

# Journal of Italian Cinema & Media Studies

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Volume 9 Number 3



## CONFERENCE REVIEW

### **IL CINEMA FA SCUOLA (SCHOOL AND CINEMA), CINE-ROOM CONFERENCE, LIVE ON CINE-ROOM FACEBOOK PAGE, 12 NOVEMBER 2020**

*Reviewed by Federica Notari, Utrecht University*

Cine-room is an online platform created by Emanuela Piovano for KitchenFilm and Lydia Genchi for No.Mad Entertainment. This project was conceived as a virtual space to promote auteur cinema and host debates with experts from different fields according to the topic of each new film campaign. Created during the days of national lockdown during the COVID-19 pandemic in Italy in the spring 2020, Cine-room was thought of as a space to continue to watch, and discuss, good cinema.

On 12 November 2020, the platform held its second roundtable, titled *Il cinema fa scuola*, and centred on the relationship between school and cinema for the campaign 'Fuori classe', a crucial discussion in a time of pandemic when both schools and cinema were closed, with major repercussions, especially for the young. Playing with the Italian expression *fare scuola*, which can be translated as 'to lead, to show the way', the title explains the intention on this meeting well: to discuss the relevance of cinema for education, for personal growth and for social change. The two introductory films to the topic are *La Cour de Babel (School of Babel)* by Julie Bertuccelli (2014) and *Les Beaux Gosses (The French Kissers)* by Riad Sattouf (2009), two French films promoted by KitchenFilm and No.Mad Entertainment, respectively.

Taking part in the discussion were experts of cinema, education or both. Film director Emanuela Piovano and No.Mad president Lydia Genchi facilitated the dialogue. Other participants were: Flavia Laviosa, chief editor of this journal and senior lecturer in Italian studies at Wellesley College; Nolwenn Delisle, cultural events coordinator at the Institut Français – Centre Saint-Louis in Rome; Matteo Bertolotti, who manages film distribution across cinemas in Bergamo; Monica Naldi, responsible for Cinema Beltrade's connection

with schools (Milan) and Letizia Giampiero, researcher at INVALSI, an institution that evaluates education in Italian schools in order to obtain constant improvements.

Each participant has a particular point of view on how cinema and education intertwine according to their individual professional experience. Flavia Laviosa, with her cross-cultural experience of bringing Italian cinema to academia in the United States, strongly believes in the power of cinema as an educational tool for any student who wishes to approach a new culture, or even just to learn a new language. As for cinema students, she deems experiential learning to be a crucial complement to traditional teaching. The *Journal of Italian Cinema & Media Studies*, which she directs, offers the opportunity for students to collaborate in order to become acquainted not only with academic publishing, but also with the wide world of directors, cinema experts and researchers.

Nolwenn Delisle, cultural events coordinator, expresses the idea that cinema is a privileged medium of connection and exchange among cultures. The Institut Français of Rome has been very active in making francophone cinema available to a young Italian public, and supported the creation of online platforms like European Film Factory and CinEd conceived for teachers who wish to welcome cinema in their teaching method. Laviosa and Delisle stress the idea that even in a moment when movie theatres are closed due to the global pandemic, cinema as a moment of sharing can still have an important social role, even if enjoyed at home.

For what concerns practical aspects on the collaboration between cinemas and schools in Italy, Matteo Bertolotti and Monica Naldi highlight the perks and difficulties of the encounter between these two realities. According to Bertolotti, working on the connection between school and cinema means addressing the future of cinema itself, as only at a young age can we discover the magic of a movie theatre, and thus become interested in this form of art. Monica Naldi adds that although some teachers believe in the importance of educating young children with images and cinema, there is little funding for collaboration projects. Most of the times, projects as such only exist, thanks to networks of teachers, parents and local cinemas. Letizia Giampiero agrees with Naldi on the difficulties of finding financing at times, but reminds us that in 2015, a national plan to bring cinema into schools was established, providing training courses for teachers and the distribution of a wide range of tools and platforms to schools. The conversation thus ends on a positive note for the future of cinema and school.

This discussion raises very interesting questions about the status of cinema in Italy: often conceived as mere entertainment, it entered universities as a subject of analysis very late compared to other European countries, and still today early education does not often relate education to cinema. And so, what more can be done? Why is cinema in Italy not a cultural milestone, despite its great tradition? A lively conversation sparks on these matters among the viewers, who leave well-reasoned comments below the video. Cine-room proves again to offer a much-needed space for cultural dialogue, reminding us the importance of cinema for personal growth and collectivity, once its ability to inspire social, historical and cultural analysis is recognized.

#### CONTRIBUTOR DETAILS

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