

It is a Glorious Moment for Italian Cinema!



A new generation of directors and actors bring to the screen stories that were unthinkable just years ago and which now are appealing to both the public and critics. The results of this renaissance for Italian filmmaking were evident at the 71st edition of the Cannes International Film Festival. Cinecittà is proud to announce the success of Italian films worldwide and the arrival of Open Roads: New Italian Cinema film festival in New York City May 31.

Italy triumphs at Cannes Film Festival with awards to director [Alice Rohrwacher](#) [2] [Lazzaro Felice](#) [3] and actor Marco Fonte's interpretation in [Matteo Garrone's](#) [4] Dogman.

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On the Croisette, the Italian writer-director Alice Rohrwacher won the Best Screenplay award for her third feature Lazzaro Felice (Happy as Lazzaro), a tale of a rural innocent defying life's certainties that fuses magical realism and fact-inspired social drama. Additionally, the Best Actor award was presented to a little-known actor, Marcello Fonte, who won for his portrayal of a cocaine-dealing dog groomer in Dogman, a violent modern parable directed by Matteo Garrone ([Gomorra](#) [6]).

Speaking at the Cannes award ceremony, Fonte admitted, "When I was a child, when I was at home and I could hear the rain on my roof, I closed my eyes and seemed to hear applause. Now the applause comes to me warmly and I feel that my family is the cinema and so are you."

Garrone discovered him by accident when Fonte was working as a caretaker and playing only minor parts in movies<now Fonte has been dubbed the new Buster Keaton by the international press.

Also in Cannes, Gianni Zanasi, whose comedy Troppa grazia (Lucia's Grace) starring [Alba Rohrwacher](#) [7], participated in the Quinzaine des Réalisateurs(Directors Fortnight), won the Europa Cinemas Label prize, which rewards the best European film of the Fortnight and subsidizes its distribution. Also in the Directors Fortnight, Stefano Savona won the L'Oeil d'Or award for Best



Documentary with *La strada dei Samouni* (Samouni Road).

Following this great success in Cannes, [Open Roads: New Italian Cinema](#) [8] will once again introduce audiences outside of Italy to this year's new Italian films with fascinating stories like [Sicilian Ghost Story](#) [9] co-directed by Fabio Grassadonia and Antonio Piazza, a film that opened Critics¹ Week in Cannes 2017. This unconventional Mafia story will debut as the opening night film at this year's 18th edition of the Open Roads: New Italian Cinema festival to be held at the Film Society of Lincoln Center on May 31, 2018.

This annual festival is the only screening series to offer North American audiences a diverse and extensive lineup of contemporary Italian films and is co-presented by the Film Society of Lincoln Center and Istituto Luce Cinecittà, Italy's state-owned company that promotes Italian movies and culture around the world.

Sicilian Ghost Story is Grassadonia and Piazza's third feature after the internationally acclaimed film *Salvo* (2013), winner of Cannes Film Festival's Critics' Week Grand Jury Prize and the Visionary Award, and *Rita* (2010). In *Sicilian Ghost Story*, the co-directors interwove the richness of fairy tales with the obscenity of Mafia control. This film has already collected multiple nominations and awards, including Best Adapted Screenplay at the David Di Donatello Awards 2018 and Best Cinematography and Best Production Design at the Nastro D'Argento, awarded by the Italian National Syndicate of Film Journalists.

The *Sicilian Ghost Story* screenplay was written while at the Sundance Institute's Screenwriters Lab and was among the winners of the Sundance Institute Global Filmmaking Award 2016.

Based on the 1993 kidnapping of 12-year-old Giuseppe Di Matteo, held by the Mafia for 779 days in the hopes of silencing his informant father, *Sicilian Ghost Story* adds to the plot a fictional classmate, Luna, who has a crush on Giuseppe and refuses to ignore his disappearance. To find him, she descends into the dark world that has swallowed him, with a lake as its mysterious entrance and other fairy tale symbols that seem to represent her bond with the kidnapped boy.

Strand Releasing has acquired all North American rights to Fabio Grassadonia and Antonio Piazza's movie ahead of its debut at Open Roads: New Italian Cinema 2018. The deal was negotiated between Jon Gerrans, co-founder of Strand Releasing, and Thania Dimitrakopoulou of The Match Factory. Strand is so pleased to be working once again with The Match Factory on this ethereal and beautiful film by filmmakers we admire, said Gerrans. Filmmakers Grassadonia and Piazza commented jointly, It is such a joy for us to learn that our film will be released in North America by Strand Releasing.

Sicilian Ghost Story started its development at the Sundance Institute where it was awarded with the Sundance Institute Global Filmmaking Award and continues its journey now in North America in such good hands. It was a great pleasure to be part of the journey of this special film around the world since the very beginning, Sundance Institute 2016, commented Griselda Guerrasio, Senior Project Manager of Istituto Luce Cinecittà.

Included in the collection of 17 films being showcased at Open Roads: New Italian Cinema are Beautiful Things by [Giorgio Ferrero](#) [10] and Federico Biasin, a wildly ambitious documentary that follows four men who work in isolation at remote scientific and industrial sites around the world; *La terra dell'abbastanza* (*Boys Cry*), the surprising debut feature by brothers Damiano and Fabio D'Innocenzo, which reinvigorates the gangster genre; *Il Cratere* (*Crater*) by documentarians Silvia Luzi and Luca Bellino, their fiction debut that recalls Luchino Visconti's *Bellissima*; *Diva!* By Francesco Patierno, an inventive work of cinematic biography in which eight actresses play Italian movie star Valentina Cortese at various stages of her career; *L'equilibrio* (*Equilibrium*), [Vincenzo Marra](#) [11]'s realist parable about faith and crime in Southern Italy; *Guarda in alto* (*Look Up*), a fiction debut by documentarian Fulvio Risuleo, an unpredictable and imaginative twist of the on-the-road movie genre; *Fortunata* by [Sergio Castellitto](#) [12], an emotionally raw melodrama anchored by actress Jasmine Trinca's performance, which earned her the Best Actress prize in the Un Certain Regard section at last year's Cannes Film Festival; *La lucida follia di Marco Ferreri* (*Marco Ferreri: Dangerous but Necessary*) by Anselma Dell'Olio, a fast-paced documentary about an Italian



nonconformist filmmaker; *Nome di donna* by Marco Tullio Giordana, an all-too-timely film about a woman courageously trying to break the silence in a culture of complicity surrounding sexual harassment; [Napoli velata \(Naples in Veils\)](#) [13] by Turkish director [Ferzan Ozpetek](#) [14], a baroque thriller in which Naples becomes a shadowy, mysterious labyrinth of desire and memory; *The Place* by Paolo Genovese, a minimalist moral thriller that boasts an all-star cast including Alba Rohrwacher, Silvio Muccino and Rocco Papaleo; *Cuori puri* (Pure Hearts) by Roberto De Paolis, an impeccably acted drama about youthful self-discovery; *Una questione privata* (Rainbow: A Private Affair) by Paolo Taviani, a sensitive, atmospheric tale set during WWII about two friends and romantic rivals, paired with a special screening of brothers Vittorio and Paolo Taviani's classic Cannes Grand Jury Prize winner *La Notte di San Lorenzo* (The Night of the Shooting Stars); *Amori che non sanno stare al mondo* (Stories of Love That Cannot Belong to This World) by Francesca Comencini who adapts her own novel for this intelligent, intensely felt romantic comedy. Additionally, Open Roads will present the new digital restoration of iconoclast Marco Ferreri's *La donna scimmia* (The Ape Woman).

Roberto Cicutto, president of [Istituto Luce Cinecittà](#) [15], says, "Coming off the great success in Cannes, we cannot be more pleased to bring 17 films to New York showing the best of what Italy's filmmakers have created this year, with a nod to Italy's great classics as well. We are undoubtedly proud of the accomplishments in Cannes with so many awards given to the actors, directors and screenwriters. Now the audiences in the United States will get to see these films of which one has already been picked up for distribution, *Sicilian Ghost Story*, thanks to Strand Releasing."

[ISTITUTO LUCE CINECITTÀ](#) [16]

Istituto Luce Cinecittà is the state-owned company whose main shareholder is the Italian Ministry for Culture subsidizing its activities on an annual basis. Istituto Luce Cinecittà holds one of the most important European film and photographic archives in which materials are collected and digitally categorized, including its own productions and materials, derived from private collections and acquisitions by a variety of sources. Istituto Luce Cinecittà owns a film library, Cineteca, containing around 3000 titles of the most significant Italian film productions in order to promote Italian culture at major national and international institutes around the world. In collaboration with the Italian Ministry for the Foreign Affairs, restorations and new prints are added every year.

Istituto Luce Cinecittà cooperates with major film festivals such as Cannes, Berlin, Buenos Aires, Toronto, Locarno, New York, London by organizing national selections, guaranteeing the presence of Italian films and artists in the various festivals, and by providing multifunctional spaces to help the promotion of our cinematography and it is the reference place for all Italian and foreign operators. It is also involved with the direct organization of numerous Film Festival around the world: The Festival of Italian Cinema in Tokyo, Open Roads: New Italian Cinema in New York, London's Cinema Made in Italy, Mittelcinemafest, and The Festival of Italian Cinema in Barcelona, Istanbul, and Buenos Aires. For more information, visit www.filmitalia.org [17] and www.cinecitta.com [18].

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[8] <https://www.filmlinc.org/festivals/open-roads-new-italian-cinema/>

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