

## **VENICE 2013 - Official Awards and Some Thought. A Rebirth of Italian Cinema?**

Simone Spoladori (September 12, 2013)



during the Award Ceremony on 7 September 2013 was announced a surprising verdict: after 15 years the Golden Lion returns to Italy and for the first time in the history of the festival the award-winning is a documentary.

Main competition - Official Awards

**GOLDEN LION for Best Film to:**

SACRO GRA by Gianfranco Rosi (Italy, France)

**SILVER LION for Best Director to:**



Alexandros Avranas for the film MISS VIOLENCE (Greece)

**GRAND JURY PRIZE to:**

JIAOYOU by Tsai Ming-liang (Chinese Taipei, France)

**COPPA VOLPI for Best Actor:**

Themis Panou in the film MISS VIOLENCE by Alexandros Avranas (Greece)

**COPPA VOLPI for Best Actress:**

Elena Cotta in the film VIA CASTELLANA BANDIERA by Emma Dante (Italy, Switzerland, France)

**MARCELLO MASTROIANNI AWARD for Best Young Actor or Actress to:**

Tye Sheridan in the film JOE by David Gordon Green (US)

**AWARD FOR BEST SCREENPLAY to:**

Steve Coogan and Jeff Pope for the film PHILOMENA by Stephen Frears (United Kingdom)

**SPECIAL JURY PRIZE to:**

DIE FRAU DES POLIZISTEN by Philip Gröning (Germany)

Many people will say that the victory came because the referee was partial: too easy. Actually, the victory of "Holy Gra", sanctioned by the jury chaired by Bernardo Bertolucci, is certainly surprising but far from scandalous. The film by Gianfranco Rosi, - which, like all major films is difficult to define and frame, poised between documentary and fiction - marks first of all the victory of the bet placed by Barbera and his selectors, who reserved one of the slots in the competition to an absolute outsider.

Secondly, in its own way "Holy Gra" is now history, since it is the first documentary - if we want to box it in this definition - to win the Golden Lion at Venice Film Festival. In addition, its unexpected triumph, together with that of another little gem like "Still Life" by Uberto Pasolini in the Orizzonti section, marks a form of redemption of the Italian cinema, a breath of fresh air in a year in which the signs of crisis at the Lido seemed stronger and more obvious than ever, as evidenced by the disastrous film by Gianni Amelio and the other poor Italian productions in the collateral sections.

But what are the aspects of Rosi's film that have hit the mark and that convinced the jury to think it as the best film of the selection? As I said before, its originality, its hybrid nature: Rosi not only captures "reality", not only he "rolls" himself into it like any other documentarists, but he stimulates and provokes it .

His portrayal of humanity "filtered" by the GRA has the extraordinary gift of lightness and measure, because it's never boring and Rosi never crushes his hands on the pathetic or grotesque. Another fascinating aspect is the fact that this movie draws the boundaries of a suspended reality, out of time, out of space, dreamy and far away from any even vague stereotypical image of Rome, a sample of situations and sketches which also has undoubtedly a veil of purity that recalls Pasolini.

These aspects can be summarized by a more general consideration: Sacred Gra is a film that "risks", which tries to say something non-trivial involving using a new kind of language, so strong and not



obvious, and which uses not immediate forms but winning. This willingness to take risks and go beyond the clichés of what already mentioned is the great strength of this film.

And it is from here that the Italian cinema must start again.

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