



OFFICIAL SELECTION
FESTIVAL DE CANNES

69. Cannes Film Festival- Official Selection – Special Screenings

Mansarda Production Fantasia Audiovisual Arizona Productions

with **Rai Cinema**

in co-production with **Greek Film Centre**

present



L'ULTIMA SPIAGGIA
(The Last Resort)

a film by

Thanos Anastopoulos Davide Del Degan

Italy/Greece/France 2016, col., DCP, 135'

Press screening: Thursday 12th May, at 11 am, Salle Bazin

Official screening: Thursday 12th May, at 8.15 pm, Salle 60ème

World sales: Wide House (Riviera G2)

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SHORT SYNOPSIS

L'ULTIMA SPIAGGIA (The Last Resort) describes the life and tells the stories of beach-goers revolving around a very popular beach located in Trieste, in the Northeast of Italy, where a wall still separates men from women.

A film about boundaries, identities and discrimination.

A tragicomedy on human nature.

LONG SYNOPSIS

Its official name is public resort “La Lanterna” (i.e. The lantern) but everybody in Trieste simply calls it “el Pedocìn”: a public beach in the very heart of Trieste, still divided in two by a wall. Men on one side of the wall and women on the other.

Another world, an island frozen in time facing a sea which divides and unites at the same time, widening and blurring borders, blending them together the same way Italians and Serbians, Greeks and Slovenians, Jews and Germans, Austrians and Americans.

L'ultima spiaggia – The Last Resort is the documentary Thanos Anastopoulos and Davide Del De-gan dedicated to this unique place and to the women and men populating it, real characters of a tragicomedy on human nature: mostly lonely individuals with a difficult past (and sometimes a difficult present), but also great humanity. The two directors attended the resort for a whole year: in winter, with very few beach-goers, mainly men, filling there their long days; in spring, as the sun gets warmer and the resort gradually livens up; in summer, when on a crowded resort lifeguards attend to their duty under the watchful eye of the women; and eventually in autumn, when buoys are pulled ashore and the previous months thoughtfully weighed, when regular beach-goers say goodbye till the following year and recall those who passed away. On the 30th September, for the annual party celebrating the closing of the season, the wall gate is opened. Men and women get ready: food, wine, songs and cheerfulness. At 12 o'clock sharp the wall is opened in the general indifference, and surprisingly nobody crosses the boundary...

In a city where borders have consistently changed, where barriers, whether real or symbolic, have crumbled, where the revolution led by Franco Basaglia knocked down the walls of the asylum, the Pedocìn wall is still standing, because, paradoxically, it does not divide but preserves the freedom of men and women. A wall leading to a reflection on identity and to a better understanding of those “mental walls” Trieste inherited, more or less consciously, from the Twentieth century.

THE BEACH “PEDOCÌN”

The beach resort “La lanterna” was founded at the turn of the twentieth century along the Molo (i.e. pier) Santa Teresa, later renamed Molo Fratelli Bandiera: built in wood, from the very beginning the resort was divided in two by a fence (later rebuilt in cement) to prevent “acts against public decency”. Today it is set in a urban environment dominated, like many other city locations, by oxymorons and contrasts. Outside the resort, on one side sailboats are docked in the marinas on the background of the elegant neoclassic buildings standing on the coast, while on the other side customs-houses loom over the port, with hundreds of Turkish lorries waiting in line to complete the boarding procedures.

While the official name “Bagno Lanterna” surely refers to the lantern placed on the pier in 1832 as a lighthouse, the origin of the nickname “Pedocìn” is still obscure: according to some historians the term comes from mussels, (in the local dialect “pedoci”), an allusion to the beach-goers crowding the resort, countless as the mussels hanging onto the rocks. Another possible explanation lies in the fact that Austro-Hungarian soldiers and locals used to go to the beach to get rid of lice; in the local dialect a louse is a “pedocio”, so the resort name means “small louse” too. Actually the first local nickname for the resort was “Ciodìn” (small nail), referring to the habit of loyal beach-goers to bring with them the nails to hang their clothes on.

One thing is certain: after over a century the Pedocìn beach hasn’t lost its popular colour, making it a crowded and beloved resort up to the present and an authentic, untouchable symbol of the city. When at the end of the ‘80s the local newspaper “Il Piccolo” launched a referendum on the future of the wall, they had not to wait long for the heartfelt reaction of the locals: the wall stays where it is.

DIRECTORS NOTES

I was born and raised in Athens and have lived in Trieste for 8 years, since my son's birth. Together with him I discovered the Pedocin resort, where whole generations of local children have moved their first steps.

Having spent my early years on the Attica beaches, I immediately felt myself at home in a seaside city like Trieste, and started to look for similarities and differences with the places of my childhood. This led me to a long and deep reflection about borders, discriminations, national and sexual identity.

A wall across a beach in nowadays Europe seems to question all the foundations of our society. This is where this project comes from, and the reason why I started to go to the beach already during the winter; this way I was able to establish a bond of mutual trust with the resort employees and the regular beach-goers. Following their daily routine based upon the weather and the nature, I realized a whole microcosm was being unveiled in front of me.

*Trieste: a cosmopolitan and multicultural city, Italian and at the same time Austrian, Balkan, Greek and Jewish. A city where nobody feels like a foreigner, because everybody is a foreigner to a certain extent, one way or the other. A city which could have become the European New York, if things had gone differently during the two World Wars. An "ex-world" already over, where a past full of promises has turned into disappointment and lost hopes. A place where no one feels ashamed of considering themselves losers, because here this is a common feeling, a philosophy of life. A border city questioning all our notions of origin, identity and belonging, where a wall can become the symbol of a utopia and knock down the "mental walls" everybody is hiding inside. Telling the story of the Pedocin wall is almost like telling the story of ourselves, loyal customers of our own last resort, looking for our own place in the sun. **Thanos Anastopoulos***

I was already quite familiar with this beach and the thousands stories that later made up the film storyline: I had already experienced its atmosphere, I still had in mind the faces of those individuals, real people carrying the burden of a fragile humanity. I had not been to the Pedocin for a long time, but this is where I grew up and where my heart still belongs.

Rediscovering my own roots after many years was a cathartic experience. Learning about the little and great human adventures gathered together in such a narrow place, recognising there all the human variety and strength, brought incredible energy to this project.

All the days we spent with our feet firmly planted in the sand of this beach, our eyes fixed on naked men and women, on peculiar and obsolete architectures, on the sea, affected me in a way that transcends time: at the beginning I could choose to experience everything with the eyes, the perspective and the dimensions of the child I once was, like in a daydream; later I came across some sort of old-fashioned masculinity, incapable of understanding or conceiving anything but itself.

As I pass by tanned, sweating and blackened bodies I recall my own point of view as a child, scared by the sometimes too large breasts of unknown and yet familiar women, while a moment later I can look with the eyes of a grown-up man, recognising the strength and the emancipation of individuals who feel free to be exactly as they are.

After several months of preparation we managed to establish that kind of relationship with the beach-goers which enabled us to produce an observational documentary, whose stories came up by themselves, with only the aid of time, and not the slightest hint of intrusion or influence from our part.

*We neither planned the interactions between characters nor brought up topics for discussion. Everything came up from the spontaneous life of this beach and the natural course of time, which in some sense forced us to break the boundaries between fiction and documentary, in order to better describe the classical archetype of the human being. Life, death, cultural and moral values. In a border city which represents multiculturalism at its highest point and remains tightly bound to its historical past. **Davide Del Degan***

THE AUTHORS

Thanos Anastopoulos was born in Athens and lives now between Italy and Greece. His first feature film, *Atlas – All the Weight of the World* was screened in 2004 at the Rotterdam International Film Festival; his second feature film *Correction* was shown at the Berlinale in 2008 and represented Greece in the Academy Awards; in 2013 he directed *The Daughter*, selected for the Berlinale and the Toronto Film Festival. Moreover, he produced *Homeland* by Syllas Tzoumerkas (2010), screened at the Venice International Film Critics Week, and *Amnesty* by Bujar Alimani (2011), which received the CICA Award at the Berlinale.

Davide del Degan was born and raised in Trieste, where he started nurturing his passion for cinema by acting as assistant director in several film productions. He made his debut as a director in 2001 with the short film *A corto d'amore*, followed in 2004 by *Interno 9*, awarded with the Globo d'oro (Italian Golden Globe) and selected for the David di Donatello competition. Among his numerous works, in 2011 he wrote and directed *Habibi*, an award-winning short movie in several international festivals, which received the Nastro d'Argento award and was selected for the Globo d'oro competition.

CREDITS

Direction	Thanos Anastopoulos, Davide Del Degan
Cinematography	Ilias Adamis, Debora Vrizzi
Editing	Bonita Papastathi
Sound Editing	Matteo Serman
Sound	Francesco Morosini, Havir Gergolet
Sound Mixing	Kostas Varibopiotis
Produced by	Nicoletta Romeo Stella Theodorakis Guillaume de Seille
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