

'Figli,' The Drama of Parenthood in Italy

Monica Straniero (January 22, 2020)



Figli, the new film directed by Giuseppe Bonito starring Paola Cortellesi and Valerio Mastandrea premieres on January 23.

"Figli" is the comical and moving story of a couple, two people in love who try to resist the impact of parenthood during a chaotic time in a country where everything seems to be conspiring against the family institution. [Paola Cortellesi](#) [2] is Sara, she is a restaurant health inspector, she has a six-year-old daughter, Anna, and she loves her husband, Nicola. [Valerio Mastandrea](#) [3] is Nicola, he owns a salmon shop. The arrival of their second son, Pietro, disrupts the entire family dynamic.

It should have been the third film by [Mattia Torre](#) [4], the brilliant auteur who prematurely passed away in 2019. "Mattia called me because he needed a director who would support him but with whom he also had a personal connection," Giuseppe Bonito revealed.



The film is based off of the monologue "Children Age," which went viral thanks to Mastandrea's passionate interpretation. Because, as Mattia Torre recounts, "Children age. But they're not the ones who age, they make you age. Children age you because you spend the day bending over them and your spine takes on that posture. Because you speak slowly so they can understand you and it ends up slowing you down. Because they give you illnesses that their own immune system defeats in a matter of days while it takes yours weeks. Because they deprive you of sleep forever."

Produced by Vision Distribution along with Wildside and The Apartment, "Figli" is a mirror onto each of our lives. An existence disrupted by the arrival of a child, lack of sleep, a pediatrician/guru, that horrible high school chat group, in-laws, Sundays, the economic crisis. And so the audience identifies with both parents, mother and father.

"Figli" paints the portrait of a country in which older people hold the power and would have the strength to rebel if they wanted to, while people in their 40s often live in situations of great job instability, which put future projects and aspirations on hold. And even hinder their deepest personal desires of fulfilment. Mattia Torre clearly calls out Italian institutions for being unable to come up with effective policies to promote birth rates and support families.

A complete film, with various narrative layers all held together by knowledgeable writing. You laugh but at a certain point the realism turns sour, tragic even. Tired of today's society which still doesn't allow women to distance themselves from their traditionally assigned role, while men feel like superheroes for buying groceries, cooking, cleaning, taking care of their various family members, all while having a job.

"In our country, the image of the mother is still tied to the idea that a woman should give up everything for her children," Mastandrea concludes, "we have to combat this ideology and realize that being a parent is not a point of arrival but one of passage."

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Links

- [1] <http://newsite.iitaly.org/files/figlicoverjpg>
- [2] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paola_Cortellesi
- [3] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Valerio_Mastandrea
- [4] <https://www.imdb.com/name/nm1399392/>