



TAORMINA FILM FESTIVAL 2024 LAUNCHES ITS PROGRAM

PRODUCED AND ORGANISED BY THE TAORMINA ARTE SICILIA FOUNDATION.

THE 70TH EDITION DIRECTED BY MARCO MÜLLER WILL EMBODY POP, GLAMOUR AND MEDITERRANEAN IDENTITY. JOIN US FOR EIGHT DAYS OF CINEMA UNDER THE STARS OF THE TEATRO ANTICO

Opening night will kick off with a special event by the Nastro d'Argento to mark the Festival's 70th anniversary with a tribute to Italian comedy, in an edition that combines Hollywood stardom, the human dimension and a celebration of diversity.

Taormina, 28 June 2024 - From action adventure to psychological thrillers, from horror to romantic-comedy and the many facets of wide-ranging Sicilian cinema: these are just some of the threads that the Director of the Taormina Film Festival, **Marco Müller**, has chosen to weave together in conceiving a program to satisfy all types of audiences, from fans of pop blockbusters to Italian cinema, under the stars of the Teatro Antico.

The Festival opens on **Friday 12 July** with a special event by the **Nastro d'Argento** to celebrate its 70th anniversary with a tribute to Italian comedy including **Christian De Sica**, **Carlo Verdone** and many others. Many international stars will attend the festival including **Sharon Stone**, **Nicolas Cage**, **Bella Thorne**, and **Rebecca De Mornay**, to name just a few.

The heart of the Taormina Film Festival is the **Gala** that will host **seven titles** with a screening every evening at the Teatro Antico, including **four world premieres** and a special focus on new filmmakers with projects from first- and second-time directors. It kicks off 13 July with the US horror film ***Saint Clare*** by **Mitzi Peirone** starring **Bella Thorne**, **Rebecca De Mornay**

and **Ryan Philippe**, followed by the action title *Twisters* by **Lee Isaac Chung** starring **Daisy Jessica Edgar-Jones and Glen Powell**; psychological thriller *The Surfer* by **Lorcan Finnegan** starring **Nicolas Cage**; *Il giudice ed il boss*, in which the director of *Placido Rizzotto*, **Pasquale Scimeca**, dedicates to the memory of the anti-mafia hero Cesare Terranova; and three emotional films including the British-Icelandic *Touch*, directed by the celebrated filmmaker **Baltasar Kormákur** and starring the very popular Japanese model and singer **Kôki**, and two Italian rom-coms *L'invenzione di noi due* by **Corrado Ceron** starring **Lino Guanciale, Silvia D'Amico and Paolo Rossi**, and *Finché notte non ci separi* by **Riccardo Antonaroli** starring **Pilar Fogliati, Filippo Scicchitano and Valeria Bilello**, which will close the festival.

Central to the Palazzo dei Congressi's programming is the **FOCUS MEDITERRANEO**, that allows the festival to open up to the world and enter into its most burning debates, starting with the international premiere of *From Ground Zero*, the collaborative film coordinated by **Rashid Masharawi** that presents the "tale of untold stories" signed by 22 young Palestinian filmmakers who have filmed daily life in Gaza. The master of Israeli cinema **Amos Gitai** returns to Taormina with *Shikun*, which portrays his vision of the country's contradictions; while in *To A Land Unknown*, **Mahdi Fleifel** delves into the world of illegal Arab immigrants in EU countries. Two major French auteur movies are hosted by Focus Mediterraneo: the international premiere of the director's cut of *Who Knows? (Va Savoir)* by **Jacques Rivette**, the Pirandellian film starring **Sergio Castellitto**, who will introduce the screening and world premiere of *Filmlovers!* by **Arnaud Desplechin**, the English-language version of *Spectateurs*, the film in which the French director celebrated the magic of cinema experienced in a movie-theater. Following his Hollywood successes, Chilean-Swedish director Daniel Espinosa sets the story of a human trafficker in the Italian South in his new film *Madame Luna*, while **Thierry de Peretti** with *In His Image* returns to his native Corsica to recount the life, friendships and loves of a young photographer during the political turmoil on the island from the late '70s onwards.

Also at the Palazzo dei Congressi, a special space is dedicated to **OFFICINA SICILIA**. The festival will show the most recent series *Made in Sicily* through the most significant moments, starting with *L'arte della gioia* by **Valeria Golino** starring **Tecla Insolia, Jasmine Trinca, Valeria Bruni Tedeschi; Vanina - Un vicequestore a Catania by **Davide Marengo** starring **Giusy Buscemi**; the first episodes of *L'ora - Inchiostro contro piombo* directed by **Piero Messina**; and the apocalyptic Sicily of *Anna* by **Niccolò Ammaniti**. Alongside this wide range of films, an impressive **quintet of world premieres** (four first-time directors and one second-time director) reminds us that Sicily is a laboratory of ever-renewed experiences that pushes its cinema forward, at 360 degrees: *Quir* by **Nicola Bellucci**; *La bocca dell'anima* by **Giuseppe Carleo**; *Tre regole infallibili* by **Marco Gianfreda**; *Pietra madre* by **Daniele Greco and Mauro Maugeri**, and *Il ladro di stelle cadenti* by **Francisco Saia**. Even well-established Sicilian talents chose to experiment including **Tony Sperandeo's** free-jazz performance in **Aurelio Grimaldi's** new film, *La rieducazione* which will receive its world premiere.**

OFFICINA SICILIA is enriched by a panorama of rediscovered Sicilian cinema, entitled **IERI OGGI DOMANI**, which aims at recovering the boldest works of the past that influenced the cinema of today and the future, with a tribute to the legendary **Panaria Film**, founded in 1947 by **Prince Francesco Alliata di Villafranca**. Some of its most important restored productions will be presented at this Festival, including the daring documentary shorts of the two different versions, in terms of language and editing, of **Vulcano** and **Volcano** (1952) by **William Dieterle**. Alongside will be the re-showing of the works of the most unexpected East Coast directors including **Maria Arena** and the Catania filmmakers collective **canecapovolto**, Sicilian cinema poised between fiction and document is explored through the authorial production of **Costanza Quatriglio** and the works of the young documentary filmmakers of the CSC - Centro Sperimentale di Cinematografia in Palermo. Of particular interest is the last of the non-fiction films in the program, the rediscovered **Diario di Guttuso**, a mosaic itinerary reconstructing Guttuso's life through places, friends and paintings, a television work from 1982 that already showed the highly personal style of **Oscar winner Giuseppe Tornatore**.

The festival pays tribute to one of the courageous protagonists of cinema made by those who want to "stay in the South", **producer Gaetano Di Vaio**, who passed away recently. Included in the program is **Largo Baracche**, a documentary that Di Vaio shot himself exactly ten years ago on the boys of the "Naples of Gomorra" and **Tre regole infallibili** by **Marco Gianfreda**, the last film that Di Vaio had produced through his company **Bronx Film**.

The offer by the **TFF 70** is made even more valuable by the history of the festival which brings us two gifts: the wonderful unmissable monologue by **Toni Servillo** from **Mario Martone's** second film, the mid length film **Rasoï**; and the **4K restoration** of **Picnic at Hanging Rock**, the masterpiece that made the Australian director **Peter Weir** famous almost 50 years ago, right here in Taormina

For this edition, the eight-time director of the Venice Film Festival has developed a program with a broad cultural and geographical range, made up not only of films. Thanks to the commitment of the **artistic director of the Fondazione Taormina Arte Sicilia, Gianna Fratta**, an internationally renowned artist, a parallel initiative will take place together with the film festival: **PROJECTIONS – Suoni e parole prima del film**, a performative format between music, theatre and multimedia events that offers, before the screenings at the Teatro Antico, performances linked to the world of cinema. In particular, the screening of Jean Epstein's documentary **La Montagne Infidèle** with live musical commentary by pianist **Omar Sosa**, the concert for the hundredth anniversary of Giacomo Puccini's death **Tosca - Il ricatto sessuale**, in which arias, duets and ensemble pieces from Puccini's masterpiece alternate with **Gianna Fratta's** own narration of the opera; **Veniamo a quel paese**, a performance of the soundtracks that **Carlo Crivelli** composed for the films by **Ficarra** and **Picone**, who will participate in the event; **Note di celluloidi**, a tribute that the Ensemble 'Suoni del Sud' pays to the best of film music performing masterpieces by **Nino Rota**, **Ennio Morricone**, **Nicola Piovani**, and **Piero Piccioni**. Finally, the play **L'amore segreto di Ofelia** by Steven Berkoff starring **Chiara Francini**

and **Andrea Argentieri** and also a tribute to **Maria Callas, *Vissi d'arte. Vissi per Maria***, which will take place between Taormina's Villa Comunale and the Teatro Antico.

2024 marks a turning point for the festival. The Fondazione Taormina Arte Sicilia, which has produced and organised the event for years, plans to implement new strategies to promote the festival in the medium and long term. The special commissioner **Sergio Bonomo**, following the strategic plans of the Regional Department for Tourism, Sport and Entertainmenturismo Sport e Spettacolo led by MP **Elvira Amata**, aimed at the development of filmmaking in Sicily. This includes the development of cine-tourism, laying the foundations in 2024 for a new course for the Festival, which in the coming years, wants to widen the reach across the region, with particular attention to the coastal areas. Moreover, as in the 2024 edition, in which music, theatre and multimedia become part and parcel of the festival program, the model proposed for the future is that of a modern and highly multidisciplinary festival, with training activities for young people, meetings and performances where arts connect and intertwine under the aegis of the cinema not as separate watertight compartments, but capable of creating new spectacular forms, which may also include coordinated activities with other Mediterranean countries, with the aims of internationalisation and openness.

Fondazione Taormina Arte Sicilia and Taormina Film Festival 70 wish to thank MiC, Ministry of Culture – General Directorate for Cinema and Audiovisual, the Regional Authority of Sicily – Regional Department for Tourism, Sport and Entertainment, Sicilia Film Commission, Municipality of Taormina, AdSP dello Stretto, Sac, Aeroporto Di Catania, CSC - Centro Sperimentale di Cinematografia; the main sponsors Intercity, Belmond Grand Hotel Timeo, Belmond Hotel Villa S. Andrea; the technical sponsors Ibfor, Wella, Delta Marriott Hotels; Rai Sicilia for the patronage and the media partners Rai, Ciak, Cinematografo, Cinecittà News, Taxi Drivers, Variety.

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70th Edition, July 12-19

**Promoted and organized by Fondazione Taormina Arte Sicilia with the support of Assessorato del Turismo dello Sport e dello Spettacolo della Regione Siciliana (Department of Tourism, Sports and Entertainment of the Sicilian Regional Authority),
by the Sicilia Film Commission, by the Municipality of Taormina and by the Ministry of Culture – General Directorate for Cinema and Audiovisual (MiC)**



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