



Magneto and Arte France
with
Casa delle Visioni and Rai Cinema
in collaboration with
Istituto Luce Cinecittà
present

SELFIE

a film by
Agostino Ferrente

France/Italy, 78 min.

produced by **Marc Berdugo, Barbara Conforti**
co-produced by **Gianfilippo Pedote**

a **Magneto and Arte France** production
co-produced by **Casa delle Visioni and Rai Cinema**
in collaboration with **Istituto Luce Cinecittà**

OFFICIAL SCREENING AT THE 69th BERLINALE – PANORAMA
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INTERNATIONAL PRESS
RENDEZ VOUS
Viviana Andriani
+33 6 80168139
viviana@rv-press.com

World Sales
Deckert Distribution GmbH
Ph: +49 (0)341 2156638
info@deckert-distribution.com

SYNOPSIS

Alessandro and Pietro are 16 years-old and live in Naples, district of Traiano where, In the summer of 2014, Davide Bifulco, also 16, died, shot while being pursued by a policeman who mistook him for a fugitive.

They are inseparable friends, Alessandro works as a waiter in a bar, Pietro dreams to become a hairdresser.

Alessandro and Pietro accept the director's proposal to shoot themselves with an iPhone, commenting live on their own daily experiences, their close friendship, their neighbourhood – now empty, in the middle of summer – and the tragedy that ended Davide's life.

Director's notes

Gianni Bifulco, the father of Davide Bifulco, agreed to meet me at the Cocco Bar in Naples' Traiano district, one of the city's many rough neighbourhoods. I had asked him to tell me about the tragic death of Davide, his innocent son who was killed by the police. While speaking with this desolate father, I explained that I wasn't interested in doing an investigation into what happened, but narrating the context in which that absurd tragedy came to pass. What I wanted to do was meet some kids the same age as Davide when he was killed and, using his story as a starting point, ask them to talk about themselves and their world.

While I was telling him about my project, Alessandro, the bar's waiter, came over to us carrying a couple coffees. A teenager with a thin adolescent face, he was in a hurry because he had to get ready for the celebrations for the Madonna dell'Arco.

I asked him if he was interested in filming the ceremony with the smartphone I gave him, requesting that he always keep himself in the frame. He accepted, and the result made an impression on me, because during the procession he was moved to tears but didn't stop shooting himself, with the statue of the Virgin behind him.

The next day, back at the Cocco Bar, a chubby kid with a moustache walked up to me and introduced himself as Alessandro's best friend. This was Pietro. He looked much older, but he swore that he too was 16.

I asked both of them to 'shoot themselves' with my iPhone as part of an audition, at a school that had just been renovated but was already run-down. I'd asked a few other kids from the area to come to the auditions as well, mostly Davide's close friends, along with a few girls and a couple of kids. But things were already clear to me: the two of them, Alessandro and Pietro, were going to be film's protagonists.

What I was trying to do was give a voice to some kids who normally aren't able to speak out, inviting them to film themselves with the technological prosthesis they were most comfortable with, a smartphone. So my idea was to delegate the shooting to them, and to think of the phone as a mirror that doesn't only reflect themselves, as is the case with the millions of 'selfies' now found on social networks, but to look at the image in the display – which then turns into the cinema screen – in order to see (and let us see) themselves reflected and also the reality behind them: their social and human context, their world, their life.

So I didn't want to entrust them with directing the film. What interested me, rather, was conveying the look in these kids' eyes, concentrating not so much on what they see (which, by now, we all know perfectly well) but on their way of looking.

What comes through in Alessandro and Pietro's eyes is their desire for a normal life, and consequently their conflict with the world they live in, where normality almost always consists in being enrolled in criminal groups and almost being considered a deserter if you try to find a way out.

The neighbourhood, seen subjectively by the two youths who tell us about it, becomes both a safe haven where they can feel at home and the place where they play out their emotions, between fear and naivety, resignation and desire. This neighbourhood, like many others, has no theatres, cinemas or libraries, and the few parents that actually find a job don't have the means with which to help the teenagers who drop out of school. Here, all kids have scooters and billiard halls, like the one in front of which Davide was killed, and the few volunteer associations that try to change things, like the one now dedicated to Davide Bifulco, are never given enough credit by local institutions.

I cannot forget that the story that sparked off my project, the tragedy of Davide's death, is all about injustice and the pain and marginalisation felt by a boy, his family, his friends and their neighbourhood.

Agostino Ferrente

Agostino Ferrente

Born in 1971, Agostino Ferrente is a director, producer and artistic director. Before becoming involved in cinema, he was an editorial coordinator for magazines and news programs addressed to communities of Italians living abroad.

After a degree in the University of DAMS in Bologna, he attended Ermanno Olmi's Film school, Ipotesi Cinema.

In 1993, he produced and directed the shorts *Poco più della metà di zero*, and *Opinioni di un pirla* in 1994.

Later, along with Giovanni Piperno, he made *Intervista a mia madre* (1999) and *Il film di Mario* (1999-2001), selected in various festivals.

In 2001, together with ten accomplices, he founded the group collective "Apollo 11" in Rome, to save the historical Apollo cinema theatre in Rome from becoming a bingo hall. By programming films, music and writing, Apollo 11 turned it into one of the liveliest cultural centres in Rome. Apollo 11 engaged also a significant collaboration with two masters of independent cinema: **Alberto Grifi** and **Vittorio De Seta**.

Furthermore, along with Mario Tronco, leader of the music band Avion Travel, they created *L'Orchestra di Piazza Vittorio*, one of the world's first multiethnic bands. This project became in 2005 a documentary, *L'Orchestra di Piazza Vittorio*, selected in many international festivals and received several awards.

In 2013, he co-directed with Giovanni Piperno *Le cose belle* (2013) that premiered at Venice Film Festival and was awarded as Best Italian Documentary by Doc/it Award.

Agostino Ferrente is currently working on his first non-documentary feature film.

Filmography

- 2019 **Selfie** (Berlinale / Panorama)
- 2013 **Le cose belle** (documentary, co-directed with Giovanni Piperno)
- 2006 **L'Orchestra di Piazza Vittorio** (documentary)
- 2004 **Scusi, dov'è il documentario?** (collective documentary)
- 2000 **Intervista a mia madre** (documentary, co-directed with Giovanni Piperno)
- 1999 **Il film di Mario** (documentary, co-directed with Giovanni Piperno)
- 1994 **Opinioni di un pirla** (short)
- 1993 **Poco più della metà di zero** (short)

Credits

Written and directed by

Agostino Ferrente

Filmed and interpreted by

Alessandro Antonelli, Pietro Orlando

Music

Andrea Pesce, Cristiano Defabriitis

Editing

Letizia Caudullo, Chiara Russo

Sound design

Benni Atria

Sound editing

Francesca Genevois

Mix

Marco Saitta

Assistant director

Edgardo Pistone

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Marc Berdugo, Barbara Conforti

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78 minutes