

FEBRUARY 2024

# THE HOT CORN

WEEKLY



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FEBRUARY 2024  
**THE HOT  
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WEEKLY**

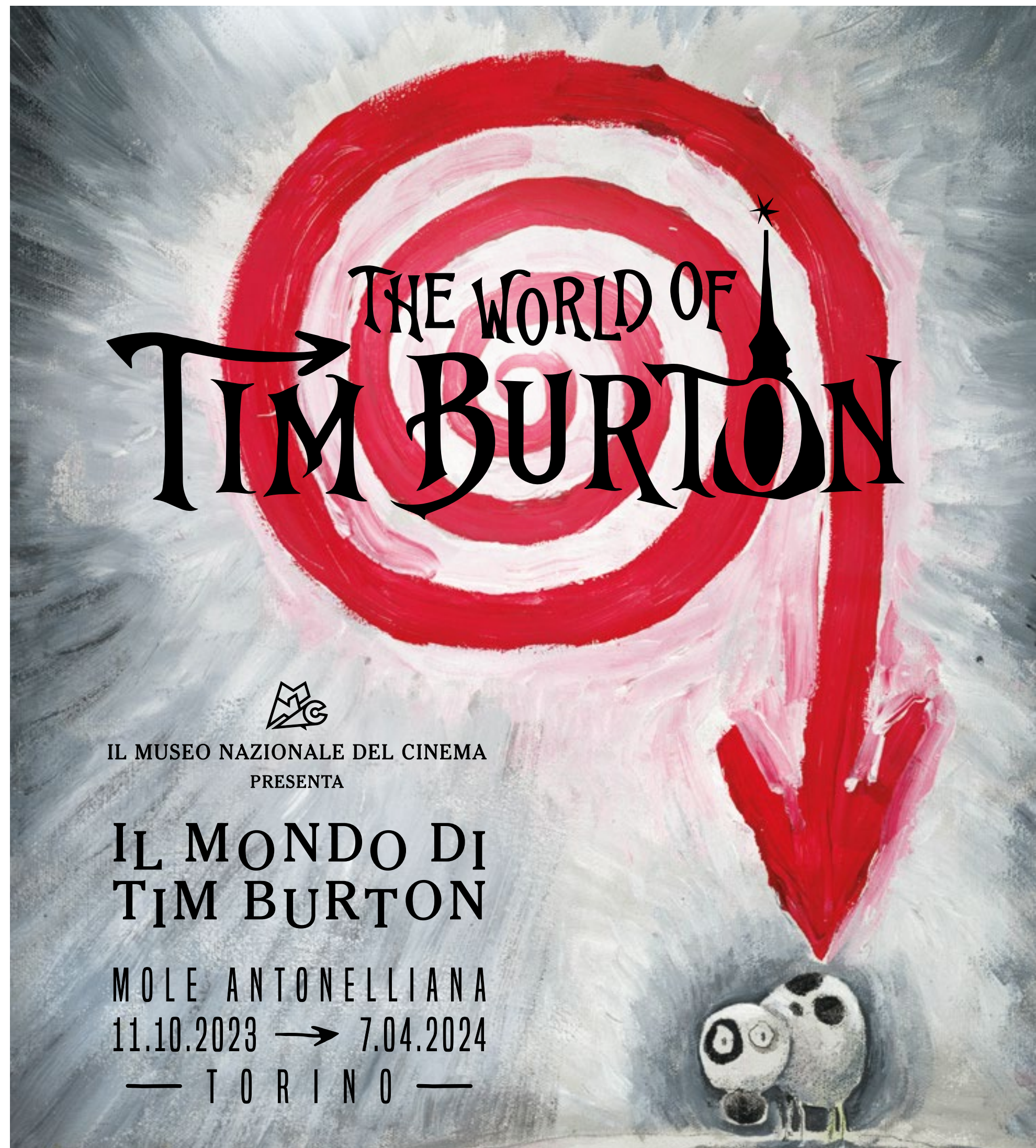


### INTERVIEWS

- CARLO CHATRIAN
- DENNIS RUH
- ALBERTO BARBERA
- LUCIA BORGONZONI
- PIERA DETASSIS
- COSTANZA QUATRIGLIO
- ROBERTO STABILE
- TIZIANA ROCCA
- DOMENICO DE GAETANO
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# The Berlinale Guide





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# The sky above Berlin and our perspective on the cinema to come

By **Andrea Morandi**

**W**ie kann es sein, daß ich, der ich bin, bevor ich wurde nicht war?" We of the generation born in the Seventies began dreaming of Berlin by following Bruno Ganz's angel Damiel to Potsdamer Platz, and then admiring Otto Sander's Cassiel atop the Siegessäule. Thanks to Wim Wenders, we arrived in Berlin before actually being there, and every time we return, it's like passing through that door, reliving, seeing, and feeling those moments. Because, after all, cinema is also this: imagination, fantasy, a dream that blends with life, so that returning to the Berlinale somehow means remembering where we started. After the Cannes, Venice, and Rome editions, for the first time, we bring our *Hot Corn Weekly* to the Berlinale to try to understand not only what we will see and the selection curated by Carlo Chatrian (who tells us about it on page 7), but also the importance of the market, the central place from which almost everything in cinema originates, as explained by Dennis Ruh on page 10. But, in addition to discovering some of the films we will see, from the opening of *Small Things Like These* with Cillian Murphy to *Another End* with Gael García Bernal, this issue also serves to go behind

the scenes of Italian cinema since this year Italy is the Country In Focus and will be present with a major event and in many panels and meetings at the EFM. So, we interviewed some of the protagonists, from Lucia Borgonzoni, Undersecretary of State to the Ministry of Culture, to Roberto Stabile, the man behind of Italy Country in Focus. But not only, as you will see in the following pages, because we also wanted to involve other prominent figures, even Alberto Barbera, who gave us his privileged view from Venice with an eye on the Oscars. In short, a special issue projected towards the future at a time when cinema has regained the glory of bygone days. Amidst so much future, there is, however, a place where we always go, every year, during the days of the Berlinale, in a furtive manner, almost as if it were a secret appointment. To Friedhof Stubenrauchstraße, where, among the graves of Helmut Newton and Ferruccio Busoni, rests an old friend we have never forgotten and to whom we owe part of our infinite love for cinema: Marlene Dietrich.



From the opening film with Cillian Murphy to *Supersex*, through interviews with Carlo Chatrian, Dennis Ruh, and many prominent figures in the industry. Discover in the following pages our special edition of *Hot Corn Weekly* dedicated to the Berlinale.

## THE WEBSITE

Keep reading reviews, stories, and interviews on the *Hot Corn* website by scanning the QR code below. Don't be shy!



The Hot Corn Weekly  
Berlinale Special Edition

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Gael García Bernal in *Another End*

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# FILMING ITALY

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## CARLO CHATRIAN: "THE OPENING WITH CILLIAN MURPHY AND MY LAST WALTZ WITH MARTIN SCORSESE: WELCOME TO THE BERLINALE"



To kick off this special edition of our *Hot Corn Weekly*, we couldn't start without the host, namely Carlo Chatrian, Artistic Director of the Berlin International Film Festival since June 2019, who was the first call we made to start putting together the magazine you now have in your hands. We asked him to guide us through this edition of the Berlinale and to tell us why Berlin remains unique in the vast panorama of international festivals.

**First of all, what kind of Berlinale will it be? What should we expect?**

A Berlinale open to the world, as it is in its DNA, but if possible, even more eager to represent the cultural and linguistic diversity that often lacks - both in theaters and in public debate. The program welcomes the big names of Anglophone cinema - we open with *Small Things Like These*, produced, among others, by Matt Damon and featuring the always extraordinary Cillian Murphy, just to mention our flagship, with an Irish film perfectly anchored in the festival's tradition of giving space to socially engaged works. It also includes European cinema authors - Olivier Assayas, who brings us a sort of autobiographical comedy about Covid, or Bruno Dumont, who, in *The Empire*, takes on the tone of parody of one of the most famous franchises. And then many new names, many films to discover -

because Berlin has always been a beautiful launching pad for directors and actors.

**This is the fifth edition under your direction. What is the strength - and uniqueness - of Berlin?**

The uniqueness of Berlin comes from the combination of a globally significant event and a city that is itself multicultural. Among the major festivals, Berlin is the only one held in a capital, and moreover, in an iconic city of the 20th century. This means that films engage with politics but also with the lives of people who are mostly very attentive to issues such as ecology, sustainability, and respect for diversity. I find all this a great stimulus to think of the festival not only as an event for industry professionals but also as a way to see cinema as a laboratory where the future is designed.

**Although solely American, did the strike of screenwriters and actors impact your choice in any way?**

We are pleased to be able to present the films alongside the actors. This is an essential element of every major festival, and Berlin is no exception. Every night, European and American stars will walk the red carpet. On the other hand, it must be said that the prolonged strike has impacted the release strategy of films, which, in

some cases, have been postponed. Nevertheless, American cinema is still present, in competition with *A Different Man* starring Sebastian Stan or *La Cucina* with Rooney Mara, and outside the competition with Adam Sandler and Carey Mulligan in *Spaceman*, with Kristen Stewart and Amanda Seyfried, with Lena Dunham and Hunter Shafer.

**In this jungle of offerings, between theaters and streaming, how important do festivals continue to be, and why?**

I think the success of festivals is a form of reaction to an excess of offerings. Festivals select, provide a guideline (often fortunately more than one), which can then be appreciated or criticized. The other element that perhaps makes festivals even more valuable today is their being meeting places. Their happening here and now, instead of being a limitation, becomes an advantage: you have to be there, or else you lose something unique. The viewing of films is increasingly happening on other channels, but the opportunity to gather among strangers united by a common passion is something irreplaceable.

**How does it feel to have Martin Scorsese, and what is your favorite**

**Scorsese film?**

Having Martin Scorsese in this, my latest edition, makes me proud. It couldn't end better! For my generation, Scorsese is a symbol of cinema 'tout court.' He is a fantastic creator of characters and stories that stick to the skin, that grow with us. I don't have a favorite film because, in reality, it's difficult to find a Scorsese film that I don't like. If I have to mention one, I would say *After Hours*, which we will show in a restored version at the festival. It's a nocturnal film. Small, perhaps, but entirely to be rediscovered. A film where reality disappears, and the protagonist (fantastic Griffin Dunne) who wants to live a film-like story finds himself lamenting his white-collar life. As in many Scorsese films, the richness comes from the supporting characters, capable of leaving an indelible memory in just a few sequences.

**Any films to keep an eye on?**

Oh no! That's a forbidden question. The program has been announced, it's available online, and now it's up to you. Enjoy the festival!



# Why Berlin is still the place to be

The importance of the EFM and the future, the changes, and the desire for cinema, but also the strike and its first editions. Dennis Ruh, director of the European Film Market since 2020, explains why everything starts from here

Interview By **Andrea Morandi**  
Photographs by **Artem Gvozdokov**

**S**ince 2020, during the months of the pandemic, when cinema seemed destined to reach a point of no return, Dennis Ruh has been at the helm of the European Film Market, one of the top three meeting places of the international film and media industries. That's the reason why one of the first phone calls we made for this special issue of *Hot Corn* was specifically for him.

**The first question is quite obvious: how important is it to be here at the EFM for a film professional?**

The European Film Market is one of the top film markets in the world. It is important for film professionals in many respects. On the one hand, it impresses with its sheer size. We expect again around 11,500 market participants with over 600 exhibiting companies and 1,500 market screenings of more than 770 new films. The market participants come from over 130 Countries which makes the EFM a global meeting point for the international film industry. The motto is: *It all starts here!* Not only that 1/3 of the market participants are usually visiting the marketplace for the first time and securing its role as a launch pad of international media business careers. It's also the first film market of the year, ushering in the new business year. Distributors, streamers and broadcasters are coming to Berlin with their fresh, untouched annual budgets to acquire new films and content. This makes the European Film Market one of the most important trading platforms».

**This year's edition is very significant in many re-**

**«Distributors, streamers and broadcasters are coming to Berlin with their annual budgets to acquire new films and content...»**



**spects."**

Well, yes, this year's edition promises to be excitingly busy. As this is the first market after the end of the SAG-AFTRA strike, we are receiving positive, promising feedback from sales representatives and other market participants. They will bring projects to the EFM that have been temporarily paused or even held back, but now that the strike is over, can be resumed or offered for acquisition. But this it's not only a place of exhibition and screenings.

**Why?**

With Industry Sessions, EFM offers a comprehensive conference program. International professionals and experts discuss highly topical industry issues, developments and forward-looking strategies. Five days from February 16 to 20, keynotes, case studies, analyses and presentations will provide vital impulses, challenge the industry to reflect, and initiate lively discussion on urgent issues arising in the upcoming film year.

**And there will be also a podcast.**

Parallel to the conference programme there will be a series of think tanks, workshops and podcast episodes in *Industry Insights – The EFM Podcast*. The program is rounded off by consultation formats to get expert advice and to increase the professional network. All in all, this makes the EFM an industry event that should not be missed on the annual agenda.

**This is the fourth year under your direction. How many things have changed following the pandemic and the COVID?**

The first market affected by the pandemic was at

the same time my first market edition as a director. I started in September 2020, right after the first pandemic wave when everyone thought that festivals and markets will be back in full force soon. However, after a few weeks, the industry had to deal with the fact that further infection waves made a physical event with international attendance impossible. So we had to move the EFM 2021 online and had just a few weeks to make it happen. My team and I were able to create important momentum for the international film and distribution industry that year, even though it was in the virtual format. At the same time, we did everything that was possible to also engage the distributors in key territories where cinemas were not closed to watch films on the big screen. Alongside the Online EFM we organized screenings in Melbourne, Tokyo, Mexico City and Sao Paulo with the result of increased sales of the presented titles in those territories.

**2022 took place online as well...**

Yes, one year later in 2023 we returned successfully to a fully physical format, breaking all previous participation and exhibition records. We also managed to make the market profitable again for the festival. And the 2024 edition promises to be a successful one as well, with sold out exhibition spaces, new and returning big country representations like India and Saudi Arabia. And the registration numbers are even higher than last year. Under my direction, we launched a podcast series, merged the conference programs of the former platform to the comprehensive joint EFM Industry Sessions, increased the accessibility of the marketplace and programs for mar-

ginalized and disabled industry professionals, secured the financing of innovative development, diversity and inclusion projects like the expanded Toolbox programs and launched the Equity and Inclusion Pathways Seminar as an industry-wide consultation forum with the aim of setting the film-political agenda regarding equity, inclusion and accessibility.

**You have also found new venues...**

We brought all market activities to Potsdamer Platz, won new venues as well as increased the physical and digital market infrastructure and consolidated the market's financing. The last but not least important milestone is our ongoing support of the Ukrainian film industry in difficult times with different programs as well as supporting independent Iranian and Belarusian film professionals.

**What do you believe is the uniqueness of a festival like the Berlinale?**

The close links of the EFM with the Berlinale as a huge public film festival is exceptional. And its position at the heart of Berlin's vivid creative economy, are defining characteristics of the Berlinale's film market. As one of the largest audience film festivals of the world, the market participants – buyers and sellers alike – benefit from the direct response of a real audience. Within the festival screenings they get an impression whether a film is well perceived by the audience or not. Popular festival titles usually sell faster and better at the market. This is unique compared with other festivals or markets.

**We have often heard it said that cinema is dead and yet it is more alive than ever.**

The whole landscape of the film industry has changed. Cinema is definitely not dead, but you can feel more

pressure: with the rise of digital technologies and streaming platforms there are unquestionably more powerful players on the market, there is more competition than ever before and the distribution chain is a different one than some years ago. The traditional model of cinema in terms of large movie theatres has certainly evolved. However, the essence of storytelling through audiovisual content and movie images is very much alive and thriving in various forms. On the other hand the digitalisation also made content creation and availability more accessible to all kind of audiences, enabling more diversity and inclusion, more stories to be told, more voices to be heard. While it might be disruptive on first sight, the shift is also an immensely enriching one as well.

**As always, the gaze is focused on the future. What is your prediction?**

There's a robust audience demand for theatrical releases and July 2023 was a record-breaking month at the global box office. And this is expected to continue in the next years, even if analytics firms like Gower Street forecast a dip of 5 percent in ticket sales. This doesn't indicate a declining interest in cinema-going. It is the consequence of the long-lasting strikes in the US. With the strikes, 50 percent of production time has been lost in the US in 2023. That's why majors had to postpone theatrical releases of high budget films to 2025. But this can also offer opportunity for independent and arthouse films as the postponement made space in the 2024 calendar. It's a chance for non-Hollywood films to shine in cinemas. The EFM is the marketplace where distribution rights of this kind of films are widely sold. That's why I expect robust business activities in Berlin.



The Royal Palace of Caserta

# THE EMPIRE

a film by Bruno Dumont

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## LUCIA BORGONZONI: "THE GOLDEN MOMENT OF ITALIAN CINEMA, OUR EVENTS AT THE BERLINALE, AND ITALIAN EXCELLENCE"



We had met in Rome, just before going to Cannes, to take stock of Italian cinema and the future. Seven months later, we find Lucia Borgonzoni, Undersecretary of State to the Ministry of Culture, in a particularly happy moment for Italian cinema, with cinema attendance numbers soaring, the nomination at the Oscars with Matteo Garrone's *lo Capitano*, and the Country In Focus here at the festival.

**Undersecretary Borgonzoni, how is Italy and Italian cinema represented here at the Berlinale and at the EFM?**

Of course, we are part of the Industry section – always crucial – with meetings and panels scheduled during the festival days, but not only that. After the experiment in Tokyo, we decided to bring a format to the Berlinale that we will then replicate in Cannes and Los Angeles. A special event, scheduled for February 19th, in which we will present Italy from the audiovisual perspective with the presence of important and highly appreciated artists. The real goal is to showcase our new talents to the international film industry. It will be an event outside the conventional framework, without the typical conference stage. A real show inside the Gropius Dome with screenings throughout the dome and Federico Ielapi (note: a young actor seen in Garrone's *Pinocchio* and who has just finished shooting *Those About to Die*, a series with Anthony Hopkins) as the host. **Will he be presenting?**

Yes, he will be the one presenting the more institutional part, where we will also

illustrate all the tools available for foreign productions intending to shoot in Italy. It will then continue with the show, which is a mix of images and words. Additionally, we will bring Stefano Accorsi to Berlin, who will present the series on Guglielmo Marconi made for the 150th anniversary of the birth of the Bolognese inventor. There will also be a connection with Matteo Garrone, involved in the Oscar race.

**Past, present, and future.**

What we were, what we are, and what we will be. Among the illustrious masters of the past, this year, for example, we will celebrate Marcello Mastroianni, whose centenary of birth is this year. Returning to the present, besides Accorsi and Ielapi, in Berlin, we will also have Gaia Girace and Saul Nanni, who is one of the protagonists of *Supersex*, the Netflix series (see pag. 20). Our goal? To promote the Italian star system: in Italy, we have great talents, but why should we only realize this potential after seeing them, perhaps, in international series, and after other countries have celebrated them? It is our task to enhance them, to make them known to the public, and to give the product in which they are protagonists the opportunity for international exposure.

**Beyond individual films or the series they star in.**

Exactly. We need to promote them beyond individual events related to a particular title or audiovisual product. More generally, I believe it would be necessary to start seeing ourselves a bit more with

the eyes with which abroad looks at Italian cinema, eyes of admiration. There should be a greater awareness of our capabilities.

**This Berlinale comes at a particularly happy moment for Italian cinema.**

2023 was a very important year, demonstrating how vital and strong Italian cinema is. We came from a challenging situation for theaters, and yet in recent months, we have seen impressive numbers with an extraordinary summer, thanks in part to the Ministry of Culture's initiative *Cinema Revolution*. Cinema has returned to everyday life and people's discussions. Many positive signals make us proud, testifying to this extraordinary season. Just to mention two, consider the Oscar nomination for Matteo Garrone's *lo Capitano* and the incredible success of Paola Cortellesi's film *C'è ancora domani*. **It had been many years since an Italian film grossed that amount. Why do you think C'è ancora domani was so successful?**

Paola Cortellesi managed to speak to everyone: she found the right language to reach men, women, young people, and older ones. And this, addressing a highly debated topic today.

**How important is it to be in Berlin today?**

I would say it's crucial. Berlin is one of the cinematic platforms where the market is active; many deals are closed here, and there is a huge number of stakeholders

interested in Italian cinema. But beyond the Industry aspect, there is also a significant festival that reminds us – once again – how central the role of the theater is, how beautiful it is to go to the cinema. In recent months, we have finally understood that platforms are functional and serve a purpose, but the theater is unique. Also, from an economic point of view, because it launches the product like nothing else can.

**What is the biggest challenge for the future?**

To export Italian cinema more and more. Another fundamental challenge is related to the Tax Credit: we will work to ensure that it brings more quality within measures that are automatic. What do I mean? Quality does not easily translate into an algorithm or a sum of factors; a film, to be such, must have exploitation, an audience, and final enjoyment. Too often, we have faced products that did not have the adequate quality. We always protect debut and second works, those that go to festivals, and challenging films, but not all products are like that. We have had many films intended for theaters that have not yet been released, and to provide tools and support for good products, we must encourage those with the ambition to make great films. Therefore, it is crucial to give different rules to market films compared to others. We will succeed



# The irresistible rise of Italian cinema

A booming production sector, a boost in box office and international awards. And now Berlin is a crucial step for Italian cinema. Our conversation with Roberto Stabile, the man behind Country in Focus

Story by **Alice Lanzani**

**O**ne of the great protagonists of this edition of the Berlinale will undoubtedly be Italy and Italian cinema, which will be at the center of the EFM as the Country in Focus. In this context, Italy will bring a series of important events to the festival with the aim of showcasing the current state of Italian cinema, but not only. A key moment for the Italian film industry, which we discussed with Roberto Stabile, Head of Special Projects of the Directorate General for Cinema and Audiovisual of the Ministry of Culture at Cinecittà, and therefore in charge of events related to Italy Country in Focus

**First of all, what is the emotion of being here, as Country in Focus?**

It's great, of course, but I would like to take a step back because it has been a long road. To get here today, we had to overcome the pandemic and the post-COVID era, so this Country in Focus has been in the making for a long time, even though we still can't believe that we are finally making it happen. In 2019, we had already signed all the agreements, but then we had to start from scratch for a simple reason: after the pandemic, the world of cinema changed completely. Many of the things we thought about then had to be reconsidered. A double effort that led us to reassess the most suitable priorities.

**What is the goal of Italy Country in Focus?**

Shining a light on our audiovisual industry and presenting it to the market. We are going through an important moment in which, thanks to the support of the Ministry, we have numerous funds to internationalize our cinema. There have been many studies on this, and we have understood how much these funds have increased the presence of our professionals in the market. Today, we can certainly say that we have a greater awareness of the circulation of Italian products.

**What should we expect at the Berlinale?**

While in the previous agreement, beyond visibility, there was a large presentation event for the system, in this new version that you will see in these days here in Berlin, we have modified the agreement,

**"The goal of Country In Focus? Shining a light on Italian audiovisual industry and presenting it to the market."**

trying to spread the Italian presence everywhere. We tried to put Italy in all the panels, got the schedule of Berlinale activities, and inserted an Italian expert everywhere. This way, instead of having a single spotlight, we will have many lights. I think it should work very well.

**The inevitable question is: how is Italian cinema doing?**

Cinematically speaking, I would compare the situation to one of the classic scenes from *Rocky* movies. There was a battered boxer who couldn't figure out where the blows were coming from and then - at a certain point - got back on his feet and won. After the pandemic and the daze of COVID numbers, many people were confident that streaming platforms were destined to replace cinemas, but then the presence of platforms was put back to the right level, and cinema was reborn. Of course, problems remain, but the strength is undeniable: we have just taken Paola Cortellesi's *C'è ancora domani* to Paris, in France it will be distributed by Universal, and we have Matteo Garrone nominated for an Oscar

**In Italy, Paola Cortellesi's film is at 35 million euros. Did you expect this?**

Absolutely not, but no one expected something like that. It was a big surprise that demonstrated the vitality of Italian cinema and - above all - the power of word of mouth.

**Will Italy ever manage to team up?**

Unfortunately, our main enemies are always ourselves, not only in cinema but in all activities. No one can harm us like we can harm ourselves, while everywhere we go abroad, we are welcomed incredibly, and our cinematography is considered as important as others. Many times, my colleagues from UniFrance ask me how we manage to be present all over the world, despite not having their resources. We need to make an effort to present ourselves abroad in a more compact and systematic way because when we unite, there's no stopping us.

**In Berlin, as always, there will be the Italian Pavilion, but you are also organizing a series of important initiatives with ICE.**

Yes, ICE is the agency for the promotion abroad and internationalization of Italian companies,



an organization through which the government promotes the consolidation and development of businesses in foreign markets. Thanks to ICE, the Foreign Ministry will host important events on the markets. At the same time, the Ministry of Culture and the Foreign Ministry, in collaboration with the David Academy, will carry on Italian Screens, the showcase presenting the best of Italian cinema from recent years abroad, organizing screenings in theaters at all diplomatic missions worldwide. We showcase films to the local audience, inviting industry professionals and distributors, presenting the incentives that the government makes available.

**What are the incentives?**

The Film Distribution Fund, active since 2018 and aimed at supporting the sale of Italian films to foreign local distributors, reimburses up to 50,000 euros for a film's theatrical release and 15,000 on a platform. The idea is to make foreign distributors aware of the advantages they can have by choosing an Italian title when purchasing a European film.

**On the cover of this issue of Hot Corn Weekly, there is precisely one of the main events of Country In Focus. But what will it be?**

It's an important moment dedicated to Italian cinema that the Undersecretary of State to the Ministry of Culture, Lucia Borgonzoni (*who tells about it on page 11*), values a lot. It's a presentation format through the young talents of our industry, scheduled for February 19 at the Gropius Dome. During this event, the format already launched in Tokyo will be presented, and the idea is to take it around the world. It will be a very important issue zero. We look forward to it.



# Small Things Like These

Tim Mielants

By Francesco Parrino

**T**he opening film of this Berlinale comes directly from Ireland: Tim Mielants's *Small Things Like These*, a film based on a screenplay by the multi-award-winning Irish playwright Enda Walsh on the 2021 novel of the same name by award-winning Irish writer Claire Keegan. The movie tells the story of a wide-eyed, man of few words, Bill Furlong (Cillian Murphy, who won the Golden Globe and received a nomination for an Academy Award for Nolan's *Oppenheimer*) a coal trader who in the Christmas period of 1985 discovers shocking secrets kept in the Dublin convent: the Magdalene Laundries. A Women's institute run by nuns belonging to various orders of the Church Catholic church in operation from 1765 until 1996 which welcomed girls who were orphans or deemed immoral because their conduct was considered sinful or in contrast with the prejudices of society of the time, to reform them. Women were subjected to a life regime very rigid, worker, forced to work at a grueling pace and without any pay. A story of universal scope, small and large, which tells of kindness towards the most fragile, of the will to oppose injustices, conveyed through small, simple but unforgettable characters.

## The Luck of the Irish

"In October there were yellow trees. Then the clocks went back the hour and the long November winds came in and blew, and stripped the trees bare. In the town of New Ross, chimneys threw out smoke which fell away and drifted off in hairy, drawn-out strings before dispersing along the quays, and soon the River Barrow, dark as stout, swelled up with rain." This is how Claire Keegan's book begins, a historical fiction novel published in 2021. In 2022, the book won the Orwell Prize for Political Fiction and was shortlisted for the Rathbones Folio Prize and the Booker Prize. At the center of the movie we have Cillian Murphy who reunites with the Belgian filmmaker Tim Mielants. After their television efforts with *Peaky Blinders*, the two have long been looking for a project to create together. Murphy's wife, the visual artist Yvonne McGuinness recommended him an adaptation of Keegan's work. Eventually, he made his fortune with Matt Damon and Ben Affleck's *Artists Equity*, strongly interested in the project. In the cast, in addition to Murphy (who also appears as a producer),



**"At the center of the film is Cillian Murphy who reunites here with director of Peaky Blinders, Tim Mielants"**

Ciarán Hinds, Emily Watson, Eileen Walsh, Michelle Fairley, Joanne Crawford, Clare Dunne and Ian O'Reilly.

## The Magdalene Laundries

The Magdalene Laundries, also known as Magdalene asylums, were institutions usually run by Roman Catholic orders, which operated from the 18th to the late 20th centuries. They were run ostensibly to house "fallen women", an estimated 30,000 of whom were confined in these institutions in Ireland. In 1993, unmarked graves of 155 women were uncovered in the convent grounds of one of the laundries. A formal state apology was issued and a compensation scheme for survivors was set up by the Irish Government, which by 2022 had paid out €32.8 million to 814 survivors. In 2002, *The Magdalene Sisters*, a film by Peter Mullan, was based on four young women incarcerated in a Dublin Magdalen Laundry from 1964 to 1968. Joni Mitchell recorded *The Magdalene Laundries*, a song about the atrocities for her 1994 album *Turbulent Indigo*.



## ALBERTO BARBERA: "FROM VENICE WITH LOVE: MY RELATIONSHIP WITH THE BERLINALE AND THE IMPORTANCE OF FILM FESTIVALS"

From Venice to Berlin, passing through the Oscars and thinking about the upcoming Film Festivals: the Berlinale has always been a privileged observatory for the cinematic year ahead. Therefore, in this special edition of our *Hot Corn Weekly*, we couldn't help but involve Alberto Barbera, the Director of the Venice Film Festival. "We have always had a magnificent relationship with Berlin," explains Barbera. "I have known Carlo Chatrian for many years, since he was still a young man starting out in Aosta, taking his first steps in film events. I have often worked with him at the Museum of Cinema in Turin and then also in Locarno. He is a great professional with undeniable expertise." **There has never been any conflict with the Berlinale...**

No, because the two festivals take place many months apart. Most films available for Venice are ready by summer, and it has never happened that someone refused for one or the other. The relationship remains excellent and friendly; in the past, we have had many opportunities for collaboration, starting from the year of COVID when there was great solidarity. I am also very friendly with Mariette Rissenbeek; we often talk and exchange information, so if I realize that a film doesn't have space at

the Mostra, I am happy to recommend it. **Let's talk about the Oscars: again this year, many films nominated have premiered at the Mostra.**

Yes, we have more films; there will be seven. Not only *Poor Things* and *Io Capitano*, but also a great variety in the types of titles, a sign that we are moving well in all directions within the global production. I also think of the nominations for Wes Anderson's *The Wonderful Story of Henry Sugar* or *Bobi Wine: the People's President* by Moses Bwayo and Christopher Sharp, not to forget about *Maestro* and *La sociedad de la nieve*. Then the fact that Matteo Garrone is on the shortlist is an additional satisfaction..

**Can you tell straightaway when a film is Oscar-worthy?**

It's not difficult to infer from the first screening whether a film is destined for a long journey or not. Unforeseen surprises can always happen, but often there's an immediate perception of having a film that's destined for a leading role in the Oscar race. It has happened frequently, from *Gravity* to *Birdman* via *La La Land* or *The Shape of Water*.

**How does it feel?**

Well, it's undoubtedly a great satisfaction, especially because I took over the festival



at a challenging time due to the strong competition from events like Telluride, Toronto, obviously Cannes, but also New York and San Sebastian. The fact that we managed to bring the Venice Film Festival back to prominence is the result of a significant gamble made at the beginning and that, over the course of ten years, has borne fruit.

**It was often said that festivals were not needed, but today they are fundamental.**

Today they have a central role because festivals serve production and distribution companies to be more effective in promotion: the visibility offered by a prestigious event lasts a long time and is also useful months after the theatrical release when the film will then be on streaming platforms.

**So we can say it out loud? Film festivals are essential.**

More and more. There was a moment with the advent of platforms and COVID, where some started to think they weren't necessary because platforms didn't need them. Instead, this idea was completely disproven, and paradoxically, festivals are more important today. As mentioned, they are formidable generators of promotion and word of mouth for the

audience. Furthermore, platforms, which have now taken the place of major Hollywood studios, need more certification of quality, something that only a festival can provide. Today, they themselves tell us that films that go through festivals have greater success even in streaming.

**Where do you stand with the next edition of Venice?**

We have already started watching quite a few films, with increasing frequency. Many dynamics have changed after the pandemic: before COVID, we selected most films right after Cannes, but now the schedule has shifted. When a producer has a film ready, they send it in the fall. Therefore, we are already in the selection phase.



# Another End

Piero Messina



By Francesco Parrino

Sal's empty eyes seem to live only on memories since he lost Zoe, the love of his life. Memories, like fragments of a shattered mirror that cannot be pieced back together. Everything is now lost. His sister Ebe, who looks at her brother with growing concern for his mental state, suggests that he turn to *Another End*, a new technology that promises to alleviate the pain of separation by bringing back, for a short time, the consciousness of the departed. This is how Sal finds Zoe again but in another woman's body. An unfamiliar body in which he mysteriously recognizes his wife and rediscovers what he had lost. What was broken seems to suddenly come together. *Another End*, in fact, grants Sal time to share a bit more of life with Zoe, to love her again, to be loved, to finally say goodbye. But then?

## Eternal Sunshine of a Spotless Mind?

Sal will rediscover happiness, but obviously it will be a fragile, ephemeral, insidious joy, and when the program ends, Sal will not intend to passively witness the dissolution of his love, the definitive loss of his wife, without a fight. Perhaps love truly survives and promises eternity through

**"My film is a love story. About love that lives in words, in thoughts, in memories."**

bodies? Or is everything destined to slowly fade away into oblivion?

### On Another Love

A love story about love, *Another End*, the new film by Piero Messina (seen in the photo above, sitting with Renate Reinsve, Bérénice Bejo and Gael García Bernal) presented in competition here in Berlin, comes more than nine years after the director's debut film, *The Wait (L'attesa)*, with Juliette Binoche and Lou de Laâge, which was presented at the Venice Film Festival in 2015. But while that film dealt with waiting and staged a Luigi Pirandello drama (*La vita che ti diedi*), here, something else is told. An attempt is made to delve into the folds of a lost love that continues to live in words, letters, thoughts, and memories. A love that grows and lives in silence, as if it were a secret, in a concept that seems to position itself halfway between Michel Gondry's *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind* and Spike Jonze's *Her*. "What can I say, for me, it's truly an honor to be here, to be invited to the official section of the Berlin Film

Festival, and for this, I thank the director, Carlo Chatrlian," comments Messina, also the author of the original screenplay from which the film is derived, "My film is a love story. About love that lives in words, thoughts, memories, but above all, it lives and grows silently in bodies. In secret. Like a body's secret."

### A Lost Love and Other Stories

In addition to the story, between sentimental drama and science fiction, what strikes about *Another End* is, of course, the cast, decidedly notable, featuring Gael García Bernal in the role of the protagonist Sal, Renate Reinsve aka *The Worst Person in the World* as his lost love Zoe, and then there's also Bérénice Bejo, Olivia Williams, Philip Rosch, and Tim Daish. Filming took place in Paris and Rome. Could this be the surprise of this Berlinale? We'll see.



## DOMENICO DE GAETANO: "ME, TIM BURTON AND THE FUTURE OF THE TURIN'S NATIONAL CINEMA MUSEUM"

One of the events of the year bears his signature: *The World of Tim Burton*, the exhibition that landed in Italy for the first time at the National Cinema Museum in Turin and is on display until April 7. An appointment that has seen thousands of tourists and enthusiasts flock to the city, ready to get lost among sculptures and drawings, between Edward Scissorhands and Alice. So, we wanted to ask Domenico De Gaetano, Director of the National Cinema Museum since 2019, to take us behind the scenes of this success, but not only that: also to tell us about the Torino Film Lab, here in Berlin with *Shambhala* by Min Bahadur Bham, not forgetting that Carlo Sironi, present with *My Summer with Irene*, comes directly from the TFL..

**And the Berlinale has always been a privileged spot from which to observe the state of cinema.**

And I am convinced that Carlo Chatrlian has done and is doing really excellent work. I always come to Berlin with pleasure for that informal atmosphere and the selection of high-quality films. And then there's the market, unmissable. The museum team is always quite substantial: from the president Enzo Ghigo to the artistic director of the Turin Film Festival, Giulio Base, to the selectors of our three festivals, TFF, Lovers, and Cinemambiente. And then there's the Torino Film Lab present here in Berlin with three of its films..

**What is Torino Film Lab and why is it central?**

The Torino Film Lab is a training, production, and distribution workshop

aimed at young filmmakers worldwide. It represents the aspect closest to the cinematic production of the Museum. In recent years, it has experienced significant growth with 9 programs, ranging from TV series to comedy, and an annual budget of €2,680,000. So far, it has supported over 180 films presented at major international festivals. Here in Berlin, as mentioned, we have three films, one of which is in competition: *Shambala* by Nepalese director Min Bahadur Bham.

**Let's go back to Tim Burton and the exhibition: did you expect such a success?**

Well, no. A success of this magnitude was difficult to predict. Ever since I saw the exhibition at the MOMA in New York in 2009, I have always wanted to bring it to Italy and showcase it here. The success of the Wednesday series, which arrived on Netflix last year, certainly helped us, especially in reaching a younger audience. I must say, it was quite something to see hundreds of 12-13 year-olds entering the Mole who had managed to convince their parents to bring them to the Museum.

**In recent months, the Museum has been at the center of many meetings and presentations, from the return of Kevin Spacey to Lidia Poet. What was the**

**mission you set for yourselves?**

The Museum has always been a reference point for those who love and study cinema. We want to transform it into one of the international hubs where extraordinary events and encounters with remarkable figures take place. We do not set limits.

**You have been directing the Museum since 2019, and you also had to face the pandemic. What is the secret to keeping interest alive in a structure like yours?**

This is my first experience as a director, and after only four months, the pandemic broke out. We shifted all activities online, and in part, it's a process that we still maintain today. Certainly, the videomapping on the dome of the Mole showed everyone that the Museum continued to plan and stay close to its audience in ways never seen before..

**One of your strengths has become the masterclasses, from Pablo Larrain to Damien Chazelle. How complicated is to bring them to Turin?**

Listening to and seeing the great masters of cinema up close is an incredible experience. Inside the Mole, it's even more so. With the prominent names we have brought, it's not difficult to

convince other artists to come to Turin. The challenge is that these artists are very busy, but 2024 will also be full of surprises, you'll see

**What are the major challenges for the future of the Museum?**

The project for the new museum. Even as it is, the Mole is fantastic, and last year, we broke the record for visitors since it opened in 2000, with over 755,000 visitors. But we are working on a redesign project that starts from the garden next to the Mole and extends to all floors of the Museum, focusing on inclusion, innovation, immersion, and sustainability.

**What kind of audience member are you? What is your favorite movie?**

I have a list of favourite films, starting with *Pocketful of Miracles* by Frank Capra, which I see every Christmas, to *Interstellar* by Christopher Nolan.

**A memory as the Museum director that you will always carry with you?**

Well, the meeting of Tim Burton with his audience in front of the Mole. There were thousands of young people waiting, never seen anything like it, not even at festivals.





# Gloria!

Margherita Vicario



By Livia Tripiciano

It's an enormous joy and a great privilege for me to be in the Berlinale's official competition. *Gloria!* is a film that has music as its protagonist and uses music as a narrative language. This is what I have always tried to do in my work: to unite cinema and music." This is how Margherita Vicario commented on the news of her participation. In recent years, she has established herself in the Italian music scene with a fresh, innovative, and versatile style, collaborating with various artists from the music scene. Vicario is fresh from the publication of her podcast *Showtime*, a four-part project that saw the release of some of her latest singles such as *Ave Maria*, *Canzoncina*, *Magia*, and *Dove te ne vai*.

#### Sound and Vision

Born in Rome in 1988, Vicario began acting in dramas and films after graduating, directed by, to name a few, Woody Allen and Fausto Brizzi, and also took part in famous TV series such as *I Cesaroni* and *I Borghia*. Vicario, however, did not just enter this world

**"This is what I have always wanted to do as a singer as well: to combine music and cinema"**

because cinema runs in her blood: her grandmother Rossana Podestà was an actress, her grandfather a director - Marco Vicario, who directed films such as *7 uomini d'oro* and *Paolo il caldo* - and her uncle Stefano, director of, among other things, several editions of the Sanremo Festival. One of the dynasties of Italian cinema that has always been male now is joined by a young and determined exponent who offers a fresh and feminine point of view.

#### Teresa, Gloria and other stories

This is an ambitious project that is not scared of combining genres, eras and themes. Set in Venice in the 18th century, the film tells the story of Teresa (Galatea Bellugi) a young woman with visionary talent who, together with a group of extraordinary musicians, bypasses the centuries and challenges the dusty constructs of the Ancien Régime by creating a rebellious, subtle and modern music. The cast includes Carlotta Gamba, Maria Vittoria Dallasta, Sara Mafodda as well as Elio (from *Elio e le storie tese*), and Veronica Lucchesi (*La Rappresentante di Lista*). Vicario is having a big debut, her film will be the only premiere in competition along with Meryam Joobeur's *Who Do I Belong to*.



## TIZIANA ROCCA: "FILMING ITALY, THE ROAD TO HOLLYWOOD AND THE MANY CHALLENGES OF MY FESTIVAL"

If there is someone who has been fighting for years to export Italian cinema abroad, without a doubt, it is Tiziana Rocca, who, in a few days, on February 26, will set off from Hollywood with the ninth edition of *Filming Italy - Los Angeles*, a festival created and directed by her. This time too, it is realized in collaboration with the Italian Institute of Culture in Los Angeles, directed by Emanuele Amendola, with APA (Association of Audiovisual Producers), and under the auspices of the Consulate General of Italy in Los Angeles. *Filming Italy* has always aimed, in addition to promoting Italy as a film set and building a bridge between Italian and American culture, to support Italian cultural growth through cinema. "It is an honor this year to confer the Lifetime Achievement Award to Franco Nero, a man and actor whom I immensely admire, and to host Matteo Garrone, a great friend of the festival, in anticipation of Oscar night."

**Taking a step back: how much has Filming Italy grown in nine years?** A lot, a whole lot. Year after year, we have grown thanks to an infinite amount of work and effort because in Hollywood, no one gives you anything for free, and certainly, no one recommends you; on the contrary. So, year after year, I have earned the trust of people in the industry, and step by step, I managed to position Filming

Italy in a place where today it is - in fact - one of the most anticipated moments for promoting Italian cinema in the United States. And it is awaited by both the general audience and industry professionals. **This year you will start with Matteo Garrone, an Oscar nominee.** Yes, we will have Matteo and the protagonist of the film, Seydou Sarr, who will be honored during a special screening of *Io Capitano*. We followed the entire American campaign for the film, and it was a huge satisfaction to see it in the Academy's shortlist. Let's hope for the best. We'll see what happens on March 10th. **One of the guests of this edition will be Franco Nero.** An icon of Italian cinema worldwide, always praised and loved by Quentin Tarantino. He will be awarded the Filming Italy Los Angeles Lifetime Achievement Award on the evening of February 29. We will screen a marathon of films dedicated to him, starting with Sergio Corbucci's *Django*, of course. The festival serves to showcase the excellence of Italian productions, which can be represented by a star like him, but also by a film, a documentary, or by costume designers or set designers. With significant efforts in 2018, I managed to obtain a star on the Walk of Fame for Gina Lollobrigida, and

last year for Giancarlo Giannini. I enjoy highlighting our talents.. **And this year's festival will also be on the platform.** Yes, we will be live, but without abandoning the digital platform that, in previous editions in America, reached over 600,000 viewers. On the platform, available to the American audience, there will be over sixty titles promoting Italian cinema, series, the great classics of the Classic section, documentaries, short films, debuts, and much more. **A distinctive feature of Filming Italy is the variety of titles.** We are the only festival capable of bringing both comedies like those of Ficarra and Picone or Alessandro Siani - currently in theaters - along with dramatic films and art cinema. And then, since I am one of the few female festival directors, I want to emphasize the collaboration with Women in Film Italy and LA, which is celebrating its fiftieth anniversary this year and supports women working in the world of cinema and behind the camera. Not surprisingly, this year we will also have directors in the lineup such as Ginevra Elkann, Roberta Torre, Kasia Smutniak. In short, a gigantic effort to give visibility and support to Italian films, and I want to thank the Italian productions and distributions that

support and help us when we request films. **Nine years of Filming Italy. If you had to choose a memory?** Walking around Hollywood with Gina Lollobrigida was a wonderful adventure. She would stop on the street and tell me where she was going to have lunch with Howard Hughes and what she used to do when she came to America in the 1960s. There was a kind of devotion towards her from the Americans, even from journalists who had only seen her on a screen. But also witnessing the presentation of the star to Giancarlo Giannini was unforgettable: during the evening at the Academy Museum of Motion Pictures, he told me about Coppola, Brando, and the scenes from *Seven Beauties* with Lina Wertmüller. Truly unique and unrepeatable emotions. I like to highlight our talents for their uniqueness because they are greatly loved abroad and deserve to be celebrated for their incredible careers.





# Why everyone is talking about Rocco?

Sex and life, love and risk, the boy behind the man and the industry of porno behind the star. Alessandro Borghi brings his unique portrait of Rocco Siffredi in *Supersex*, the new Netflix title that will have its world premiere here at Berlinale Special. But what will we see in the series?

Story by **Livia Tripiciano**  
Photographs by **Lucia Iuorio**

**A**fter months of anticipation, *Supersex*, the series loosely inspired by the life of Rocco Siffredi will be presented here in Berlin, in the Berlinale Special section. Alessandro Borghi takes on the role of the greatest Italian porn star, accompanied by Jasmine Trinca, who plays Lucia, a fictional character representing many women in Rocco's life. Also featured are Adriano Giannini as Tommaso, Saul Nanni as young Rocco and Enrico Borello as his cousin, Gabriele Galetta. They are directed by a group of young and ambitious directors: Matteo Rovere, Francesco Carrozzini, and Francesca Mazzoleni. "These stories are courageous because they touch on controversial and provocative topics, challenging taboos, prejudices, and conventions", explained during a press conference held last year Tinny Andreatta, Vice President of Italian content at Netflix, the platform that will distribute the series starting from March 6th. "These stories are unique stories that, when put together, form a rich mosaic that appeals to different audiences and their diverse needs for entertainment, curiosity, and provocation."

#### The many stories of a man

Stories like the story of Rocco Tano, Siffredi's real name, that will be told, between fiction and reality, over seven episodes that will start from his origins in Ortona up to his triumph in the field of porn between his family, success and relationship with love as well as the work environment that made him a celebrity. "*Supersex* has been a long road", said Lorenzo

**"This is the story of a man who takes seven episodes and 350 minutes to say: I love you..."**



Mieli, one of the producers, "There is a true story behind Rocco. It could have been a subject relevant to everyone. When I first thought of this, a path of research began. A series that is only apparently controversial." At the center of everything, Alessandro Borghi who plays the protagonist: "The porn story is a narrative junction", said the actor, "it marks an emotional change in the character. This is perhaps the great intuition of *Supersex*." It's 1984 when in a red-light district, Rocco meets Gabriel Pontello, a French producer and actor in adult films, who opens the way for him in the industry. From there, his first appearances begin, leading to success in 1987 with *Fantastica Moana* featuring Moana Pozzi, in the series starring Gaia Messerklinger.

#### Rocco and his brothers

However, *Supersex* doesn't just want to tell Rocco's story but also the years of the pornographic industry explosion, concurrent with some drastic changes in society and culture during those years. The title is taken from 'Supersex,' a magazine of explicit photo novels sold in Italy between the Seventies and Eighties, a magazine that also featured an emerging Cicciolina. "*Supersex* is the story of a man who takes seven episodes and 350 minutes to say I love you", explains Francesca Manieri, creator and scriptwriter of the series, "and finally accepting that the demon in his body can be reconciled with love. To do

this he has to uncover the only part of him we have never seen: his soul. *Supersex* is about today and about us. What does it mean to be male? Are we still able to reconcile sexuality and emotions? These are the questions that like a kaleidoscope open up before us as we immerse ourselves in his incredible life".

#### How to Have Sex

But who is Rocco Siffredi really? The son of an Abruzzese carpenter who found himself, almost unintentionally, becoming one of the greatest porn stars of all time, a concrete symbol of the much-celebrated Italian passion. Rocco has known an infinite number of women, on and off the screen, yet he has been married to the same woman since 1993, Rózsa Tassi, a former Hungarian colleague with whom he has two sons, Lorenzo and Leonardo. Outside the sets of the films that have earned him numerous awards, Rocco is a loving father and husband dedicated to his family. Precisely for the love of his wife and two sons, in 2004, at the age of forty, he announced his retirement from the world of porn, only to return in 2009. However, it wasn't just the dilemma of leaving the scenes that tormented the adult film actor, but above all, his sex addiction that almost ended his marriage. "The addiction lasted so long: I'm afraid I'll never be completely out of it," Siffredi stated. Lights and shadows on a man and a character waiting to be discovered.





# Dostoevskij

Damiano and Fabio D'Innocenzo



By Dario Cangemi

**L**ife, death, and extreme consequences. The foray into serial storytelling. Let's talk about *Dostoevskij*, the new series by the D'Innocenzo Brothers, premiering here in Berlin. The (not-so-thin) thread connecting the Italian directors to the Berlinale is a journey that gained momentum with *La terra dell'abbastanza*, presented in the Panorama section in 2018, followed by the Silver Bear win for Best Script in 2020 with *Favolacce*.

#### Karamazov & D'Innocenzo

"We're very grateful to the Berlinale", said the two directors, "for selecting *Dostoevskij*. Berlin, for us, is home. But not always are you welcomed at home. In fact, it is precisely at home that you must prove to still be yourself. From our debut with *La Terra dell'abbastanza*, we've changed a lot, and yet, with *Dostoevskij*, you have once again recognized us and opened the door to our home: a door that still sounds the same." The six-episode series marks the return of the brothers to directing after *America Latina* (Venice Film Festival, 2021). It is a noir thriller with Filippo Timi starring as Enzo Vitello, an eccentric yet tormented detective

**"I believe that no man ever threw away life while it was worth keeping..."**

with a painful past. He investigates the bloody trail of a ruthless serial killer, nicknamed Dostoevskij for the letters filled with macabre details left at the crime scenes. Obsessed with the killer's words, Vitello goes to the extent of conducting a dangerous solo investigation, getting closer and closer to the truth. A cop, a killer, both elusive and intangible, both ghosts, moving in the darkness of consciousness, hunting each other but also sharing a caress.

#### Crime and Punishment

In the end, *Dostoevskij* traverses and seeks to answer what is a timeless and complex question: is living the real crime? The letters of the serial killer become a coagulation of suffering, and the refuse of life becomes the only fitting atonement: death. The premises of Damiano and Fabio d'Innocenzo start from an assumption by David Hume that finds its analogies even in a certain literature dear to their friend Pietro Castellitto: "I believe that no man ever threw away life while it was worth keeping." In the cast, alongside Timi, are also Gabriel Montesi, Federico Vanni and Carlotta Gamba, here at the Berlinale also with *Gloria!* (see page 18).



## GIANLUCA CURTI: "TORNATORE TEHRAN, AVATI: HERE'S WHAT WE BRING TO BERLIN WITH MINERVA PICTURES"

New movies, the challenge of production, the works of Italian masters like Giuseppe Tornatore and Pupi Avati: always a constant presence here at the EFM, Gianluca Curti, CEO of Minerva Pictures, tells *Hot Corn* what he will bring to Berlin.

#### What does it mean for an independent producer and distributor like Minerva Pictures to be here at the Berlinale?

It's always interesting, stimulating, and useful to connect with friends and industry contacts from around the world. Being part of a globalized market, it's crucial to be at the EFM, where the market comes to life. Minerva has been present in all international markets for over 35 years, both as a world sales entity and a buyer. Over the past year and a half, the challenge, especially in terms of acquisitions, is to maintain a balance in selecting products that fit various exploitation methods. In our digital ecosystem, we look for certain characteristics, and in the traditional domestic licensing sector - currently in crisis due to a significant decline in the pay window - it has become risky to acquire products, even commercial ones, at high costs. Quality cinema or festival-oriented productions that we cherish are further impacted by this licensing crisis, unless there are strong ties to theatrical distribution. Even in such cases, arthouse or genre products that make the economic effort sustainable are few. True independence today is a luxury and a chimera that needs to be sought and found. We have a fairly clear idea of where to look. In the role of a producer, being at a market

like Berlin is important because many productions have been looking with interest to activate co-productions, even minority ones, with Italy, given the favorable tax and credit regime.

#### What are you bringing to EFM?

With our International Sales division, we will participate in EFM with an exciting new lineup, including 8 market screenings, of which 6 are market premieres. We begin with the first and only series by Academy Award-winning director Giuseppe Tornatore, *The Camorrist*, fresh from an invitation at Series Mania. This 5-episode masterpiece has been completely restored in 4k by Tornatore himself, with music by the Oscar winner Nicola Piovani. Additionally, there's a new thriller starring Luca Argentero, titled *The Net*. Also premiering are three independent production gems: Antonin Svoboda's *Persona Non Grata*, an Austrian psychological thriller on the #MeToo movement in the sport; *Stabat Mater*, the feature debut by Berlinale Talent Nazareno Manuel Nicoletti; and the French-Italian double-act with Nikita's Anne Parillaud, *A La Recherche*, directed by the newly appointed director of Turin Film Festival, Giulio Base. Last but not least, the Amazon Prime Video comedy success *Bang*



*Bank* will also have its market debut. In addition to new content, Minerva Pictures will preserve its heritage by representing its film catalogue of over 1000 titles spanning various genres.

#### What are the Minerva titles for 2024 that you are focusing on?

2024 will be a year full of novelties in terms of production for Minerva. Soon to air on Italian television is *Margherita delle Stelle*, a movie dedicated to Margherita Hack starring Cristiana Capotondi. We are finalizing post-production on *Reading Lolita in Tehran*, directed by Eran Riklis and based on the bestseller by Azar Nafisi, with Golshifteh Farahani. This powerful story revolves around the condition of women in Khomeini's Iran. The film is an Italian-Israeli co-production, made with Rosamont and Rai Cinema, with international sales by Westend, present here in Berlin. For this title we're starting conversations with the most important world festivals. Within the year, the series *Miss Fallaci* will also air, in co-production with Paramount, featuring Miriam Leone. It's an impressive production about the life of the young Oriana Fallaci, the most famous Italian journalist in the

world, who managed to interview the greatest figures on earth. It was initially scheduled to air in March on Paramount+, but Paramount's recent strategy change brings forthcoming news.

#### You also have the new film by Pupi Avati.

Yes, we're also in production with Avati's *L'orto americano*, a gothic tale set in WWII, starring Filippo Scotti (the star of Paolo Sorrentino's *The Hand of God*) and Rita Tushingham, co-produced with DueA and Rai Cinema. We're also working on a documentary about the life of philosopher Benedetto Croce, directed by Avati, and a documentary about Bernardo Bertolucci, directed by Marco Spagnoli, which we will bring to international markets. We have many other projects in development, including a series on Italian fashion, from an idea by our partners Santo and Francesca Versace, and many initiatives also in the distribution sector, including for theaters. 2024 will be a crucial year for the future of independent production. Meanwhile, here in Minerva, we use the motto: keep going and pedal...



# À La Recherche

Giulio Base



**A** love letter to cinema, brought to the audience through the verbal duel between the two protagonists, in search of one last great turning point. *À la recherche*, the latest work by Giulio Base, presented at the Rome Film Festival and now among the films presented here in Berlin at the European Film Market, is set in a single location for its entire duration—a theater of the encounter between two nostalgic, desperate yet still hopeful characters in 1970s Rome. Ariane (Anne Parillaud) is a French patroness, a former star of Parisian high society, once the lover of great directors and actors, now facing inevitable decline. Her only, last hope is to regain the favor of the maestro Luchino Visconti by presenting him with a cinematic adaptation of Marcel Proust's immortal work, *In Search of Lost Time*, referenced in the film's title itself.

#### Ariane and Pietro

For this mammoth but seemingly unrealizable endeavor, he summons the Italian screenwriter Pietro (Giulio Base), whose career has been stuck for years writing scripts for mediocre films. "One

day my friend Paolo Fosso," the director explains to *Hot Corn*, "brought me a subject in which he told me he saw me as a protagonist, a strange fact because almost no one sees me only as such. I immediately fell in love with it, even though Paolo presented me as a loser screenwriter, a conformist who had made so many compromises, dissipating his talent behind women. Though, it was a metaphor for getting to the heart of the film." Thus opens a 90-minute-long pas de deux, a head-to-head that springs both from the differences in vision on historical and political issues and from the juxtaposition of two characters who, even when enveloped by erotic passion, are victims of a timeless decadence, of an aura of failure that they desperately try to undo. "Was Anne Parillaud the first choice?" the director reveals, "No, actually, I had met other actresses before, but in a sense, yes, she was because as soon as I saw her, I immediately understood that she was the actress I was looking for. We were in Venice, during the festival, having lunch on a terrace, and she immediately won me over

with her nobility of manners and gestures that the character in my film required." Amidst the plots of this dense verbal contest, however, emerges the director's ode to the art of cinematography, both Italian (Antonioni, Fellini, Leone, in addition to Visconti) and from overseas (Scorsese, Coppola), the meticulous attention to aesthetic detail in set design, and verbal precision in the screenplay.

#### In Search of Lost Time

"I believe that things that have true value sooner or later come out", explains Base, "they have timelessness response, they speak for themselves. Marcel Proust's text is so strong that even though it is a voluminous, titanic, or gigantic novel, there is a certain point when you pick it up you are kidnapped. You dive into that world where it's hard to get out. It is the grandeur of the prose of literature and psychology. Nietzsche said that nothing in his time taught him as much about psychology as reading *In Search of Lost Time*. Which is for me the true founding text of contemporary literature."



## PIERA DETASSIS: "THAT FIRST TIME OF MINE IN BERLIN AND THE EVOLUTION OF THE ITALIAN CINEMA ACADEMY"

First as a journalist, then as a festival director, and now as the President and Artistic Director of the Italian Film Academy of David di Donatello. Piera Detassis knows Berlin very well. She has seen many films and stars pass through Potsdamer Platz, contributing over the years to amplify and tell the very essence of the Berlinale. So she couldn't be missing from our special issue dedicated to the festival.

**The Berlinale has always been one a privileged point of view from which to observe the state of cinema. Do you remember the first time you attended?**

I can say that I arrived here with History. The first time was in 1989, as a journalist. I conducted an investigation on the Babelsberg Studios in Potsdam, still in East Germany. In November, the Berlin Wall fell, and the next edition of Berlinale was, of course, an extraordinary experience. I returned to interview the same workers and officials to measure the change. I remember the words of hope and a certain bewilderment in the face of the new freedom that had both broken habits and certainties. The heart of the festival was still the legendary Zoo Palast, but that year I attended the first screenings beyond the Wall, at the Kosmos and Colosseum cinemas: Oliver Stone's *Born on the Fourth of July*. American stars crossing Checkpoint Charlie, an unforgettable emotion. However, what has always fascinated me a lot in Berlin is the EFM, the market, with this strong European vocation, solid, important, very organized, and open. An extraordinary source of contacts and discoveries, especially in the years spent here as a Festival director.

**This year, the Berlinale comes with Matteo Garrone as Academy nominee and Paola Cortellesi's movie breaking any records. How is Italian cinema doing?**

The Italian cinema is in a hectic moment, as I believe the films and series here at the Berlinale also signal. It is in search of itself, orphaned of the classic Italian comedy genre, now considered consumable on streaming platforms. We have important authors, surprising debuts, and finally, a great boldness in introducing genres, innovation, and narrative counterattacks in auteur cinema. Today, the audience in theaters mainly asks to be surprised. Old habits no longer hold, especially in communication. Everything has changed.

**How is the path of the David di Donatello Awards and the innovation you brought? Are you satisfied?**

I prefer to focus on the Italian Cinema Academy that oversees the David di Donatello Awards. During my mandate, which began in 2018, the Foundation's mission was to create synergies with all cinema associations, institutions, and professions that are part of the Academy. It's a common job that extends throughout the year, and through the operation of selection and transparency about the

jury and the voting mechanism. It has involved the entire industry. From the Awards Night we expanded to the industry and training, collaborated with the Italian Ministry of Culture, producers, distributors, and exhibitors to repopulate theaters post-pandemic, organized the Award's night even during the lockdown. We arrived at the third edition in partnership with Netflix for the Becoming Maestre mentoring project on female professions in the audiovisual sector. We inaugurated an ambitious cinema project in schools in collaboration with Unita, the association that brings together actors. The digitalization of both the archive and operations was important: the David brand has strengthened, now we need to take a step forward towards innovation, streamlining decision-making processes, and stronger and more aware involvement of the membership.

**What does Italian cinema lack to have an exportable star system?**

In my opinion, nothing. We have an extraordinary school of actors, increasingly polyglot. It is essential to break down borders, even at the narrative level, and activate exchanges between authors and

international productions. Serials, furthermore, are incubators of new young protagonists and promote our faces abroad. Having said that, the term "star system" is obsolete. Sagas, franchises, superheroes, the spread of platforms have shattered the monolith. The star today is the originality of the story.

**Do film festivals still serve a purpose? They seemed outdated, but they are now more essential than ever...**

Festivals, special programs, even summer events during the closure and distancing periods represented the point of suture with the public, or rather, with the many diverse audiences. They marked the difference with streaming-only consumption, representing the place of quality, direct interaction with actor or directors, a fundamental guide that, within a trust pact with the viewer, offers a selection of quality that fuels curiosity and discoveries, disappointments, and enthusiasms. Major festivals like Berlinale or Venice also represent the laboratory of the future but in a broad context of community and sharing. Today, festivals are the extended cinema hall.







## COSTANZA QUATRIGLIO: "FROM PALERMO TO THE BERLINALE, MY LONG JOURNEY WITH MY FATHER IN THE SECRET DRAWER"



Sicily, Europe, the world, and a home that becomes a set. An intimate yet universal work, Costanza Quatriglio arrives at the Berlinale in the Forum section with *The Secret Drawer*, composed of sentimental journeys through photographs, 8mm reels, sound recordings made by her father from the 1940s onwards across the world. A personal and collective memory that blends in a dialogue between presence and absence. Palermo and Sicily serve as the point of observation of the world from which everything originates and to which everything returns. A drawer from which the memories of a father and a daughter emerge. Unexpectedly, the voice of Carlo Levi, memories of Jean Paul Sartre, the friendship with Leonardo Sciascia, as well as photos of Anna Magnani, Cary Grant, and Ingrid Bergman, the missed self-portrait with Enrico Fermi, and the drawing by Renato Guttuso. Also, the Belice earthquake and the Berlin Wall, Paris and America in the 1950s. But who was Giuseppe Quatriglio? A tireless researcher of Sicilian things - as his friend Sciascia described him - was a reference point for journalism in Sicily, but not only. A great traveller, he was a news correspondent in America and collaborated with many important Italian magazines.

**What does it feel like to be at the Berlinale with this very project?**  
What can I say? I am genuinely happy that



*The Secret Drawer* (in Italian, *Il Cassetto Segreto*) is being premiered here in Berlin. This is a film that starts from Sicily but lives in the world. The world was already in my home. The idea of showing it to such an important audience makes me proud. Especially in a section like Forum, which has made history in the world of cinema over the years.

**How was it emotionally to shoot a documentary about your father?**

Of course, there were many emotions during the production, a lot of dedication, sometimes to the point where there was no time to reflect on the emotions. I found the presence of librarians and archivists in the project quite intriguing. I liked how they worked with books and archives; I could see their deep love for what they were doing, and they conveyed a profound sense of care. There was also a sense of modesty, naturally. It's not easy to film your own home and try to narrate something so close to you, both in terms of emotions and personal history. However, I managed to overcome this reluctance by recognizing the universal scope of the film's narrative. Not only for the events and stories related to the world but also for the private sphere that concerns all of us

**When did you realize that you absolutely had to make this documentary?**

The point of no return was when I realized the enormous amount of material emerging in terms of stories and events.

And then there was, of course, the idea that I enjoyed telling that story. I felt that filming my home became a form of knowledge, a way to change my perspective. So, when I understood all of this, shooting *The Secret Drawer* became very straightforward.

**Did you have any references in this work?**

No. In this project absolutely not. This is an act of extreme freedom and completeness of a journey that is my own journey. It's a film that brings together various aspects of filmmaking that are all elements I have experienced in other films.

**We are here at the Berlinale, and a question is inevitable: Do film festivals still serve a purpose?**

They serve a lot for discovery when they are a territory for exploration and discussion of languages, about who we are and who we can be. When they serve as showcases for a market that doesn't need support but only feeds itself, they are less necessary.

**If you could go back to your very first works, what would you say to that Costanza?**

To always be free, not to lose the extreme vitality, energy, and great creativity with which I started. And not to make the mistakes that were made afterward, although all in all, I am still young to say this. Yes, maybe I would tell that to the younger one.

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