

70th Venice Film Festival - An Overview

Simone Spoladori (August 31, 2013)



The 70th edition of the Venice Film Festival opens today: fewer films than in past editions, a lower media profile but many possible surprises

The world's oldest film festival opens tonight in its 70th edition and it's going to be a very interesting selection despite a mediatic low profile due to the critical economic and political circumstances still shattering Italy and other countries in Europe. There are no big names in the main competition, as authors like [Ridley Scott](#) [2], [Spike Jonze](#) [3], [Steve McQueen](#) [4] chose the more appealing blockbuster showcase of Toronto. However, there are great expectations for wonderful filmmakers such as Jonathan Glazer and his long awaited third feature, "Under the Skin." Here, the sizzling [Scarlett Johansson](#) [5] plays an alien sent to earth to hunt human victims. Sci-fi is one of the most popular genres of the selection, and includes a film by Terry Gilliam "The Zero Theorem," where the academy award winner Christophe Walz plays a computer hacker searching for the meaning of human existence, as well as the world premiere of "Gravity," which will be screened tonight, a film out of the competition, directed by Alfonso Cuaron, starring [George Clooney](#) [6] and [Sandra Bullock](#) [7].

Two great american writers will see their stories on the screen: Cormac McCarthy's novel "Child of God" is transposed by James Franco, director, screenwriter and actor of one of the roughest movies of the competition; while Bret Easton Ellis is the screenwriter of "The Canyons," an erotic thriller with Lindsay Lohan as lead and directed by Paul Schrader. For the first time the festival includes two documentaries in its competition selection: Errol Morris' "The Unknown Known: The Life and Times of Donald Rumsfeld," a portrait of President George W. Bush's controversial secretary of defense, and Gianfranco Rosi's "Sacro GRA," which deals with the highway circling Rome, the "grande raccordo anulare." Altogether, 7 out of the 20 competition movies are U.S. productions or co-productions: the selection is completed by Kelly Reichardt's "Night Moves", David Gordon Green's "Joe" and "Parkland" by Peter Landsman. The other Italian in the competition is Gianni Amelio (the last Italian to win the Venice main prize in 1998, with "Così Ridevano,") with his brand new "L'intrepido," starring Antonio Albanese, and Emma Dante's "Via Castellana Bandiera."

"Philomena," by former golden lion winner Stephen Frears, brings to screen a talented actress Judy Dench, playing a woman in search of her illegitimate son she had been forced to give him up for adoption many years before. It is a tearjacking drama and also a j'accuse to catholic strictness. Other highlights of the main selection are the japanese master Hayao Miyazaki with his "Kaze tachinu," "Jiaoyou (Stray Dogs)" by Tsai Ming-Liang, "Ana Arabia" of Amos Gitai and "La Jalousie" of Philippe Garrel. Out of competition, the return of Kim Ki-duk, who won the festival's Golden Lion last year, with the drama "Moebius," one of the predictable scandals of the festival. As usual, the most interesting surprises will probably arrive from side sections, such as "The Critics Week" and mainly the "Venice Days," an independent event similar to Cannes "Directors' Fortnight," this year reaching its 10th edition.

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