Interview with Valerio Adami

Valerio Adami, the internationally renowned painter, was born in 1935 in Bologna Italy and represents the Nouvelle Figuration. He is also a member of the jury for this year’s FIPA. Let’s meet him.

“You made this year’s poster for FIPA...”

FIPA chose one of my paintings for its 2008 poster. On the poster, we see a staircase which leads to a film cinema. A young man in a suit of pinstripes, shocked to find himself in this position. While this is not really a self-portrait, it resembles me a little. Cinema fascinates me.

What are your thoughts on cinema?

My generation grew up with it. In 1970, Ipan Calvino read one of my screenplays and, with his support, I directed a film with my brother Giancarlo. The award winning, Vacanze nel deserto, tells the story of a man who keeps a video diary of sorts, logging various moments in his life. When one day the main character mixes up the order of events, the audience follows several parallel stories of his life. The film explores the ambiguity of the characters’ possible fates that unfold at the same time. Although an American producer agreed to finance my second film, I never directed it. As a painter I am too used to freedom. A painter has the power to change everything in the last minute, which is not possible for a film director.

Could you tell us more about your style of painting?

Rather than painting, I would prefer to talk about emptiness, about the decline of creativity in art. Today, the word “contemporary” determines without any further consideration what art should be and even the rules that creativity must obey. Moreover the media invented the word, “contemporary”, in India, where I have found my refuge, I witness another form of emptiness. The manner in which globalization has imposed western markets in this country, has profoundly changed people’s daily life and expectation to increase its poverty. The illusion of progress causes the loss of values such as dignity and honour and leads to emptiness. During my trips these last few years to India, I was full of nostalgia. India is no longer the country I once recognized in Ginsberg’s Varnasi...

Marie-Gaëlle GRAITEAU
Translated by: Nina DYK, Thomas HATCHER and Diane LAZAR

“Colours give voice to Adami’s shapes”

The Nouvelle Figuration marks the transition from the abstract movement of the 50’s to the figurative narrative of the late 60’s. Although Adami’s early paintings reflect an expressionist inspiration, he quickly found his own style: shadowless shapes of bold colour circled by thick black lines. Octavio Paz defines his friend’s pictorial style in the following way: “The colours give voice to Adami’s shapes, his greys and his greens, his blues and his ocre, his reds and his oranges cry out in his sketches. As we follow the line’s course a story unravels; the colours give these stories both body and voice. Adami’s voice sounds loud and clear, always precise, sometimes grave yet devoid of pathos. His style is never boisterous, and rather than shout, he always prefers to whisper.”

REPORTAGES AND CURRENT AFFAIRS

I was a test-tube baby

Jérôme Missolz’s promising documentary La Cigogne et l’épouvette, partly fails because it leaves the spectator lost in a world of test-tubes, pipettes, and Petri dishes.

The introduction is direct and catchy. The editing style is bold and efficient. Within a few seconds and only two shots, Jérôme Missolz switches from an anonymous avenue to the secret and hidden universe of a woman’s womb. This sensitive subject, medically assisted procreation, touches on men and women’s intimacy. Right from the start, it questions the distance between the camera and its subject. How can a film faithfully convey the uneasiness and the worries of expecting couples? The film avoids voyeurism and does not go for shock value.

As we go back and forth between a Belgian and a French hospital, the film points a finger at the differences between the two medical teams. The prevailing culture of patients and their problems, and the astounding variety of diagnoses and treatments do not hold your attention for long. Unfortunately this list soon turns into a catalogue, the film becomes redundant and the audience eventually gets bored. The music, instead of structuring the film, hardly makes up for the weaknesses in rhythm. The camera wanders down endless corridors from operating room to meeting room, from meeting room to waiting room, from waiting room to operating room and back again. Little by little, the film loses its steam. The numerous couples do not understand the medical procedures; they are a bit lost as is the spectator watching the film. When the doctors meet to choose a treatment for Véronique D., Agnès T., Sylvie R., or even Catherine F., the film gets tedious. The documentary’s structure does not focus on the patient. The director tries to create a dramatic tension by relying on a mysterious medical world, which is both complex and ultra-modern. IVF, pap smears, AI and ICIS are all mentioned so even the neophyte gets familiar with this jargon. But it’s too late, the spectator is no longer in the mood.

Pierre DENOITS
Judith DOZIERES
Translated by : Lindsay FUCHS

ASPECTS OF FRENCH CREATION

Mafia Blues

In his hands-on approach, Jean-Pierre Limosin courageously goes to the other side of the world, into the headquarters of the Japanese mafia in the heart of Tokyo.

“Young Yakuzza” stays away from traditional drama, but sticks to the everyday details of the Yakuzza, like that of a cup of tea or a communal bath... The camera is often hand held in the close-ups on the gang boss’s face revealing first his doubts then his certainties. Jean-Pierre Limosin’s film is written in blood. Faced with an ever changing world where laws are getting stricter, Mr. Kumagaia holds on to ancient values while searching for new solutions. Limosin’s film is not based on the classical structures of good and evil, by not dwelling on their criminal affairs, he reveals the essence of the institution itself, a humane organisation. Here, like in any other business, you wait for promotion. When the big boss, who we never see, decides to reorganize the business, it’s all the small people who risk suffering. The hierarchical system seems archaic, above all when the parallel editing and the soundtrack throw us at the mercy of the rappers’ anger and hostility.

“They rap singers are the same age as the ronkies in the gang. They are supposed to mirror the young mobsters.” In the Yakuzza, you bow before and after the boss has been served his tea. In return, the only thing he would say is

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“thank you”... The rap is proposing a different state of mind: one of respect you could lose, not of one you have to gain. Thanks to the parallel editing, the two lifestyles meet and this underlines their divergence. This is certainly the strength of the documentary for which the director affirms having had carte blanche. “One would think that a Yakuzza gang boss who has people’s fingers cut off may have footage cut out. Well, he doesn’t.”

20-year-old Naoki is a Yakuzza apprentice.

Laure LARRIEU
Translated by: Olivia MASTRANGELO and Hendrik TELTAU
La liberté d'un peintre...


"Les couleurs donnent une voix aux formes d’Adami..."

La Nouvelle Figuration est un mouvement artistique qui s’est développé au cours des années 1960 et 1970 en Italie. Les artistes de cette tendance se réfèrent à la peinture expressionniste, trouvant dans ses formes colorées une voix personnelle.

Situations de la création française

Mafia blues

Quand Jean-Pierre Limosin prend la caméra, c'est à deux mains, avec courage, pour nous entrainer de l'autre côté du globe, au cœur de Tokyo, dans les bureaux de la mafia nipponne.

GRANDS REPORTAGES ET FAITS DE SOCIETE

Je suis né d'une pipette

Le documentaire prometteur de Jérôme Missol, La Cigogne et l'Eprouvette, laisse quelques plumes en abandonnant en chemin le spectateur dans un monde de pipettes et de paillettes.

Le choix de la redaction

Hors compétition : "Jaune Création"

En marge de la compétition, le festival propose de découvrir les tendances de la jeune création internationale au travers de films d'écologie. Les quatre coins du monde sont représentés : dès ce soir, l'oeuvre de cinema de Lotz (Pologne), puis les universités de São Paulo (Brésil), de Salamanca (Espagne), de Pekin (Chine) et d'Évry (France).