

RICHMOND
Italian
Film
Festival

MARCH 21-24, 2025



UNIVERSITY OF RICHMOND
School of Arts & Sciences[™]

DEPARTMENT OF LANGUAGES, LITERATURES,
AND CULTURES



UNIVERSITY OF RICHMOND
School of Arts & Sciences[™]

FILM STUDIES PROGRAM

Festival Locations

FRIDAY, MARCH 21, 2025

Jepson Plaza & Room 118
Jepson Hall
221 Richmond Way
University of Richmond

SUNDAY, MARCH 23, 2025

Jepson Room 118
Jepson Hall
221 Richmond Way
University of Richmond

SATURDAY, MARCH 22, 2025

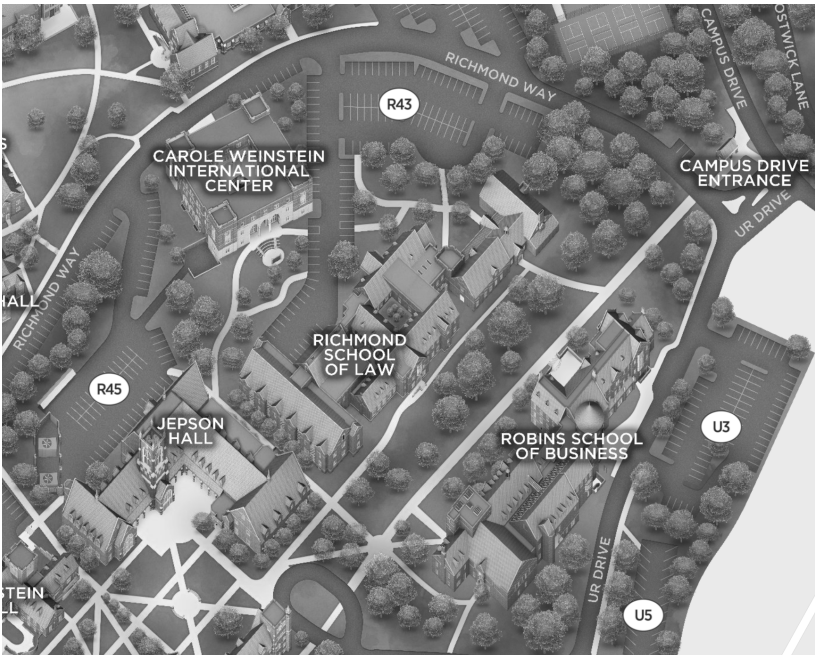
Ukrop Auditorium
Robins School of Business
102 UR Drive
University of Richmond

MONDAY, MARCH 24, 2025

The Byrd Theatre
2902 W. Cary Street
Richmond, Virginia

UNIVERSITY OF RICHMOND PARKING LOT LOCATIONS

U3, U5, R43, R45



Welcome

The first edition of the Richmond Italian Film Festival will showcase some of the best Italian films of the last two years and one rediscovered film from the heyday of Italian cinema. Several guests will introduce the films and participate in two roundtable discussions. Our aim is to bring the finest Italian films to Richmond each year.

Admission is free for daily screenings. We encourage you to arrive early for seating.

Hosted by the Department of Languages, Literatures, & Cultures and the Film Studies Program, with the support of the Cultural Affairs Committee, A&S Dean's Office, Osher Lifelong Learning Institute, Office of International Education, the Bonner Center for Civic Engagement, the Boatwright Memorial Library, and Italian Cultural Institute (Washington, D.C.).

FRIDAY, MARCH 21, 2025

5:30 p.m.
**OPENING
RECEPTION**
Jepson Plaza

Greetings and Remarks

Elettra La Duca
Director, Italian Cultural Institute, Washington D.C.

Anthony Russell
University of Richmond

Luca Peretti
University of Richmond
Festival Curator

The opening reception features an opportunity to mingle with guest panelists, film scholars, and film industry experts. Italian-inspired food stations, wine, and beer will be served.

6:30 p.m.
**FILM
SCREENING**
Jepson 118

C'è ancora domani

(There is still tomorrow, Paola Cortellesi, 2023)

Introduction

Monika Siebert
University of Richmond

In this moving comedic drama set in postwar Rome, a working-class woman dreams of a better future for herself and her daughter while facing abuse at the hands of her domineering husband. When a mysterious letter arrives, she discovers the courage to change the circumstances of her life. The first film as director of one of the most known Italian comedic actresses, the film was an Italian box office phenomenon and winner of six David di Donatello (the Italian Academy Awards). The film was successfully distributed in several countries, receiving critic and audience accolades, and will be in theaters in the United States in March 2025.

SATURDAY, MARCH 22, 2025

1:30 p.m.

FILM

SCREENING

Ukrop

Auditorium

Stonebreakers (Valerio Ciriaci, 2022)

Introduction

Valerio Ciriaci

Director

The film chronicles the conflicts around monuments that arose in the United States during the George Floyd protests and the 2020 presidential election. As statues of Columbus, Confederates, and Founding Fathers fall from their pedestals, the nation's triumphalist myths are called into question. By exploring the shifting landscapes of American monumentality, the film interrogates the link between history and political action in a nation that must confront its past now more urgently than ever. From the Italian creative team behind one of the most acclaimed films on Italian colonialism (*If Only I Were That Warrior*), the film returns to Richmond five years after the events that it depicts took place here on Monument Avenue.

Following the film
ROUNDTABLE

Ukrop

Auditorium

RECEPTION

featuring Italian snacks and beverages will be held following the roundtable.

“Richmond and its monuments, five years later.”

Greetings

Jennifer Cavanaugh

Dean, School of Arts & Sciences

University of Richmond

Chair: Sonja Bertucci

University of Richmond

Valerio Ciriaci

Director, Italian Cultural Institute, Washington D.C.

Julian Maxwell Hayter

University of Richmond

Nicole Maurantonio

University of Richmond

SUNDAY, MARCH 23, 2025

1:30 p.m.

FILM SCREENING

Jepson 118

La chimera (Alice Rohrwacher, 2023)

Introduction

Ira Deutchman
Columbia University
Film Producer and Distributor

Everyone has their own Chimera, something they try to achieve but never manage to find. For the band of tombaroli, thieves of ancient grave goods and archaeological wonders, the Chimera means redemption from work and the dream of easy wealth. For Arthur, the Chimera looks like the woman he lost, Beniamina. To find her, Arthur challenges the invisible, searches everywhere, goes inside the earth — in search of the door to the afterlife of which myths speak. In an adventurous journey between the living and the dead, between forests and cities, between celebrations and solitudes, the intertwined destinies of these characters unfold, all in search of the Chimera.

From the acclaimed director of *Happy as Lazzaro*, this is the first screening in Richmond of her fourth film.

4 p.m. ROUNDTABLE

Jepson 118

RECEPTION

featuring Italian appetizers and desserts will be held following the roundtable.

“Italian cinema in the U.S.: past, present, future.”

Chair: Luca Peretti
University of Richmond
Festival Curator

Ira Deutchman
Columbia University; Film Producer and Distributor

Damiano Garofalo
La Sapienza, Università di Roma, online

Elettra La Duca
Director, Italian Cultural Institute, Washington D.C.

Isaak J. Liptzin
Producer, Awen Films, New York City

6 p.m. FILM SCREENING

Jepson 118

Parthenope (Paolo Sorrentino, 2024)

Introduction

Bernardo Piciché
Virginia Commonwealth University

Parthenope, born in the sea of Naples in 1950, searches for happiness over the long summers of her youth, falling in love with her home city and its many memorable characters. First actress, then anthropologist, we follow her exploration of life and Naples over several years. In typical Sorrentinian style, different and absurd characters are protagonist, from a lascivious bishop to the writer John Cheever. From Academy Award-winning filmmaker Paolo Sorrentino comes a monumental and deeply romantic story of a lifetime, screened for the first time in Richmond.

MONDAY, MARCH 24, 2025

7 p.m.

Smog (Franco Rossi, 1962)

FILM

SCREENING

Introduction

The Byrd Theatre

2908 W. Cary Street
Richmond

Luca Peretti
University of Richmond
Festival Curator

Restored by Fondazione Cineteca Di Bologna and the UCLA Film & Television Archive in collaboration with Warner Bros. Entertainment, Inc. Restoration funding provided by the Hollywood Foreign Press Association.

The first Italian feature ever to be shot entirely in the United States, it premiered at the Venice Film Festival before almost completely disappearing. It tells the story of an Italian lawyer's accidental layover in Los Angeles, where his encounters with the characters of the city and the postmodernist architecture (very unlike Italy) lead to an existential crisis. With an important cast (Enrico Maria Salerno, Renato Salvatori, and Annie Girardot) and jazz-inflected score by Piero Umiliani, featuring Chet Baker on trumpet, the film will be screened for the first time ever in Virginia, over 60 years after its making, in a beautifully restored copy.

Biographies



SONJA BERTUCCI is a filmmaker and educator based in Richmond, Va. While her academic work explores questions around cinema and the poetics of the past, with a focus on Iranian cinema, her films thematize grief and loss, ephemerality, and marginalized subjects of cultural life. Her most recent film, *The Diamond Couple* (2024), has been screened at multiple festivals and won multiple awards, including the Award for Inspirational Filmmaking at the Arizona International Film Festival.



VALERIO CIRIACI is an Italian documentary filmmaker living in the United States. Born in Rome, Valerio graduated from Sapienza University of Rome in 2011 with a degree in communications. That same year, he moved to New York City to attend the documentary program at New York Film Academy. In 2012, he co-founded the production company Awen Films, with which he has directed independent documentaries, editorial videos, and other non-fiction projects. His short documentaries, *Melodico* (2012), *Treasure - The Story of Marcus Hook* (2013), and *Iom Romi* (2017), have been selected by numerous international festivals, including Big Sky Documentary Film Festival, Hot Springs Documentary Film Festival, Bari International Film Festival, and the New York Jewish Film Festival at Lincoln Center. In 2015, he released his first feature, *If Only I Were That Warrior*, winner of the “Imperdibili” award at Festival dei Popoli and of the 2016 Globo d’Oro for best documentary. *Mister Wonderland*, his second feature, received the ‘Il Cinemino’ prize at Festival dei Popoli in 2019 and was broadcast on Rai in Italy and on PBS in the United States. His latest film, *Stonebreakers*, won Honorable Mention (best feature), the Audience Award, and the “Imperdibili” award at Festival dei Popoli in 2022, and had its U.S. premiere at IFFBoston in April 2023.



IRA DEUTCHMAN has been making, marketing and distributing films since 1975, having worked on over 150 films including some of the most successful independent films of all time. He was one of the founders of Cinecom and later created Fine Line Features — two companies that were created from scratch and, in their respective times, helped define the independent film business. He was also a co-founder of Emerging Pictures, the first digital projection network in the United States and a pioneer in delivering live cultural events into movie theaters. Currently, Deutchman is an independent producer and a consultant in marketing and distribution of independent films. He is also professor emeritus in the School of the Arts at Columbia University, where he has taught since 1987 and was the chair of the Film Program from 2011-2015. His current projects include serving as director/producer of the feature documentary *Searching for Mr. Rugoff* (opened in theaters in August, 2021), producer of the stage adaptation

of Joan Micklin Silver's *Hester Street*, producer of *Nickel & Dimed*, based on the book by Barbara Ehrenreich and directed by Debra Granik (in pre-production) and executive producer of the mini-series based on the novel *Radio Girls* by Sarah-Jane Stratford (in development). In 2017, Deutchman was awarded the Spotlight Lifetime Achievement Award by the Sundance Art House Convergence for his service to independent film marketing and distribution.



DAMIANO GAROFALO is an associate professor in film & media studies at Sapienza University of Rome, where he teaches cinema history and television history. After having obtained a Ph.D. in cultural history at the University of Padua, he worked as an adjunct professor at several Italian Universities (Udine, Padua, Milan, Reggio Emilia, Cassino). He also worked as a post-doctoral fellow at the Deutsches Historisches Institut in Rome and at the Catholic University of Milan. He was also a visiting scholar at the Ohio State University and at McGill University in Montreal, and a Goggio Lecturer at the University of Toronto. His most recent book, *C'era una volta in America. Storia del cinema italiano negli Stati Uniti (1946-2000)* will be published in English Translation by Palgrave Macmillan in 2025.



ELETTRA LA DUCA is the director of the Italian Cultural Institute of Washington, D.C., an office of the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation dedicated to promoting Italian language and culture. Since the beginning of her assignment in 2022, she and the Institute's team have organized numerous exhibitions, concerts, film festivals, panels, and other events, collaborating with Italian, local and international institutions to highlight the vitality of contemporary Italian culture. She has a background in cultural heritage conservation and a Ph.D. in history and arts from the University of Granada. During her studies, she has worked with the Italian Ministry of Culture, with several European artistic institutions, and with the University of Canterbury in New Zealand, where she was a visiting researcher in 2017. She became a cultural attaché for the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation in 2020, and in 2021, she was assigned to the Italian Cultural Institute of Abu Dhabi to coordinate the Italian program for Expo 2020 Dubai.



ISAAK J. LIPTZIN is a documentary producer and cinematographer based in New York City. Born in San Francisco, he spent his formative years in Italy before moving to New York in 2009 to study photography at New York University's Tisch School of the Arts. In 2013, he co-founded Awen Films with Valerio Ciriaci, producing award-winning documentary features including *If Only I Were That Warrior* (2015), *Mister Wonderland* (2017), and *Stonebreakers* (2022), along with numerous documentary shorts, series, and reportages. Beyond Awen Films, he served as a news producer for Italian

national broadcaster Rai during the 2016, 2020, and 2024 presidential campaigns and produced for Netflix Originals' *First Team: Juventus*. His work has been commissioned by organizations including MSNBC, AJ+, WNYC Radio, Centro Primo Levi, Foreign Policy Association, and UNITAR.



NICOLE MAURANTONIO is a professor of rhetoric & communication studies and American studies at the University of Richmond, where she has worked since 2010. She currently serves as associate provost of academic affairs. Prior to joining the faculty at UR, she was a post-doctoral teaching associate in the Communication Studies Department at Northeastern University. Maurantonio's teaching and scholarship explore narrative and material traces of memory, with a particular focus on the relationship between race and place. A teacher-public scholar, Maurantonio's work has appeared in a variety of venues, from *Communication, Culture, and Critique* to *The Washington Post*. The co-editor of *Communicating Memory & History* (Peter Lang, 2019) with David W. Park, she is also the author of *Confederate Exceptionalism: Civil War Myth and Memory in the Twenty-First Century* (University Press of Kansas, Culture America series, 2019).



LUCA PERETTI is an assistant professor of Italian studies at the University of Richmond. He wrote *Un dio nero un diavolo bianco. Storia di un film non fatto tra Algeria, Eni, Solinas e Sartre* (Marsilio, 2023) and co-edited volumes on terrorism and cinema (Postmedia books, 2014), *Pier Pasolini Pasolini* (Bloomsbury Academics, 2018), on Italian cinema and Algeria (AAMOD, 2022), and on Italian cinema and the former Portuguese colonies (AAMOD, 2024). His work has appeared in, among others, *Film History*, *Senses of Cinema*, *The Italianist*, *Interventions*, *Annali d'Italianistica*, *Journal of Italian Cinema and Media Studies*, *Historical Materialism*, *Comunicazioni Sociali*, *L'Avventura*. He is the editor-in-chief of *Cinema e Storia*. He wrote and co-produced the film *Mister Wonderland* (dir. Valerio Ciriaci, 2019) and collaborates with newspapers and magazines. He has organized and programmed film festivals and retrospectives since 2005.



BERNARDO PICICHÉ, J.D., Ph.D., has recently joined the Department of English at Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) to teach world cinema and comparative literatures. Previously, in the School of World Studies at VCU, he taught courses of Italian language and culture; Greco-Roman, Italian, French, Spanish, and Arabic literatures in translation; history of the ideas; religions of the Ancient Mediterranean; eco-fiction, international migrations, Italian opera, cultural studies, and world cinema. Piciché earned a Laurea in Law and a Laurea in Italian literature, both from the University of Rome. After that, he received graduate degrees in global diplomacy, Italian Renaissance, and contemporary Italian poetry from Rome, Paris VIII, and Yale.

He published on Italian writers, such as Dante, Boccaccio, Tasso, on the painter Caravaggio, the Italian Futurism, Mediterranean philology, and filmmakers, such as the Italian Francesco Rosi and the Kurdish Erol Mintas. His present research focuses on Italian directors and Early Modern travelers in the Vice-Royalty of Naples.



ANTHONY RUSSELL is an associate professor of English and Italian studies at the University of Richmond and is the coordinator of the Italian Studies Program. He earned a Ph.D. in Renaissance studies from Yale University and is a past recipient of a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities. His comparative and interdisciplinary research in Medieval and Early Modern Studies has yielded publications on Dante, Tommaso

Campanella, Marsilio Ficino, Giorgio Vasari, Du Bellay, John Donne, and Philip Sidney. He has co-edited a book entitled *William Shakespeare and 21st-Century Culture, Politics, and Leadership* (2020), for which he wrote on *Macbeth* and *Breaking Bad*. Most recently, he has published on literature and pandemics for the *Interdisciplinary Journal of Leadership Studies* (2022), and on Michelangelo's *Last Judgment* and 16th century art criticism in a special edition of *Religions* entitled *Ritual, Spectacle, and Drama in the Medieval & Early Modern World* (2023). He is the past president of the Richmond Shakespeare Theatre.



MONIKA SIEBERT is an associate professor of English and coordinator of the Film Studies Program at the University of Richmond, where she teaches courses in contemporary U.S. American literature and North American Indigenous literature and film. She is the author of *Indians Playing Indian: Multiculturalism and Contemporary Indigenous Art in North America* (2015) and essays on Indigenous literature and film in

American Literature, Public Culture, ab-Original: Journal of Indigenous Studies and First Nations, and First Peoples' Cultures, and Mississippi Quarterly.

Notes



Digital program available at
filmstudies.richmond.edu.



RICHMOND
**Italian
Film
Festival**