

VERDICT

LOCARNO REVIEW DAILY

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FUORI CONCORSO



CONANN

VERDICT: French director Bertrand Mandico's lurid saga of gender-queer decadence and visceral violence is a ravishing sensory feast for viewers with strong stomachs.

Stephen Dalton, August 1, 2013

A legendary warrior queen looks back on a decadent life of blood-soaked barbarism and romantic tragedy in *Conann*, the third full-length feature from prolific shorts director Bertrand Mandico.

Following *The Wild Boys* (2017) and *After Blue* (2021), the uncompromising French auteur's latest phantasmagorical long-form experiment features many of his regular players and stylistic

tropes: heavily theatrical setting, heightened poetic dialogue, and overt nods to Fassbinder and Burroughs, all performed by a mostly female cast in both male and female roles. Launched in Cannes, this gender-fluid queer-punk fantasia screens at Locarno Film Festival later this week alongside the thematically related world premiere of Mandico's latest short, *We The Barbarians*.

[Continues next page](#)

Giona A. Nazzaro

Locarno's artistic director Giona A. Nazzaro on Hollywood, Locarno and Diversifying the Lineup




Bold, up-to-date programming, from Golden Leopard contenders to crowd-pleasers in Piazza Grande, makes Locarno a cutting-edge festival.

Max Borg, August 1, 2023

His first experience of Locarno, as a spectator/critic, was in 1994, during the Marco Müller years. It's an edition still fondly remembered by seasoned festival goers, chiefly for what remains the ultimate Müller-era double bill in Piazza Grande: Abbas Kiarostami's *Through the Olive Trees*, followed by *Speed*. And while Nazzaro may not be a fan of the word "eclectic" per se, he aims to recreate that same sense of contrast with his programming choices.

"As a festival goer and critic, I've been to events where you end up

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CONANN (Continued)

Mandico's lurid demi-monde of high-art perversion and bloodthirsty decadence is clearly not pitched at mainstream multiplex tastes, of course, but *Conann* still feels like his most fully rounded and lavishly crafted statement to date. It is certainly beautiful, with its ravishing 35mm monochrome cinematography, and graphically gory, with its visceral scenes of erotically charged sadism and ritual cannibalism. These extreme midnight-movie elements, coupled to a cryptic and episodic plot, will limit the film's potential post-festival audiences to cult connoisseur circles. But for viewers with a high tolerance for art-house cinema with a generous undertow of transgressive pulp attitude, *Conann* is a richly rewarding addition to the Mandico Cinematic Universe.

The inspirational seed for *Conann* was Mandico's planned stage production about a film crew shooting *Conan the Barbarian* (1982), the shlocky sword and sorcery saga that propelled Arnold Schwarzenegger to Hollywood action-hero fame.

[Full Review](#)

GIONA A. NAZZARO (Continued)

feeling you're sort of always watching the same movies," he tells *The Film Verdict*. "My hope for Locarno audiences is that after spending a day at the festival, they will go home and think they saw four or five films, all very different from one another."

In fact, Nazzaro is keen on challenging the notion of what a festival film is. This year, the Cineasti del presente competition includes an erotic comedy (the Spanish production *On the Go*), and laughter has always been a key component of the current vision for Locarno. Nazzaro looks back on one of his bolder choices for the 2021 edition, when *Cop Secret* was among the contenders for the Golden Leopard: a gay buddy/cop movie from Iceland, the film also boasted a director, Hannes Halldórsson, who is perhaps best known as a soccer goalkeeper.

(In fact, the world premiere in Locarno had to accommodate his match schedule.) "I thought I had hit the jackpot, and then people started saying it wasn't a Locarno kind of movie," the artistic director remembers with a chuckle.

But if you ask Nazzaro, the distinction between "commercial" and "arthouse" cinema is nonsensical. "At the end of the day," he explains, "when you produce an arthouse movie, you still need actors, a director, a writer, a cinematographer, an editor, a composer, a sound designer, etcetera. And unless they've all agreed to do it for the glory, that film will cost money, and you have to think about making it back."

Going back to the topic of diversifying the lineup, he mentions two examples from the same country, the Philippines.

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Location Flashback

Swiss Route 19 / Oberalp-Realp, Switzerland *Goldfinger* (1964)



Photo: ©United Artist, Eon Productions

Oberalp Pass is a high mountain pass at an elevation of 2,044 meters (6,706 feet) above sea level, located on the border of the cantons of Graubunden and Uri in Switzerland through the Swiss Alps.

In this scene, James Bond (Sean Connery) keeps his distance while keeping an eye on Auric Goldfinger (Gert Frobe), but little does he know, he's already been detected and is in the sights of a nearby assassin, Tilly Masterson (Tania Mallet).

Goldfinger was heralded as the film in the franchise where James Bond “comes into focus”. Its release led to a number of promotional licensed tie-in items, including a toy Aston Martin DB5 car from Corgi Toys which became the biggest selling toy of 1964. The promotion also included an image of gold-painted Eaton on the cover of Life. *Goldfinger* was the first Bond film to win an Oscar (for Best Sound Editing) and opened to largely favorable critical reception. The film was a financial success, recouping its budget in two weeks and grossing over \$120 million worldwide. In 1999, it was ranked No. 70 on the BFI Top 100 British films list compiled by the British Film Institute.



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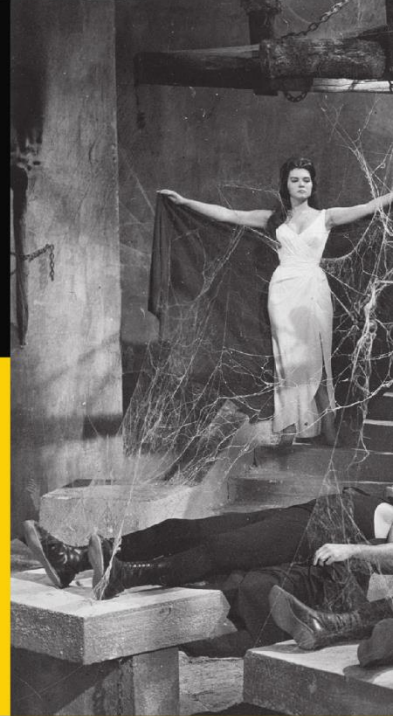
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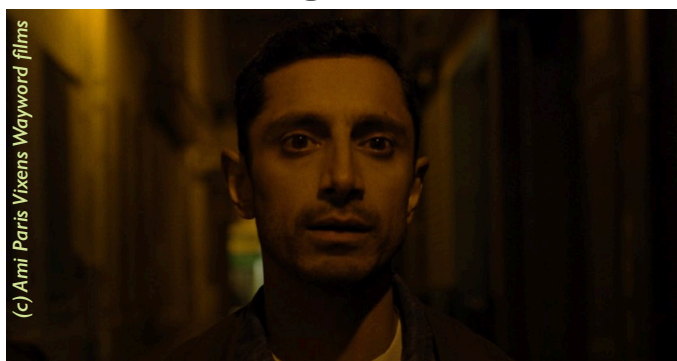
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Locarno Screening Guide

August 2



(c) Ami Paris Vixens Wayword films

Dammi

14:00 GranRex

The Mexico Olympics (1969)

Introduced by Giona A. Nazzaro, Olaf Moller and Roberto Turigliatto
Retrospective

15:30 Palexpo (FEVI)

The Lodger (1927)

Pre-Opening Screening with live Music
Cinema History

17:30 GranRex

La Noche Avanza

Introduced by Michel Lipkes Leduc
Retrospective

19:15 Teatro Kursaal

The Great Champion (1949)

Retrospective

21:30 Piazza Grande

Opening Ceremony

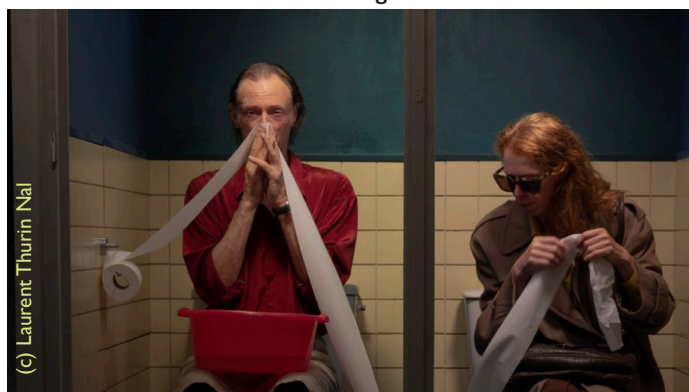
Excellence Award Davide Campari to Riz Ahmed
Dammi

Second Screening
The Falling Star

22:00 GranRex
Torero (1956)

Retrospective

The Falling Star



(c) Laurent Thurin Nal

August 3



(c) Bendita Film Sales

Me & The Beasts

9:00 GranRex

The Case of the Wee Murdered Woman (1955)

Retrospective

La Sala

5 Hectares

11:00 am Teatro Kursaal

Me & The Beasts

Open Doors: Screenings

11:00 Palexpo (FEVI)

The Giacomettis

Panorama Suisse

11:30 GranRex

La Corte de Faraon (1944)

Introduced by Frédéric Maire
Retrospective

14:00 · Palexpo (FEVI)

Animal

Concorso interazionale

14:30 · La Sala

Pardi di domani: Concorso Corti d'autore

Nocturne for a Forest

Duck

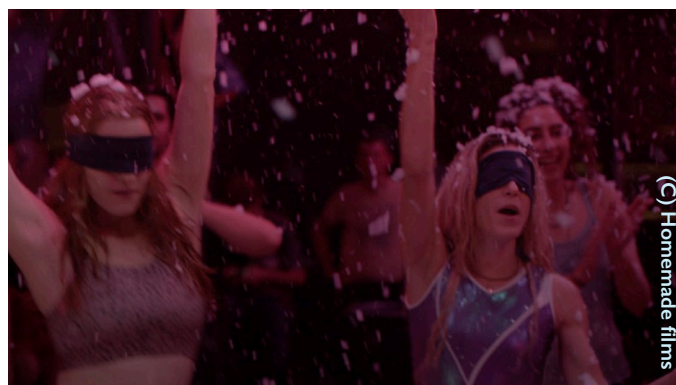
A Tortoise's Year of Fate

Du bist so wunderbar

The Currency – Sensing I Agbogbloshie

Continues **Next Page**

Animal



(c) Homemade films

Screening Guide

continued from previous page

August 3



(c) Emmanuelle Firman

The Path of Excellence

15:00 · GranRex
Mogul Mowglie (2020)

Cinema History: Excellence Award Davide Campari to Riz Ahmed

16:45 · Palexpo (FEVI)
Yannik

Concorso interazionale

17:00 · PalaVideo @Palazzo dei Congressi Muralto ·
Find a Film!

Pardi di domani: Special Event

17:30 · GranRex
Good Evening, Mr. Wallenberg (1990)

Cinema History

17:30 · La Sala
Procida

Fuori Concorso

20:30 · GranRex
La mente y el crimen (1961)

Restrospective

21:30 · PalaCinema I
If the Sun Never Returns (1987)

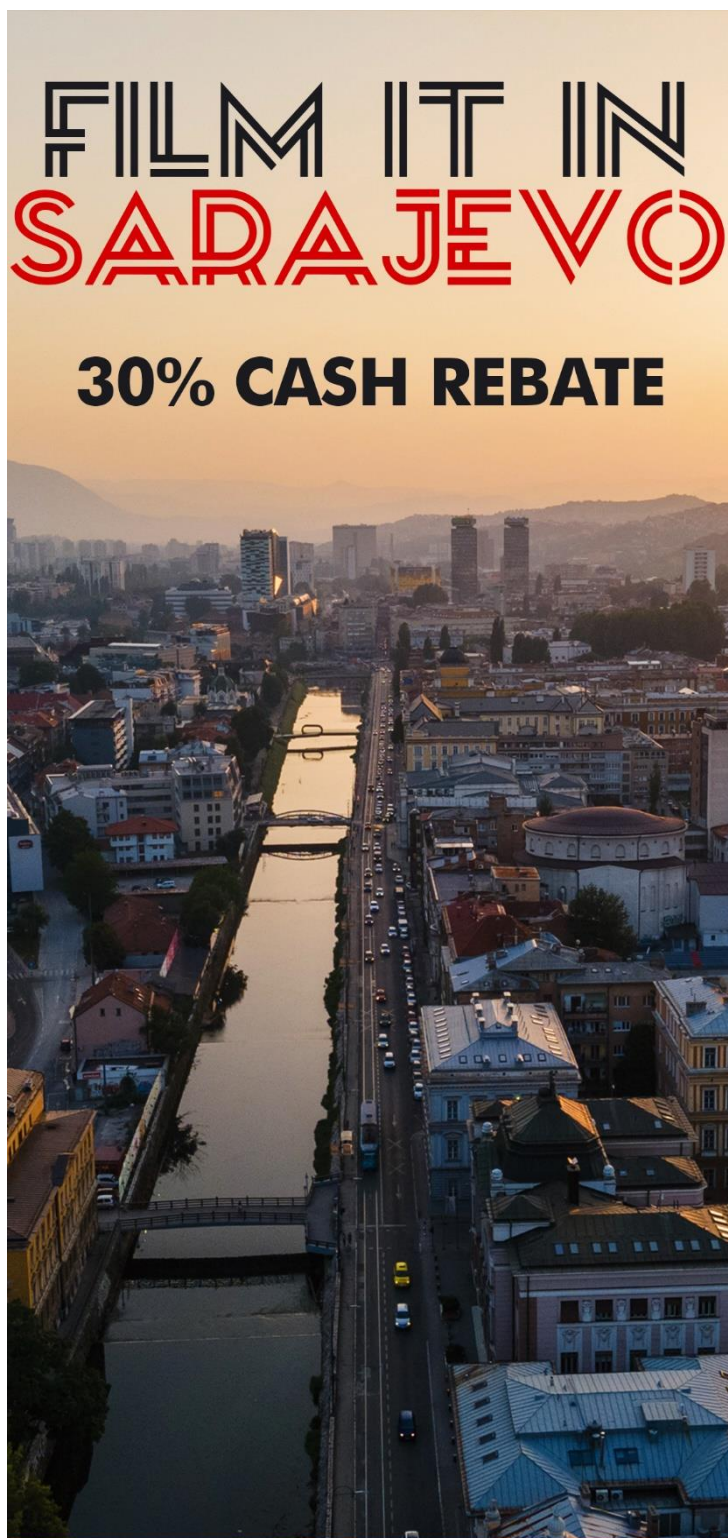
Cinema History: Cinema Suisse

21:30 · Piazza Grande
Vision Award Ticinomoda to Pietro Scalia
The Path of Excellence

Procids



(c) Regione Campania, Film Commission Campania



Grad Sarajevo
City of Sarajevo



Ministarstvo kulture i sporta
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