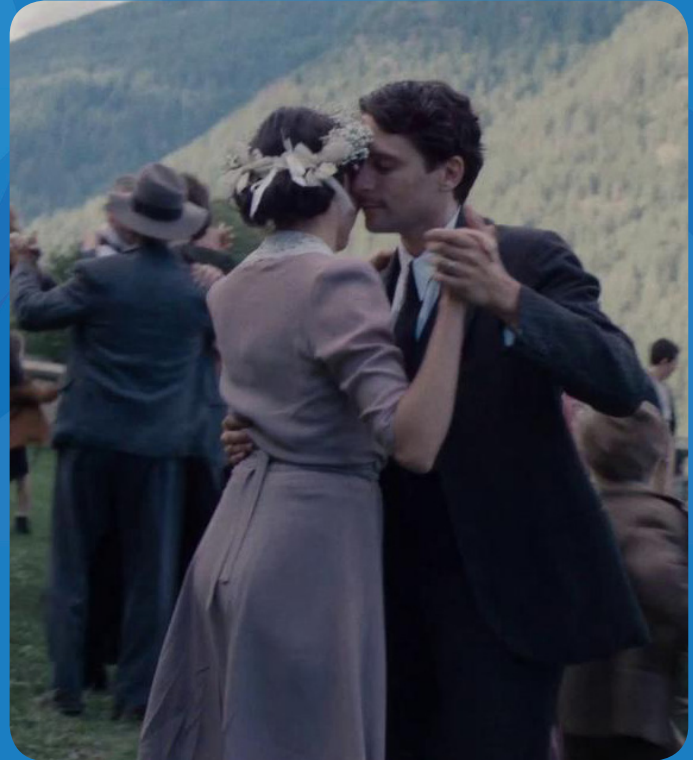
Once again the Italian Film Focus offers the public a glimpse of Italian contemporary cinema, confirming the Italian talent to mix images, stories, and emotions with interpretations which go beyond our borders.

It also confirms that Italy is continuing to give the world some of the best screenwriters, producers and actors.

Italian Film Focus is a joint initiative of the Embassy of Italy in Pretoria, the Consulate General of Italy in Johannesburg, the Consulate of Italy in Cape Town, the Italian Cultural Institute in Pretoria and the Controluce Association, with the support of the Italian Ministry of Culture.

Fans of Italian cinema have a lot to look forward to in this year's edition. Thus, join us in Johannesburg from November 27, 2024 till December 2, 2024 and enjoy the screenings.

Emanuela Curnis
Consul General of Italy in Johannesburg



Dear spectators and Italian cinema enthusiasts,

It is a great honour to welcome you to the 24th edition of the Italian Film Focus. This year, once again, we are excited to bring Cape Town audiences a rich selection of new films from Italian cinemas, showcasing some of the most celebrated works of 2024. This is possible thanks to an occasion like the Italian Film Focus, a unique platform to share Italian cinematic culture in an international setting, offering local audiences the chance to explore and enjoy the latest in Italian cinema.

The success of the initiative has enabled the occasion to become a regular feature in the cultural calendar of Cape Town. A special thanks goes to the Festival's organizing partner, Controluce, that enable this event thanks to their wonderful selection of works. In fact, the Festival is more than an entertainment event—it serves as a bridge that connects people across cultural and geographic boundaries. Language, culture, art, are ways of looking at reality around us. Through art, we're given the enriching opportunity to see the world from new perspectives, to embark on wonderful adventures we may have never thought possible, all without leaving our seats.

Each film offers a glimpse into a unique way of life, inviting us to appreciate the beauty of our differences while discovering the shared experiences that unite us all. This edition is, as always, the result of a strong collaboration between Italian and local institutions. I extend my gratitude to the Ministry of Culture, the Embassy of Italy in South Africa, the Italian Cultural Institute in Pretoria, the Controluce Association, Labia Cinema, and all our sponsors, whose support has made this Festival possible.

Cinema, like daydreaming, is a journey that transports us far beyond our

everyday reality, allowing us to explore through our own eyes distant lands and cultures, and their stories. Through the art of cinema, let us continue to celebrate diversity and deepen the ties between people, nations, and between Italy and South Africa.

Enjoy the show!

**By Giulio Mignacca,
Consul of Italy, Cape Town**

It is with great pleasure that the Italian Cultural Institute in Pretoria once again supports the Italian Film Focus, a festival which stands out for the quality of its artistic programming. Bringing cinema back to the big screen is essential for us, so that the cinematic experience maintains its own socialisation dimension. Watching films on the big screen enriches the cultural experience by making it a shared one. The Italian Film Focus is a key event to ensure that the best Italian cinema continues to be shared in South Africa.

**By Michele Gialdroni,
Director of the Italian Cultural Institute in Pretoria**

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About the film and delegation of filmmakers: Once again this year, THE ITALIAN FILM FOCUS IN SOUTH AFRICA IFF presents the best of this year's Italian cinema, featuring six films from the most important and recent European festivals, with the presence of some prestigious directors and actors. Antonio Piazza and Fabio Grassadonia will present their film SICILIAN LETTERS, which was in competition at the 2024 Venice Film Festival. It offers a striking vision of the mafia soul, told through the metaphorical device of "pizzini", coded messages left by the fugitive mafia boss. The cast includes two extraordinary leading actors, Toni Servillo and Elio Germano. We will also showcase the magnificent VERMIGLIO, which received the jury's special prize at the Venice Film Festival 2024 and is Italy's candidate for the upcoming Oscars, a film where the landscape and characters merge into a single ancient narrative rhythm. It will be presented by rising Italian actor Giuseppe De Dominicis. Additionally, there are two films recently shown at the Rome Film Festival: ETERNAL VISIONARY, where Michele Placido explores the creative and personal world of Luigi Pirandello, and THE OPERA! ARIAS FOR AN ECLIPSE, the directorial debut of renowned Italian opera and theatre director David Livermore, co-signed with Paolo Gè Cucco and co-produced by Dolce & Gabbana. This film courageously, inventively, and originally represents the myth of Orpheus and Eurydice, integrating the prose of two great actors, Fanny Ardant and Vincent Cassel, with the voices of various spectacular singers.

We also have the latest works from two established Italian directors: THE LIFE APART by Marco Tullio Giordana, where music and the lives of two musicians intersect with family dramas, and BATTLEGROUND by Gianni Amelio, an original and engaging reflection on war, the individual's right to refuse it, and the tragic consequences that follow.

Our delegation will also be involved in a series of master classes with local film schools and meetings with South African authors and producers to develop new co-productions. We would like to remind you that, thanks to the commitment of the IFF, the co-production agreement between Italy and South Africa was signed in 2006, leading to the production of five feature films and several documentaries.

The festival is organized in collaboration with Consulate General of Italy in Johannesburg, the Consulate of Italy in Cape Town, and the Italian Cultural Institute in Pretoria. We thank them for their collaboration and support.

Educational activity at local film schools: The presence in Cape Town of a delegation of filmmakers will offer the opportunity to participate in an important educational activity that has developed over the years at local film schools. This relationship has seen our younger audience grow.

**By Prof. Antonio Falduto,
Chairperson Controluce Association**

NEW TRENDS IN ITALIAN CINEMA

By Giovanni Ottone, Film Critic

The Italian film industry has historically established itself at both production and commercial levels. It maintains profitable market and co-production relations with other European countries and engages in continuous interchange with the American Hollywood industry. It continuously renews a tradition of quality, which is internationally recognized for its authors, screenwriters, directors and other professional technical figures as well as for its sector of film conservation and restoration.

In fact, in Italy, the cinema and audiovisual sector has recorded an extraordinary growth production trend in recent years, largely facilitated and supported by public resources, in particular the Tax Credit, and the implementation of the "Discipline of Cinema and Audiovisual" Law No. 220 of November 14, 2016, along with its amendment, Legislative Decree No. 203 of December 7, 2017, in accordance with Article 33 of the aforementioned law. According to data from the 2023 Report by ANICA (the trade association of film producers and distributors), the total number of feature films, both Italian and non-Italian, distributed in cinemas was 355 in 2009, while it was 500 in 2022 and a whopping 736 in 2023. Much of this increase in distribution in cinemas is due to the growth of Italian films in circulation, growing from 208 in 2017 to 251 in 2022, and a total of 348 in 2023. By breaking down the statistical data of films distributed between Italians and non-Italians, we note that, in the last 15 years, the latter have grown, going from 240 to 388, while the Italian ones have tripled, going from 115 in 2009 to 348 in 2023.

We would like to briefly present key data on the Italian film industry, market, and audience for the 2023-2024 season, based on the 2023 Cinetel Report and preliminary 2024 updates.

In 2023, 402 new Italian feature films were produced, including 262 by national companies -156 fiction films and 106 documentaries - in addition to 92 majority co-productions with other countries, marking a growth of 13% compared to 2022. During 2023, the audiences' attendance in the roughly 770 cinemas, which include approximately 2600 screens, recorded a number of admissions in the theatre equal to 70,6million tickets sold, for a total box office revenue of € 495,6 million. Compared to 2022, this represents a 61.6% increase in box office takings and a 58.6% rise in attendance. National cinema accounted for 25.9% of total attendance, with 18,277,037 spectators (+93.9% compared to 2022), and 24.3% of box office revenue, totalling €120,677,989 (+100% compared to 2022). This is therefore a share higher than the average for the period 2017-2019 (20.6% of box office revenue and



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21% attendance) and is close the decade average of 2010-2019 (26.2% box office takings and 27.1% attendance). In 2023, **There's Still Tomorrow**, the debut feature film by well-known actress Paola Cortellesi, released on October 26, sold 448,552 tickets and generated €36,841,823 in revenue. **There's Still Tomorrow** ranked first overall in box office takings, among all Italian and non-Italian films distributed in theatres and it is the greatest success of Italian cinema since 2020. Historically, it is the tenth highest-grossing film in Italy and the fifth among nationally produced films. According to preliminary data relating to the first eight months of 2024, the box office recorded an overall positive trend, with the Italian film market being the only one showing a slight increase among those of the main European countries, including Great Britain. As of August 31, the statistics record an audiences' attendance in cinemas reaching 41,5million admissions (+ 1% compared to the same period in 2023), for a total box office revenue of € 293,9 million (+ 1.2% compared to the same period in 2023). According to Cinetel data, the summer of 2024 was the best ever season for Italian cinemas, with 15,524,568 admissions and total box office takings of €110,775,452 between June 1 and August 31. A significant factor in this success was the Ministry of Culture's initiative, Cinema Revolution, which ran from June 9 to September 14 in participating cinemas. During this period, tickets for all Italian and European films were offered at a reduced price of €3.50, fully subsidized by a ministerial fund allocated to exhibitors based on ticket sales. Preliminary data for the first 10 months of 2024 show that 146 Italian fiction feature films, exclusively produced by national companies, have been distributed in cinemas. During this period, Italian

cinema accounted for approximately 10% of both audience attendance and box office revenue. In particular, it is worth mentioning the two Italian feature films that, as of November 11, have achieved the greatest success in terms of both audience and box office. **A World Apart**, by Riccardo Milani, released in theatres on March 28, totalled 1,104,237 admissions and a total



taking of € 7,361,331. **Parthenope**, by Paolo Sorrentino, released in over 500 theatres on October 24, has so far achieved 880,087 admissions and a provisional box office revenue of € 6,307,593.

Since the 1950s, various trends and dynamics have intertwined in Italian cinema, including: Auteur Cinema, starting from the "Neorealist" era, to various past and recent declinations of the imaginary; narrative genre cinema, aimed at the general public, including comedy, social and political cinema, thrillers, horror, erotic comedies, B movies, melodramas, musicals, etc.; documentary or non-fiction cinema, with a rich tradition of social and/or poetic realism; and experimental cinema, exploring fiction and non-narrative documentary outside conventional norms.

Over the last decade, Italian cinema has been characterised by new directions and themes, with a significant revival of genre cinema. First, there has been yet another rebirth of comedy, with a variety of more or less dramatic and regional declinations, resulting in works of different originality and quality. Other specific genre types have also been redefined, such as melodrama and existential and/or psychological drama, with different social and generational characterisations and with many films dedicated to youth, women, immigrants, the inhabitants of overcrowded and deteriorated proletarian suburbs of Rome and Naples and to social outcasts; thrillers and noir films, some of which reference precisely to current political events, with timid evocations of the cinema of civil commitment or denunciation of the 60s and 70s; gangster movies, in which realist and naturalist tones are intertwined, centred on Italian mafia organisations, such as the Neapolitan Camorra, the Calabrian 'Ndrangheta and the Sicilian Cosa Nostra, alongside detective films; the forays into fantasy and science fiction cinema, including in pseudo-trash versions. Several very successful films also pay homage to multiple genres, creatively mixing different codes and canons.

In 2024, several of the aforementioned trends that emerged in the last decade were confirmed. Comedies of various genres and dramatic works that configure contemporary existential itineraries, with weighty male, female and couple portraits predominate. Stories of adolescents with identity crises and relational challenges within families, schools, and the urban outskirts of major cities also gained prominence. Thrillers dedicated to stories of marginalisation and organised crime equally prevailed. There is also no shortage of biographical dramatic works dedicated to famous writers or politicians or to reenactments of crucial eras of the history of the last century of our country. Finally, we wish to highlight a rich production of documentaries, comprising about a third of the Italian films produced and distributed in the 2023-2024 season. These are works of various genres, including some of excellent quality, devoted to social or political themes or of a biographical nature, about personalities from the world of art, culture and politics.

We therefore like to offer a critical overview of selected feature films showcased in this year's edition of the Italian Film Focus Festival in Johannesburg and Cape Town.

Battleground (Campo di battaglia), by veteran Gianni Amelio, freely adapts the novel "La sfida" ("The heat", 2018), by Carlo Patriarca, proposing an interesting period drama in which psychological and moral issues related to physical illness clash with traumas of the soul. It recalls the last year of World War I (1914 - 1918), setting the story in a town behind the eastern front lines, in Veneto, without showing neither trenches nor armed conflicts. Amelio does not make a classic war film, but chooses an unusual point of

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view, a different battlefield: a military hospital. A claustrophobic place and dimension, often present in Amelio's cinema, in which the horror of wounds, disabilities and illnesses, the premonition of death and the different choices on how to deal with them by those who are victims and those who must intervene to soothe and cure are continually revealed. Stefano Zorzi (Gabriel Montesi) and Giulio Farradi (Alessandro Borghi) are childhood friends and later classmates at the Faculty of Medicine, and work as expert medical officers in the same overcrowded hospital of wounded and seriously ill veterans from the front. Stefano belongs to an upper-middle-class family and is faithful to the ideals of honour, justice and defence of the homeland. He does not compromise when faced with cases of simulation and acts of self-harm by soldiers who, after recovering, try in every way to obtain permanent sick leave in order not to return to the front. On the other hand, Giulio is a tormented and restless man who is strongly opposed to the continuation of the war. He chooses to secretly interfere and by inoculating non-lethal germs grown in the laboratory he succeeds in worsening the health conditions of the soldiers who, according to him, need to obtain exemption from service. But when, at the beginning of 2018, the nightmare of the very severe pandemic of the "Spanish flu" starts spreading, causing thousands of deaths even among the civilian population, the situation at the hospital worsens and the protagonists are forced to reconsider their role. **Battleground** is a mature work, characterised by a sparing and formally composed narration, by a credible and adequate scenography and by gloomy photography. Amelio places the obsessive representation of details into the foreground, with almost horror-like hues of the bodies of wounded and bleeding patients,

maimed or prostrated by the flu, while they cough spasmodically, and of the omens of death. He also manages, albeit less thoroughly, to describe the dark side of the political and social context and of the wounds of the soul that tear apart the protagonists - perhaps too entwined with the values they embody rather than with their essence - and the minor characters. A mental and psychological malaise that causes individuals to feel a sense of persistent threat and leads them to doubt their future.

Eternal Visionary (Eterno visionario), by Michele Placido, is a biographical work that recounts, in an elliptical and fragmentary form, proceeding through temporal leaps, salient episodes of the artistic experience and mature life of Luigi Pirandello (1867 - 1936). An intellectual, writer and playwright who masterfully interpreted the dissolution of the identity of the men and women of his time. In November 1934 Luigi Pirandello is making the train journey to Stockholm where he will receive the "Nobel Prize for Literature". During sleepless nights he sees the ghosts of his existence through the lens of memories. A visionary universe that ranges from the archaic landscapes and sulphur mines of his native land in Sicily, to Berlin and, above all, to Rome, between the theatre and the claustrophobic family interior. The recurring obsession concerns the emotional drama of his life, trapped between the passionate and impossible love for his favorite actress Marta Abba (Federica Luna Vincenti), whom he met for the first time in 1925, and the stormy relationship with the painful madness of his wife Antonietta Portulano (Valeria Bruni Tedeschi), which emerged in the early 1900s and became uncontrollable in 1919, when Pirandello agreed to commit her to a mental institution. Furthermore the deep, but at times conflictual, bond with

his three children Lietta, Stefano and Fausto; the controversial relationship with fascism; the triumphs but also the failures of his comedies; the illusion of a cinematic collaboration with the great German director Friedrich Wilhelm Murnau. *Eternal Visionary* is a bourgeois drama in which a visceral and, at the same time, slightly stiff approach prevails. As with some of Placido's previous films, it is inconsistent in that it oscillates between a genuine concrete and naturalistic characterisation, which enhances the charge of the characters' impulses, and traces of a certain academicism, especially in the imagery linked to the History, culture and fashions of the time and in the mise-en-scène. Examples of this are the references to Futurism and Art Deco and the atmospheres of the nights spent in Berlin during the Weimar Republic, where frenzy, vitalism, creativity and precariousness, Kurt Weill's



songs and ragtime music dominate. It sets up a continuous dialectic, almost a game between the theatrical stage and the tormented family environment. Corporality, obsessions, passions, enthusiasm, regret and small pettiness are intertwined. Despite the intricate narrative, the film gradually grows in intensity, building to some truly convincing and touching scenes such as Fabrizio Bentivoglio's monologue in front of the mirror, in which the author's gaze and the interpreter's expressions come to fully embody the character. Up to the epilogue characterised by the significant self-analytical acceptance speech addressed to the Swedish Academy after receiving the Nobel Prize. Fabrizio Bentivoglio offers a truly excellent interpretation, showing all the problematic nature of the character in the face of life's turning points and the complex dialectic between affections and artistic creativity. Michele Placido plays Saul Colin, Pirandello's literary agent, a character who is at the same time grateful towards the master, proud of his acquaintance and also his confidant and advisor.

Sicilian Letters (Iddu – L'ultimo padrino), the third feature film by Palermo-based directors Fabio Grassadonia and Antonio Piazza, is loosely based on a period in the thirty-year fugitive life of Matteo Messina Denaro, one of the most important and ruthless bosses of Cosa Nostra, the Sicilian mafia. It is a work of fiction, inspired in particular by the story of the correspondence between the boss himself and the former mayor of Castelvetrano Antonino Vaccarino, published in the book "Letters to Svetonio" (Lettere a Svetonio, 2008), edited by Salvatore Mugno, which took place during the early 2000s. It is a pochade, a farcical comedy, successful, funny and intelligent, characterised by the cross cutting of the scenes involving the two

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protagonists. Catello Palumbo (Toni Servillo), nicknamed “the principal”, a long-time sixty-year-old politician, resident in a municipality in the Trapani area and convicted of external complicity in a mafia-type criminal association, returns to his home after serving his prison sentence. Since he was Matteo Messina Denaro’s godfather about forty years earlier, he is summoned to an intelligence service base of operations. The agents of the team dedicated to



finding the mafia fugitive propose that he collaborate with them. Subjected to threats and promises to grant him the cancellation of residual sentences, Catello sees the only opportunity to get back in the game and cannot refuse. He is recruited to carry out the mission of reconnecting with his “godson” Matteo, in the hope of being able to locate his hideout and, ultimately, to arrest him, after many failed attempts. Catello recovers contacts with people who are part of Matteo’s circle of relatives and acolytes and begins a correspondence with the boss. In the meantime, Matteo (Elio Germano), identified by his circle as Iddu, lives in a small house in the village and feels depressed. When he is not busy managing, through his subordinates, the affairs of the mafia gang, he spends his time recalling his childhood and the

moments of the relationship with the beloved parent who often appears in his dreams. He is assisted by Lucia Russo (Barbara Bobulova), an elegant mafia widow in her forties. Knowing the boss’s regret for not being able to have contact with his son, a boy born from a clandestine relationship in the past, whom he has never acknowledged, Catello organizes a bold and Machiavellian plan. With **Iddu**, the previous film **Salvo** (2013) and the Sicilian Ghost Story (2017), Grassadonia and Piazza complete a trilogy of films dedicated to the mafia. They confirm an idea of fresh, coherent and aesthetically recognisable cinema, not bound by ideological and formal constraints. It is based on a script that reshapes the data of reality, historical and social, with the freedom in rereading and the courage and solidity of invention, using genres from time to time according to the most appropriate purposes to consolidate their vision of the story and the meaning of the film. In the case of **Sicilian Letters** the fictional and novelistic invention inspired by a real event, the apparently absurd absence of Matteo Messina Denaro, which gave rise to speculations of all kinds, finds effectiveness in the choice of a comedy with grotesque and sarcastic touches, even with borrowings from other genres and with some perhaps unnecessary excess, drawing a parade of disturbing caricatural masks. Or, as the directors themselves state, “a whirling dance of characters who, in the sleep of reason, chase dreams that always end up transforming into tragic and ridiculous nightmares”. In their filmography, one constant is noticeable: the use of dreams to bring into focus the disturbances of the characters’ conscience, according to a fruitful dialectic between reality, fantasy and memories.

Vermiglio, the second feature by Maura Delpero, is a period drama that tells

the collective story of a small mountain community in Trentino, focusing on social and cultural traditions and the slow maturation of existential choices, essentially by female characters, that undermine the existing balance. A fragile elegy well laid out, that fascinates, even if it appears partly artificial. The story takes place in Vermiglio, in Val di Sole, a small Alpine town in the province of Trento on the border with Lombardy, in 1944, in the final phase of the Second World War. In that microcosm, where only a few hundred people live, there is no discussion of economics and politics and the conflict seems strangely distant, even though fascists and Nazis are still present, not far away, at the bottom of the valley. The new fact that is commented on is the presence of Pietro (Giuseppe De Domenico), a Sicilian soldier, presumably a deserter, who has taken refuge in a haystack and sometimes wanders among the houses. Lucia (Martina Scrinzi) is 21 years old and is the only young girl who, little by little, becomes familiar with this unexpected guest and then falls in love with him. Her family does not stand in her way. Cesare Graziadei (Tommaso Ragno), her father, the parent of seven children, is the elderly elementary school teacher: an authoritative and upright man, who stubbornly imposes himself within the family, but who is understanding of the needs of others and respected by everyone. He is educated, listens to Chopin's music, loves the arts, as much as he loves nature and the land to cultivate. Lucia's younger sisters are trying to find their way in life: Ada (Rachele Potrich) would like to continue studying but is prevented from doing so, while Flavia (Anna Thaler), a 12-year-old teenager, is her father's favorite. After a few months, Lucia marries Pietro and the whole town takes part in the celebration. At the end of the war Pietro decides to return to Sicily

to regularise his situation. In the meantime, after a few months, Lucia gives birth to a baby girl, who is baptised with the name Antonia. Months pass without any news from Pietro and Lucia experiences growing discomfort. Maura Delpero's cinema is characterised by two aspects: a past as a documentary filmmaker, starting from her directorial debut in 2005; a strong interest in the theme of motherhood and in the relationship between mothers and daughters that she expressed through the creation of **Maternal** (2019), a female drama set in Buenos Aires, in a family home for single mothers. Vermiglio is the birthplace of the director's father, who passed away years ago. Therefore, it is noticeable how Vermiglio's script denotes a precise ethnographic knowledge of the environment, of the changes of the seasons and of local traditions and customs and how much the staging makes use of the astounding cinematography by Mikhail Krichman. Maura Delpero opts for a meticulous calligraphic realism that also includes the choice to use the Solandro dialect extensively. The sketchy, scenographic and "cultural", representation of the context prevails, through the appropriation of the methods of documentary cinema. While the characterisation of the characters, despite a good direction of the actors, both professional and non-professional, present in the cast, and the respectful transparency of Delpero's gaze, appears partly schematic. The result is a hypnotic and vaguely claustrophobic effect and an archaic dimension linked to myths and religious and pagan rites, to the detriment of dramatic effectiveness. The presence of constant narrative ellipses and the choice to place many events off-screen or to relegate them to news reported in the dialogues also contribute to this result.

Screenings

JOHANNESBURG

27 November 2024

6:00 pm

VERMIGLIO | Vermiglio

by Maura Delpero - duration 119'

in attendance: Giuseppe De Domenico

28 November 2024

6:00 pm

SICILIAN LETTERS | Iddu

by Antonio Piazza and Fabio Grassadonia - duration 122'

in attendance: Antonio Piazza and Fabio Grassadonia

29 November 2024

6:00 pm

BATTLEGROUNDS | Campo di battaglia

by Gianni Amelio - duration 104'

30 November 2024

6:00 pm

THE OPERA! ARIAS FOR AN ECLIPSE

The Opera! Arie per un'eclissi

by Davide Livermore and Paolo Gep Cucco - duration 106'

1 December 2024

5:00 pm

THE LIFE APART | La vita accanto

by Marco Tullio Giordana - duration 110'

2 December 2024

6:00 pm

ETERNAL VISIONARY | Eterno visionario

by Michele Placido - duration 112'

CAPE TOWN

29 November 2024

6:00 pm

THE OPERA! ARIAS FOR AN ECLIPSE

The Opera! Arie per un'eclissi

by Davide Livermore and Paolo Gep Cucco - duration 106'

8:30 pm

VERMIGLIO | Vermiglio

by Maura Delpero - duration 119'

in attendance: Giuseppe De Domenico

30 November 2024

6:00 pm

ETERNAL VISIONARY | Eterno visionario

by Michele Placido - duration 112'

8:30 pm

SICILIAN LETTERS | Iddu

by Antonio Piazza and Fabio Grassadonia - duration 122'

in attendance: Antonio Piazza and Fabio Grassadonia

1 December 2024

6:00 pm

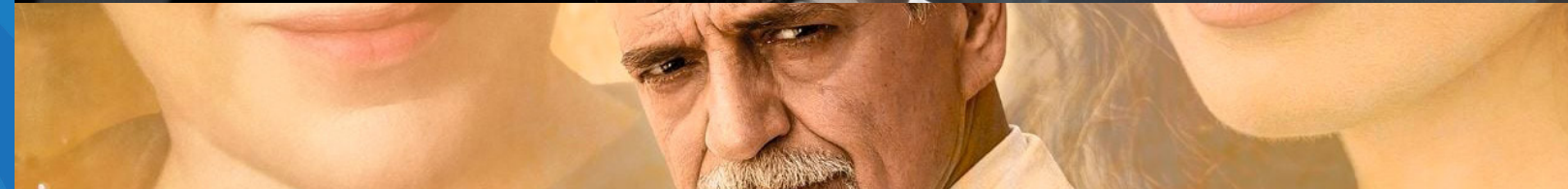
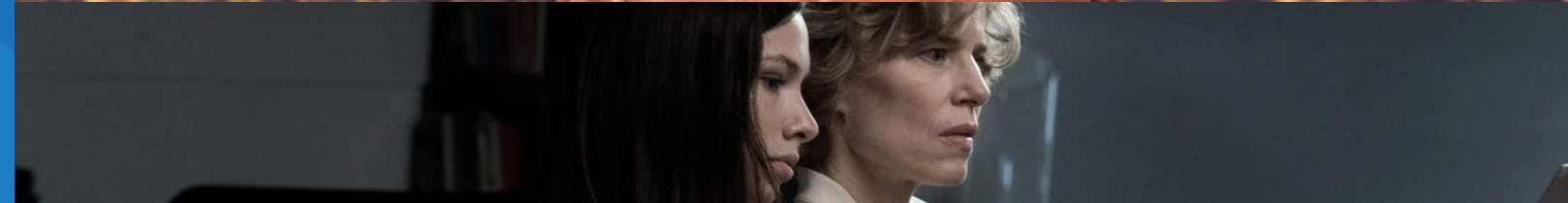
BATTLEGROUNDS | Campo di battaglia

by Gianni Amelio - duration 104'

8:30 pm

THE LIFE APART | La vita accanto

by Marco Tullio Giordana - duration 110'



BATTLEGROUND

Campo di Battaglia Directed by: GIANNI AMELIO



During World War I, Dr. Stefano Zorzi spends his days in the Exemption Clinic in a large Northern Italian city, where he treats frontline soldiers, but also also fights self-harm among those hoping to be dispensed. Dr. Giulio Farradi instead is deeply opposed to war, and assists the wounded in self-harming just enough to be exonerated. The two doctors, close friends since university, secretly challenge each other both professionally and romantically, as they are both attached to Anna, a strong-willed nurse. But when the Spanish flu epidemic arrives in 1918, love, politics, and science dangerously blur.



Cast: Alessandro Borghi, Gabriel Montesi, Federica Rosellini, Giovanni Scotti, Vince Vivencio, Alberto Cracco, Luca Lazzareschi, Maria Grazia Plos, Rita Bosello, Giuseppe Amelio, Roberta Barbiero, Maurizio Grassia, Luca Lo Destro, Nicoletta Maragno, Giulio Maroncelli, Stefano Scandaletti, Stefano Scherini, Massimo Scola, Marco Sincini, Gianluca Zaccaria, Francesco Busolin, Guido Rigatti, Michele De Paola, Lorenzo Della Pasqua, Samuel Fantini, Gianluca Guizzardi, Riccardo Mori, Mattia Musa, Pietro Nalesso, Marco Rivolta, Sabino Rociola, Sara Stablum, Gabriel Zama

Screenplay: Gianni Amelio

Cinematography: Luan Amelio Ujkaj

Editing: Simona Paggi

Set design: Beatrice Scarpato

Costume design: Luca Costigliolo

Music: Franco Piersanti

Producer: Simone Gattoni, Marco Bellocchio, Beppe Caschetto, Bruno Benetti

Production: Kavac, IBC Movie, OneArt, Rai Cinema

Country: Italy

Year: 2024

Film run: 104'

Format: colour

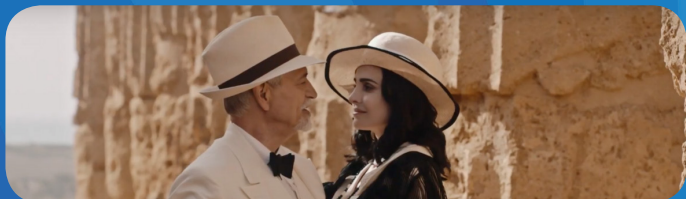
Festival & awards: Ajaccio Italian Film Festival 2024: Compétition | Festival do Rio 2024: World Panorama | La Biennale di Venezia 2024: Venezia 81 Competition | MittelCinemaFest 2024 | Villerupt Italian Film Festival 2024: Hors Compétition.



ETERNAL VISIONARY

Eterno Visionario Directed by: MICHELE PLACIDO

1934: On a train to Stockholm, where he will shortly receive the Nobel Prize for Literature, Italian playwright and novelist Luigi Pirandello, relives his fascination with the figures who populated his life and also inspired his art. He reminisces about his controversial stance towards fascism, his turbulent bond with his children, the painful mental illness of his wife, and his love for Marta Abba, the young actress who became his muse and lover. A captivating story that unfolds between Rome, the Stockholm of the Nobel Prizes, the Berlin of Kurt Weill, the backward Sicily of archaic landscapes. Eternal Visionary concentrates on one phase of Pirandello's career in order to show the playwright's more intimate side in a vivid and authentic portrait of an eternal visionary.



Cast: Fabrizio Bentivoglio, Valeria Bruni Tedeschi, Federica Luna Vincenti, Giancarlo Commare, Aurora Giovinazzo, Michelangelo Placido, Michele Placido, Ute Lemper, Mino Manni, Marcello Mazzarella, Dajana Roncione, Guia Jelo, Cele Abba.

Screenplay: Michele Placido, Matteo Collura, Toni Trupia, from the book by Matteo Collura "Il gioco delle parti. Vita straordinaria di Luigi Pirandello"

Cinematography: Michele D'Attanasio

Editing: Consuelo Catucci

Set design: Tonino Zera

Costume design: Andrea Cavalletto

Music: Oragravity

Producer: Federica Vincenti, Joseph Rouschop

Production: Goldenart, GapBusters, Rai Cinema, supported by Ministero della Cultura, with the support of Sicilia Film CommissionInstitute

Country: Italy / Belgium

Year: 2024

Film run: 112'

Format: colour

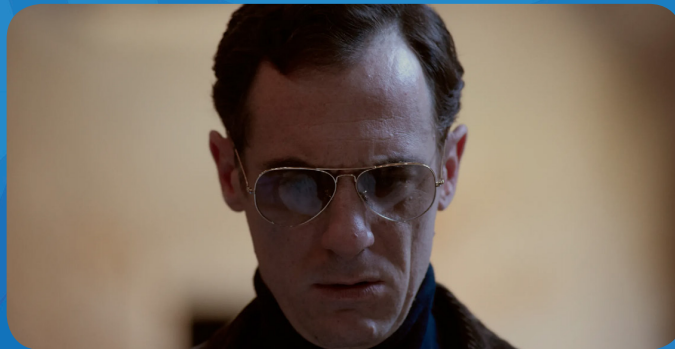
Festival & awards: Rome Film Fest 2024: Grand Public.



SICILIAN LETTERS

Iddu Directed by: ANTONIO PIAZZA, FABIO GRASSADONIA

Sicily, early 2000s. After a few years in prison for mafia, Catello, a career politician, has lost everything. When the Italian intelligence service asks him for help in catching Matteo, his godson and the last prominent fugitive mafia boss out there, Catello seizes the opportunity to get back in the game. A cunning man with a hundred faces, a tireless illusionist who turns truth into lies and lies into truth, Catello launches into a peculiar and unlikely exchange of letters with the fugitive, whose emotional void he tries to exploit. But a gamble with one of the most wanted criminals in the world involves a certain risk...



DIRECTOR'S NOTES:

The initial idea for this film came from reading the numerous pizzini (notes in code) written by the mafia boss Matteo Messina Denaro during his long stint in hiding. The boss was able to run his clandestine life and business through these unusual letters. The notes, however, transcended the practical function of criminal communication and allowed aspects of his personality and the nature of the tragic and ridiculous world that swirled recklessly around him to emerge. Drawing free inspiration from these pizzini, Iddu recounts the correspondence between Matteo, a reluctant prince of a senseless world, and Catello, a grotesque mask of sunny amorality. With Matteo and Catello, we immerse ourselves in the void in which an entire people wallows as if in a great sea kissed by the sun and the Gods.



Cast: Toni Servillo, Elio Germano, Daniela Marra, Barbora Bobulova, Fausto Russo Alesi, Giuseppe Tantiolo, Antonia Truppo, Tommaso Ragno, Betti Pedrazzi, Filippo Luna, Roberto De Francesco, Rosario Palazzolo, Vincenzo Ferrera, Gianluca Zaccaria

Screenplay: Antonio Piazza, Fabio Grassadonia

Cinematography: Luca Bigazzi

Editing: Paola Freddi

Set design: Gaspare De Pascali

Costume design: Andrea Cavalletto

Music: Lorenzo Urciullo aka Colapesce

Producer: Nicola Giuliano, Francesca Cima, Carlotta Calori, Viola Prestieri, Alexis Dantec

Production: Indigo Film, Les Films du Losange, Rai Cinema, with the support of Regione Lazio, CANAL +, CINÉ +

Country: Italy / France

Year: 2024

Film run: 122'

Format: colour

Festival & awards: Ajaccio Italian Film Festival 2024: Compétition | Chicago International Film Festival 2024: Spotlight | Cinéalma - L'âme de la méditerranée 2024 | El Gouna Film Festival 2024: Out of Competition | Festival du Cinéma Italien de Montélimar - Le Teil 2024: Panorama | Haifa International Film Festival 2024: Carmel International Competition | La Biennale di Venezia 2024: Venezia 81 - Lizzani Award, Francesco Pasinetti Award, Rotella Award | AjLes Rencontres du Cinéma Italien à Grenoble et en Isère 2024: Avant-Première | Mostra Internacional de Cinema 2024: Perspectiva Internacional | Villerupt Italian Film Festival 2024: Compétition | Zurich Film Festival 2024: Gala Premieres.



THE LIFE APART

La Vita Accanto Directed by: MARCO TULLIO GIORDANA

In Vicenza, a beautiful Italian art city, a young wealthy couple joyfully welcomes the birth of a long-awaited daughter in the early 1980s. But the child's face is disfigured by a red birthmark that covers half her face. This spot haunts the mother to the point that she rejects her responsibilities as a mother. The child's aunt, a famous concert pianist, takes over her education, thus discovering her exceptional musical talent.



DIRECTOR'S NOTES:

The novel A Life Apart by Mariapia Veladiano is the story of how discomfort can break into the life of a family, disrupting it forever. In the book, this discomfort is represented by the monstrosity of an immediately rejected new-born child. In the film, this 'monstrosity' is represented by a purple birthmark that covers half of the child's face and body. Otherwise, little Rebecca is beautiful and, we will discover as time goes by, extraordinarily gifted for music. But the angioma that disfigures her makes it difficult for her to relate to others, especially her mother who has never accepted her and, out of shame, has always kept her segregated at home. The central theme is the body, with its acceptance forming the basis of identity. It explores how perceived imperfections—whether real, imagined, or influenced by the gaze of others—can lead to altering and conforming the body to the standards of an illusion.



Cast: Beatrice Barison, Sonia Bergamasco, Paolo Pierobon, Valentina Bellè, Michela Cescon, Edoardo Coen, Giulia Briata, Viola Basso, Flora Zambello, Sveva Bassan, Laura Cavinato, Sabrina Simonetto, Sara Ciocca, Licia Navarrini, Alessandro Bressanello, Susanna Acchiardi, Angela Fontana, Luigi Diberti

Screenplay: Marco Bellocchio, Marco Tullio Giordana, Gloria Malatesta, from the novel by Mariapia Veladiano with the same title

Cinematography: Roberto Forza

Editing: Francesca Calvelli, Claudio Misantoni

Set design: Luca Gobbi

Costume design: Gemma Mascagni

Music: Fabio Massimo Capogrosso

Producer: Simone Gattoni, Beppe Caschetto

Production: Kavac, IBC Movie, Rai Cinema, with the support of Fondazione Veneto Film Commission

Country: Italy

Year: 2024

Film run: 110'

Format: colour

Festival & awards: Ajaccio Italian Film Festival 2024: Compétition | Cinema Italian Style - Seattle 2024 | Festival du Cinéma Italien de Montélimar - Le Teil 2024: Panorama | Les Rencontres du Cinéma Italien à Grenoble et en Isère 2024: Panorama | Locarno Film Festival 2024: Fuori Concorso | MittelCinemaFest 2024 | Villerupt Italian Film Festival 2024: Hors Compétition.



THE OPERA! ARIAS FOR AN ECLIPSE

The Opera! Arie per un'eclissi Directed by: DAVIDE LIVERMORE, PAOLO GEP CUCCO

This is the modern version of the famous Greek myth of Orpheus and Eurydice. In this version, Eurydice dies from a gun fire on her wedding day. Orpheus, being devastated by the loss of his beloved, will pursue a quest to Hades' kingdom, more known as "hell", embodied by the Grand Hades Hotel. In the search for his lover, Orpheus will encounter a lot of iconic characters and will have to face his deepest fears, in a distorted reality rhythmmed by the most famous opera' songs. This is the tale of all tales, the tale of a timeless love story meeting the most famous Opera's songs. Costumes are designed by Dolce&Gabbana.



Cast: Valentino Buzza, Mariam Battistelli, Erwin Schrott, Vincent Cassel, Caterina Murino, Fanny Ardant, Rossy De Palma, Angela Finocchiaro, Linda Gennari, Charlotte Gentile, Sergio Bernal

Screenplay: Davide Livermore, Paolo Gep Cucco

Cinematography: Gareth Munden

Editing: Alessandro Heffler

Set design: Giò Forma

Costume design: Dolce & Gabbana

Music: Mario Conte

Production: Showlab, Rai Cinema, supported by Ministero della Cultura, with the support of Film Commission Torino Piemonte

Country: Italy

Year: 2024

Film run: 106'

Format: colour

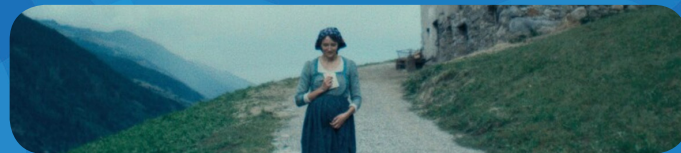
Festival & awards: Rome Film Fest 2024: Special Screening.



VERMIGLIO

Vermiglio Directed by: MAURA DELPERO

Set in the eponymous village of Vermiglio, high in the Italian Alps, during the waning days of World War II, Vermiglio tells the story of a large family that has lived, for generations, in quiet isolation from the rest of the world, far enough even from the conflict to not feel its effects. But peace is lost when Pietro, an illiterate Sicilian army deserter, comes walking into the village with his injured comrade Attilio on his back. Initially hailed as a hero, Pietro catches the eye of Lucia and gently falls in love with her, shaking the community, uncapping intolerance and altering the dynamics of the place forever.



DIRECTOR'S NOTES:

My father left us one summer afternoon. Before closing them forever, he looked at us with the big, amazed eyes of a child. I had already heard that when you get older you become a little child again, but I didn't know that those two ages could merge into a single face. In the months that followed, he came to visit me in a dream. He had returned to his childhood home, in Vermiglio. He was six years old, he had a toothless smile, the legs of a mountain goat and was carrying this film under his arm: four seasons in the life of his large family. A story of children and adults, amongst deaths and births, disappointments and rebirths, of their holding each other tight in the turns of life, and out of a community growing into individuals. Of the smell of wood and warm milk on freezing mornings. With the distant and ever-present war, experienced by those who remained outside the great machine: the mothers who watched the world from a kitchen, with newborns dying because of blankets that were too short, the women who feared they were already widows, the farmers who waited for sons who never returned, the teachers and priests who replaced the fathers. A story of war without bombs, or great battles. In the uncompromising logic of the mountain that every day reminds man how small he is. Vermiglio is a landscape of the soul, a "family lexicon" that lives inside me, on the threshold of the unconscious, an act of love for my father, his family and their small village. Travelling through a personal time, it wants to pay homage to a collective memory.

Cast: Tommaso Ragno, Giuseppe De Domenico, Carlotta Gamba, Roberta Rovelli, Martina Scrinzi, Sara Serraiocco, Orietta Notari, Santiago Fondevila Sancet, Rachele Potrich, Anna Thaler, Patrick Gardener, Enrico Panizza, Luis Thaler, Simone Benedetti

Screenplay: Maura Delpero

Cinematography: Mikhail Krichman

Editing: Gianluca Mattei

Set design: Vito Giuseppe Zito, Pirra

Costume design: Andrea Cavalletto

Music: Matteo Franceschini

Producer: Francesca Andreoli, Carole Baraton, Tatjana Kozar

Production: Cinedora, Charades, Versus, Rai Cinema, supported by Ministero della Cultura, with the support of Eurimages, CNC – Cinéma du Monde, Région Ile de France, Fédération Wallonie-Bruxelles, IDM Film Commission Südtirol, Trentino Film Commission

Country: Italy / France / Belgium

Year: 2024

Film run: 119'

Format: colour

Festival & awards: Opening festival: La Biennale di Venezia 2024: Venezia 81 Competition | Silver Lion – Grand Jury Prize | Italian Candidate for the Oscar 2025.



TRIFOLE

Trifole Directed by: **GABRIELE FABBRO**

Trailer | Italy - South Africa coproductions

We are pleased to finally present the trailer for TRIFOLE, a film directed by Gabriele Fabbro, written by Ydalie Turk and Gabriele Fabbro himself, and co-produced by TrifoleMovie, with the support of Film Commission Torino Piemonte. This latest co-production between Italy and South Africa demonstrates an enduring and dynamic cultural and professional relationship. Since the signing of the co-production agreement in 2006, supported by the efforts of CONTROLUCE, this collaboration has resulted in the creation of five feature films and several documentaries.

Set in the Langhe, the land of the Alba White Truffle, it tells the story of a family reunion and the rediscovery of one's roots and sees as protagonists a grandfather-truffle hunter, his young granddaughter who lives in London and is sent by her mother to help her grandfather who is in financial and health difficulties.

Cast: Ydalie Turk, Umberto Orsini, Margherita Buy, Enzo Iacchetti, Birba

Screenplay: Ydalie Turk, Gabriele Fabbro

Cinematography: Brandon Lattman

Editing: Gabriele Fabbro

Set design: Serena Viganò

Costume design: Francesca Cibischino

Music: Vincent Cahay

Producer: Massimo Fabbro

Production: TrifoleMovie, with the support of Film Commission Torino Piemonte

Country: Italy / Belgium

Year: 2024

Film run: 100'

Format: colour

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