

SYNOPSIS

Ritratti di Cinema is an imaginary round table in which nine iconic directors of international cinema, Jane Campion, Tim Burton, Ruben Östlund, Asghar Farhadi, Pablo Larrain, Damien Chazelle, Paul Schrader, Peter Greenaway and Martin Scorsese, reflect on the meaning of cinema and on the mechanisms that have made their respective languages so unmistakable.

It is a way of speaking about cinema without analysing films, without entering into technicalities. *Ritratti di Cinema* is conceived as a journey into the deeper themes that run through the work of these nine great auteurs: a way of tracing cinema back to the profound roots of creativity.

DIRECTOR'S NOTES

Some of the questions I chose are common to each director, such as inviting them to speak about their perspective on gender diversity, or their relationship with God. Other themes are more closely connected to their own cinema, without ever focusing on a specific film, unless they themselves chose to use one as an example in order to explore the proposed subject.

I offered them complete freedom in their contributions: no debate, no opposition, only listening. Let me explain. When authors and directors of such stature are invited to take part in an event, to meet journalists and large audiences, they are often moved from one interview to another and, with a certain ease, navigate a format they know well and repeat on every festival or retrospective occasion concerning their work, anywhere in the world.

The documentary film *Ritratti di Cinema* was born from the desire to slow down, for a moment, the virtuous circuit of the stars, in order to portray them up close, as the human beings they are: uncertain, fragile, fallible, and deeply similar to their cinema.

The nine directors and auteurs involved in the project developed complex thoughts without having prepared any speech in advance, in a relaxed atmosphere, while preserving the clarity of their strong individual identities. My approach, in order to establish a quick connection with them, was first to analyse their filmographies and a number of mainstream interviews, so as to understand the dramatic triggers that define their cinematic vision and allow their personalities to emerge spontaneously.

Ritratti di Cinema is an imaginary round table in which a multi-voiced dialogue takes shape, a dialogue that never actually occurred in reality, since the directors never met one another on my set. As in a kind of impossible interview, we see them debate and defend different points of view on the proposed themes, perspectives that are reflected in the cinema that defines each of them.

The themes emerge from the context. There is no voice-over announcing them; rather, they develop and shift structurally like a stream of consciousness, punctuated by moments of cinematic breathing space.

No iconic scenes from the films of our protagonists have been used. Instead, we see Turin through the changing seasons, with the Mole Antonelliana at its centre; we see images of pre-cinema from the Museum's collection, details of restored film stock, and poetic passages in the spirit of Méliès. The directorial purpose of these visual departures is to soften the themes addressed with the nostalgia of a sunny, windy or rainy Turin, and with the lightness of cinema as it once was, leaving room, however briefly, for the imagination.

Ritratti di Cinema speaks of cinematic beginnings, courage and solitude, conflict and contradiction, heroes and antiheroes, victims and perpetrators, point of view, directing and its personal meaning, music, the relationship with actors and, finally, what cinema is and what it represents for each of the directors involved.

Ritratti di Cinema closes its narrative flow with images captured during the backstage of Riccardo Ghilardi's set, showing the directors doing what, quite rightly, we expect of them: being stars.

Paolo CiviPRODUCTION NOTES

The production of *Ritratti di Cinema* developed over time, accompanying a project of complex nature and strongly auteur-driven identity. From the outset, the aim was not to create a traditional documentary, but to build a work capable of giving cinematic unity to a series of separate encounters, transforming them into an ideal dialogue between nine great international directors.

The complexity of the project required a production process based on preparation, structural coherence and the ability to bring together material gathered at different moments, with auteurs from different backgrounds, languages and sensibilities. The challenge was to support this plurality without making it rigid, building a structure that was solid yet open, capable of preserving freedom, spontaneity and authenticity.

The visual choices also respond to this vision. The decision to avoid the most iconic images from the protagonists' filmographies, in favour of an autonomous imagery made up of pre-cinema, restored film stock and views of Turin across the seasons, helped define an independent, coherent and recognisable form.

Ritratti di Cinema is therefore the result of precise and carefully balanced production work, able to accompany an ambitious idea without betraying its nature, transforming a multiplicity of voices into a single cinematic narrative.