

GIULIANO MONTALDO



The Journal #5 presents *Legal Death*. Giuliano Montaldo tells the story of the genesis of *Sacco and Vanzetti*, by Silvia Giuliotti and Giotto Barbieri.

The documentary tells us about Giuliano Montaldo's extraordinary work, the entire artistic/production path and the background of a film that has not only marked the history of cinema but has literally changed history (find out how in the interview with Silvia Giuliotti), on the notes of the ballad *Here's to You* by Ennio Morricone and Joan Baez which has become an entire generation manifesto for freedom and the defense of human rights.

*Somebody told me:
"Sacco and Vanzetti
changed my thinking".*

Giuliano Montaldo



LEGAL DEATH

Silvia Giuliotti, Giotto Barbieri
Italy, 2018, 52'

FIVE QUESTIONS WITH THE DIRECTOR

How did the idea of working with Giuliano Montaldo come about and why?

Silvia Giuliotti*: The idea was born in 2017 for the 90th anniversary of the death of Sacco and Vanzetti and the 40th anniversary of their rehabilitation. The initial idea was that Giuliano Montaldo's film was the only case in which a film changed history. Thanks to the worldwide success of the film and the pressure of young people from all over the world who asked to reopen the case in court, the Massachusetts government rehabilitated the two Italian anarchists.

Thanks to the professional relationship and friendship of many years with Giuliano Montaldo, I was able to propose this project to him. Montaldo made himself available immediately, assisted by the support of the Enrico Appetito Archive, holder of the photographic rights of the film's still photos. These two elements laid the foundations for embarking on the authorial and productive path of a documentary that highlighted and explored absolutely new aspects. With this documentary we wanted to tell the genesis of the film and find out why a director of the caliber of Montaldo faced so many difficulties for a film, which, once overcome, became a worldwide success. A masterful example of how a work of extraordinary artistic level and civic commitment comes to life.

How did you access the sources and how did you set up your search?

SG: The Enrico Appetito Archive is a photographic archive declared a cultural asset, and holds the rights to many films from 1959 until today. I have been collaborating with them for years, for various projects on cinema (also the film *The Hidden Angels* of Luchino Visconti was born from the photographic archive of Mario Tursi, set photographer of Visconti's films, which today is preserved in the Enrico Appetito Archive as well). This *Sacco and Vanzetti* idea was born with them. In detail, we were able to access over 4,000 exclusive shots of scene, off-scene, and backstage photos. Once the photos for the film were chosen, the archive cleaned up and restored each shot.

A moment that impressed you during the work?

SG: While we were writing, together with co-director and author Giotto Barbieri, we came across the unpublished stories of Luigi Botta, a historian who has been researching on Sacco and Vanzetti for years. Unfortunately, we weren't able to report them all in the documentary due to time constraints. One of these stories concerned the mystery of the missing funeral footage. At the time, mass attendance was prohibited by the Massachusetts government and only 200 people were allowed to attend funerals. 500,000 came! The defense committee organized the shooting with various positions, with an exceptional "directorial" result for those years. This footage disappeared for decades until it was found in the 1960s, then disappeared again, only to be found recently. I was lucky enough to be able to include it in the film. It was a real twist, one of those miracles that sometimes happen in the development and research phase of a documentary. We have been lucky.

Are you satisfied with the result, would you have wanted to say more in the documentary?

SG: Yes, we are satisfied with the result, but above all we are happy that Giuliano Montaldo enjoyed the film. Everything seemed to have been said about Sacco and Vanzetti. Montaldo himself initially expressed his perplexity about the fact that something new could be revealed. This was our challenge, and we are happy to have succeeded. One story that we have not been able to tell is the question of the ashes of the two anarchists, which has remained nebulous for many years. It was said that they had been mixed, divided and reunited later, partly in Italy, partly in Boston, partly returned to their families, then scattered who knows where. But historians have now reconstructed the entire route. Here, this topic remained pending, I wanted to tell it.

How was it received by critics and the public?

SG: I must say that there was a great reception from the public who were lucky enough to see it in cinemas. His historical and artistic interest has particularly impressed the audience, and film critics have written excellent articles. It is a film that continues to interest, because it tells a story that moves from universal values, which is why it is always relevant. It is also the lesson of a teacher who teaches his love for cinema. I hope that with Audiovisiva, which is committed to a new and alternative diffusion, this kind of documentaries will find a wider and international audience, arrive in the classrooms of schools and universities, in museums and cultural institutions.

Your dream documentary?

SG: I have a desk overflowing with projects and work in progress! But maybe I'd better call them "challenges". In general, making a good documentary for me means taking paths never tried before, a lot of research, unpublished materials. Otherwise you risk making the same films over and over again, seen and re-seen many times. Also *Fellinopolis*, screened at the cinema in these days, and *The Hidden Angels* of Luchino Visconti were adventurous journeys marked by twists, finds, discoveries, unique testimonies, materials never seen before. But this is another story. I will keep it under wraps for the next interview!

*SILVIA GIULIOTTI

Director and producer.

Born in Milan, he spent his childhood in Rome. Very young she does the first ones positions in one of the film companies of which her mother was the director, she at Gaumont Italia, attending Cinecittà and the sets of Federico Fellini, Mauro Bolognini, Andrej Tarkovsky, Ettore Scola, Liliana Cavani, Lina Wertmüller, just to name a few, where she works as an assistant and still photographer. At the beginning of the 80s she joined of the group of operators of the director of photography Armando Nannuzzi, becoming one of the first female camera operators. In 2004 you founded your own company independent production, iFrame, to freely dedicate yourself to the creation of short films, documentaries, music videos, advertisements and live concert videos. Since 2005 she has been a professor of digital filming and editing techniques at the Free University of Cinema in Rome and at the Architectural Association in London, where she teaches direction and technique digital shooting and editing.