

Open Roads. Italian Cinema in Today's Cultural Scene

Natasha Lardera (June 09, 2015)



New York's favorite Casa Italiana Zerilli-Marimò closed the season of cultural events with a successful round table with the directors and actors of *Open Roads: New Italian Cinema* at Lincoln center. With the guidance of Stefano Albertini and Antonio Monda, Italian actors and directors discussed their films and what seems to be a great moment for Italian cinema.

Casa Italiana Zerilli-Marimò's director, Stefano Albertini, closed the season of cultural events with a successful round table with the directors and actors of [Open Roads: New Italian Cinema](#) [2] at Lincoln center.

"This is a unique opportunity to listen to such a rich and diverse group of Italian filmmakers talk about their films and about what seems to be a great moment for Italian cinema," Albertini mentioned in the announcement of the evening.

The delegation included: [Francesca Archibugi](#) [3], director of [Il nome del figlio/An Italian Name](#) [4]; Duccio Chiarini, director of [I dolori del giovane Edo/Short Skin](#) [5]; [Cristina Comencini](#) [6], director of [Latin Lover](#) [7]; Eleonora Danco, director of *N-Capace/N-Able*; Ivano De Matteo, director of [I nostri](#)



[ragazzi/The Dinner](#) [8]; Adriano Giannini, actor in [La foresta di ghiaccio/The Ice Forest](#) [9]; Claudio Santamaria, actor in Ermanno Olmi's [Torneranno i prati/Greenery Will Bloom Again](#) [10]; and Sara Serraiocco, actress in *Cloro/Chlorine*.

With the initial help of writer and professor Antonio Monda, who is also one of the founders of Open Roads, Albertini led an insightful conversation on the variety of films presented this year and the general situation of Italian cinema in today's cultural scene.

"There are comedies, thrillers, avant garde films, shorts and the latest work from one of the historical masters of Italian cinema: [Ermanno Olmi](#) [11]," Monda said in his introduction, curious to know how working with a living legend is. "It was the most intense and enjoyable working experience of my life," [Claudio Santamaria](#) [12], who plays an army officer during the Great War, "As a director he destroys the actor because he wants to see the human being capture on camera."

The film captures a single snowy night on the Italian front, on the Cimbrian Mountains, as soldiers in trenches deal with their loneliness, the hardship of war as they try find pockets of hope where they can.

The master's latest endeavor is typical of his style, with measured pacing, sparse dialogue and a haunting meditative element, and this fact brought on a discussion on genre. Newcomer Duccio Chiarini explained that "at the moment everybody runs his own show. Directors find their own specific way to tell their stories, they don't really follow a genre. Things in Italy are not that easy but something mazing can come out of necessity and/or poor means." His *Short Skin*, a dramedy, if we have to chose a genre for it, which has already earned distribution in the US, is a hilarious coming-of-age tale that captures the turbulences, physical and emotional, of adolescence. A jewel made with a limited budget and a short amount of time.

Eleonora Danco's film [N-Capace](#) [13] is, instead, something completely unique. "I created my own genre. The film defeats genre, it is not a documentary, it is a sort of surreal tale" the director said of her autobiographical story. "I had the necessity to work on what I saw around me." Shot in her seaside hometown of Terracina, Danco involves the locals through interviews and by encouraging them to participate in her drama. Adolescents and old people sing and dance in a series of theatrical tableaux.

Cristina Comenicini's *Latin Lover*, the film that opened the festival, is instead a classic comedy set in the microcosm of a large, atypical family that pokes fun at the traditional concept of the Italian latin lover and pays homage to the Italian cinema of the great masters. "These maestros had total freedom of expression," Comenicini revealed, "They made whatever film they wanted to make. This freedom is lacking now, due to budget issues or else." "The more I work," Francesca Archibugi added, "The more I realize that the story itself is not important, it is the way you tell it that is." *An Italian Name* is a crowd-pleaser that can be seen as an Italian variation of *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*

Unique are also the other films in the showcase and that is what makes Italian cinema special. *The Ice Forest*, the thriller by Claudio Noce starring Giannini, is the only one that has been compared to a Hollywood thriller, although its majestic Alpine setting, the issue of human trafficking on the Italian-Slovenian border and its shooting technique make it incomparable to anything else. Each film has its personality.

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