

**CSC** Centro Sperimentale  
di Cinematografia

19•20•21 GIUGNO 2024



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MINISTERO  
DELLA  
CULTURA

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The word diaspora comes from the Greek word for dispersion; it refers to the scattering of a people, the uprooting of individuals. To being torn away from one's homeland or kin. Many peoples have suffered this injustice, which always leaves a deep scar. We asked ourselves where all the filmmakers, artists and writers who have been scattered around the world now find themselves living, and decided to offer them these premises in the Centro Sperimentale di Cinematografia as a common home for three days; a place in which they could re-assemble the remnants of their ideas, projects and frustrations, and recompose the diaspora of artists. We have given them the means to screen their works, and a microphone to talk about them. Between two fronts, there is always a no-man's land, a deserted strip inhabited by fear – but also hope. We want to occupy this land, and turn it into a place of meditation, in the same open field where art and dreams tend to meet.

La parola diaspora ha origine greca, significa dispersione. Disseminare un popolo, sradicare un individuo, un'anima. Allontanare dalla propria terra, dal proprio sangue originario. Molti popoli hanno subito un affronto simile. Che è sempre una lacerazione. Ci siamo domandati allora dove fossero quei cineasti, artisti, scrittori divisi e riseminati altrove. Abbiamo deciso di offrire loro un luogo, questo luogo, il Centro Sperimentale di Cinematografia, che per tre giorni diventa una casa comune dove raccogliere ciò che è stato disperso delle loro idee, dei loro progetti e delle loro frustrazioni. Ricomporre la diaspora degli artisti. Offriamo uno schermo per mostrare le loro opere e un microfono per parlarne. Tra due fronti c'è sempre una terra di nessuno, un lembo deserto, abitato dalla paura ma anche dal desiderio. Vogliamo occupare questa terra, perché diventi luogo di meditazione umana, nello stesso campo aperto dove l'arte, per sua abitudine, incontra il sogno.

# 19 GIUGNO

## LA DIASPORA DEI CINEASTI

### APERTURA

**Teatro Alessandro Blasetti**

ore 9.30

Presentazione di Sergio Castellitto

ore 10.30

**Teatro Alessandro Blasetti**

Incontro con Khali Joreige

**Je veux voir**

di Joana Hadjithomas e Khalil Joreige (Francia/Libano, 2008, 75')

**Aula magna**

Incontro con Maryna Er Gorbach e Mehmet Er

**Klondike**

di Maryna Er Gorbach (Ucraina/Turchia, 2022, 100')

**Sala cinema**

Incontro con Saeed Al Batal

**Still Recording**

di Saeed Al Batal & Ghiath Ayoub (Libano/Siria/Francia/Germania/Qatar, 2018, 120')

ore 14.30

**Teatro Alessandro Blasetti**

Incontro con Michel Khleifi

**La Mémoire fertile**

di Michel Khleifi (Palestina/Belgio, 1980, 104')

**Aula magna**

Incontro con Mahamat-Saleh Haroun

**Daratt**

di Mahamat-Saleh Haroun (Ciad/Francia/Austria/Belgio, 2006, 96')

**Sala cinema**

Incontro con Hala Alabdalla

**As If We Were Catching a Cobra**

di Hala Alabdalla (Siria/Emirati Arabi Uniti, 2012, 120')

CHIUSURA

**Teatro Alessandro Blasetti**

ore 18

Lectio Magistralis del Card. Gianfranco Ravasi

Introduce Sergio Castellitto

ore 19

Conversazione tra David Grossman e Margaret Mazzantini

# 20 GIUGNO

## LO SGUARDO DEL CINEMA ITALIANO SULLE GUERRE

APERTURA

**Teatro Alessandro Blasetti**

ore 10.30

Incontro con Massimo D'Anolfi e Martina Parenti

**Guerra e pace**

di Massimo D'Anolfi e Martina Parenti (Italia/Svizzera, 2020, 128')

**Aula magna**

Incontro con Stefano Savona, Jean Mallet, Giulia Tagliavia

**La strada dei Samouni**

di Stefano Savona (Italia/Francia, 2018, 126')

### Sala cinema

Incontro con Giacomo Abbruzzese

#### Archipel

di Giacomo Abbruzzese (Francia/Palestina/Italia, 2010, 23')

a seguire

#### Disco Boy

di Giacomo Abbruzzese (Italia/Francia/Belgio/Polonia, 2023, 92')

ore 14.30

#### Teatro Alessandro Blasetti

Incontro con Eida Ferri

#### I bambini di Gaza

di Loris Lai (Italia/Belgio, 2024, 90')

### Aula magna

Incontro con Costanza Quatriglio e Mohammad Jan Azad

#### Sembra mio figlio

di Costanza Quatriglio (Italia, 2018, 103')

### Sala cinema

Incontro con Francesca Mannocchi

#### Isis Tomorrow - The Lost Souls of Mosul

di Francesca Mannocchi e Alessio Romenzi (Italia/Germania, 2018, 80')

### CHIUSURA

#### Teatro Alessandro Blasetti

ore 18

Conversazione con Rami Elhanan e Bassam Aramin

## 21 GIUGNO NEI PAESI IN GUERRA

### APERTURA

#### Teatro Alessandro Blasetti

ore 9.30

Incontro con Hagai Levi

ore 10.30

#### Teatro Alessandro Blasetti

Incontro con Mohamed Kordofani

#### Goodbye Julia

di Mohamed Kordofani (Sudan/Egitto/Germania/Francia/Svezia/Arabia Saudita, 2023, 120')

### Aula magna

Incontro con Ariel Nasr e Sahraa Karimi

#### The Forbidden Reel

di Ariel Nasr (Canada/Afghanistan, 2019, 119')

### Sala cinema

Incontro con Ali Asgari

#### Ayeh haye zamini (Terrestrial Verses)

di Ali Asgari e Alireza Khatami (Iran, 2023, 77')

ore 14.30

#### Teatro Alessandro Blasetti

Incontro con Yervant Gianikian e Lucrezia Lerro

#### Prigionieri della guerra

di Angela Ricci Lucchi e Yervant Gianikian (Italia, 1995, 64')



a seguire

### Oh! Uomo

di Angela Ricci Lucchi e Yervant Gianikian (Italia, 2004, 71')

### Aula magna

Incontro con Dieudo Hamadi

### Downstream to Kinshasa

di Dieudo Hamadi (Repubblica Democratica del Congo, 2020, 90')

### Sala cinema

Incontro con Jasmila Zbanic

### Quo vadis, Aida?

di Jasmila Zbanic (Bosnia e Erzegovina/Romania/Austria/Paesi Bassi/  
Germania/Polonia /Francia /Norvegia /Turchia, 2020, 101')

### CHIUSURA

### Teatro Alessandro Blasetti

Incontro con Aleksandr Sokurov

ore 18

### Fairytale

di Aleksandr Sokurov (Russia/Belgio, 2022, 98')

All films are presented in their original version with English subtitles.

The programme may be subject to change. We recommend checking out our site:

<https://www.fondazioneccsc.it>

## JE VEUX VOIR

by Joana Hadjithomas and Khalil Joreige (France/Lebanon, 2008, 75')

Catherine Deneuve is invited to Lebanon to receive a fictitious award. Starting from this assumption, she is welcomed by an actor who brings her to visit the ruins of his native village (destroyed in 2006 by an armed conflict). The film explores the themes of the depiction of war, the perception of reality, and the consequences of violence on individuals and communities. It offers a profound reflection on the nature of war and its consequences on society.

### Directors' comments

"Faced with this war of unprecedented violence, with the shocking television images, what kind of images could still be produced? What can cinema do in such a violent situation? Our sadness and pain absolutely had to be countered by something audacious. We immediately had the idea for the film's plot: introducing fiction, the dream brought by an 'icon' of the cinema into a situation which could apparently only lend itself to a regime of images hurriedly classified as real or documentary. And, through this presence, ask questions: what can fiction do, what can cinema do? And then attempt to answer by proposing to Catherine Deneuve, an actor we greatly admire and who, with her choices, represents Cinema, that she go to the southern border of Lebanon with Rabih Mroué, an artist and an actor with whom we collaborate closely. It is a question of alchemy. What will this encounter cause in such a context? What will happen?"

### Biographies

Joana Hadjithomas and Khalil Joreige were born in Beirut in 1969 to refugee families, one of Greek, Syrian, and Lebanese origin, and the other Palestinian and Lebanese. They spent their childhood in Beirut during the Lebanese civil war. Both of them studied literature at University Paris Nanterre and cinema in New York. They are married. They have been collaborating since the 90s on videos, films, photography and installations.

As directors and artists, Joana Hadjithomas and Khalil Joreige question the production of images and representations, the construction of fictions, and the writing of history. Their works create thematic and formal links between photography, video, performance, installation, sculpture and cinema, both documentary and fiction.

Together, they have directed numerous films (among others, *Khiyam* 2000-2007, 2008; *A Perfect Day*, 2005; *Je veux voir*, 2008; *The Lebanese Rocket Society*, 2012; and *Memory Box*, 2021), which have been presented and awarded at the most important international film festivals.

**KLONDIKE** by Maryna Er Gorbach (Ukraine/Turkey, 2022, 100')

The name of the film is that of a region of Canada, famous for the gold rush: Klondike. Like Klondike, the Donbass region in Ukraine is a territory with rich and coveted resources: for this reason, too, it has taken the form of a theatre of war. Klondike is set during July 2014 not far from the city of Donetsk, the unofficial capital of Donbass, on the eastern Ukrainian border with Russia.

A family is suddenly shocked by the shooting down of commercial flight MH17, which happened a few metres from their home. The protagonists, who are expecting a child, find themselves having to deal with the consequences of the war that invades their lives and their house. At the centre of the narrative stands Irka, pregnant and determined, in sharp contrast with her husband Tolik, who is weak and susceptible to the promises of pro-Russian separatists, and the tension between him and Irka's brother, Yuryk. The house, a symbol of intimacy, becomes the fulcrum of a dramatic representation that highlights how war radically transforms the family dynamic. With immersive direction, full of sequence shots and long takes, moving between the broken lives, Maryna Er Gorbach has managed to portray the wounds of a people at war long before the media trained their spotlights on it. She won the Director's Prize in the World Cinema section of the Sundance Festival 17 days before the start of military operations by Putin's Russia.

**Director's comments**

"I would define *Klondike* as an anti-war film. This is my personal artistic response to militarism. [...] There is a part in *Klondike* in which I use documentary footage of the MH-17 plane catastrophe. For a moment during the film, we made the cinema screen simply a television. It is precisely in this moment that spectators and characters end up finding themselves in exactly the same position. I think we all watch the news, and we are addicted to it in some way. The difference between us and the people of Ukraine is that for them, there is tangible danger in real life. [...] My filmmaking is part of my life. This is how I feel and see reality. It is the time of my observation. I am aware of the fact that for some people, this style can seem slow, but it is what genuinely belongs to me. There are those who film themselves on Tik Tok, while I am passionate about shooting in a single sequence. Maybe one day, perhaps in 10 or 15 years, *Klondike* will be remembered as a memory of the feelings of a woman in 2022. For me, life is made 'in blocks'."

**Biography**

The Ukrainian director Maryna Er Gorbach (born in 1981 in Kyiv) writes, directs, produces, and edits films, often together with her husband, the Turkish director Mehmet Bahadır Er. Maryna studied at Kyiv National I.K. Karpenko-Kary University for Theatre, Cinema and Television. After graduating, she directed a weekly 30-episode documentary for

ICTV. She obtained her degree in Poland, where she was a student of the famous director Andrzej Wajda.

She has directed films that have been chosen for several prestigious festivals such as Berlin, Rotterdam, Montreal, Tokyo, New York and Stockholm, where they received numerous awards. Mehmet Bahadır Er and Maryna Er Gorbach made their first feature film, *Black Dogs Barking*, in 2009. *Klondike*, 2022, made a sweep of awards: after the Directing Award for best foreign film at the Sundance Film Festival 2022, it went to the Ecumenical Jury at the Berlinale, and on the Grand Prix at the Freiburg International Film Festival, where it also obtained the Critics' Award, and the awards for best photography and best film at the 41<sup>st</sup> Istanbul Film Festival.

**STILL RECORDING** by Saeed Al Batal & Ghiath Ayoub (Lebanon, Syria, France, Germany, Qatar, 2018, 128')

In 2011, Saeed, a twenty-year-old engineering student, went to Douma to participate in the Syrian revolution. He was later joined by his friend Milad, a student at the faculty of Fine Arts in the University of Damascus. For more than four years, Saeed and Milad filmed everyday life against a backdrop of bombings, music, death, madness, youth, making do, and life. From the initial euphoria to anguish and disenchantment.

The film is an x-ray of a territory that has not been subjugated, an exceptionally intense look at revolution and the armed struggle, at dreams and doubts, and at fear and love, in a compelling cinematic and human movement.

**Directors' comments**

"We lost a lot of possessions during the bombings: cameras, hardware, footage, computers. In the four hundred and fifty hours of filming in Douma, we have things that start but never finish, because the cameraman begins filming but then has to stop and turn to other things. The language of the film is a sort of daily diary, events take place quickly, there is no time to think about what the plot of the film is. That is why it is called *Still Recording*. For me, as a filmmaker, the most interesting thing is the concept of the "camera that protects the cameraman". It doesn't protect from the bombs, or from hunger, but from something more threatening: madness. It is art at the expense of war, life against death." (Ghiath Ayoub).

"We depended on the camera to reveal the truth about what was happening ... It is the last line of defence that we have against lies." (Saeed al Batal).

**Biographies**

Saeed Al Batal, born in 1988 in Tartous, Syria, is a citizen journalist, photographer and director. In addition to holding several photography and journalism workshops, he has

worked as a reporter for various radio stations, and has written articles on Syrian current affairs for agencies and institutions all over the world. He is one of the founders of the *Sam Lenses* online gallery, and the *Humans of Syria* project. Ghiath Ayoub, born in 1989 in Yabrod, Syria, is a director and visual artist who graduated from the faculty of Fine Arts in the University of Damascus. He is the co-founder of several open spaces in Beirut. Ghiath has also participated in various civic initiatives such as *Humans of Syria*, in graphic design projects, and in films that have been published on websites and screened in exhibition spaces all around the world.

## LA MÉMOIRE FERTILE *La Mémoire fertile* by Michel Khleifi (Palestine/Belgium, 1980, 104')

This is the first film to have been shot by a Palestinian director inside Israeli borders since 1967. Neither documentary nor fiction, the film recounts the life of two very different Palestinian women: Farah, a widow who lives with her children and grandchildren, and Sarah, a novelist from the West Bank.

Michel Khleifi closely observes the two women in their everyday life and highlights their very different personalities. Their divergent opinions and lives play an important role in underlining their shared condition as Palestinians under Israeli rule, and as women in a society dominated by men. And yet, in spite of these contrasts, the mother and the intellectual share the same struggle for freedom and dignity.

### Director's comments

"I wanted to show a profound reality: there are people who struggle with their bodies and their souls in Palestine, but without these two women, these people are not much. The two women are the majority: I wanted this majority to have a voice, and to see their own contradictions so they could reinvent new forms of resistance.

On the other hand, when I think about militant cinema, I often think there is a need for militancy porn. By filming war, we demystify militancy because we show its horror, and we instil demobilizing fear. Furthermore, I didn't want to make a national sociological film: I wanted the enemy to be afraid of a metaphysical dimension to show that, in any case, despite might and technology, there is this fertility of memory and the resistance of the people that thousands of bombs cannot kill. For me, militancy means giving hope and creative strength to people, but I would like to point out that I appreciate the plurality of cinema and approaches."

### Biography

Born in Nazareth in 1950 to a working-class Palestinian family, Michel Khleifi is considered the founder of contemporary Palestinian cinema and one of its most original

voices. Having emigrated to Belgium in 1970, he studied theatre and television at the INSAS in Brussels and worked for RTBF (Belgian TV) before making his first feature-length documentary, *La mémoire fertile* (1980), which combined a lyrical aesthetic with a critical political commitment. In 1987 he directed *Wedding in Galilee*, the first feature film entirely shot in Palestine by a Palestinian director, which premiered at the Directors' Fortnight in Cannes and was awarded the international Critics' Award. The film marked the arrival of Palestinian cinema on the international scene. It was followed by three more feature films: *Cantique des pierres* (1990), *L'ordre du jour* (1992), and *Conte des trois diamants* (1995), and the documentaries *Mariages mixtes en Terra Sainte* (1996), and *Route 181 - Fragments d'un voyage en Palestine et Israël* (2002, co-directed with Eyal Sivan). *Zindeeq* (2009) won the Golden Muhr at the Dubai International Film Festival. Khleifi lives in Brussels, where he has taught filmmaking at INSAS for more than thirty years, as well as holding other lecturing positions at Columbia University, St Joseph's University in Beirut, and the AM Qattan Foundation in Palestine and Jordan.

## DARATT by Mahamat-Saleh Haroun (Chad/France/Austria/Belgium, 2006, 96')

Armed with a pistol, Atim, a fifteen-year-old boy from Chad, sets out in search of the murderer of his father, who had been killed during the course of the violent civil war. The boy arrives in N'djamena and finds the killer, but the man is not what he expected.

*Daratt* (the word indicates the dry season, in which the film takes place) won the special jury award at the 63<sup>rd</sup> Venice Film Festival, and is one of those films that can start from a precise historical context and sublimate it into a parable on fatherhood and the difficulty of forgiveness. We are, in fact, in Chad in 2006, when the government granted an amnesty to all war criminals, but the relationship between Atim and Nassara follows the elemental and austere movements of any encounter between a father and a son. It captures the less sensationalistic side of Africa, with few hungry children and no breathtaking landscapes, but we get to suffer and rejoice in Atim's choices in a cathartic process that ultimately liberates and stuns.

### Director's comments

"The love for images comes from a beautiful Indian actor whom I had seen up close: she was staring at the camera and, hence, she was looking straight at me. I was nine years old, and it was the first time I had been to the cinema. That image made me happy and at the same time, it traumatized me, I believed that that woman was smiling at me with a smile of love. For me, that image has a sacred aspect. [...] I was in Chad during the civil war, and with this film I wanted to ask questions about evil. [...] The persecutor can be our neighbour, we all have our diabolical side, and everyone can overcome it with an ef-



fort of conscience. The tragedy of civil war is that it never finishes, the thirst for revenge devours us. That is why we must overcome hatred.”

### Biography

Mahamat-Saleh Haroun was born in 1961 in Chad, and he studied in Paris and Bordeaux. In 1994 he made his debut with his first short film, *Maral Tanie*. In 1997, together with his colleague Issa Serge Coelo, he founded an association in Paris which brings together directors of African origin to try to help authors resolve the numerous difficulties and serious problems that afflict the cinematography of the ‘Black Continent’.

These problems became the subject of his first feature film, *Bye Bye Africa*, made in 1999. The film received the CinemAvvenire award and a Special Mention in the Luigi De Laurentiis Award at the 56<sup>th</sup> Venice international Film Festival. His following film, *Abouna*, was presented at the Directors’ Fortnight.

In 2006 he returned to Venice with *Daratt*, which won the Grand Jury Prize, and a Special Mention from the SIGNIS jury. In 2010 he competed in the Cannes Film Festival with *Un homme qui crie*, which won the Jury Prize. In 2013 he was once again in Cannes with *Gri-gris*, and in 2021 with *Lingui*.

**AS IF WE WERE CATCHING A COBRA** by Hala Alabdalla (Syria/United Arab Emirates, 2012, 120’)

In the two years of the film’s production – from the start of summer 2010 to that of 2012 – there were great upheavals in the Middle East, especially in the two countries the film concentrates on, Egypt and Syria. By questioning Egyptian and Syrian cartoonists about their experiences before and after these important historical movements against despotism, the film attempts to measure the newfound freedom that will guarantee the right to freedom of expression, protecting it from censorship. The Syrian writer and journalist Samar Yazbek provides us with her vision and her impressions of Damascus in the months before the Syrian revolution until her exile in France five months later.

### Director’s comments

“Cinema can be a force for change; by narrating our stories, we can inspire awareness and solidarity. [...] War is never an answer, we must always look for ways to reach dialogue and peace. [...] Palestine is an open wound in the heart of the Arab world, it is our moral and political duty to support their cause until they obtain justice and freedom.”

### Biography

Hala Alabdalla is an important Syrian producer and director who has lived and worked in France and in the Middle East since 1981. After having collaborated for several years with

other directors such as Omar Amiralay, she moved into directing with *I Am the One Who Brings Flowers to Her Grave* (2006), the first Syrian film to be presented and awarded at the Venice Film Festival. After that, she made other important documentaries, such as *As If It Were Catching a Cobra* (2012), *Farouk, Besieged Like Me* (2016), and *Omar*

*Amiralay: Sorrow, Time, Silence* (2021). In 2017 she created the programme *Savoir, Voir, Revoir*: a training and directing workshop for young Syrian refugees in Paris, supported by CNC and Arte. Hala is also the director of the Ramad Films company.

**GUERRA E PACE** by Massimo D’Anolfi and Martina Parenti (Italy/Switzerland, 2020, 128’)

*Guerra e pace* recounts the over-a-century-old relationship between cinema and war, from their first encounter way back in 1911, on the occasion of the Italian invasion of Libya, up to the present day. It seems to be a very short step from the sequences filmed by the pioneers of cinema to the footage of today, shot on smartphones by citizens of the world, and the relationship between cinema and war is rock solid.

### Directors’ comments

“*Guerra e pace* arose from a reflection on the diplomacy of today. At the end of 2016 we found ourselves in a street where there were several embassies, and we asked ourselves what value diplomacy held today. This reflection on diplomacy led us to think about foreign policy, and inevitably, about war. In turn, war pushed us to think about the value of images, and about how cinema and images then influence war and its perception, and the reflection on the archives of memory emerged from that. This was, in synthesis, the path that led to the film. As often happens, over time this process, this path, became the material of the film and, in some way, the film itself.”

### Biographies

Martina Parenti was born in Milan in 1972. She took a degree in History and Criticism of Cinema. She has worked for the cinema with various productions, and for television with RAI. Massimo D’Anolfi was born on 7 January 1974 in Pescara. Before dedicating himself to directing, he studied Oriental Literature at the Oriental University in Naples. Together with Martina Parenti he founded the independent production company, Montmorency Film. Considered among the greatest exponents of Italian documentary cinema, they wrote, directed, shot, and edited the films: *I promessi sposi* (2007), *Grandi speranze* (2009), *Il castello* (2011), *Materia oscura* (2013), *L’infinita fabbrica del Duomo* (2015), *Spira mirabilis* (2016), *Guerra e pace* (2020), and the short films *Blu* (2018) and *Una giornata nell’archivio di Piero Bottoni* (2023).

**LA STRADA DEI SAMOUNI** by Stefano Savona (Italy/France,

2018, 126')

Hit by an Israeli bombardment, a family living in the Gaza Strip is decimated. Despite the mourning and the day-to-day difficulties, a year later one of the surviving children organizes his own wedding party. On the thread of memories, real images and an animated story alternate to paint a family portrait before, during and after the tragic events that turned their lives upside down in that January of 2009, when twenty-nine family members were massacred during the 'Cast Lead' operation.

**Director's comments**

"In January 2009, during the Israeli military operation in Gaza, I managed to sneak into the Strip across the Egyptian border, to create a filmed diary of those days of war, which became my film *Piombo Fuso*.

On 20 January, following the retreat of the Israeli army, I made it to the north of the Strip and the city of Gaza, where I came into contact with the extended Samouni family, a community of farmers who up to then had miraculously survived 60 years of conflicts and occupations, and who were dealing for the first time with an unprecedented tragedy. Twenty-nine of their members, mostly women and children, had been killed by an elite unit of the Israeli army; what's more, their houses and fields had been completely destroyed. These dramatic events were later the subject of a UN investigation, the Goldstone report, and an Israeli army commission of inquiry, which acknowledged the military error. I started filming the Samouni immediately, in January 2009.

But right from the start I was in no doubt: my film could not be reduced to a mere account of the massacre, to mourning the tragedy, or to denouncing an injustice. How could I go beyond the wails of desperation of the survivors and the 'iconic' exposure of the tragedy and the bodies of the martyrs? [...] Ever since those first takes, the answer to these questions of mine has come from the Samouni themselves, especially from the young protagonists that I began to follow day after day. [...] Their collective history was rich and complex, full of internal contradictions, short circuits, and unexpected twists. And so, we had to recount their extraordinary human experiences far beyond the dramatic events of 2009."

**Biography**

Born in Palermo in 1969, Stefano Savona studied archaeology and anthropology in Rome. Over the years, he has taken part in archaeological digs in Sudan, Egypt, Turkey and Israel. In 1995 he began to work as a freelance photographer, travelling to many places, including the territory of Turkish Kurdistan. The result of this experience was the exhibition and publication of his volume *Verso il Kurdistan*.

Savona accompanies his photographic work with directing documentary films, focussing in particular on the questions of immigration and minorities fighting for freedom. In 2002 he produced *Un confine di specchi*, a documentary dealing with the theme of migratory exchange between Italy and Tunisia. In 2006 came his feature film *Primavera in Kurdistan*, about the events of the Kurdish PKK guerrillas on the border between Iraq and Turkey, which received the SCAM International Award at the Cinéma du Réel Festival in Paris and a nomination for the David di Donatello. The film *Piombo fuso* (2009), focussing on the Arab-Israeli conflict and shot inside the Gaza Strip, was selected at the Locarno Film Festival and won the Special Jury Prize. In 2010, with Penelope Bortoluzzi, he founded the production company Picofilms in Paris. Savona was then the main producer and director of *Palazzo delle Aquile*, a collective film on the topic of housing in the Palermo area, which won the Grand Prix of the 2011 Cinéma du Réel Festival. Also from 2011 was *Tahrir - Liberation Square*, a documentary on the protest movement that exploded in Egypt in those same months, which was selected at the Locarno Film Festival, the New York Film Festival, and the 2011 Viennale.

In 2018 *La strada dei Samouni* was released, followed in 2023 by *Le mura di Bergamo*, a testimony to the Covid-19 pandemic in the Lombardy city.

**ARCHIPEL** by Giacomo Abbruzzese (Fr./Pal./It. 2010, 23')

Abdel enters Israel illegally by passing under the wall that divides the city, through the sewer system. He works in a restaurant in West Jerusalem. On his day off, he decides to return home with a mysterious white chest. It is the beginning of a long journey.

**Director's comments**

"I wanted to tell the everyday story of a man who is constantly on the move, out of necessity, forced to continuously search for entry and exit points, until he gets lost in a territory he himself no longer recognizes. Denying the current political partition of the territory (the Palestinian Territories and Israel are never mentioned), *Archipel* shows the constraints and the difficulties of an unprecedented and mysterious journey, eschewing the use of the spectacular. There is nothing extraordinary about the organization of oppression."

**DISCO BOY** by Giacomo Abbruzzese (Italy/France/Belgium/Poland, 2023, 92')

Aleksei, a Byelorussian fleeing from his past, reaches Paris and enlists in the Foreign Legion in order to obtain a French passport. In the Niger Delta, Jomo, a young revolutionary, fights against the oil companies that have devastated his village. His sister

Udoka dreams of escaping, aware of the fact that, by now, everything is lost. Their destinies will intertwine, beyond the borders of life and death.

#### Director's comments

"For a long time, I had wanted to make an atypical war film, a film in which the Other truly existed, completely, and was not simply an enemy or a victim. It is the story of a Byelorussian who crosses Europe, arrives in Paris, and joins the Foreign Legion, and then the story of his antagonist, who is fighting to defend his village in Nigeria from exploitation by oil companies. Deep down, it is the story of a metamorphosis, of a communion with the other, which ultimately opens towards a utopia.

I became interested in MEND [The Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta, ed.] about fifteen years ago; it was one of the first ecoterrorist movements in the world. In almost all my films, I have been interested in armed struggle: how far one can go, precipitating into violence, for reasons one believes to be right. It was no coincidence that this ecological vanguard came from the Niger Delta, one of the most polluted places in the world. I was born and raised in Taranto, and I always carry my city with me, for better or for worse. And in *Disco Boy*, Taranto is in the factories of the Niger in the environmental devastation."

#### Biography

Giacomo Abbruzzese was born in Taranto in 1983, and he lives and works in Paris and Madrid. After spending two years as a photographer in Israel and Palestine, he graduated in France at Le Fresnoy. His short films have obtained nominations and awards at numerous international festivals, including Oberhausen, Clermont Ferrand, Viennale, Mar del Plata, Indielisboa, Nouveau Cinéma Montreal, Angers, and Turin. He was Artist in Residence at the Cinéfondation of the Cannes Film Festival, at the Cité Internationale des Arts in Paris, and at the Clermont Ferrand Short Film Festival. *Disco Boy*, his first feature film, was presented in competition at the Berlinale 73, where it won the Silver Bear for Hélène Louvart's Cinematography.

## I BAMBINI DI GAZA - SULLE ONDE DELLA LIBERTÀ

by Loris Lai  
(Italy/Belgium, 2024, 90')

The Gaza Strip, 2003. Israeli settlements are still present near Gaza, and the second intifada is underway. 43% of the population are under the age of 14.

This is what the initial captions say, after the opening credits, over which bullet shots and explosions reverberate in black. The theatre of war is well known. Mahmud is an eleven-year-old Palestinian who lives alone in Gaza with his young mother Farah, a widow of a 'martyr' of the resistance, and he helps her to sell bunches of thyme, fluttering be-

tween alarms, bombardments, and curfews in a city devastated by an endless conflict that strikes civilians blindly. On the beach where he goes to learn to surf, Mahmud sees a boy moving furtively and re-entering the settlement near the checkpoints on the road: it is Alon, the only child of a Jewish couple, and he shares Mahmud's passion for surfing.

#### Director's comments

"[The film, ed.] was conceived some time ago, around 2013, when I read Nicoletta Bertolotti's book for the first time. As a director I had served a long apprenticeship in advertising, in fashion, and in music videos, but I was struck by this story, which is almost a Shakespearian archetype, Montague versus Capulet. A clash by birth, not by choice. I was also captivated by the connection with surfing, as I am also a surfer in Los Angeles, where I have lived for many years. I have always been interested in the situation in the Middle East, but from that moment on, I started doing more in-depth research.

Most of all, I wanted to tell the story through the eyes of children, which always gives more freedom in terms of storytelling. It allows you to explore the surreal, but also to look at everything with a purity that adults, who are more controlled, do not have. [...] In 2014 I went to Gaza as a photojournalist for the *London Times*, because I wanted to see the reality with my own eyes before I wrote the screenplay. Obviously, I was aware of it on an intellectual level, but being there in person was something else entirely. That is where the journey began with my co-writer, Dahlia Heyman, and the long search for producers. There were several difficulties from this point of view, because everyone liked the story, but it was also pretty much untouchable. Above and beyond the events of 7 October, the situation in Gaza has always been something so tragic as to be impossible to narrate."

#### Biography

Born in Rome, he studied classical piano for many years. He graduated in Philosophy and Letters from the Roma Tre University, and studied experimental cinema in Los Angeles at UCLA.

He has directed various music videos, including *Love is Requited*. The song by the singer-songwriter Elisa won the Nastro d'Argento, and the video won the 10<sup>th</sup> edition of the Roma Videoclip - Il Cinema Incontra La Musica.

*I bambini di Gaza* is his debut film.

## SEMBRA MIO FIGLIO

by Costanza Quatriglio (Italy, 2018, 103')

Ismail lives in Europe with his brother Hassan, with whom he fled persecution in Afghanistan as a child. His mother, who has never given up hope of hearing news of her children, does not recognize him today. After several disturbing telephone calls, Ismail goes to

face his family's fate by coming to terms with the senselessness of war and with the history of his people, the Hazara.

The film is shot impeccably, even in its filming techniques, and it relies on the dominant features of silence, of words spoken at just the right moment, and of an intimate thread that runs through the entire movie. A film of fine powder, heartrending telephone calls, and ultimately also of civil weight equal to the intrepidity, also productive, with which it was shot.

#### Director's comments

"Ismail's body, his meekness, his voice suspended between the most cramped corners of Europe, leads us somewhere else, to a place that belongs to us much more than we are willing to imagine: from the evocation of faraway places in time and space to a concreteness made of flesh and blood, the film journeys in search of answers that do not exist; what does exist is the possibility, for Ismail, of speaking out, of using the words that up to now had been denied him, because nobody, until then, had listened to him. In the mother tongue we recognize the language of the world, of ancient piety that has no homeland, no country, no borders, and no frontiers."

#### Biography

Born in Palermo, Costanza Quatriglio has been passionate about photography since her high school years. She bought her first camera, a Yashica, with money she won for an essay she wrote about the mafia, and she served her time in the darkroom. After graduating in Law, she moved Rome and was accepted to the Centro Sperimentale di Cinematografia, where she obtained a diploma in directing. She made her debut in 2003 with *L'isola*, which was presented at the Directors' Fortnight at the 56<sup>th</sup> Cannes Film Festival, where it won important awards, including the Cicae Prize and the Fipresci Award. She won the Silver Ribbon twice in the best documentary category: with *Terramatta* in 2013 and *Triangle* in 2015. Among her documentary films presented at major international festivals (Venice Film Festival, Locarno Film Festival, Turin, Madrid, Rome...) and winners of several awards are: *Ècosaimale?* (2000), *Il bambino Gioacchino* (2000), *La borsa di Hélène* (2000), *L'insonnia di Devi* (2001), *Raiz* (2004) *Il mondo addosso* (2006), *Il mio cuore umano* (2009), *Con il fiato sospeso* (2013), and *87 ore* (2015).

In 2018 she returned to the Locarno Film Festival with the film *Sembra mio figlio*, which won, among other awards, a Ciak d'Oro and the Silver Ribbon for Legality. In 2018 she received the Visioni Dal Mondo Award, the Amnesty International Award, and the CIR Award. In 2020 she directed the musical film *Palermo sospesa*, in 2021 she made the TV Movie *La bambina che non voleva cantare*, inspired by the biography of Nada Malanima, and *Trafficante di virus*, inspired by the story of the scientist Ilaria Capua, presented at the Turin Film Festival.

In 2024 she made the documentary *Il cassetto segreto*, dedicated to her father, the journalist Giuseppe Quatriglio, presented at the Forum of the 74<sup>th</sup> Berlinale. She has lectured for 20 years on film direction, documentary filmmaking and reality dramaturgy. She is among the founders of the Scuola d'Arte Cinematografica Gian Maria Volonté. Since 2019 she has been the artistic director of the CSC documentary course.

## ISIS, TOMORROW - THE LOST SOULS OF MOSUL

by Francesca Mannocchi and Alessio Romenzi (Italy/Germany, 2018, 80')

*Isis, Tomorrow - The Lost Souls of Mosul* explores the devastating consequences of the war against Isis in Mosul, focussing on the broken lives of the survivors and children who lived under the caliphate regime. The documentary retraces the long months of the war through the voices of the children of the militiamen, trained in combat and in kamikaze suicide, following their fates in the complexity of the post-war period. A post-war period made up of child-widows and marginalized children, where the blood of battles makes way for vendettas and daily retaliation, with violence as the only response to violence.

#### Directors' comments

"Isis has lost Mosul. But is it really defeated? Or does the real war – for those who experience it and for the survivors – begin the day after the proclaimed victory? This film arose from questions that became more insistent during the months of war in Mosul, and which accompanied us in the exhausting post-war phases: what needs to be done to save the hundreds of thousands of children who grew up for three years under Isis? How can we avoid the possibility that these children are the fertile breeding ground of the terrorism of tomorrow?"

#### Biographies

Francesca Mannocchi, born in Rome on 1 October 1981, is an Italian journalist, writer and documentary maker. She has collaborated with national and international newspapers, and with various television channels. She has made several reportages in Iraq, Libya, Lebanon, Syria, Tunisia, Egypt, Afghanistan, Turkey, Yemen, Ukraine, Somalia and Palestine. Her work concentrates on the story of migration and war.

As a reporter, she has won several journalism awards, including the Giustolisi Award for *Missione impossibile*, an investigation into migrant trafficking and Libyan prisons. In 2019 she published her first novel, *Io Khaled vendo uomini e sono innocente*, with which she won the Estense Award. In the same year she also published her book *Porti ciascuno la sua colpa*.

In 2021 she published her memoir *Bianco è il colore del danno*, followed in 2022 by *Dall'Ucraina all'Afghanistan, i conflitti di oggi raccontati ai ragazzi*.

In the same year, Francesca Mannocchi won the Rizzi Award, the European Award for Investigative and Judicial Journalism, and the Flaiano Award.

Alessio Romenzi, born in Colle Sant'Angelo in 1974, is an Italian photographer and documentary maker whose photos appear in major international newspapers. He has also collaborated with international organizations including Amnesty International, FAO, UNICEF, UNESCO, the international Committee of the Red Cross, Save the Children, and War Child International. His work focusses on the story of the Arab Spring, Syrian refugees, migration in Libya, and the realities of crisis situations in the Middle East, Africa and Europe. Alessio Romenzi was one of the first photographers to enter Syria clandestinely: his photos documented the protests against the regime of Bashar al-Assad. In 2018, after the liberation of Mosul from Islam, he produced the documentary *Isis, Tomorrow. The Lost Souls of Mosul* together with Francesca Mannocchi, which was presented at the 75<sup>th</sup> Venice Film Festival.

## GOODBYE JULIA by Mohamed Kordofani

(Sudan/Egypt/Germany/France/Sweden/Saudi Arabia, 2023, 120')

*Goodbye Julia* tells the story of two women who represent the complicated relationship and the differences between the communities of Northern and Southern Sudan. It is set in Khartoum during Sudan's last years as a unified country, not long before the separation of South Sudan in 2011. Mona, an upper-class former popular singer from the north, who lives with her husband Akram, is trying to deal with her sense of guilt for having caused the death of a man from the south by employing Julia, his unsuspecting widow, as her maid. The film dramatizes the tension and the ethnic divisions between North and South Sudan, using the relationship between Mona and Julia as a microcosm of the wider social and political conflicts of the country. Kordofani's directing skilfully balances dramatic and thriller elements, offering a profound look at the difficulties of intercultural relationships in a context of inequalities and deep-rooted prejudices.

### Director's comments

"My duty as an artist required me to document history from more of a social than a political perspective. *Goodbye Julia* is a difficult journey through the collective memory of the Sudanese people, which deals with the daily life of two women bound by the unusual social and political situations that have left a deep impression on them. The screenplay is inspired by the stages of reconciliation, and addresses themes such as remorse, compensation, repentance, and racism. The film examines the dynamics of the complicated interaction between Northerners and Southerners, as well as the conflict between pro-

gressivism and conservatism, and deals with the process of change that we have to go through in order to be reconciled and healed as people and as a society."

### Biography

Mohamed Kordofani is a Sudanese director and screenwriter. He lives in Bahrain and has worked as an aeronautical engineer. Kordofani originally worked full time as an aeronautical engineer and only later turned to making videos and short films as a part-time activity. Primarily a self-taught director, in 2014 he set up his own company, Kordofani Films, producing music videos, promotional films, and event coverage, to support his directing activities financially. He was awarded Best Director with the Taharqa International Award for Arts for his 2015 short film *Gone for Gold*. His second short film, *Nyer-kuk* (2016), received numerous awards, including the Network of Alternative Arab Screens (NAAS) Award at the Carthage Film Festival, the Jury Award at the Oran International Arabic Film Festival, and the Black Elephant Award at the Sudan Independent Film Festival. His following short film, *Kejer's Prison*, was shot in a prison in Khartoum and presents a 13-minute monologue of a distressed soldier attempting to justify the violent actions of military officers against peaceful protestors.

## THE FORBIDDEN REEL by Ariel Nasr (Canada/Afghanistan, 2019, 119')

*The Forbidden Reel* recounts how the Afghan film archive was saved from being destroyed by the Taliban. It is an extraordinary archive that reveals a rich arthouse cinema and reflects a long-forgotten Afghanistan. Under the threat of execution by the Taliban, who were destroying innumerable aspects of Afghan culture, the staff of Afghan Film hid hundreds of reels of film behind a secret wall. The rescued archive, which is still in a vulnerable state in their office in Kabul, uncovers an incredibly rich cinematic history. It shows the facets of a modernist, left-leaning Afghanistan, which had long been sidelined by journalistic images of violence and extremism. In *The Forbidden Reel*, director Ariel Nasr interviews key figures, including the director Latif Ahmadi and the actor Yasmin Yarmal, recounting how Afghan arthouse cinema flourished in the '70s and '80s, even in the midst of intense national turmoil.

Through the archive itself – and by weaving together reconstructions using original film equipment – Nasr writes a moving love letter to an Afghanistan that most of us have never seen before.

### Director's comments

"I wanted the archives to be used in various ways. Ok, here are the films. On the second level, there is the history of Afghanistan through the films. The third level is how we can



metaphorically talk about their lives through their work.”

### Biography

Ariel Nasr is a documentary director. He was born and raised in Halifax, and he studied at the University of King's College. An Afghan, he saw the Afghan war as an important formative influence on his work, focussing his attention on films of Afghan culture and Afghan immigrants in Canada. His many works include *The Boxing Girls of Kabul*, which won the Canadian Screen Award for best short documentary in 2013, and *The Forbidden Reel*, winner of the Audience Award in 2020 at the Hot Docs Canadian International Documentary Festival.

## AYEH HAYE ZAMINI (TERRESTRIAL VERSES) by Ali Asgari and

Alireza Khatami (Iran, 2023, 77')

Divided into episodes, *Kafka a Teheran* recounts the daily lives of people of all sexes and ages who find themselves defending their stances regarding various events and conversing with those who respect and/or represent the country's authoritarian regime. A frank and harsh film about the absurdity of day-to-day life in Iran, which was shot without waiting for permission from the censor. The original title is *Terrestrial Verses* in honour of the poetess and activist Feroz Farrokhzad (1934-1967). It consists of nine episodes, each one taking the name of its protagonist (David, Selena, Aram, Sadaf, Faezeh Farbod, Siamak, Ali, and Mehri) and it describes the vicissitudes of ordinary people trying to cope with the senseless rules of the regime. Every insignificant deed of daily life leads to questioning power, as a response to the Kafkaesque situations – hence the choice of the title in Italy – experienced by the protagonists, who are ordinary people, with relatively common professions (with the exception of a screenwriter). *Kafka a Teheran* was presented in the Un Certain Regard section of the 76<sup>th</sup> Cannes Film Festival.

### Directors' comments

“Our idea was never to show those in power. [...] We already knew when we were writing that they would always be out of the picture. They are only representatives of the system; their voices change but ultimately these different exponents of a regime that controls everything make up a single person. The important thing was to show in detail what happens to the characters in the frame, their reactions to the madness of the requests, the pressure they undergo. [...] Our film arrives after the killing of Mahsa Amini, an enormous scandal for the government. What is happening in Iran has allowed us to see everything in the light of 'before' and 'after' the founding of the *Woman, Life, Freedom* movement. For the cinema, too, there was a before and there will be an after. As artists,

we could no longer use indirect methods, so we had to decide to be more explicit, but in a deliberately 'artistic' way, making a non-narrative film.

And without asking for permission, as we had had to do for too many years before. By now, people had taken to the streets in Iran. We could no longer use metaphors to tell a story, even if there are some metaphorical scenes at the beginning and at the end.” (Ali Asgari).

“I observed the disturbing escalation of the regime's censorship of Iranian cinema, increasingly pushing directors into a corner and limiting our creative avenues over the course of the last two years. Ali Asgari has experienced the repercussions of this climate first hand. What is even more worrying is the regime's ability to use intimidation. Besides reviewing and censoring content, they employ a web of threats and legal consequences.” (Alireza Khatami).

### Biographies

Ali Asgari is an Iranian director and screenwriter, born in 1982. He studied at the DAMS of the Roma Tre University. He worked as an assistant director before starting to direct his first short films in 2010, which he presented at various festivals.

His short film *Bishtar az do saat* (More Than Two Hours) was selected at the Cannes Film Festival in 2013 and at the Sundance Film Festival in 2014. In 2014, he wrote and directed *La bambina*. After *Disappearance* (2017), he directed *Ta Farda* (2022), and *Terrestrial Verses* (2023), the latter together with Alireza Khatami.

Alireza Khatami was born in Iran in 1980, he worked in the film and advertising industries in Iran and Malaysia before leaving to study for a Master's in Fine Arts in the United States. His work addresses issues of memory, language, and trauma. *Oblivion Verses* (2017) is his first feature film. For this film, he received financial support for screenplay development from the Hubert Bals Fund in 2011. This film won the Horizons Award for Best Screenplay, the FIPRESCI Award for Best First Film, and the Interfilm Award for the promotion of interreligious dialogue in Venice.

## PRIGIONIERI DELLA GUERRA by Angela Ricci Lucchi and Yervant Gianikian

(Italy, 1995, 64')

'War writings' transposed into a film; diaries and letters of soldiers that are told through images. A film on the Great War, which is made up of cinematographic materials collected in the archives of the great empires that faced off against each other, mainly Tsarist and Austro-Hungarian. Thus emerges the contrast between the military 'report films' on the conditions of prisoners of war, of orphans, refugees, women and children, and of the fallen of both sides. But above all, it follows the events of different ethnic groups on the various fronts who, in the wake of defeats, suffered deportation to places

far from their countries of origin.

## OH! UOMO

by Angela Ricci Lucchi and Yervant Gianikian (Italy, 2004, 71')

The third act of the trilogy on the First World War, which began with *Prigionieri della guerra*, and continued with *Su tutte le vette è pace*. This time, the work focusses on the early post-war period: from the emblems of totalitarianism to the individual physicality of human suffering. It is the representation of the 'new man', who has emerged from the war full of anger, ready for the totalitarian experience. Like the previous productions, the film was made using historic materials deposited in various Italian and European archives.

### Directors' comments

"Today, we are in a permanent state of war. We began reporting on the war in 1986 with *Dal Polo all'Equatore* and for thirty years or so we have continued to retrace the First and the Second World Wars, the Armenian question, and emigrations. Time is continuous repetition, as Gianbattista Vico emphasized: history repeats itself. [...] We have always worked on the past, which for us, speaks of the present, while historical time perfectly reflects this downtrodden humanity of our days. Historical time and human time overlap in pain. We do nothing except observe and recall the continuous repetition of history, which occurs through violence."

### Biographies

The lives of Angela Ricci Lucchi (Lugo, 1942 - Milan, 2018) and Yervant Gianikian (Merano, 1942) are closely interwoven in a profound personal and professional bond, which led them to collaborate on nearly all of their artistic production. He was an architect of Armenian origin, and she was a painter who studied under Kokoschka. Starting in the Seventies, the couple dedicated themselves exclusively to artistic production, making several short films of experimental and avant-garde cinema. An emblematic example of this period are the so-called 'scented films', whose screenings were accompanied by the diffusion of aromatic essences that interact with the film. Then, from the 1980s, the first feature-length documentaries began to be produced. Maintaining an innovative and experimental approach, the documentary works focus in particular on the manipulation of already existing footage, in accordance with the aesthetics of found footage. A creative reuse of pre-existing archive material, with particular attention to images of war and the colonial period. Recurring themes in their cinematographic and artistic production are the exploration of the concepts of war and peace, the theme of imperialism, and the exploitation of disadvantaged people. Their works, on the border between visual art and experimental cinema, have been screened at numerous international film festivals.

## DOWNSTREAM TO KINSHASA

by Dieudo Hamadi (Democratic Republic of Congo, 2020, 90')

For six bloody days in June 2000, the Congolese city of Kisangani was the scene of deadly violence in the armed conflict between Uganda and Rwanda. More than 10,000 grenades exploded, killing thousands of people and wounding thousands more. Since then, the victims of the Six Day War have been fighting to obtain recognition and compensation. Outraged by the indifference of those in power, they decide to undertake a perilous journey along the Congo River to Kinshasa, the country's capital, to make their voices heard.

### Director's comments

"In direct cinema, reality cannot be predicted. So the most important thing is where you choose to be, where you put your camera. This is what makes the difference, above and beyond sensitivities and intentions. The position of the camera is fundamental, and my job is to always find that place, always, to capture what I'm looking for. [...] In my case, it is the subject of the film that dictates the form. It is true that the films I make are similar in terms of their form, but this happens because I have no desire to search far away, because every time I realize that with my style of direct cinema, I have been able to recount a certain story in the way that it presented itself to me. [...] My work starts after that of the journalist, and it goes further. And within everything I choose to show, I am always looking for something that can be of value beyond what I show, something that can describe the country in a different way, something that allows us to see that which is invisible to the camera."

### Biography

Dieudo Hamadi was born on 22 February 1984 in Kisangani, in the Democratic Republic of Congo. His adolescence was strongly influenced by the Six Day War, the appalling armed conflict between Uganda and Rwanda, fought between 5 and 10 June 2000, right on the soil of his hometown. This event undoubtedly played a crucial role in his decision to take up the profession of documentary director, with particular sensitivity to the political and social events of his country and his land. He made his debut in 2010 with a short documentary film titled *Dames en attente*, which won him an award at the Cinéma du Reel Film Festival. That was followed in 2013 by *Atalaku*, focussed on the Congolese presidential elections in 2011, and *Examen d'état*, in 2014, in which he deals with the condition of students in his hometown, Kisangani. With *Maman Colonel*, a documentary about a policewoman, in which he tackles the topic of sexual abuse, he won the Ecumenical Jury Prize at the Berlin International Film Festival.

In 2018 *Kinshasa Makambo* was released, which was presented at the Toronto International Film Festival. It tells the story of three young democratic activists involved in the protests in 2016 against the president of the Congo, Joseph Kabila. In 2020, his documentary *Downstream to Kinshasa* was included in the official selection of the Cannes Film Festival, which was, however, suspended on account of the pandemic. The documentary talks about the survivors of the Six Day War, the conflict that he had witnessed (and seen its effects on his people) firsthand, when he was sixteen years old.

## QUO VADIS, AIDA? by Jasmila Zbanic

(Bosnia and Herzegovina/Romania/Austria/Netherlands/ Germany/Poland/France/Norway/Turkey, 2020, 101')

In 1995, after the evacuation of the city of Srebrenica, Muslim Bosnian citizens sought refuge in a UN refugee camp. Aida, a translator with the Blue Berets, finds herself in the difficult position of having to represent an organization that seems uninterested in the imminent danger, while the Serbian army advances, and the thousands of displaced people are unable to all get inside the perimeter of protection. Aida struggles in an attempt to save herself, her family, and her fellow citizens, asking for rescue and help, and trying to lead the people with the few weapons she has. But all her attempts are in vain, and Aida finds herself witnessing a genocide that nobody had tried to avoid or hinder.

### Director's comments

"I believe that cinema is a unique and powerful tool: it places an audience for 100 minutes in a situation in which the people can identify with the characters on the screen. When we hear the news or read an article, we receive information; cinema, on the other hand, gives us inimitable completeness and fullness: we feel the vibrations of the image and the sound in our eyes and on our skin; it is a truly complete experience. Many people who have visited Srebrenica have told me that they learned a great deal about the genocide that took place in 1995 by going to those places, but they also told me that only when you see the film do you really understand what it must have been like for an ordinary human being to go through it. That is the only way that you realize that war is not a question of numbers: if you say 8372 people died, it is a big number, but to see them in a film, in this case with the faces of Aida's children, is completely different, because they could be your children, your father, your mother, and that changes everything. That's why, for me cinema really is one of the most beautiful ways that human beings have for communicating."

### Biography

Jasmila Zbanic is a Bosnian director, screenwriter and film producer born on 17 December 1974 in Sarajevo, in Bosnia and Herzegovina. She is one of the most important figures in contemporary Balkan cinema, known above all for her work in arthouse cinema, and for her social commitment through her works.

Her film career emerged in the context of the conflicts and the tragedies she experienced during the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina in the '90s. After graduating from the Academy of Performing Arts in Sarajevo, she spent some time in the United States, working as a puppeteer in the Bread and Puppet Theatre and as a clown in a Lee DeLong workshop.

On her return to Bosnia in 1997, she founded the artistic collective Deblokada, through which she made documentaries, audiovisual works, and short films that were presented at internationally important exhibitions, such as the 3<sup>rd</sup> Manifesta in Ljubljana in 2000, the Kunsthalle of the Fridericianum Museum in Kassel in 2004, and the Istanbul Biennale in 2003. Her most famous film is *Grbavica* from 2006, which won the Golden Bear at the Berlin international Film Festival. The film deals with the psychological consequences of war through the story of a mother and her daughter who live in Sarajevo after the end of the conflict. *Grbavica* was acclaimed by international critics and helped to consolidate Zbanic's reputation as one of the most powerful voices in contemporary Balkan cinema. Subsequently, Zbanic continued to direct and produce films that address complex social and political themes, often drawing inspiration from her personal experience and the historical context of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Her other best-known works include *Na putu* (2010) and *Djeca* (2012), which received recognition and awards in numerous international film festivals. In 2021, Zbanic directed the film *Quo Vadis, Aida?* Receiving a Golden Lion nomination at the 77<sup>th</sup> Venice International Film Festival, and was nominated for an Oscar for Best International Film at the 2021 Oscar Awards. She also won the European Film Award for Best Film and Best Director.

In addition to her cinematic activity, Jasmila Zbanic is also committed to promoting Bosnian cinema and supporting human rights through her art.

## FAIRYTALE by Aleksandr Sokurov (Russia/Belgium, 2022, 98')

A work on the history and the madness of power, but also on the poetics of cinema, which transports the spectator into a Dantesque limbo inhabited by Joseph Stalin, Benito Mussolini, Adolf Hitler and Winston Churchill. The protagonists of the film are absolutely real - they could not be otherwise, considering that the footage is of them, gleaned from the newsreel recordings of the time. Their earthly life has not yet allowed them to leave, and these dictators and potentates of the past argue with each other, each one in his own language, but their main problem is that they are unable to become

history and cross the threshold of oblivion that separates the present from the past.

### Director's comments

"This is a difficult moment; I can't say anything else. It is a time immersed in tragedies, misfortunes, and the collapse of civilization. Entire cities have fallen into ruin, the forests have been reduced to ash, millions of people who lived in rural areas with their heritage of local folk traditions and customs have been wiped out. How can we understand the paradox of human life, of human existence? How can we not once again drown in tears, in desperation, and fail to find answers to the simplest questions? As an author, I will try to look at my heroes with light humour, and even with a sarcastic tone. How will I do this? I don't know.

I will watch the newsreels of those whom we have designated heroes, and I will try to remove the pathos and the majestic grandiosity from people known the world over as examples of power or evil. [...] We smile, we laugh, through a paradoxical perspective we try to understand the point of view of the characters in power who held the destiny of History in their hands. Who were the people they surrounded themselves with, the victors and the vanquished? What would they have said to each other if they had all met together in life? What would they have talked about? What do the people who watch them in the squares or from the trenches think about them? And are all those people really united in their delight and reference? We will try to understand this by looking at the faces of Italian, French, German and English people; we will try to listen to what they are saying in that moment, whispering or shouting."

### Biography

Alexandr Sokurov was born in 1951. On account of his father's numerous assignments, the family moved constantly between various cities in the Soviet Union and Poland. In 1968, Sokurov moved to Gorky, his mother's hometown, and took a degree in History.

He started working at the local television network, where he made several documentaries and live programmes. In 1979 he graduated in directing at VGIK, the Pan-Soviet Institute for Cinematography, making his first feature film, *The Lonely Voice of Man*. The university leaders objected to the film, but it was much appreciated by Andrej Tarkovskij. Thanks to the latter's support, Alexandr Sokurov started to work for Cinestudi Lenfilm in Leningrad, where his early works earned him a reputation as a dissident. Since 1981 he has also worked for the Leningrad Studio for Documentaries, yet none of his films were presented to the general public until the political changes of 1985-1987. In 1991, when the government funds dried up, Alexandr Sokurov began producing videos and for around ten years he developed his extraordinary documentary video technique in his 'creative workshop', the non-governmental company 'North Foundation of Independent

Cinema and Culture', and from 1998 onwards at 'Bereg Productions'. His films have received awards at various festivals, including Berlin, Cannes, Venice, and Locarno (Pardo d'onore 2006). One of his first films to gain international acclaim was *Mother and Son* in 1997, which was followed by *Father and Son*.

Sokurov was the first director to make a feature film in a single sequence shot lasting 96 minutes, *Russian Ark*, 2003. Sokurov filmed a cycle on key characters in the history of the 20<sup>th</sup> century: *Moloch* (1999) about Hitler (Award for Best Screenplay at Cannes), *Toro* (2001) about Lenin, and *Il Sole* (2005) about Emperor Hirohito. Concluding the tetralogy is *Faust*, which won the Golden Lion in Venice in 2011.

Among the numerous awards he has received, mention must be made of the Tertium Millennium Vatican Award, and the EFA Lifetime Achievement Award in 2017. His latest film, *Fairytale*, 2022, presented at the Locarno Film Festival, was banned in Russia.





Fatto di sangue fra due uomini per causa di una vedova. Si sospettano moventi politici di Lina Wertmüller, 1978. Foto di Antonio Benetti  
Sophia Loren ©Archivio Fotografico Cineteca Nazionale - CSC

## PLACE/NON-PLACE

READING BY STUDENTS OF THE THIRD YEAR ACTING COURSE OF THE  
**CENTRO SPERIMENTALE DI CINEMATOGRAFIA**

by **Vito Mancusi**

19 • 20 • 21 giugno

classroom "Recitazione 3" • 11:00 a.m. ▶ 15:00 p.m.

In this historical moment, in which there are 50 armed conflicts underway, we are called upon to reflect on the theme of the diaspora of artists, and we asked ourselves what lens we can use to read the situation. We have found a starting point, which we want to share with you, in the concept of non-place. Non-places, as theorized by Marc Augé in 1992, are spaces in opposition to anthropological places; that is, all those spaces that have the prerogative of not being identity-related, relational or historical, such as airports, shopping centres, hospitals and refugee camps. In a war scenario, it is the non-places of misery that proliferate, transit zones where culture, identity, traditions and many other things are repressed. The artists we speak on behalf of have guided us and shed light for us on the condition of those who are constrained and imprisoned in these transit zones, and on how it is possible to change the meaning of identifying words such as here and where, space and time.

Text written by Alice Bortolani and Camilla Ventura, 3<sup>rd</sup> year CSC acting course

"Place, often rendered like this in Italian, but also translated as location or as land, is where individuals, not only Palestinians, spend their lives, travel through history, and suffer genocide or sieges. But it is above all the place of personal history, the place of perception of living beings through the senses." (Mahmoud Darwish, State of Siege).

- Syria Conflict - Poetry readings from *Specchi dell'assenza* by Faraj Bayrakdar
- Israel Palestine Conflict - Poetry readings from *Stato d'assedio* by Mahmoud Darwish  
and staged reading of *Beirut rocks* by Israel Horovitz
- Ukraine Russia Conflict - Poetry readings by Serhiy Zhadan
- Yemen Conflict - Poetry readings from *Ricordi di passione* by Ashraf Fayadh
- Myanmar Conflict - Poetry readings by various Burmese poets



# THE DIASPORA OF WOMEN

PHOTOGRAPHIC EXHIBITION BY ANTONELLA FELICIONI

I believe that to move from thought to the soul, we need tools and vehicles; and this is what images are. The very act of selecting the photos took courage and held great possibilities for error, from which, perhaps, only the desire for truth could absolve.

Through the expressiveness of the set scenes and the faces of great actors and directors of Italian cinema, the leitmotif of this exhibition celebrates the roles that women are forcefully called upon to interpret in the diaspora of life, and it photographs contexts, feelings, choices, and wars beyond all judgement. It is a world to be described; and it is presumptuous to think of being exhaustive, so I let myself be guided, traversed and ventured to discover emotions.

The exhibition itinerary begins with Anna Magnani and Sophia Loren, accompanied by two important directors - Lina Wertmüller and Liliana Cavani - then continues with Claudia Cardinale, and concludes with a constellation of other, no less influential actors from Rosanna Schiaffino to Giovanna Ralli, from Lucia Bosè to Clara Calamai, and from Gina Lollobrigida to Silvana Mangano.

One fact emerges strongly: the importance of Italian cinema as a language, in some respects to be rediscovered because it still has a lot to give, but for this there are the experts, historians, and critics of the seventh art.

Being a mother, being disputed, being loved, being free, being a rebel, being a lover, being a prisoner, being overwhelmed ... like cry, desperation, escape, help, embrace, smile, irreverence, rivalry, intensity, care, and love: these are not just words; they are many ways of being a woman.

*Antonella Felicioni*



*The Secret of Santa Vittoria*  
(*Il segreto di Santa Vittoria*) di Stanley Kramer, 1969. Foto di Bruno Bruni  
Anna Magnani ©Archivio Fotografico Cineteca Nazionale - CSC

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