

Independent Italian Film for a New York Audience

Alessandra Grandi (February 13, 2010)



Beginning Friday, February 12 a three-day retrospective offers a look into the world of Carmelo Bene, Franco Brocari, and Mario Schifano.

Over the next few days, the Italian Cultural Institute of New York and Anthology Film Archives remind us that art knows no boundaries of time, language, and space. Art, when it is good, survives and lives on with the audience, sharing stories and opinions that do not die but instead return to open our world of doubt.

The art that comes to find us, perhaps for the first time in New York, is that of Carmelo Bene, Franco Brocari, and Mario Schifano. The passionate young people responsible for this exceptional event are part of the association Vistanova, who also organized the Lucca Film Festival. The three-day event



dedicated to independent Italian cinema begins on Friday, February 12, at the Anthology Film Archives, 32nd Avenue, NYC.

Carmelo Bene, Franco Brocari, and Mario Schifano were friends who also shared the same vision, one of independent poetics that flowed through the underground culture of the 1970s. The aesthetics of Italian underground cinema is strongly linked, despite the physical distance, to the avant-garde New American cinema in New York, which attracted experimental filmmakers such as Warhol, Conner, Man Ray and many others.

Their mission was to erase the barriers that isolate experimental media by combining cinema with other art forms while transforming filmmakers, producers, and distributors of their own films into "artistic operators." There was no single way of being a filmmaker; you could make films with the eyes of a painter-photographer, musician, poet, actor, or performer, and develop new film techniques in the process.

"Carmelo Bene," the young people from Vistanova told us, "was primarily known as a writer, actor, and stage director before filmmaker. Mario Schifano was a renowned painter and along with Brocari, lived and worked in Rome during the '60s and '70s, a flourishing period of artistic and cultural activity. Through their search to arrive at a deeply personal style of filmmaking, one can identify everyone in the Italian underground scene who preferred to create narrative films that could revolutionize cinema but also reach people beyond the barriers of the avant-garde. This film series offers a rare opportunity to see a selection of their work – five feature films recently restored and rarely seen in the United States."

To promote this hidden world to the next generation here in New York, this weekend's retrospective is dedicated to highlighting the important work of these three Italian artists.

Here is the schedule:

FEB 12 at 7:15 PM

NECROPOLIS by Franco Brocari, 1970

FEB 12 at 9:30 PM

SCHIFANOSAURUS REX by Franco Brocari, 2008

FEB 13 at 6:30 PM

OUR LADY OF THE TURKS / NOSTRA SIGNORA DEI TURCHI by Carmelo Bene, 1968

FEB 13 at 9:15 PM

SALOMÈ by Carmelo Bene, 1972

FEB 14 at 4:30 PM

NECROPOLIS by Franco Brocari, 1970

FEB 14 at 6:30 PM

UMANO NON UMANO by Mario Schifano, 1969

FEB 14 at 8:30 PM

SCHIFANOSAURUS REX by Franco Brocari, 2008



The retrospective is curated by the Lucca Film Festival (the Vistanova organization) in association with the Italian Cultural Institute of New York and Anthology Film Archives. The films are all in Italian with English subtitles.

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