

N.I.C.E. Awards Antonio Morabito and His Il Venditore di Medicine

Natasha Lardera (November 25, 2014)



N.I.C.E. is committed to showcasing new Italian cinema abroad, but it has also been promoting the City of Florence, the Region of Tuscany, its territory and culture, supporting not only its tourism but a cultural and productive exchange. This happens every year through the screening of films produced or shot in Tuscany (often international premieres) and through the presentation of the “Città di Firenze” Award to the winning film of the US festival.

Antonio Morabito, with his film *Il Venditore di Medicine*, is the winner of the “Città di Firenze” Award” of the 24th edition of N.I.C.E. New Italian Cinema Events Festival.

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The award, assigned by the American audience (mostly young film professionals and students of film and Italian language) through voting ballots, has the aim to draw the national and international attention to quality and independent films, which nonetheless don’t easily find their natural place



into the Italian movie theaters.

[Morabito](#) [4], who received his award in San Francisco, was extremely surprised but proud of his film, which is a piece that denounces the current illegal practices of some pharmaceutical companies that force doctors to prescribe their medications to their patients even though they are not necessary to make them feel better.

“The topic touches all of us,” the director said, “Mine is not an investigation, but the simple narration of real facts.” The film is a horror where factual events are stranger than fiction, and where medicine equates any other commercial products: “Do you know what oncology means? Two thousand euros a vial!”

The film stars [Claudio Santamaria](#) [5], in the role of the medical representative who, in order not to lose his job, accepts all sorts of compromises no matter what his conscience tells him; Isabella Ferrari, in the role of the area manager and [Marco Travaglio](#) [6] in the role of the “evil” Prof. Malinverni, Chief of oncology.

“Hopefully the film will find distribution and Morabito will become one of Italy's prominent filmmakers,” Viviana del Bianco, the festival's director said, “We are proud of all our filmmakers and we are working hard to help them get the attention they deserve.”

N.I.C.E. is an important cinematic event for the Italian community abroad but mostly for American distributors in search of new material. Year after year, the festival showcases Italian films made by new directors at their first or second experience. This is an important opportunity for all these Italian promising directors to have their talent recognized outside the borders of their home country.

“N.I.C.E., now in its 24th year, is the Italian film festival that has been in the US the longest,” Fabio Troisi, cultural attaché to the Italian Cultural Institute in New York, said in an introductory press conference, “2014 has been an historical year for Italian cinema. The Great Beauty has won an Academy Award – by the way, Sorrentino, the director, was discovered by N.I.C.E. – and five Italian films found American distributors. Five is not a high number, we know that, but it is a lot compared to other countries and to previous years. How is that possible? Better quality, that's the answer. There are new directors whose talent and films are being helped by N.I.C.E. Because they are given a chance to be seen.”

Troisi's desire is to renovate interest in this festival that has been presented in NYC for the past couple of years, in limited editions. “We don't have a partner in New York,” Viviana del Bianco added, “but we have great support from the cultural institutions. Hopefully, next year, for our 25th anniversary, we will be able to show all the films.” According to del Bianco, the celebrations for the anniversary will be grand, and will see the participation of some of America's favorite filmmakers who have supported N.I.C.E. from the very beginning.

“Scorsese, Turturro and Coppola, are just a few name I can throw out there...” del Bianco concluded, “meanwhile let's focus on Morabito and his promising talent.”

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