

A Conversation with Andrea Lodovichietti

Chiara Montalto (July 21, 2008)



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It is my intention to let the artists, actors, filmmakers and musicians I know personally speak about their experiences and journeys in this space. As an artist myself (I'm an actress and, now, filmmaker, but you'll hear more about me at another time) I know firsthand just how solitary a creative path can be. I am blessed to have many amazing, vibrant artists as my friends, peers and mentors. As a child, I recall my grandmother telling me that that I would be judged by the company I kept. "Tell me who your friends are," she would say, "and I'll tell you what you are." Luck, I suppose, has found me,



because many of the artists, friends and mentors in my life are not only some of the most talented and amazing people, they are loving, and supportive.

Recently, I had a conversation with my friend Andrea Lodovichietti. Andrea is a filmmaker from Fano, Italy, and his most recent film, “Sotto il Mio Giardino” just won the Looking for Genius Award at Spike Lee's Bablegum Film Festival, in Cannes, France. Now, Andrea is coming to the United States in support of the film at the Rhode Island Film Festival, and he is also planning a longer trip to New York and Los Angeles later in the year. He works as the assistant to Paolo Sorrentino, and is hoping to find representation stateside on his trip. Andrea studied in Rome at the Centro Sperimentale di Cinematografia and started Lobecafilms with his friend Luca Capara.

In *Sotto il Mio Giardino*, Marco, a ten year old boy who has a passion for insects, is convinced that his neighbor has killed his wife and has buried her under his garden, the evidence being a large ant-nest he has been examining. He decides to carry out some investigations, but only reveals his thoughts to his little friend, Sara. How the story is resolved is something you'll just have to see for yourself.

The following is a conversation that Andrea and I recently had, translated to English from Italian.

CM: When did you decide to be a filmmaker?

AL: Everything happened very quickly for me, and I consider myself very lucky. I have to admit that I have always been very determined, but we all know that luck, in these cases, is very important. At 15, I worked in radio as a DJ, in discothèques and I was organizing some of the biggest parties in the province (Pesaro) (at the time it was a big deal to have these parties of 2,000 people, now they are much smaller). During my first years of high school, I worked Wednesday, Thursday and Friday nights and also Sunday afternoon. Of course, at school I wasn't at the top of my class! In 1992, I also had a recording studio, with two friends from Fano, we had a dance track that had lyrics from the Divine Comedy. Thinking of it now, I probably wouldn't do it again! Then for a few seasons, I worked at a tourist village, working as an entertainment coordinator, from a human point of view, an incredible experience, also from a professional point of view. The following two years I took part in competitions of cabaret and comic theatre that toured around Italy. Some of the scripts were written by me, inspired by the type of comedy in the works of Alessandro Bergonzoni, whom I had the chance to meet in Bologna once. I was 20 or 22 years old. Then I went to the Arts University at Bologna (DAMS) and to the school of theatre at Navile, directed by the actor and the filmmaker Nino Campisi: that was the moment when I took all of my creative energy and found my true passion: the cinema, mise en scene, visual storytelling. During my final years at DAMS, I made some shorts with a crew from Fano. Then, I was invited into the class at Centro Sperimentale di Cinematografia. At that point, my real career started. In any case, without my very cool family and friends around me I would not have been able to achieve what I have in such a short time.



CM: What inspires you? What do you look for in a story? Do you write every script that you make?

AL: Yes, I have always written the scripts for the shorts that I have made. I don't look for stories in particular, but for emotions, feelings. In the moment when an idea, a note, an old photograph, keeps repeating in my mind, I know immediately if its worth it developing, and, above all, if its possible to transform it with imagery. In any case, as in life, I like lonely people or solitary characters, lonely, but in a good way. We live passively through 10,000 stories every day, we close our eyes constantly, to people, situations, stories, intrigue. It's only necessary to translate these everyday stories into film. You just have to be alert, to capture each nuance, even when you are in your car and you stop to buy cigarettes, you look out the window, or you wait for the bus. The attentive observation of all that is around you, that's the key to everything.

CM: What's the world of producing like in Italy? Do you see yourself having a real artistic future in Italy as a director?

AL: In Italy, the situation is very, very complicated, and the state of Italian cinema in general (with a few exceptions) is not the best. In my experience, what has been essential is the experience at CSC (I graduated as a director in 2006) and to work with one of the best Italian directors at the moment, Paolo Sorrentino. This is the only option that you really have if you want to start a directing career. At CSC, in the three years of study, you have contact with practically everyone in the world of cinema. Often you get to work with Italian and international directors on a professional level; people of the caliber of Peppino Rotunno, Piero Tosi, Guiliano Montaldo, Suso Cecchi D'Amico, who have been so important to Italian cinema. Having worked with these people, you get to have a cultural and artistic exposure that wouldn't be possible any other way. When you find yourself knowing them in an artistic sense its almost surprising. Its these human contacts and relationships, the advice and inspiration that these people give you that makes you truly grow. Paraphrasing the great Francois Truffaut, technically, you can learn to make film in a short time. But to call yourself a filmmaker, in the highest sense of the word, is a whole other thing for which an entire lifetime is not enough.

CM: What are your feelings on neorealism and the history of Italian cinema?

AL: Like I said, for me cinema is the perfect union and harmony between form and substance. Films



that are only form bore me, they are sterile. Films that are only content and action, bother me. Cinema is this union, the amalgam or meeting place of various communicative arts: photography, music, language, writing, form. Cinema is the real “Festival delle emozioni” as Roland Barthes said. Cinema is emotion, entertainment and culture. A good film is that which tells its story with a certain awareness, following one or more specific parameters. I believe Neorealism represents the quintessential example of what I have just explained. The Bicycle Thief is one of three Italian films that I truly love. Every time I see it, it moves me. Neorealism is a picture of Italy in the years after the war, but its also a picture of what it is to be human, at any time. I believe that apart from nouvelle vague, there hasn't been another artistic cinematic movement with such importance in the history of cinema in the world.

As I mentioned, Andrea will be in the US in the first week of August, in support of Sotto Il Mio Giardino at the Rhode Island Film Festival, and then he will have an extended stay in the US, in New York and LA, in the next few months. He is looking to meet contacts in the film world here, so should you wish to email him, he has a page on I - Italy, <http://www.i-italy.us/profile/Andrea> [2] and also at www.myspace.com/andrealodovichetti [3]. Finally, to watch the wonderful Sotto Il Mio Giardino, follow the link to Babelgum.

Related Links: <http://www.babelgum.com/106236/sotto-mio-giardino-aka-under-garden.htm> [4]

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[1] <http://www.iitaly.org/files/lodovichetti-under-my-garden>

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