

CGAC CINEMA SERIES

FROM MUSSOLINI TO BERLUSCONI: A SET OF MASKS

ITALIAN CINEMA SERIES

16 January – 20 February 2014

TRANSGENDER CINEMA SERIES

March 2014

BRITISH CINEMA SERIES

April–May 2014

All screenings will begin at 8:30 p.m.

Entrance is free until filled to capacity.



CGAC CINEMA SERIES 20TH ANNIVERSARY PROGRAMME

At the time of the CGAC's inception in 1993, during the seventh series of Cineuropa, *Rúa Nova* bustled with names such as Ken Loach, Krzysztof Kieslowski, Sally Potter, and Emir Kusturica. Santiago de Compostela, where several multiplexes recently opened at the Área Central shopping centre, also boasts the Valle Inclán multi-screen cinema complexes and three old-style theatres: the Capitol, the Yago and the Avenida.

In November 2013, Compostela was something of an oasis amidst the dystopia that is currently eroding the field of cinematographic exhibitions. Commercial theatres have already packed up and left the city proper; from outside its walls, they show only 3D films with superheroes and Disney characters, an offering unfit for cinephiles.

The CGAC offers up the perfect solution: To use the city as a means for recovering the cinema tradition. After twenty years during which—with the exception of Cineuropa—civilised, sensitive, emotional film that is open to the possibility of creativity, risk, and cultural tension has all but disappeared from the face of the Earth, the CGAC aims to bring back film and words: Weekday sessions, courses with presentations, original version films, and tasteful programming.

To celebrate these past twenty years, the *CGAC Cinema Series* program is kicking off on a nostalgic note, with a celebration: the twentieth anniversary of the founding of Centro Galego de Arte Contemporánea and the twentieth anniversary of Fellini's death. This forum will provide the opportunity to showcase a series of contemporary Italian cinema pieces, from an unreleased film by Nanni Moretti to the world premiere of titles such as *Romanzo di una strage* (Piazza Fontana: The Italian Conspiracy), from Marco Tullio Giordana.

Additionally—in keeping with the view to 1993—Sally Potter's *Orlando*, the Cineuropa winner of that year, will be recovered. And, along with it, a series of films that explore transgenderism.

Lastly, the third focus of this series devoted to the past twenty years is a review of irate British cinema, a style that struggled against the Thatcherism counterrevolution. In their staunch defence of a social model at risk of disappearing, Mike Leigh and Ken Loach—today, as before—have more than enough reasons to soldier on.

FROM MUSSOLINI TO BERLUSCONI: A SET OF MASKS

ITALIAN CINEMA SERIES

The nine films of which the first 2014 CGAC cinema series is composed delve into twentieth century Italy. And in a most meticulous manner, they analyse the three political systems that dominated this long century: From the beginnings of the fascist movement in 1920 through 2013, just after the period of mediocracy known as Berlusconiism finally came to a close. (We are talking about two buffoons here, Mussolini and Berlusconi, who are unlike any other in terms of their historical, geostrategic and war impact. However, they are indeed worthy of comparison in their ability to build demagogic regimes, in their use of mass media, in their basest instincts for garnering popular support, and in the length of time that both were able to prolong their leadership).

Somewhere in the middle of *Girolimoni, il mostro di Roma* (The Assassin of Rome), Benito Mussolini appears on the scene. When the actions of a rapist and child murderer causes mass hysteria in a town that Mussolini has recently taken in his march on Rome, he is forced into accountability sooner rather than later and must find a scapegoat for the people. The somatisation of fascism through the murder of children is more obvious here than in Fritz Lang's *M*, *The Vampire of Düsseldorf*. This illness opts to take root in the physical presence of Il Duce at his peak.

Mussolini does not reappear in this series, although his shadow lurks in two other films in such a way that the not so distant foreground conveys his downfall. *La lunga notte del '43* (The Long Night of '43) and in *Salò o le 120 giornate di Sodoma* (Salò, or the 120 Days of Sodom) portrays the days of exacerbated chaos, violence, and repression stemming from the Axis defeats. With a formidable dramatic eloquence, Vancini's film reconstructs the massacre of Ferrara's civilians prior to Mussolini's fall from power. As for Pasolini, he found material for his film—one that was involuntarily testamentary—in the frenzied escape from the so-called Republic of Salò when, having lost the war, a group of fascist resisters engage in the ritualization of sex and death. As the newly resumed research progresses on Pasolini's political assassination, a popular theory has emerged that the kidnapping of the original *Salomites* served as bait for drawing the filmmaker and intellectual into a fatal trap, signalling one of the peaks of the strategy of tension and the years of lead of Italy in the nineteen-seventies.

The other two peaks during this decade of collective tremors were the assassination of Aldo Moro and the Piazza Fontana slaughter, an attack spearheaded by the extreme right group Ordine Nuovo in Milan in 1969. *Romanzo di una strage* (Piazza Fontana: The Italian Conspiracy), for some incomprehensible reason previously unreleased in Spain, recreates—using the knowledge we now have today of the event—the pinnacle of the strategy that would culminate in a neofascist coup d'état led by Borghese, 'The Black Prince.' Then there is Marco Tullio Giordana, whose only film to reach Spain is *La meglio gioventù* (The Best of Youth), a political drama that, while less convoluted than the canonical model of this genre (that of Francesco Rossi and Elio Petri), is undoubtedly inspired by it. In one sweeping step, it takes the viewer through a broken and backward Italy where the iconic Aldo Moro, mentioned previously, makes an appearance.

At the same time that all of this was shaking the very foundation of the country, a certain segment of the leftist intellectual population was already operating far outside the system, away from politics and their official nature, in harmony with the praises of Jean-Paul Sartre or—directly from the realm of film—Jean-Luc Godard. Dominated by Godard's looming presence during those years, Bernardo Bertolucci is



no longer the homegrown communist he was in *Prima della rivoluzione* (Before the Revolution) but, rather, a supporter of the counterculture protest. *Partner*, with its declared support of Viet Cong, direct action, and delegitimation of power is one of the most revealing symbols of 1968 cinema, not just in Italy but internationally.

Beneath the guise of a scenic game—that is, the portrayal of a Dostoyevsky theatrical production—Bertolucci conducts an exercise in schizophrenic vividness, with Pierre Clementi embodying the Jekyll and Hyde nature of the tumultuous left. When so much has already been said about the kidnappings and prohibitions of *Last Tango in Paris*, perhaps the time has come to hone in on Bertolucci's least famous work. We must ask ourselves what the political motives were for preventing this film from premiering in the United States and Mexico (two of the hotbeds of the 1968 uprisings) until 1974 and 1976, respectively, or why its release in England, for example, was never authorised. Perhaps, for the sake of that out-of-date element that was once known as intellectual curiosity, perhaps it is worth it to discover *Partner*, nearly fifty years later.

We started off talking about Mussolini and Berlusconi. What both of them shared—the First Italian Republic, from 1945 until its implosion in 1992—had a lifelong Cerberus: When Paolo Sorrentino dared to narrate Giulio Andreotti's vital and unforeseen turn of events (that is, politics; for him it was always politics), it did not seem possible that this biopic could cover all of the twists and turns, nooks and crannies, shadows and unpleasantries from which he always managed to come out unscathed as the guardian of secrets. This is Andreotti. Perhaps this is where the brilliant, visionary, dramatic idea came from for *Il Divo*, to foreshadow with great dexterity what was to come. Thus, Toni Servillo, a real star under Sorrentino's direction (since *La grande bellezza* [The Great Beauty] has risen to the top, this series will conclude with a film by the same director and starring the same actor, *Le conseguenze dell'amore* [The Consequences of Love]) takes on the likeness of an anthropomorphic rodent that seems to represent, better than any other attempt, the true nature of Beelzebub: Prime Minister seven times over and mastermind of all the conspiracies of his time, from Operation Gladio, oil tycoon Enrico Mattei's forced landing and Valerio Borghese's coup d'état to pacts with the mafia, the controlled assassination of Magistrates Falcone and Borsellino, and the poisoning of Pope John Paul I. And all of this ends with a kiss of death from Toto Riina in Palermo. Like Al Capone, only a fiscal offense could stop him.

And, having ousted Andreotti, *Il Divo*, and with the Republic buried under the ominous name of Tangentopoli, we finally arrive at Silvio Berlusconi. It is not important whether he played a part in any of the above, or if his fortune was amassed under the protection of the Pentapartito and Bettino Craxi. Either way, Berlusconi emerged from the labyrinth. Perhaps on account of having suffered so greatly due to the relatively short reach of a film/demolition of *Il Cavaliere*, centered around a farce, an impossible characterisation of a caricature, where

the imitator always loses to the original version (see Sabina Guzzanti and her headstrong *Viva Zapatero*), Nanni Moretti was cold and calculating in his approach toward the indestructible buffoon. *Il Caimano* (The Caiman) is one of my favourite political films of all time and one that was created amidst the anguish of dealing with a power junkie while he is actually still in power. That is to say that everything that is typical about these dangerous assumptions—making a film of such an urgent nature, carefully amassing an arsenal of explosives to combat the rampant despot, and the recurrence, sooner or later, of melodramatic means or militant sentimentalisms—is precisely what Nanni Moretti avoids like the plague in his 2006 film.

Creating this film was a complex and minutely calculated task of distancing, beginning with the concept of Russian dolls, where there is a film contained within a film: a movie that speaks about another movie that will speak about Berlusconi. Everything that happens seems not to be connected to *Il Caimano*. Yet the film is impossible. Only Berlusconi himself could create a believable Berlusconi character. Therefore, the two sequences in which archival material is used so that the person speaking is, in fact, *Il Cavaliere*, without any intermediaries, are akin to the Mephistophelian horror genre. Only Nanni Moretti, who has been lying in wait for the magnificent and abrupt end of Italy's masquerade, can make Berlusconi palatable, cantering between outbursts in this tremendous work of art on power without power. On this journey, an Italy reddened with a century of blood and fire is left behind as if it were the Vietnam of the napalm pacifists.

José Luis Losa

SCREENING PROGRAM

16 JANUARY

Presentation by José Luis Losa

La dolce vita (Federico Fellini, 1960)

17 JANUARY

Girolimoni, il mostro di Roma (Damiano Damiani, 1972)

23 JANUARY

La lunga notte del 43 (Florestano Vancini, 1960)

24 JANUARY

Partner (Bernardo Bertolucci, 1968)

30 JANUARY

Romanzo di una strange (Marco Tulio Giordana, 2012)

31 JANUARY

Il Divo (Paolo Sorrentino, 2008)

6 FEBRUARY

Il Caimano (Nanni Moretti, 2006)

7 FEBRUARY

Le conseguenze dell'amore (Paolo Sorrentino, 2004)

20 FEBRUARY

Closing lecture by Javier Rebollo

Salò o le 120 giornate di Sodoma (Pier Paolo Pasolini, 1975)

CGAC

DEPARTAMENTO DE PRENSA E COMUNICACIÓN

Rúa Ramón del Valle Inclán 2

15703 Santiago de Compostela

Tel.: 981 546 632 / Fax: 981 546 625

cgac.prensa@xunta.es

www.cgac.org

galicia



**XUNTA
DE GALICIA**