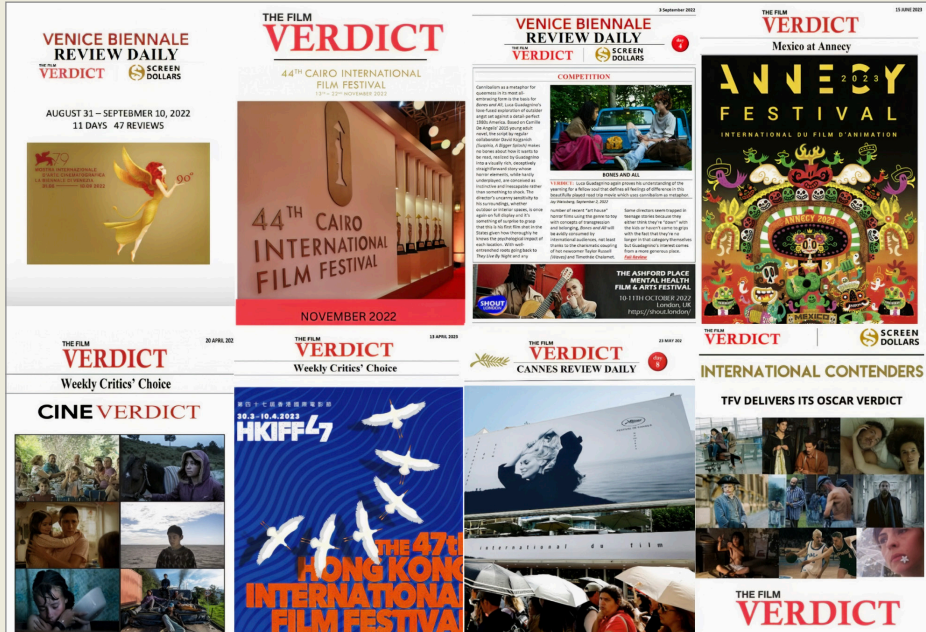


VENICE REVIEW DAILY



3 Questions for Alberto Barbera

Alberto Barbera, director of the 80th Venice International Film Festival, reflects on the future of cinema.

TheFilmVerdict, August 28th, 2023

THE FILM VERDICT: In your introduction to the 80th Venice Film Festival, you use a quotation from Bernardo Bertolucci’s far-sighted 1964 film *Before the Revolution* — “We went to bed at night knowing that we’d wake up in the future” — to gaze into what lies ahead for the Mostra. Your conclusion, based on this year’s selection process, seems basically optimistic. What is it about this moment in time that has stimulated filmmakers to give their best? Is it the very challenges they face? Is world cinema at a turning point?

ALBERTO BARBERA: I’m resolutely optimistic, despite all those (and there are more than a few) who prophesy the imminent death of cinema. There will never be a shortage of films, even if the cinema changes, and it is destined to change even more with the rise, for example, of the unprecedented innovations that AI will bring in the immediate future. This is the real turning point and the film industry is going to have to come to grips with it very soon. If the switch from analog to digital took some fifteen years to complete, the transformation in the way films are written and shot in the immediate future will

Continues next page

The Film Verdict at 1,000 Reviews

How The Film Verdict has grown since its first public bow in Venice.

TheFilmVerdict, August 28th, 2023

This is a big anniversary year for the 80th Mostra del Cinema, but no less of a frisson for the writers and management of The Film Verdict, as we celebrate the start of our third year in business on a digital platform that has grown hugely and well, and is still expanding week by week.

When five Verdict critics get off the boat and step onto the Lido, we will be very much aware that two exciting, labor-in-

tensive years have passed since our first festival debut — which took place at at Venice in 2021. Our mission was immediately understood and supported by Venice president Roberto Cicutto, festival director Alberto Barbera and the head of international press Michela Lazzarin: to promote the festival’s program of world cinema through independent reviews and the power of writing that dives deep into the zeitgeist of our time.

To a rather amazing extent, the objectives TFV set itself at its inception have been fulfilled; namely, to promote timely, stimulating international cinema via a greatly increased number of reviews

Continues next page

GERMAN FILMS IN VENICE



THE THEORY OF EVERYTHING

by Timm Kröger



HOLLYWOOD GATE

by Ibrahim Nash'at



Continued from previous page

by authoritative writers, reviews that had largely stopped coming out of the major trade magazines. It was this woeful void that The Film Verdict set out to fill, becoming the essential missing link in the production-promotion-distribution cycle of world cinema. And after more than 1,000 reviews published in two years, we can take justifiable pride in a promise fulfilled.

The idea for the platform seemed self-evident when, back in the summer of 2021, a group of frustrated critics approached Eric Mika,



TFV Critics Stephen Dalton and Carmen Gray working hard at International Film Festival Rotterdam

the former publisher of The Hollywood Reporter and Variety's former international topper. He understood that a website was needed for quality film criticism that addressed those directors and, indeed, entire countries that were being increasingly overlooked by the trades, even if the films were stunning and the world sales agents were already

[*For Full Article, Click here*](#)



Director of the 80th Venice International Film Festival, Alberto Barbera

Continued from previous page

be much faster and more radical. Because AI is already here and working, it doesn't need to be perfected or for standard procedures to be created. All that is missing is regulation, which is one of the most important demands put forward by the strikers.

I don't know what stimulated the creativity of the filmmakers, which is at the heart of the (apparently) high quality of the films in this year's program. But it's true that, generally speaking, situations of uncertainty and difficulty are a stimulus for directors. I am referring to the extremely serious problems afflicting the contemporary world: the growing military conflict, the challenge of climate change, the epochal phenomenon of migration and the psychological and social uncertainty it causes. Artists are sensitive antennae able to perceive the deepest unease and translate it into stories that are highly

faithful and representative mirrors of this moment.

THE FILM VERDICT: Art-house and independent cinema – the kind of ambitious, quality movies that Venice screens – sometimes seems to be separated from commercial cinema – the superhero franchises, the repetitive genre films – by a high wall. At other times it is amazing to see mega-hits like Barbie and Oppenheimer break through with the style and intelligence of festival films. Does the future hold more of this type of crossover? What role do festivals like Venice play in pushing producers to aim higher and risk more?

ALBERTO BARBERA: The contraposition between auteur films and commercial cinema is a simplification that has never existed in a reductive form. The entire history of cinema can be summed up in the attempt to find an (im)possible

[*For Full Article, Click here*](#)

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Venice Memories by Peter Cowie

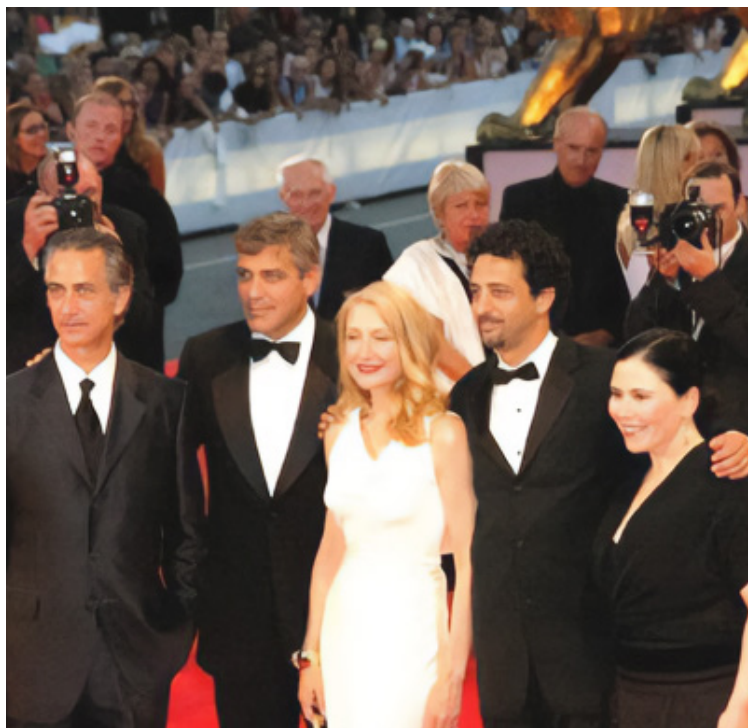


Peter Cowie is the former International Publishing Director of Variety, author of numerous books on the cinema, and chair of the annual panel on the Biennale College Cinema program in Venice. A long-time friend and colleague and an early supporter of The Film Verdict project, his enthusiasm and intelligence applied to film offers a constant source of inspiration for those seeking a “third way” between art and commerce. In this three-part series, he reflects on the history of the Venice Film Festival and those who have shaped it.

In my youth, I could never get to the Venice Festival, for the simple reason that it occurred during the very month that I was assembling my annual International Film Guide into page form. So the Mostra remained like a chimera on the horizon of filmgoing experience. At least until 1998, when Deborah Young asked me to fly in to moderate a panel during the festival. It proved a baptism of fire, as our principal guest, the charismatic mayor of Rome, Walter Veltroni, was running late. “He’ll be here in ten minutes”, an aide whispered into my ear. “Keep talking.” Then about twenty minutes later, another message, “He’s on his way...” Eventually he did climb on to the dais and proceeded to hold forth most eloquently – for what seemed like an eternity.

But my true engagement with the Mostra began almost twenty years ago, when the artistic director, Marco Müller, appointed me a member of the jury of the “Luigi De Laurentiis Award for a Debut Film.” We were accommodated in the legendary Hotel des Bains, with its sprawling gardens, pool, and

glorious terraces. Our president was the idiosyncratic, inventive Canadian director, Guy Maddin. Our deliberations were as serene as the lagoon itself, although ruffled by a Russian member of the jury who insisted on watching the films on DVD in her hotel room.



George Clooney and team at the World Premiere of Good Night and Good Luck

That same year, we attended the world premiere of *Good Night and Good Luck*, George Clooney’s film about Ed Murrow. “George” mania was at its height, and at the press conference earlier in the day one woman had appealed to Clooney “to have my baby.” That evening, the Sala Grande was packed to the eaves. As Clooney took his place in the balcony, you could hear the crowd

outside the building chanting his name. The lights went down, the credits began, but the chanting grew from a rumble to what seemed like an uproar. Those without tickets were trying to force their way into the auditorium. With almost effortless

cool, Clooney rose to his feet, waved to the projectionist, and the screening came to a halt. Clooney went downstairs and addressed the frustrated crowd. He must have calmed them, because when he returned to his seat, the film could begin once more. The incident captured for me the very personal nature of the Mostra, and the intimate relationship

between artist/entertainer and his public in a way that could not have happened at a regular event.

Another image, this time from 2013, embodied the warmth and emotional power of the Mostra, when a portly Lech Walesa rose from his seat to acknowledge the applause for the 87-year-old

continues next page

Venice Memories continued

Andrzej Wajda's last great film, *Walesa, Man of Hope*. Raising the director's hand high, Walesa seemed in awe of the occasion – art and politics fused in an unforgettable moment of rapture.

Many years later, the then President of the Biennale, Paolo Baratta, and the artistic director, Alberto Barbera, asked me to write a brief history of the festival to celebrate its 75th anniversary; and this was duly published by the Biennale.



Historical photo of Des Bains Hotel Garden



Historic photo of Excelsior Hotel

The birth of the Mostra came about through a number of unrelated circumstances. The Biennale had been promoting the visual arts since 1893, and in the early 1930's its president, Count Volpi, seized the birth of the Mostra came about through a number of unrelated circumstances. The Biennale had been promoting the visual arts since 1893, and in the early 1930's its president, Count Volpi, seized the opportunity to help the flagging fortunes of his two elegant hotels on the Venice Lido

– the Excelsior and the Des Bains. Like Lenin in Russia before him, Mussolini saw in the cinema an instrument for enhancing Italy's cultural prestige and saw to it that funds were made available to the Biennale from 1930 onwards, enabling the autonomous organization to launch first an International Festival of Contemporary Music, and then, in 1932, the "Mostra", or "Exhibition", as it became known informally in Italian film circles.

Part Two of this article will appear in tomorrow's Venice daily.



Lech Walesa at 70th Venice Film Festival in 2013

VENICE FAST FACTS

Biennele celebrates 80 years

1938



The first retrospective was introduced, devoted to French cinema from 1891 to 1933. Marlene Dietrich came to the Lido, consecrating the star worship that accompanied the Festival.

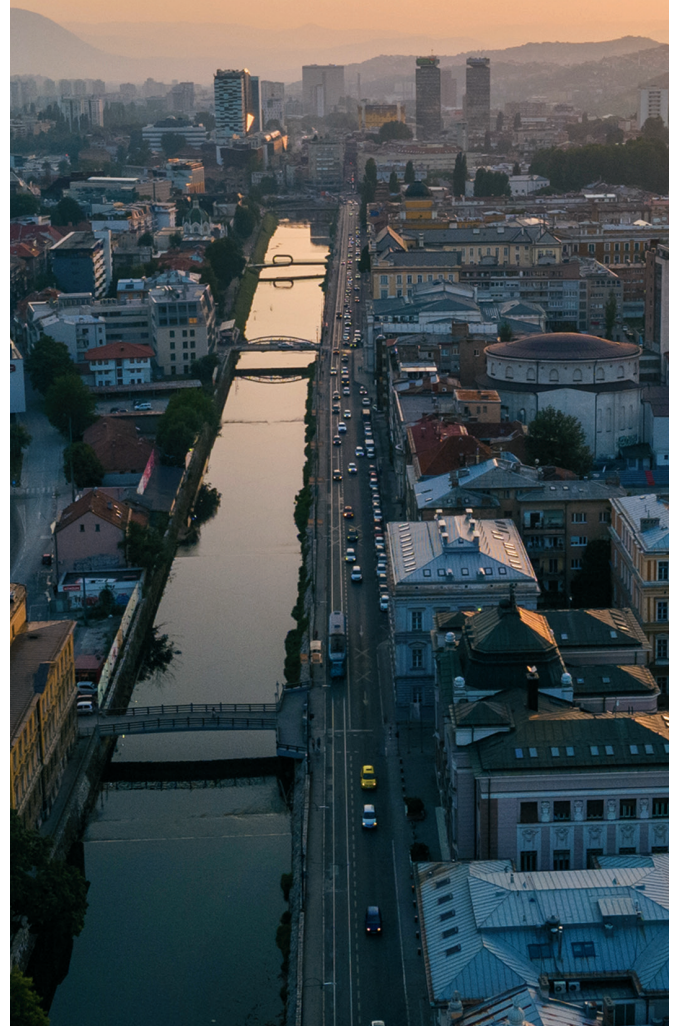
1947



The Festival was held in the splendid setting of the courtyard of the Ducal Palace, with a record audience of 90,000. That year the international jury was reinstated to assign the International Grand Prix of Venice awarded to *The Strike (Siréna)* by Karel Stekly

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PROGRAM
31 AUGUST
4 SEPTEMBER
2023

THURSDAY, 31 AUGUST

- 09:00 - 11:00
FOCUS ON CHINA | VPB SPECIAL SCREENING | Sala Volpi
Blue Planet Sci-Fi Film Festival: Short Films Selection
- 10:30 - 12:00
VPB SPECIAL SCREENING | Sala Pasinetti
When Your Eyes Linger by Hwang Da-seul
- 12:00 - 13:40
FOCUS ON KYRGYZSTAN | VPB SPECIAL SCREENING | Sala Pasinetti
The Gift by Dalmira Tilebergenova
- 12:00-14:30
VPB SPECIAL SCREENING | Sala Casinò
Creation of the Gods I: Kingdom of Storms by Wuershan
- 14:00 - 15:30
FOCUS ON CHINA | The Most Beautiful Shooting Locations in China
in collaboration with Xinhua
- 16:00-16:50
PANEL | Co-Producing with Japan:
New Opportunities for the Italian Film Industry
- 17:00 - 18:00
FOCUS ON KYRGYZSTAN | Cooperation Strategies & Perspectives
in collaboration with the Cinema Department - Minister of Culture, Information, Sports, and Youth Policy of Kyrgyzstan & Embassy of the Kyrgyz Republic to Italy

FRIDAY, 1 SEPTEMBER

- 14:30 - 16:00
PANEL | New Image, New Lifestyle. Cinema in the New Media Time,
Capture Your Own Story
in collaboration with Infinix

SATURDAY, 2 SEPTEMBER

- 11:45 - 13:30
PANEL | Spotlight on Hong Kong Film Industry:
The Past, Present and Exciting Future
in collaboration with Create Hong Kong
- 15:00 - 16:50
PANEL | The New Anti-Piracy Law:
Opportunities for the Audiovisual Industry
in collaboration with FAPAV
- 18:10 - 19:10
FOCUS ON CHINA | Blue Planet Sci-Fi Film Festival Cooperation Forum
in collaboration with Xinhua

SUNDAY, 3 SEPTEMBER

- 10:30 - 12:15
PANEL | Genre Trends in Global Film Production
in collaboration with C-stars Consulting
- 15:00 - 16:30
PANEL | Next Generation Movie Creatives: from Schools to Showbiz.
Spotlight on Animation
in collaboration with MPA
- 18:10 - 19:00
FOCUS ON CHINA | Unravelling China's
Cultural Tapestry through Wine and Film
in collaboration with LIPP & NYSH Productions

MONDAY, 4 SEPTEMBER

- 15:00 - 17:00
PANEL | We Are Stories Campaign: Protecting Creativity
and Supporting Young Talents
in collaboration with FAPAV

Events: Open to all
Focus on Kyrgyzstan: Italian/Russian with translation
All the other panels: Italian/English with translation

Screenings: Gold and Trade Accreditation
For info: italianpavilion.it

Location Flashback

Campo San Barnaba - Venice, Italy

Summertime (1955)



Photo: © United Artists

Premiered at Venice's Palace Theatre on May 29, 1955

In this scene, while sightseeing during her dream Italian vacation, American Jane Hudson (Katherine Hepburn) shoots a home movie of the area, but takes one too many steps backward and ends up falling in the canal.

The San Barnaba is a campo in the Dorosoduro sestiere of Venice, Italy. The neighborhood's church is the San Barnaba. It has been featured in numerous films, including *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade*, where it served as the exterior to the library.

The film was shot on location in Venice in Technicolor in 1954. On a budget of \$1.1 Billion. It was one of the first British-produced films to be shot entirely on location. A co-production between the United States, United Kingdom, and Italy, *Summertime* was released theatrically by United Artists in the U.S. on June 21, 1955, and premiered in the United Kingdom later that Autumn under the alternative title *Summer Madness*.



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The Teacher's Lounge selected as Germany's submission for Best International Film Oscar®

The Teacher's Lounge by Ilker Çatak (if..Productions Film) will enter the race for Germany to the 96th Oscars® in the Best International Feature Film category. The choice was decided by an independent nine member jury who were appointed by various associations working within the German film industry. A total of 13 films were submitted for consideration.

Jury spokesperson Torsten Koch (Constantin Film, German Distributors Association) gave the motivation for its choice as follows, "By nominating *THE TEACHERS' LOUNGE*, the jury has chosen a highly topical, universal feature film that is impossible to resist. Student Academy Award® winner Ilker Çatak takes the microcosm of a school as the setting for social processes of erosion in the post-factual age. Çatak is masterful in the way he stages his precisely written story as a breakdown in understanding. Leonie Benesch delivers a breathtaking performance as an idealist who, in trying to do everything right, comes under increasing pressure – intensified by the clever decision to adopt the unusual 4:3 format. *THE TEACHERS' LOUNGE* is supported by the outstanding casting and superb performances of its diverse ensemble."

TFV critic, Boyd van Hoeij, in his review, called the film, "a great performance from German actress Leonie Benesch (*The Crown*) in a solid drama about trying to stand upright in a world of changing mores."

Statements by director Ilker Çatak und producer Ingo Fliess: The nomination of our film for the Best International Feature Film "Oscar® is a special honour and recognition of our consistent work as well as of the creative passion of all involved. We are deeply grateful for this opportunity and are delighted from the bottom of our hearts. At the same time, however, we are very aware of the responsibility involved in representing German film on the inter-

national stage. We see our film as being both an individual work as well as a contribution to our nation's cultural identity. We will show full commitment to living up to this responsibility."



About the film: The drama *THE TEACHERS' LOUNGE* centres on Carla Nowak (Leonie Benesch), a young and dedicated sports and math teacher who starts her first job full of idealism. But then there are a series of thefts at her school.

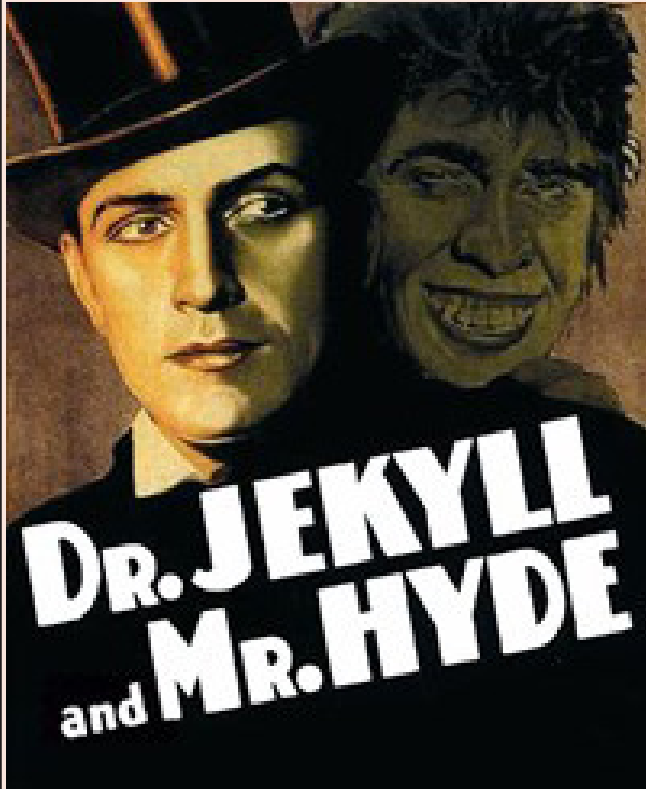
When a Turkish student is accused of thieving, Carla decides to get to the bottom of the matter, but she faces an insoluble dilemma: the prime suspect, the school's secretary, is the mother of her most talented pupil, Oskar. The forces Carla has unleashed slide out of control to the point where Oskar contacts the school newspaper to publicize his mother's point of view – which then sparks a heated debate about truth and justice. Carla tries to mediate between outraged parents, opinionated colleagues and aggressive students,

Full article, [click here](#)

VENICE FAST FACTS

Biennale celebrates 80 years

1932



August 6, the first festival opened with a screening of American film Dr. Jekyll & Mr. Hyde. No awards were given.

1934



The second Festival, August 1, was the first time it included a competition. The “Coppa Mussolini” was introduced for best foreign film and best Italian film however, keeping in fascist tradition; there was no actual jury. The best foreign film award was given to *Man of Aran*.



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