

Inside Buffalo. An African-Italian Story

John Margherita (October 02, 2009)



The documentary “Inside Buffalo” will be screened at the Afro-American Museum of Philadelphia on October 6 at 6:00 pm. In his work, the African-Italian director Kuwornu recounts the story of the 92nd American infantry division, the Buffalo Soldiers, who fought the Nazi-Fascist in Italy during World War II with the support and friendship of Italian Partisans. The event is sponsored by the Italian Consulate General of Philadelphia.

On October 6 the Afro-American Museum in Philadelphia will host a screening of “Inside Buffalo” in partnership with the Italian Consulate General of Philadelphia.



The multi-awarded documentary, defined as “a patchwork of stories that history almost forgot to tell”, has been shot both in Italy and in the USA and was first released in 2008. It recounts the story of the 92nd American infantry division which consisted in 15.000 soldiers who served in Italy during World War II, but that found that their contributions went unnoticed upon their return to the United States.

Nicknamed “Buffalo Soldiers” after the name given by American Indians to the black

members of the US Cavalry who fought Indians in the American West, they represent to the eyes of the Italian-African filmmaker Fred Kudjo Kuwornu an occasion to explore his own heritage and the history of Afro-American forces in Italy.

The documentary is divided into three different periods (before, during, and after World War II until contemporary days) and focuses on the segregation of the Buffalo Soldiers in the army, their friendship with Italians, and the prejudices they were victims of when they went back to their home country.

Their destiny, as Director Kuwornu shows the audience, is completely different from the one they were promised when they first joined the army to go to war. The “Double V” promise, in fact, had convinced them to risk their life for their country in the name of two Victories, one against Nazi-Fascism abroad, the other against prejudice at home. They found themselves fighting in one of the most difficult scenarios of the war, the Gothic Line, formed Field Marshal Albert Kesselring’s last major line of defence in the final stages of WWII along the summits of the Appenines during the fighting retreat of Nazi Germany’s forces against the Allied Armies commanded by General Clark.

They fought restlessly, despite of the fact that the training they had received in Arizona was not sufficient to combat on high mountains during the coldest Italian winter of the 40s. Discriminated by their fellow soldiers behind the lines, they found the friendship and support of the Italian Partisan forces who had become highly active and effective in disrupting German actions on the high mountains.

The story moves on to their return back home, where they still found prejudice among their fellow Americans, where they still had another battle to fight. Their story has been almost forgotten both in Italy and the US, but Director Kuwornu decided to bring it back to life when he met his friend and colleague Spike Lee in Tuscany just a year ago. At that time the latter was working on his “Miracolo di Sant’Anna” and inspired him to start this very personal voyage of discovery in Italian contemporary history.

One of the peculiarities of this already multi-awarded movie is the participation of Congressional Medal of Honor in WWII Vernon Baker who recounts vividly his war-time experiences and the heroism showed by his unit of Buffalo Soldiers. Additionally to the appearance of former President Bill Clinton, director Kuwornu includes in his movie also the first African-American President of the history of the United States, Barack Obama.

INSIDE BUFFALO

Tuesday October 6, 6:00 pm

"African American Museum Philadelphia"

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