

Minervini's Texas Trilogy Presented at Lincoln Center

N. L. (September 09, 2014)



Observant but unobtrusive, Minervini merges documentary and neorealist techniques to render his stories, and the people inhabiting them, with dignity and compassion. Minervini was born in Italy but moved to Texas for personal reasons. There he became heavily involved with the local communities and decided to start making films on his own unstructured terms

The Film Society of Lincoln Center is dedicating some time to the work of an Italian director that is getting to be known in the US: [Roberto Minervini](#) [2]. His Texas Trilogy is scheduled to be screened from September 19-25, along with an exclusive one-week only run of [Stop the Pounding Heart](#) [3] at the [Elinor Bunin Munroe Film Center](#) [4].

“Minervini strips away Lone Star preconceptions in a trilogy of films that burrow deep into the mores of the Italian-born filmmaker’s new homeland. Observant but unobtrusive, Minervini merges documentary and neorealist techniques to render his stories, and the people inhabiting them, with dignity and compassion,” the Film Society announced.

Minervini was born in Italy, moved to the Philippines to begin an academic career, but then moved to Texas for personal reasons. “I became heavily involved with the local communities and decided to start making films on my own unstructured terms,” he has said.



The Passage

Roberto Minervini, USA/Belgium, 2011, DCP, 85m

In writer/director Roberto Minervini's feature debut, Ana (Soledad St. Hilaire), a middle-aged woman living alone in a border town, is told she has terminal cancer. With just weeks to live, she asks new acquaintance—and ex-con—Jack (Mean Gene Kelton) to drive her to a faith healer in Marfa, Texas. They are joined on the road by friendly British artist Harold (Alan Lyddiard). Though the trio have few commonalities in worldview or life experience, time spent together brings out unexpected affinities. What might have been a sentimental medley of clichés emerges as a graceful character study, with Minervini revealing a keen ear for regional expression and a generosity of spirit comparable to Sayles and Linklater.

September 21, 4:30pm

September 23, 7:00pm

Low Tide

Roberto Minervini, USA/Italy/Belgium, 2012, DCP, 92m

Bearing traces of Huck Finn and Antoine Doinel, *Low Tide*'s nameless adolescent hero (Daniel Blanchard) runs errands and cares for his substance-abusing mother (Melissa McKinney). Roberto Minervini's second feature casts nonprofessionals to magnificently truthful effect, and the writer/director demonstrates his characteristic sensitivity for small Texas towns and their resilient denizens. Blanchard is seldom off-screen, as Minervini follows him on his "rounds" from the nursing home where his mother works to a slaughterhouse, but also to the river to catch frogs and fish. Minervini does not mute the hardships of his protagonist's life, nor does he deny him the right to be 12 years old.

September 21, 7:00pm

September 24, 7:00pm

Stop the Pounding Heart

Roberto Minervini, Belgium/Italy/USA, 2013, DCP, 100m

Sara (Sara Carlson, playing herself) is part of a devout Christian goat-farming family with 12 children, all home-schooled and raised with strict moral guidance from the Scriptures. Set in a rural community that has remained isolated from technological advances and lifestyle influence—no phones, TVs, computers, or drunken-teen brawls—the subtly narrative film follows Sara and Colby, two 14-year-olds with vastly different backgrounds who are quietly drawn to each other. In Minervini's intimate documentary-style portrait—the third in the Italian-born filmmaker's Texas trilogy—Sara's commitment to her faith is never questioned. It's the power of the director's nonintrusive handheld-camera style that reveals his protagonist's spiritual and emotional inner turmoil about her place in a faith that requires women to be subservient to their fathers before becoming their husbands' helpers. By also presenting an authentic, impartial portrayal of the Texas Bible Belt, Minervini allows humanity and complexity behind the stereotypes to show through. A Big World Pictures release.

Opens September 19

Stop the Pounding Heart

premiered at the 66th Cannes Film Festival in 2013, and it received quite a good amount of praise. "A modest film made with an authenticity that commands respect," [raved](#) [5] [The Hollywood Reporter](#) [5]. The film was also presented at The Film Society's New Directors/New Films. He has said about the film, "At first I wasn't sure what kind of film I wanted to make. I began working with two families that I had developed strong ties with, whose lifestyles and values were fascinating, and surely worth exploring further. The story of Sara and Colby surfaced during the shoot and unfolded before my eyes, day after day. It is an autogenetic story that needed to be told, because many people don't have contact with these populations, even though they are true American archetypes."

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Links

[1] <http://newsite.iitaly.org/files/stopthepoundingheart1410277061jpg>

[2] <http://www.mymovies.it/biografia/?r=33606>

[3] http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stop_the_Pounding_Heart

[4] <http://www.filmlinc.com/>

[5] <http://www.hollywoodreporter.com/review/stop-pounding-heart-cannes-review-524583>