CARLO SCARPA

Journal #10 presents The Pavilion on the Water, a film by Stefano Croci and Silvia Siberini.

The documentary feature film *The Pavilion On The Water* is a cinematic journey into the world of Venetian architect Carlo Scarpa and his passion for Japanese culture.
Japan, to him, was an inspirational universe but also the place where he eventually died in 1978, at the height of his career, while retracing the steps of wandering poet Matsuo Bashō.
Through the words of Japanese philosopher Ryosuke Ōhashi, the film unfolds and quests after the sense of beauty. It is the possibility of reflecting on this matter that brings together Scarpa's work and Japanese traditional aesthetic.
Venice, the West's gateway to the East as well as Scarpa's birthplace, and a cinematic look at the architect's work jointly represent the chance to evoke aspects of his life through the words of his son Tobia, his former students and collaborators and researcher J.K. Mauro Pierconti.
A nostalgic feeling permeates the whole film. Nostalgia for that rare event which is the birth of an artist. Although he passed away, he left behind a great and beautiful body of work that, still to this day, delights and amuses.

THE PAVILION ON THE WATER
Stefano Croci, Silvia Siberini
Italy, 2023, 77'

DIRECTORS' NOTE

The Pavilion on the Water grew out of the filmmakers' research, which led to the making of a short documentary on Carlo Scarpa (1906-1978) and Matsuo Bashō (1644-1694), *La Pietà del Vento* (2014).
On his last trip in 1978, Scarpa intended to reach the ancient Japanese capital, Hiraizumi. He was retracing the routes described by the poet in the travelogue he wrote before his death, *The Narrow Path to the Deep North* (1694). Scarpa never reached Hiraizumi; he died in a tragic accident in Sendai on the same day the poet died, November 28th.
Reconciling a poetic aspiration, pandering to a lyrical and dreamy sensibility, with a philosophical approach, we wanted to recount the works of the Venetian architect, not only because of the high artistic value they represent but also because of the nature of his figure as an emblem of a unique encounter between tradition and modernity, East and West. Scarpa liked to call himself "Byzantine at heart, a European setting sail for the East."
The documentary ideally aspires, through cinema, to manifest and evoke the research he worked in that direction.
The narrative is directed along an experiential itinerary, in which artistic, philosophical, and literary suggestions, archival materials, thoughts, and memories become load-bearing elements for reconstructing Scarpa's cultured and emotional discourse.
This narrative mode retains a certain degree of exactitude, consistent with the intrinsic impossibility of circumscribing an artist's existence and creativity in a complete and accomplished portrait.
At the same time, it is an opportunity to approach a discourse of universal scope that is the essence of the work of art.
Scarpa's work seems to pose this question, which, as in an enigma, demands to be solved. But the deeper we go into this attempt, the more the mystery opens up. It is as if Scarpa's work cannot leave us indifferent and forces us to question ourselves continuously, on many levels, as artists, intellectuals, and human beings. Although it is inextricably linked to the context in which it arose, it presents a force capable of speaking to us sincerely, transcending geographical and cultural limitations. Just as to enter the tea houses built by Sen no Rikyū (1522-1591, it was necessary to lay down one's arms and join as an 'equal' -not even the title of nobility had weight there- in Scarpa's architecture one enters with one's mind and heart in a particular disposition. The places themselves demand it; they operate this transformation themselves.

IN DIALOGUE WITH THE DIRECTORS

How did this documentary come about?

The documentary comes from an earlier work, a short film we made on the same subject in 2014, *La Pietà del Vento*. We needed to delve deeper into the theme with this new feature film, aiming to offer a more profound reflection on the aesthetic relationship between two worlds and cultures and Scarpa's love for Japanese art.

A moment during production that you are particularly attached to?

There are many, but we especially remember the 16mm footage shot on a boat in an empty Venice during the Coronavirus period. We also remember the journey to a Japan with closed borders and the opportunities that this situation granted us: the chance to experience places for extended periods, in a slow rhythm, with no one around. And, of course, the encounters with all the people who participated in the film, who generously welcomed us and worked hard to help us get closer to Scarpa's life and work.

What was the most challenging thing, the biggest obstacle to overcome?

The film's ultimate goal was to convey to the audience, through the medium of cinema, the sense of wonder that Scarpa's work evokes when you experience it. Its goal was not to celebrate an architect but to share the experience of his works and his inspirations.

A scene you would have liked to film but couldn't?

The film was initially supposed to conclude with Scarpa's collaborator Guido Pietropoli, assisted by Zanon's blacksmiths, making a system for the Brion Memorial, which Scarpa could not finish due to his death in Japan in 1978, to create a drop of water that would fall with a specific rhythm on the surface of the marble tomb of a relative of the patron. It could not be realized, but the film carries a trace of it.

STEFANO CROCI
Director

He graduated in Art History specializing then in Theoretical Philosophy at Alma Mater Studiorum – University of Bologna. He first focused on music composition and then devoted himself to documentary and video art production by founding the production company Caucaso. He works as a director, producer and director of photography, in productions presented at major international festivals, cinemas, television stations, museums and academia.

SILVIA SIBERINI
Director

She graduated in Philosophy and History and then pursued a second degree in Oriental Cultures and Civilizations at the University of Bologna. Specializing in Japanese language, she works and deepens her studies in comparative philosophy in Latin America, India and Japan. Since 2001 she has collaborated with Italian artists in the field of visual arts (wall paintings, photography, documentaries, publishing) and has been involved in animation production and distribution. Since 2005, she has taken part in numerous cultural projects, in the field of philosophy, having the opportunity to get to know some of the most important exponents of contemporary philosophical and scientific culture.