

Without Borders. The Importance of Diversity.

Maria Vittoria Solomita (June 08, 2010)



Between July 7 and 9, 2010, the third edition of the multi-cultural festival “Senza Frontiere/WithoutBorders” will take place at the Casa del Cinema of Rome

“A festival suspended between social accusation and new media. The audiovisual power to carry the universal message of equality, basically 'Without borders'”. So the three-year-old Roman festival was presented on June 3 at Casa Italiana Zerilli-Marimò.

The idea started from a documentary by Paul Smaczny, “Knowledge Is the Beginning”, a delightful story centered upon the multi-ethnic reality of the Divan Orchestra, a group made up of Syrian, Egyptian, Jordanian, and Lebanese students. “While their home countries fight against each other, they are able to cooperate peacefully, playing great music”, underlined organizer Fiamma Arditi.

The festival's mission is summarized in this image. The common objective of the participating films is to demonstrate, through life-stories, how cinema, music and collective work can overcome the barriers set up by prejudices and phobias enforced by ignorance.

And so, crossing the mental limits of preconception and the physical ones of the ocean, these films were promoted in New York, in the presence of some of the authors who will be present in Italy in July, at the Casa del Cinema of Villa Borghese. The round table included the director of the Human



Rights Watch Carroll Bogert, the vice-president of the Barenboim-Said Foundation Miriam Said, the head of the UN Alliance of Civilizations project Jordi Torrent, and teacher Joy Episalla.

An art teacher because every year high school students are involved in a side-project: a photographic exhibition which raises awareness towards the Festival's theme. So while the first edition highlighted the Palestinian situation, and the second edition faced the issue of the role of women and adolescents in various cultures and the weight of censorship, especially in Iran, this year is the turn of water.

But "Without borders" doesn't only overcome the cultural superstructures linked to borders, it also erases the standard values of "regulations", "genre" and "selection", since the organizers receive the films by upcoming authors and recommended directors through friends, relatives, and other connections. So only afterwards is the yearly topic chosen. For this third edition the revelation was caused by the scientific documentary by Irina Salina Flow, distributed in Italy by Feltrinelli under the title *Per amore dell'acqua*.

Another limit overcome by this small festival has to do with genre classifications, the reason why the Roman public may view documentaries, fiction, reportages and commercials, such as the beautiful *Wombat*, a mini-sketch about the sense of globalization and the non-sense of glocal indifference.

Many years ago an astronaut expressed himself regarding this concept, having had a special viewing position, the Moon. From Apollo 8 Frank Borman saw that "those differences which for many people are unsurmountable look like what they really are, pure ideological limits". Let's just hope we don't have to move to the Moon to understand the importance of diversity.

Translated by Julian Sachs

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