

Adolescence, Immigration and Nature: About the Italian Films at TFFI

natasha lardera (April 01, 2013)



The Tribeca Film Festival, founded by Robert De Niro, Jane Rosenthal and Craig Hatkoff in 2001 following the attacks on the World Trade Center, will open the doors of its 12th annual edition from April 17- April 28. Italy is presenting a film competing in the World Narrative Feature Competition, a Feature length documentary, two shorts and a special installation to be held at MoMA PS1.

The [Tribeca Film Festival](#) [2](TFF), presented by founding sponsor [American Express](#) [3], will open the doors of its 12th annual edition from April 17- April 28, 2013.

Founded by [Robert De Niro](#) [4], [Jane Rosenthal](#) [5] and [Craig Hatkoff](#) [6] in 2001 following the attacks on the World Trade Center, to spur the economic and cultural revitalization of the lower Manhattan district through an annual celebration of film, music and culture, the Festival brings the industry and community together around storytelling.

The 2013 film selection includes feature films from 30 different countries, including 53 World Premieres, 7 International Premieres, 15 North American Premieres, 6 U.S. Premieres and 8 New York Premieres. A total of 113 directors will present feature works at the Festival, with 35 of these



filmmakers marking their feature directorial debuts. Among these directors, 26 are women. The 2013 film slate was chosen from a total of 6005 submissions.

“Our competition selections embody the quality and diversity of contemporary cinema from across the globe,” said [Frederic Boyer](#) [7], Artistic Director Tribeca Film Festival. “The cinematic proficiency that harnesses this lineup is remarkable and we’re looking forward to sharing these new perspectives, powerful performances, and multifaceted stories.”

Keeping with Tribeca’s mission of fostering dialogue between US and global film making, half of this year’s narrative competition films are American productions, and half hail from around the world. The fact that consistent themes of love, coming of age, and reinvention of self emerge across these disparate cultures and communities is testament to the universal power of film and storytelling that Tribeca strives to celebrate in its competition. Among the 12 films in the World Narrative Feature Competition we find, for the first time in years, an Italian: [Claudio Giovannesi](#) [8]’s *Ali Blue Eyes* (*Ali ha gli occhi azzurri*), a film about an adolescent who must come to terms with his cultural heritage, and make key choices about how that dictates their actions and identity.

“Claudio Giovannesi’s award-winning (at the [Festival Internazionale del Film di Roma](#) [9]) second dramatic feature captures one week in the life of sixteen-year-old troublemaker Nader (played by Nader Sarhan), who, despite his mother’s threats and family’s insistence that he respect his Muslim roots, fights, steals and pursues an Italian girlfriend. A stunning example of contemporary Italian neo-realism, *Ali Blue Eyes* is an engrossing coming-of-age story about an immigrant who will stop at nothing to fit in.”

The film was inspired by Pier Paolo Pasolini’s work (it has been described as a modern *Ragazzi di vita*, literally *Boys of Life*, idiomatically *Hustlers*, Pasolini’s 1956 novel on the lives of the sub-common man) and is set in Roman ghetto.

Showtimes:

April 22, 6.30 pm, Clearview Cinemas Chelsea
April 23, 7.30 pm, Clearview Cinemas Chelsea
April 25, 4.00 pm, Clearview Cinemas Chelsea
April 27, 4.00 pm, Clearview Cinemas Chelsea

Italy has more films in competition, all equally interesting and worth of much attention.

In the Documentary feature category we find *The Director* by [Christina Voros](#). [10] This Italian-American production will have its World Premiere at Tribeca. The film’s focus is creative director Frida Giannini, in this authoritative look at the past, present and future of The House of Gucci. Taking advantage of rare, behind-the-scenes access, Voros shows how the Florentine trendsetter has been re-imagined in the past few years. Co-produced by Hollywood star [James Franco](#) [11].

Showtimes:

April 21, 6.30 pm, SVA Theater 1
April 24, 8.30 pm, SVA Theater 2
April 26, 3.00 pm, AMC Lowes Village

There are two shorts competing in the Shorts Section: a narrative and a documentary.

The first one is *The Nightshift Belongs to the Stars* by [Edoardo Ponti](#) [12]. In just 23 minutes the director tells the story of Matteo and Sonia, on the eve of their respective open-heart surgeries. The two forge a friendship through a mutual passion for mountaineering and a promise to climb together in the Dolomites, in Trentino, Italy. Will their hearts survive the challenge? Though Sonia’s husband Mark worries about his wife and feels threatened by Matteo, the two aim for the summit, opening the route to a new beginning and a second chance at life. The film was written by celebrated Italian author Erri de Luca and it is based on his short story by the same title. Screening in Shorts Program: *Skin Deep*.

For showtimes click [HERE>>>](#) [13]



The other short, *Light Plate*, is directed by [Josh Gibson](#) [14]. This whimsical black-and-white film essay explores the Tuscan landscape and the relationship between tradition, modernity and food. Through shimmering, hand-processed, window-framed ruminations, time passes in licks of light, while a storm gathers and a woman makes pasta by hand. Screening in Shorts Program: Let There be Light: The Cycle of Life.

For showtimes click [HERE>>>](#) [15]

The festival's program also includes a special screening, or rather an installation, of *Alberi*, a documentary by [Michelangelo Frammartino](#) [16]. Wrapping the audience in waves of sound, *Alberi* takes us on a circular journey through the countryside of Southern Italy, to the village of Satriano. Historically, men of the town would cover themselves with ivy, transforming into strange, ghost-like walking trees. This ancestral arboreal rite, nearly forgotten as newer generations gradually lost interest, celebrated the connection between man and nature while costuming the men for Carnevale.

In a triumphant reclamation of the old ways, director Michelangelo Frammartino captures the majesty of this ceremony via his singular cinematic artistry. This dynamic installation is both a mesmerizing homage to nature and breathtaking union of sound and image. *Alberi* will run as an installation in the VW Dome at MoMA PS1 from April 18 through the end of the festival (excluding Sundays).

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Links

- [1] <http://test.iitaly.org/files/tribeca1364839536jpeg>
- [2] <http://www.tribecafilm.com/festival>
- [3] <https://www.americanexpress.com/>
- [4] http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Robert_De_Niro
- [5] http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jane_Rosenthal
- [6] http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Craig_Hatkoff
- [7] <http://www.indiewire.com/article/how-tribeca-chose-frederic-boyer-to-run-the-festival-and-what-comes-next>
- [8] <http://www.film.it/claudio-giovannesi/>
- [9] <http://www.romacinemafest.it/ecm/web/fcr/online/home>
- [10] <http://christinavoros.com/>
- [11] <http://james-franco.com/>
- [12] http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edoardo_Ponti
- [13] <http://www.tribecafilm.com/filmguide/513e62d3c07f5d1ef9000062-the-nightshift-belongs-to>
- [14] <http://joshsgibson.com/>
- [15] <http://www.tribecafilm.com/filmguide/513e67e2c07f5dd745000043-light-plate>
- [16] http://mubi.com/cast_members/116209