

Carlo Fumo. Youth and Cinema: the Valsele International Film Festival

Natasha Lardera (September 06, 2012)



This year in its fourth edition, the Valsele International Film Festival is an innovative and dynamic artistic-cinematographic appointment held in the breathtaking Valle del Sele, a modern day oasis in the Salerno area. The showcase created by the director Carlo Fumo, involves, numerous young people who show their interest and involvement in the social through film. We interviewed him. We found a lot of connections with America...

It is of extreme importance for any young person to find direction in life. Positive youth development, for example, is a term that refers to "the intentional efforts to provide opportunities for youth to enhance their interests, skills, and abilities into their adulthood." Film, for example, is fun and unique medium that helps a lot not just by developing creativity but also by helping kids open their eyes to what surrounds them. More and more events and showcases are created in the effort to help this development and one of the most successful examples of this is the Valsele International Film Festival.

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artistic-cinematographic appointment held in the breathtaking Valle del Sele (Valley of Sele), a modern day oasis in the Salerno area in Campania. The festival, created by the director [Carlo Fumo](#) [2], involves, professionally and culturally, numerous local and international young people who show their interest and involvement in the social through film.

The "Valsele International Film Festival," founded in 2009, has grown even more this year as it is spread through several different appointments. It is indeed divided into "stages," different events that include a screening and a tasting, and a final Award ceremony.

Each stage represents a cine-gastronomic "salon" where a film in competition is presented with the participation of its director and cast. People are able to enjoy the show while savoring the scrumptious products of the area. The food is prepared by the best local chefs using only the most authentic and delicious products available.

The Award ceremony and the Social School Contest, a special event held in favor of young students with an interest in the social, will take place on November 3, 2012.

While we wait for such evening of talent and creativity, we had the opportunity to chat with the festival's founder and artistic director, Carlo Fumo. Fumo is a local director who was drawn to cinema from a young age. As a child born in a town surrounded by mountains, he recorded the beautiful views around him on paper by drawing original images. With time he realized that those images could tell more and thus he shot his first short film... he was only 16 when he created *Il Monaco* (The Monk).

Through the years he continued working on his projects then success arrived with the book [Il Regista del Mondo \(The World's Director\)](#) [2], a work of global accusations where the 2001 Twin Towers terrorist attacks are also addressed. A short based on the book has been shot with the participation of some of Italy's most talented actors: Alessandro Haber, Gianmarco Tognazzi, Luca Ward, Lidia Vitale, Massimiliano Gallo and Naike Rivelli. There is a plan to develop a feature length film by 2014. In addition to his film projects, Fumo is always busy with the programming of the [Valsele International Film Festival](#) [3].

How was the festival born? And why did you choose the Valle del Sele?

The festival was created in 2009 as a cinema showcase to promote the Valle del Sele. The first location back then was Valva, specifically inside the breathtaking Villa D'Ayala, one of the 50 most beautiful residences in Italy as per MIBAC (Ministero per i Beni e le Attività Culturali, Ministry of heritage and Cultural Activities). In 2011 we moved to Contursi Terme, a real paradise on earth with the purest thermal water in the country (as per the Ministry of Health). This year we move to Eboli, a town known to the world thanks to Carlo Levi and his novel *Christ Stopped at Eboli* (published in 1945, the book is a memoir of the author's time spent in exile in Lucania, after being arrested in connection with his political activism. In 1979, the book was adapted into a film, directed by Francesco Rosi). We are the guests of Valasele, Campania's largest sports arena. We needed a big place to welcome the ever increasing number of participants. This year there is an entrance fee as all money earned will be donated to [Mentoring USA - Italia Onlus](#) [4] (Mentoring USA is a structured, site-based, mentoring organization that began as the first state-sponsored, school-based, one-on-one mentoring program in the country in 1987. Mentoring USA's mission is to create positive and supportive mentor relationships for youth ages 7-21, through a structured site-based model. Mentoring USA/Italia was founded in 1998. Over the twelve years of activity more than 8000 young Italians, working with as many volunteer Mentors, have benefited from the one-to-one method which is the basis of the educative intervention). The check with the total amount will be directly donated to Mentoring USA-Italia Onlus's president, and founder, [Matilda Raffa Cuom](#) [5] on the end of November at the [World Forum for Child Welfare in Naples](#). [6]

The festival's theme this year's is comedy, while in the past you addressed serious issues. How important is comedy in cinema and in life?

True, the previous topics were "Immigration" in 2009 (famous journalist Tito Stagno, mostly known



for his reporting on space travel, was awarded with the Bronze Medal from the President of the Republic); "Fighting Camorra" in 2010 (the medal was awarded to Don Luigi Merola, a priest whose work is dedicated to fighting this a Mafia-type criminal organization, or secret society, originating in the region of Campania) and "Italy's 150th Anniversary" in 2011 (I was awarded by the president myself for the theme of the edition and the work I do). This year we picked comedy and although it is a less serious topic than the previous ones, we are still faithful to our interest in the social. This year's edition will introduce a new important chapter, the "School Contest," a competition where students from different schools will contribute to the screenings of 10 shorts (5 Italian and 5 foreign) that address social and cultural topics mostly directed to road safety education and civics.

The festival celebrates the heritage of the "Commedia Italiana," thanks to the contributions of Cristian De Sica and Gianmarco Tognazzi, the sons of those who made it great and eternal (Vittorio De Sica and Ugo Tognazzi). Our guest, actor Alessandro Siani embodies the rebirth of Italian comedy. In a moment of crisis like the one we are living through there is a need to make people laugh, and make them think through humor by producing original and exportable films, such as "Il Postino" "Mediterraneo" and a few more, considering that in the past few years the country has produced demented comedies that are not easily understandable outside of their country of origin. Alessandro and I are working on a project in New York and Naples: an original and entertaining comedy with social and historical nuances on the two cities. If Alessandro decides to take part I will then present it to John Turturro when I will see him at the award ceremony in November. They would be the perfect on-screen pair for this international comedy.

How did you select the films that are in the festival?

As mentioned earlier, we looked for those comedies that are easily exportable. While for the School Contest we focused on social issues pertaining to a young audience. We are still working on the final selection. Our jury is made up of great personalities of the Italian film industry: the President, Remigio Trucchio (AGIS), Gianmarco Tognazzi (Actor), Orfeo Orlando (Actor and Director), Claudio Di Mauro (Editor), Luca Ward (Actor), Emma Perrelli (Executive, Youth Department), Luciana Della Fornace (President AGIScuola), Sergio Cuomo (President Mentoring USA-Italia Onlus) Martino Melchionda (Mayor of Eboli), Annarita Bruno (Education Councillorm Eboli) Marco Graziaplena (Director of Photography - Teacher CSC), Giuseppe Alessio Nuzzo (President Social World Film Festival), Adriano Aponte (Composer), Gaetano Carito (Sound Engineer), Simone Bracci (Journalist and Director at Film4Life) Michele Cuozzo (Honorary President of Valsele International Film Festival), Roberta Inarta (Director Scuola di Cinema of Naples) Fabrizio Ferrari (Artistic Director - Rome Independent Film Festival) M. Giuseppe Cascella (Artist), Valter D'Errico (Producer and Actor).

Tell us about the importance of the Social School Contest and of cinema in a social context

It is extremely important to teach kids to appreciate good cinema and some specific social topics. Our jobs allow us to create stories that address issues of primary importance reaching an audience of all ages, but mostly of a young age. Today, in Italy especially, so many values have been lost. Civics and domestic affairs are rarely taught in school and because of scarce resources, kids are left on their own to deal with their issues. Social cinema is important because it can teach youngsters, but not only them, how to behave in specific situations, what to avoid and why, the risks and consequences of certain actions and decisions, how to return to normality, how to love life its values and oneself. During the School Contest the President of Regione Campania, Stefano Caldoro, will award the Bronze medal of the President of the Republic to Mrs. Matilda Raffa Cuomo for her extraordinary work as the Honorary President of Mentoring USA-Italia. She is active in the spreading of her one-to-one method to contrast and prevent scholastic dispersion and youth inadequacy. In the great book "The Person Who Changed My Life" she collected the testimonies of great personalities (Andrea Boccelli, Bill Clinton, Hilary Clinton, John Turturro etc.) who tell their mentoring stories and how they contributed to their human and professional success.



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[2] <http://www.ilregistadelmondo.com/home/>

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[4] <http://www.mentoringusa.org/>

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[6] <http://www.worldforum2012.org/en/news-6bwg/highlights/world-forum-for-child-welfare-2011-melbourne>