



Festival del film Locarno
Official selection

BLUE FILM

with

RAI CINEMA

presents



ON THE VOLCANO

SUL VULCANO

A film by Gianfranco Pannone

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On the Volcano ■ Credits

Director	GIANFRANCO PANNONE
Subject, Screenplay	GIANFRANCO PANNONE
Director of Photography	TAREK BEN ABDALLAH
Editing	ERIKA MANONI
Sound	ANDREA VIALI
Music	DANIELE SEPE
Assistant director	FRANCESCO IMPOSIMATO
A production by with	BLUE FILM RAI CINEMA
in partnership with	ISTITUTO LUCE – CINECITTÀ and SOUL MOVIE
in collaboration with	FILM COMMISSION REGIONE CAMPANIA e SUDLAB
under the patronage of	ENTE PARCO NAZIONALE DEL VESUVIO, PROVINCIA DI NAPOLI, COMUNE DI NAPOLI, COMUNE DI OTTAVIANO
with the support of	MINISTERO PER I BENI E LE ATTIVITÀ CULTURALI E TURISMO - DIREZIONE GENERALE PER IL CINEMA
Produced by	ALESSANDRO BONIFAZI and BRUNO TRIBBIOLI
Country	ITALIA
Year	2014
Location	REGIONE CAMPANIA
Film run	90'
Format	DCP 2k HQ DOLBY DIGITAL
WORLD SALES	BERTA FILM STEFANO MUTOLO info@bertafilm.it – ph.: +39 0555000777

On the Volcano ■ The Cast

Yole Loquercio

Matteo Fraterno

Maria Perfetto

and

**Raffaella Pernice, Maria Del Porto, Salvatore Di Gennaro, Carmine Montella, Antonio Perna,
Salvatore Perfetto, Pasquale Persico, Giovanni Ricciardi**

GUEST ARTISTS

Roberto De Francesco	(from <i>Skin</i> , by Curzio Malaparte)
Andrea Renzi	(from <i>Wild Broom</i> , by Giacomo Leopardi)
Fabrizio Gifuni	(from <i>Naples '44</i> , by Norman Lewis)
Iaia Forte	(from 'Il Manifesto', 27/5/2008: <i>Napoli. L'immondizia del mondo</i> , by Fabrizia Ramondino)
Aniello Arena	(from <i>L'origine del Monte Vesuvio</i> , by Pompeo Sarnelli)
Toni Servillo	(from <i>On the Immense</i> , by Giordano Bruno)
Donatella Finocchiaro	(from <i>The Legend of the Future</i> , by Matilde Serao)
Leo Gullotta	(from <i>Letters to Tacitus</i> , by Pliny the Younger)
Renato Carpentieri	(from <i>Writings on Earthquakes</i> , by Immanuel Kant)
Enzo Moscato	(from <i>San Gennaro's blood</i> , by Sándor Márai)
Guenda Gorla	(from <i>Juliette</i> , by Donatien-Alphonse-François de Sade)
Ciro Carlo Fico	(from <i>Struppio</i> , by Jacovo Fenice)

On the Volcano ■ Synopsis

Maria, Matteo and Yole; three lives at the foot of Mount Vesuvius, a unique location laden with history, mythology, and literary allusions.

Maria lives and works in a plant nursery just downhill from an abandoned Vesuvian villa, while “cultivating” her own intellectual curiosity and discreetly guarding the volcano itself.

Matteo is a talented painter who tries his hand at making artworks out of lava which attest to his profound ties to the land; indeed, he has never left.

Yole is a “neomelodic” singer, an independent young woman who sees no contradiction in also being a devotee of the Virgin Mary; Yole’s religious feeling is quite common among inhabitants under the volcano, which has embraced icons from Dionysus/Bacchus to San Gennaro.

Could it be that the Neapolitans’ proverbial fatalism, which conceals a widely-held religious fervor even now, derives from the vicinity of the volcano itself, which, for two thousand years, has given to the population living at its feet as much as it has taken away?

Yet today, where does the greater danger lie? In Vesuvius, which could violently awaken at any time, or in mankind, with all the damage it has done in under one century?

This begs the inevitable question of how it has been possible to mar the beauty of this landscape with so many eyesores mushrooming everywhere, from illegal construction to dumping grounds of all kinds?

Drawing on the stories of real people, invaluable archive material, and literary sources that evoke the volcano – ranging from Giordano Bruno and the Marquis De Sade to Giacomo Leopardi and Curzio Malaparte – *On the Volcano* tries to make sense of a “mad, mad land” that ultimately represents us all.



A unique environment

On the Volcano can boast a setting that is absolutely unique: Mount Vesuvius. Moving between past and present, the film assembles many voices to speak of the delicate balance between man and nature, taking the Neapolitans' historical condition, torn as they are between a philosophical fatalism and an almost Dionysian vitality, as its starting point.

And yet. What if that fatalism and vitality – revisited, getting around all the alibis that have practically immobilized Naples for centuries – could be reinvested as the values underpinning a fresh, markedly Mediterranean rebirth of modern man?

All this, naturally, in the light of something that anyone who lives on a volcano has always known: *Nature is stronger than man, even now, despite all the improvements mankind has made in its living conditions.*

This is why a new ecology is called for, one which allows man to assess his own limits once more, and builds on the legacy of a history measured in millennia: that of a volcano in the vicinity of which hundreds of thousands of people live, relatively aware of its presence.

Is Vesuvius really a state of mind? From an acquaintance with some of the inhabitants of the towns surrounding the volcano – Somma, Ottaviano, San Sebastiano, Cercola, Torre del Greco and Boscotrecase – the answer would appear to be yes!

Practically everybody in this area feels like a child of Vesuvius, an identity they bear gracefully enough, given how imbued they are with the tales and legends of the volcano, which become tangible on screen thanks to the artistry of a number of Italy's finest actors.

These actors, in fact, lend their voices to key cultural figures who have described the volcano over the course of two thousand years, from Plinio the Younger and Giordano Bruno to the Marquis de Sade and Giacomo Leopardi, and more recently Matilde Serao and Curzio Malaparte.

And our interviewees, Maria Matteo and Yole, rooted in the present as they may be, are not really all that removed from these famous figures. On the contrary, their observations are part of a dialogue with images from the volcano's past (in paintings, prints, and above all the rare photos and film footage from the Luce Archives) as well as with the words of those artists who have evoked Vesuvius throughout history.

A powerful synthesis of the Neapolitans' at times difficult relationship with the volcano, attesting to this ongoing dialectic between man and nature, comes to us courtesy of Giordano Bruno, the 'local' philosopher who was born in Nola, beneath Vesuvius. His religious "pantheism" makes him the guardian spirit of this film.

In one of his many writings, Giordano Bruno recalls a dream he had when he was twelve, in which the nearby Mount Cicala, a luxuriant peak facing Vesuvius, spoke to him. The mountain offered a pre-adolescent Giordano a metaphor for life itself, advising him not to climb to the top of Cicala to learn about the world because it was far too easy. No, he had to make the far more daunting, arduous ascent of the peak's neighbour, Vesuvius.

On one hand, then, the benevolent Mount Cicala came to represent the idea of a nature that could be tamed, to a certain extent, and all to mankind's advantage; on the other hand, the rebel mountain with its enormous crater stood as a sort of "stepmother Nature", although not necessarily hostile.

What literature tells us...

Vesuvius screamed in the night, spitting blood and fire. From the day in which Pompeii and Herculaneum were annihilated, buried alive in a tomb of ash and cinders, the sky had not heard such a horrendous voice.

from *Skin*, by Curzio Malaparte

Faults and volcanoes with this completely criminal nature plunge the soul into a delirium that drives it to make grand gestures and submit to tumultuous passions.

from *Juliette* by Donatien Alphonse-Francois de Sade

These fields scattered
with barren ash, covered
with solid lava,
that resounds under the traveller's feet:
where snakes twist, and couple
in the sun, and the rabbits return
to their familiar cavernous burrows:
were once happy, prosperous farms.
They were golden with corn, echoed
to lowing cattle:
there were gardens and palaces,
the welcome leisure retreats
for powerful, famous cities,
which the proud mountain crushed
with all their people, beneath the torrents
from its fiery mouth.

from *Wild Broom*, by Giacomo Leopardi

Here, in the midst of this "no man's land" of the volcano, any dilettante could have predicted the destruction of the city with mathematical accuracy, but apparently no inhabitant of San Sebastiano would have ever entertained the possibility.

from *Naples '44*, by Norman Lewis

In the collective imagination, the rubbish in which Naples is submerged has the same value as the eruption of Vesuvius that covered the lovely, opulent Pompeii.

from *L'immondizia del mondo*, by Fabrizia Ramondino

Look at my brother Vesuvius over there. He's my brother and he cares for you as well, can you believe it? Now tell me: if I send you there, will you care to go? You'll remain there with him.

from *On the Immense*, by Giordano Bruno

This passionate city will die a good death; it will die worthily in that immense flaming apotheosis of fire.

From *The Legend of the Future*, by Matilde Serao

Meanwhile, broad sheets of flame were lighting up many parts of Vesuvius; their light and brightness were the more vivid for the darkness of the night... It was daylight now elsewhere in the world, but there the darkness was darker and thicker than any night.

from *Letters to Tacitus*, by Pliny the Younger

The observation of such terrible cases is instructive: it humbles man by showing that he has no right to expect only light consequences from the laws of nature drawn up by God.

From *Writings on Earthquakes*, by Immanuel Kant

They learn slowly and forget very quickly. I keep an eye on them; now they think I'm asleep so they've grown more insolent. They wink at each other and try to learn my secrets; then they brag that they can also produce explosions even more violent and noisy than mine.

from *San Gennaro's Blood*, by Sándor Márai

...and what the interviewees say...

It's hard to live here; it isn't easy. It's hard to live here.

It's a struggle, but if you manage to stay honest, morally and intellectually, every day you've won the battle.

Maria

There are kids like me who didn't make it, either because their father was, you know, or their brother or their uncle was, you know, or maybe they actually liked living like this. I personally don't like it at all

Yole

Life is good here, but at the same time you live with the threat.

You have to live with this contradiction, which can be schizophrenic at times.

I always hope it's going to be a gentle catastrophe that doesn't do much damage – but that's a bit of a pipedream.

Matteo

Even the rocks are all from Vesuvius. That's just the way it is. They're not white, or pink. They're black.

Vincenzo

Delusional! They're deluding themselves, but unfortunately Vesuvius is right here. We can't pretend it isn't. It's here!

Armando

Now if Vesuvius blows today I certainly hope we don't have to turn to San Gennaro, again, because San Gennaro has done enough already.

Pasquale

On the Volcano ■ Gianfranco Pannone

After graduating in Cinema history and criticism at La Sapienza University of Rome, he graduated in Directing at the CSC (National Cinema School). Between 1990 and 1998, he directed and produced the documentary films *Piccola America*, *Lettere dall'America* and *L'America a Roma*, which together make up the *Trilogy of America*; and later *Latina/Littoria* (2001), a *French-Italian documentary-film*, which was awarded the prize for the best non-fiction work at the Torino Film Festival in 2001 and in 2003 at the Mediterranean Film Festival – Rai Award. Among his short and medium-length films are *Kelibia/Mazara* (1998, co-directed with T. Ben Abdallah), *Pomodori* (1999), *Sirena operaia* (2000), *Viaggio intorno alla mia casa* (2001), *Venezia, la città che affonda* (2001, co-directed with M. Visalberghi), *Pietre, miracoli e petrolio*, *Benvenue chez Casetti* (2006). Also the feature film *100 anni della nostra storia* (2006, co-directed with Marco Puccioni), made it to the final five of David di Donatello in 2007; the docu-series *Cronisti di strada* (2007) and, in recent years, the shorts *Immota manet* (2009), *Linee di confine* (2010), *Aprilia* (2011). *Le pietre sacre della Basilicata* (2012), *Graziano e le sue donne* (2013) *Io che amo solo te* (2004) is his fiction feature film. His last documentary films are: *Il sol dell'avvenire* (2008), which was conceived and written with John Fasanella and was presented as a special event at the International Film Festival of Locarno, at Viennale in 2008, at the International Documentary Film Festival of London and in the final five of Nastri D'Argento in 2009; *ma che Storia...*, a montage film produced by Cinecittà Luce and presented during the International Venice Film Festival in 2010, as well as in many cities across the world as representative of the 150th anniversary of the Unification of Italy; *Scorie in libertà* (2011-2012), presented in the International section of Cinemambiente Torino Festival in 2012 and, as a special event, at the Festival del Nuovo Cinema di Pesaro in the same year. The documentary *Ebrei a Roma* was presented as a Special Event at the Rome International Film Festival in 2012. This year he has completed the medium-length *Trit cme la bula* and the feature *Sul vulcano*.

His works have earned him awards, have allowed him to participate in many Italian and international festivals and are aired on major European television. Pannone has also directed several shows as a theatre director, including, *Guerra civile* in 2006, presented in the same year at the Festival Dei Due Mondi in Spoleto. He is co-founder of Doc/It and he is an active member of the association *100autori*.

He teaches documentary filmmaking at Dams in Roma Tre University and documentary direction at CSC – National Cinema School in Rome and in L'Aquila. He has also conducted numerous workshops on documentary writing and directing. He has been editor of the *Docdoc* column in the online journal *ildocumentario.it* and he has written several essays and books about cinema, including *Il sol dell'avvenire – Diario di un film politicamente scorretto* (with Giovanni Fasanella) edited by *Chiarelettere*, *L'officina del documentario* (with Mario Balsamo) edited by *Cdg*, and *Docdoc – 10 anni di cinema e altre storie* edited by *Mephite-Quaderni di Cinemasud*. He is responsible for the *Open Eyes Section*, dedicated to international documentaries, within the *Med Film Festival in Rome*.

On the Volcano ■ Blue Film

Blue Film is a production and distribution company.

It was set up in Rome in 2001 and produces features, shorts, documentaries, videos and commercials, favouring partnerships and alliances between European and worldwide producers and public and private investors.

Blue Film's productions have always been characterized by a strong social, cultural and anthropological commitment and an innovative use of film language and new technology.

Blue Film is currently producing and developing international feature film and documentaries projects.

PRODUCTION

ON THE VOLCANO (2014) directed by Gianfranco Pannone

Film-documentary, prod. *Blue Film* supported by MiBAC and Rai Cinema, with the co-operation of Soul Movie, Istituto Luce - Cinecittà and with the co-operation of Film Commission Regione Campania, Parco Nazionale del Vesuvio, Osservatorio Vesuviano and Sud Lab

Distributed by Istituto Luce - Cinecittà

HAPPY DAYS MOTEL (2012)

Directed by Francesca Staasch

Feature film, HD prod. *Blue Film* with *RAI CINEMA*, with the co-operation of FourLab, supported by Fondazione Sardegna Film Commission

Cast: Lino Guanciale, Valeria Cavalli, Luigi Iacuzio, Luciano Curreli, Valeria Belardelli

Distributed by Cubovision for Rai Cinema and Rai Cinema Channel

Distributed by Home Video 01 Distribution

Best independent film NapoliCulturalClassic 2013

Official Selection OFF PLUS CAMERA International Festival of Independent Cinema – Cracovia

17th Gallio Film Festival

THE LEGEND OF KASPAR HAUSER (2012)

Directed by Davide Manuli

Feature film 35 mm., prod. *Blue Film* and *Shooting Hope Productions*, supported by Ministero per i Beni e le Attività Culturali (MiBAC) and Regione Sardegna

Cast: Vincent Gallo, Claudia Gerini, Elisa Sednaoui, Fabrizio Gifuni, Silvia Calderoni

Distributed by Mediaplex Italia

World Sales Intramovies

41st International Film Festival Rotterdam – Section Spectrum

Istanbul International Independent Film Festival – Section !F Cult

CPH PIX Copenhagen International Film Festival – Section New Talents Grand Prix

San Francisco Independent Film Festival – Jury Prize

The film has participated at more than 70 international film festivals

JEWS IN ROME (Ebrei a Roma) (2012)

Directed by Gianfranco Pannone

Film-documentary, prod. *Blue Film*, supported by Rai Cinema, MiBAC, Regione Lazio, with the co-operation of Cinecittà Luce, with the co-operation of Comunità Ebraica of Rome, Comune di Roma and Provincia di Roma

Distributed by Rai

Special Event at VII International Rome Film Festival

Best Documentary Award Ariano Film Festival 2013

THE WAY BACK HOME (La strada verso casa) (2011)

Directed by Samuele Rossi

Feature 35 mm., prod. *Blue Film* and *FourLab*

Cast: Giorgio Colangeli, Alessandro Marverti, Cecilia Albertini

Special Event at 6th International Rome Film Festival

Nomination Best Original Screenplay New York City International Film Festival 2011

Critics prize M-Feel, Audience award SocialWord and Best Cast Special Mention at 15th Terra di Siena International Film Festival

Prize for best interpretation to Giorgio Colangeli at XI Festival del Cinema Indipendente

PORTRAIT OF MY FATHER (Ritratto di mio padre) (2010)

Directed by Maria Sole Tognazzi

Film-documentary, prod. *Blue Film*, *LA7 Tv*, *Ascent Film* and *Surf Film*, supported by Ministero per i Beni e le Attività Culturali (MiBAC)

Nastro d'Argento 2011

5th International Rome Film Festival Special Event

Festival Prize at 64th Salerno Film Festival

THROUGH KOREAN CINEMA (2010)

Directed by Leonardo Cinieri Lombroso

Film-documentary, prod. *Blue Film*

Distributed by Blue Film

15th Pusan International Film Festival – Wide AngleM

24th Tokyo International Film Festival – official selection

8th Festival of Korean Cinema in Italy – official selection

21st Fukuoka International Film Festival – official selection

PIETRO GERMI. The good the beautiful the bad (Pietro Germi. Il bravo il bello il cattivo) (2009)

Directed by Claudio Bondi

Film-documentary, prod. *Blue Film*, *Ascent Film* and *La7*, supported by Regione Lazio

Distributed by Blue Film

Distributed in France by Carlotta Film

62nd Cannes Film Festival Official Selection Cannes Classic

39th Molodist Kiev International Film Festival

BEKET (2008)

Directed by Davide Manuli

Feature film 35 mm, prod. *Blue Film* and *Shooting Hope Productions*, with the co-operation of Provincia del Medio Campidano, Unione dei Comuni della Gallura e Tempio Pausania, Delphina hotels & resort, Coocon Art and Gianluca Vassallo

Cast: Fabrizio Gifuni, Paolo Rossi, Luciano Curreli, Roberto "Freak" Antoni, Jerome Duranteau

Distributed by Blue Film

World Sales and Home Video Gruppo Minerva Raro Video

Prize "Lanterna magica" – 16mm Film Festival 2009

Cutting Edge Award – Best Avantguard Film at the Miami International Film Festival 2009

Winner of the Renderyard International Film Festival – London 2009

Nomination Best Direct Sound Recording (Marco Fiumara) at Nastri d'Argento 2009

Nomination Best Debut Film at Ciak d'Oro 2009

Special Jury Prize – XXVI Sulmona Cinema Film Festival 2008

Critics' Prize – XII Terra di Siena Film Festival 2008

Independent Critics' Prize – Filmmakers of the Present Competition 61st Locarno International Film Festival 2008

In competition at the Max Ophuls Festival, "SPEKTRUM EUROPE" section – Germany

In competition at the 6th Mexico City International Contemporary Film Festival (FICCO CINEMEX 2009)

The film has participated at more than 50 international film festivals

BEKET is distributed in Home Video worldwide with MINERVA PICTURES

RED SUNRISE (Il sol dell'avvenire) (2008)

Directed by Gianfranco Pannone

Film-documentary 35 mm. by Giovanni Fasanella and Gianfranco Pannone, prod. *Blue Film*, supported by MiBAC and Regione Lazio FI.LA.S.

Distributed by Iguana Film and Blue Film

Publishing Distribution ChiareLettere (book + dvd)

World Sales and Home Video Gruppo Minerva Raro Video

Special Event at the 61st Locarno International Film Festival 2008

Viennale Vienna International Film Festival 2008

In competition at the London International Documentary Festival 09

In competition at the Mostra Internacional de Cinema de Sao Paulo

In concorso alla Mostra Internacional de Cinema de Sao Paulo

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