

John Turturro. Naples - Fact & Fiction

Luca Delbello (January 12, 2011)



January 20 (6.00 pm). John Turturro is scheduled to meet with Cardinal of Naples Crescenzo Sepe and Antonio Monda at Casa Italiana Zerilli-Marimò. Moderated by Stefano Albertini, they will speak about Naples. Clips from Turturro's latest film, *Passione*, will be shown

He is one of the most talented Hollywood character actors of his generation. Raised in Brooklyn by Italian-American parents, [John Turturro](#) [2] made a career out of his abilities as a versatile ham, embodying the most different of roles, enriching them each time with a touch of creative characterization that has made them unforgettable.



His acting abilities have made him a true icon of American cinema, and some of his roles are fixed in Hollywood cinema. Surely many remember him as the vain bowler in [The Big Lebowski](#) [3] or the neurotic pizza maker in *Do the Right Thing*, but also for more subtle roles such as the intellectual screenwriter in *Barton Fink* or the poker expert in *Rounders*.

Throughout his career he had the opportunity of working with some of the greatest directors of today's cinema, from the Coen brothers who made him into their fetish actor, to his artistic fellowship with [Spike Lee](#) [4], who chose him to bring to life some of the most memorable Italian-American characters of film history.

Turturro, together with Robert De Niro, Martin Scorsese, Al Pacino, Chazz Palminteri and not many others, represents one of the cultural reference points of the Italian-American community of New York City. He is the prototype of the Italian born and raised in America in search of a more intimate and personal contact with his land of origin, Italy. But it would be wrong to enclose him within a fence of ethnic characterization. His style allows him to go beyond the ability to represent a single community, being able to give shape and substance to different and complicated roles.

This strong relationship he has with our country has led him to direct his latest film, [Passione](#) [5], in Naples. It is a kind of musical documentary, an homage to the Neapolitan cultural vitality and poetry. His cinema is sophisticated, delicate, in which the virtues of this city, plagued with unemployment, speculation and false clichés, are extolled. *Passione* is also the right word for describing the commitment of the several artists involved in this small Italian/American production, especially Massimo Ranieri and Lina Sastri, as well as Enzo Avitabile and Raiz, in a work that is meant to emphasize Neapolitan art and music, traditional and contemporary, often snubbed by critics.

Turturro holds on to his ability as an enchantor and finds time to laugh and smile, between a dance of Caravan Petrol with Fiorello and some jokes in Neapolitan dialect. Offering the spectator a sincere and humble portrait, the Italian-American director succeeds in bringing out a non-stereotyped image of Naples, that moves and simultaneously captures the many facets and unlimited contradictions of a city that has given so much in terms of culture and art but that frequently is trivialized by infinite clichés and by eternal preconceptions about its citizens and its customs.

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Links

[1] <http://ftp.iitaly.org/files/passione-di-john-turturro>

[2] <http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0001806/>

[3] http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Big_Lebowski

[4] http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spike_Lee

[5] <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt1407085/>