

## **“The Cinema of Roberto Nanni”**

**by Cristina Piccino**

**from “Il Manifesto”, Italian national newspaper**

Roberto Nanni is one of our best talents.

Secluded, solitary, explorer of formats, genres, devices, video as Super 8 mm, the latter now for a generation of artists almost a means to resist the homogenization (dictatorship?) of the digital.

But Nanni, however, has always worked on it, because all of his cinema is a harsh form of resistance to the bureaucracy of Ministries, to the lack of invention, seeking a political and poetic necessity starting from the images.

It's this independence that makes him unique, and it's also very exhausting.

But Nanni grew up with punk and the visions of Mekas, Anger, contemporary music, images for him can only be emotional deconstruction and movement.

His emotional plot consists of suggestions; he loves to dissect the object of his gaze, improvise trajectories, distort the point of view.

In some way, he always seeks to update rather than merely preserve, to museify.

This work on an intimate, personal memory is a sign of great vitality.

If one goes to look at any of these notes, diaries, travels, portraits, they are many fragments of a memory that is also collective.

There is truly an ability to synthesize many elements and many ideas about making cinema.

It is a highly political cinema because I believe that there is still a big misunderstanding about the idea of political cinema today.

That is, political cinema is thought to be the choice of a subject, of a committed subject, a subject who tells a story of today.

Well, Roberto Nanni puts the political aspect first and foremost in the film, in the filmic gesture, in the choice of an image, in the way of working on it, reflecting on it, editing it, gently leading those who watch to compose their own universe, their own critical gaze.

The first work with which I got to know Roberto Nanni is *“Love Conquers All.*

*Conversation with Derek Jarman”.*

It still amazes me today to think about a work like this, an interview conducted with Derek Jarman shortly before he died.

Derek was already very ill, he had AIDS, and he talks about it with great serenity together with Roberto.

This idea of editing, of mixing formats, of never filming the person sitting but inventing a form of cinema, is astonishing.

Take for example "*Through a Dirty Glass*" which he films from the old house where he lived in Piazza Fanti, near Piazza Vittorio in Rome.

He captures what he sees from the window of his bathroom, a story, a cross section of very strong reality.

First of all, about the location. Piazza Vittorio is where all the immigrants who arrived in Rome have concentrated and where they have consolidated their presence.

The daily life of this environment, the quarrels, the demonstrations of the fascists of Forza Nuova against immigration, all the contradictions and conflicts of a contemporary reality, a reality that has been exploited to the point of obscenity these days.

A year of non-voyeuristic but profound objective observation from the window of a Roman house that talks about immigrants, marginalization, war in Yugoslavia, media and loneliness with extreme delicacy and strength, like those who know how to observe the surface to dismantle the pieces and recombine them into orders not predictable.

I chose these two examples precisely because both "*Love Conquers All. Conversation with Derek Jarman*" the meeting with a director whom Roberto loves very much and a reality film such as "*Through a Dirty Glass*" are both two expressive forms in which you always see a search both towards the visual support and towards the use of sound, of "music".

One can think of a musicality, of something internal to his cinema.

Indeed, his cinema is a unique, singular gesture within what we can define as Italian cinema.

Cristina Piccino, 2009