



32. Venice
International Film
Festival
Critics' Week

TFILM AND RAICINEMA PRESENT

CRATER

A FILM BY SILVIA LUZI AND LUCA BELLINO

WITH ROSARIO CAROCCIA AND SHARON CAROCCIA
 WRITTEN BY SILVIA LUZI AND LUCA BELLINO WITH ROSARIO CAROCCIA
 CINEMATOGRAPHY, SOUND AND EDITING SILVIA LUZI AND LUCA BELLINO
 SOUND DESIGN STEFANO GROSSO ORIGINAL MUSIC ALESSANDRO PAOLINI
 WITH THE SONG 'NA STELLA BY FAUSTO MESOLELLA PERFORMED BY GIANMARIA TESTA
 PRODUCED BY TFILM WITH RAI CINEMA WITH THE SUPPORT OF MIBACT - DIREZIONE GENERALE PER IL CINEMA, BRITDOC, PULSE FILMS AND FILTEXT
 WORLD SALES ALPHA VIOLET
 DIRECTED BY SILVIA LUZI AND LUCA BELLINO



CRATER

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World Premiere
Venice FF 2017 International Critics' Week Competition

original title
Il Cratere

Italy - 2017 - 93 min - Super35 4K - 1:1.85 - 5.1 - Italian

Crater is the name of a dim and uncertain constellation, it is almost invisible because of its strong luminosity.

Science views its stars as shifting but in the galaxy, values become inverted.

Crater sparkles and cannot be seen.

SYNOPSIS

Rosario works as a street seller on the fairgrounds of the suburbs of Naples. His dream to escape poverty latches onto the musical talent of his daughter Sharon. Fascinated by the video images of his teenage daughter, he turns into an impresario to make her a star of Italian folk music.

Between documentary and realistic tale, Crater portrays the ambitions of a father against the freedom of his daughter.



CRATER

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CAST

Rosario Caroccia (the Father)
Sharon Caroccia (the Daughter)

Tina Amariutei
Assunta Arcella
Imma Benvenuto
Eros Caroccia
Mariaelianna Caroccia
Rosario Junior Caroccia
Rosario Petrone
Davide Russo
Genny Valentino

CREW

Directed by	SILVIA LUZI, LUCA BELLINO
written by	SILVIA LUZI, LUCA BELLINO
with the collaboration of	ROSARIO CAROCCIA
Photography, sound & editing	SILVIA LUZI, LUCA BELLINO
Original Music	ALESSANDRO PAOLINI
sound design	STEFANO GROSSO
Sound editing & mix	DANIELA BASSANI, MARZIA CORDÒ, GIANCARLO RUTIGLIANO
Post production	MAURO VICENTINI
Produced by	LUCA BELLINO, SILVIA LUZI
Production companies with the support of	TFILM con RAI CINEMA MINISTERO dei BENI e delle ATTIVITÀ CULTURALI e del TURISMO DIREZIONE GENERALE CINEMA
in collaboration with and with the support of	BRITDOC PULSE FILMS FILTEX srl

CRATER

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DIRECTORS' BIOGRAPHY & FILMOGRAPHY

Luca Bellino (1978) and Silvia Luzi (1976) received several international awards and nominations for directing two previous documentaries. Tfilm, their production company is based in Rome. Tfilm distinguished itself for the strong social and political connotation of its titles. Tfilm's productions are characterized by a clear authorial imprint, a style that combines observation cinema and current events. The Company produced documentaries both for cinema and for television. The work of Luzi and Bellino as directors and producers is focused on film projects with a strong impact.

CRATER is their first feature fiction film.

THE THREAT (86', 2008) – more than 60 international film festivals, David Di Donatello Nomination Best Documentary, New York Young Filmmakers Prize.

ON THE ART OF WAR (85', 2012) – more than 50 international film festivals, 20 awards and nominations. Prix FEDEORA Best European Documentary, Best Documentary at Crossing Europe Film Festival, Leipziger Ring and Healthy Workplaces Film Award at DokLeipzig.

CRATER

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DIRECTORS' STATEMENT

Crater depicts the ambition and the will of redemption of a father, which can become an obsession for him and a source of torment for his children. It is the story of Sharon, a blossoming, girlish 13-year-old, and her father Rosario, visitors of a world of puppets in an anonymous, hostile place.

The cornerstone of the film's working method lies in the choice of directly involving the protagonist already from the writing phase, letting him become at the same time author of the story, driving force and flesh of the staging. Rosario Caroccia, the father, collaborated in the development of the plot and became the actor of his own existence. The locations, the characters and the bonds between them are real and shown with a direct, pitiless style, while the story develops with a fictional rhythm.

Rosario and Sharon play themselves and put on film their own lives as they are hounded by the camera along the parallel tracks of love and violence, success and oppression and reality and fiction.

We watch Rosario walking along the space that we call crater like a soldier on the battlefield, and take up Sharon as his bizarre and ultimate weapon. We chose to stay with them and fight together with their wrinkles, grimaces, bitter smiles and liberating tears. And Rosario and Sharon chose to stay with us, and to support our plan to re-imagine their life transforming it into a film. On the one hand, the shared writing with the protagonists and, on the other, a very clear. We wanted to communicate the suffocating nature of the locations, the claustrophobia of a sealed border, the oppression of a mind that bounces endlessly off the same obsession. The crater is one character among many, it is the space that feeds the stories with its looming, dark presence and its tangible, material discomforts. Spending time with Rosario and Sharon means spending time in their world, and their world is a closed and claustrophobic one.

CRATER

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Crater is a film of closed spaces. In the film, the camera becomes one with the bodies, rooms and the environment: close, bold and tireless, to show the defeated ones, the humble who seek rebellion but fail to find redemption. Given this, the perspective we chose was that of a 50mm lens: being close to the characters was not enough for us, we wanted to be attached to their skin and to share their emotions physically. The extreme close-up as a specific visual element of a crater which can only be understood from within its borders, with its own rules and with its own flavour.

To show the ellipses of the story and the intimate lives of these souls in turmoil, we therefore decided to shoot with a skeleton crew composed almost exclusively of two of us, taking rigorous care of the sound, which in the film plays a key role. The focus of the film is not the music – the music is simply the starting point, the McGuffin, the gamble. The music in the crater is not a job, it is a window from which to observe reality. It is life, the battle, the going for broke.



CRATER

A film by Silvia Luzi & Luca Bellino

INTERVIEW WITH LUCA BELLINO AND SILVIA LUZI

Is your film CRATER based on a true story?

We started off with a story of pure fiction, born from the deep knowledge of the place we wanted to portray. We imagined a symbolic space, which we call 'crater', a compound of uninterrupted towns and villages that stretches on around Naples, lapping the feet of Mount Vesuvius. The crater is a separate and self-referential universe, forlorn and cheerful, a place with boundaries and rules of its own. It is the anonymous and invisible extension of Naples, a desolation of illusions and misunderstandings, a faint and imperceptible tragedy obscured by the big city. We wanted the story to be imbued with the flavors of this area and with the echo of the sounds that define it without giving a precise geographical connotation. In the crater, we searched for faces and voices, holding auditions for months and spent entire nights amidst the lights of the local TV studios where singers from the area came to perform. We looked for fathers and their children and found illusions and moments of glory. We met whole families involved in drafting career plans for folk music stars, indebted fathers, proud mothers and minors weighed down by the responsibility of deliverance. In the crater, social acceptance does not go through sports, dance or beauty contests; it is fastened on a type of music ignored by the rest of the world. The key to respect and consideration in the crater is "neomelodic music". And the offspring becomes the vehicle to a dream, a final bet. So, in the end "Crater" is an imaginary story carrying a heavy load of reality.

How did you meet Sharon, Rosario and their family? And why did you decide to cast them as your protagonists?

In the screenplay, the role of the family was already the focus point, a sort of space within the space, a crater within the crater. But, for the system we wanted to create, we needed a real family that would be able to project the kind of dysfunctional behavior and the emotional ties inherent to any family unit.

CRATER

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The screenplay we had written also contained another element: adolescence as a symbol of conflict and pure rebellion. We looked for fathers with teenage children, faces capable of embodying both the idea of vengeance and resistance towards the world, as well the inner insurrection of a thirteen-year-old. After months of rehearsals we thought we had closed the cast and were ready to start shooting. Then we came across this truck full of stuffed animals and plush toys and suddenly stood before Rosario and his pure and unconscious ambition. And there, at his side was Sharon, all freckles and smiles, slack and indolent with a puberty exploding in breasts and unawareness. We had no doubts. The film was born.

CRATER is your first feature length, after having shot two documentaries. How and why did you cross the thin line towards fiction, while clearly maintaining a documentary core?

From the very beginning we wanted each visual element of the film to be real. The clothes, the places, the objects as well as the lives of the other characters that cross Sharon's and Rosario's path. However, the idea rooted in the writing phase was to bring it together into the stylistic and narrative structure of a pure fiction film.



CRATER

A film by Silvia Luzi & Luca Bellino

The experiment was to use reality or the documentary language to enrich film in its form and essence. We used everything that was before us, highly symbolic and moldable material. We never wanted to hide the documentary footprint, but we wanted to show it in its slow meltdown, a progressive loss of density that had to go hand in hand with the story. With the evolution of the plot, a soft but constant metamorphosis takes place between reality and fiction. A short circuit that we had looked for and wanted from the beginning and that we attempted to underline further in post-production, working in the same direction both with the color grading and the sound design.

How did you work on the set with non-professional actors? Were the dialogues and the screenplay set or did you work on the improvisation of language and situations?

The idea of working with non-professional actors and people that were actually related was always a priority. The 'training' of the actors took place while shooting. We started with a screenplay that grew and was enriched day by day. We shot in sequence, developing every single scene with Rosario and Sharon for days, discussing it, expanding it and defining the dialogues. Rosary turned out to be an unconscious talent, capable of digging into his past to rediscover emotions and events that justified his actions. We slowly started involving him in the writing process; his intuitions and impulses enhanced our work while at the same time reassuring us about the correctness of the system we had set in motion. With Sharon, on the other hand, the work was very intimate and exclusive. We watched her improve and grow day after day; we shared the infinite torments of adolescence as well as the anxiety of growing older and transferred into her character a whole interior world as yet unexplored by herself. In the creation of the characters and through the acting, their personalities and their daily lives switched places. Rosario became a strict father, unfaltering in his almost heroic dream while Sharon had to measure her intensity and tone. She studied hard in order to accomplish a transformation and modify her extroverted and laid-back nature. She hid the smiles and learned to handle a character defined primarily by looks and glances, unexpressed emotions and physicality. For all of us it has been a long journey of growth and great commitment.

CRATER

A film by Silvia Luzi & Luca Bellino



In the film, you observe the family relationship as opposed to the limits of cultural and social freedom. In your opinion what is the real conflict between father and daughter?

We wanted to tell an intimate story, the story of a father and a daughter, of their bizarre universe made of plush toys, traditional songs and local TV stations; we wanted to tell about the natural conflict that develops towards adults when you are thirteen and about the need to offer a different future to your children. The father and the daughter as well as the other characters, are isolated from the rest of the world, which, for style reasons as well, is always out of focus. "Crater" is a film full of closed spaces - those of the house, of the recording studio and of the television studio - but also of the car that becomes an aquarium with putrid windows. We wanted the camera to become one with the bodies and the environment, precisely because of the desire to tell of a world within the world, a conflict within the conflict. We were not interested in digging into social issues, in condemning the Government, which probably in those places is not very present; we did not want to denounce the situation of cultural or social degradation. Rosario and Sharon are very bright stars that have nothing to do with the Neapolitan cliché of sun, love, music and carefree living. It is the rebellion that makes them shine. Maybe this is the true tension, the real conflict of the film.

CRATER

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Music - the Neapolitan folksongs in particular - is predominant in the film. How did you conceive the cinematic work in accordance with the music?

In the crater, music becomes a style that mixes the great Neapolitan song tradition with Italian pop music and walks a thin line between kitsch and trash. It is defined as "neomelodic" because it retraces the history and memory of the territory but is new in its contents. It is an independent movement that is completely detached from any music label. A kind of sovereign government that feeds on its own market and on perfectly functioning dynamics. It is music with lyrics in dialect that refer to a present that is deciphered without difficulty by the listener. Outside the crater, the neomelodic performers are totally unknown or, at best, ridiculed and looked on with the amusement and leniency reserved for some whacky freak show. In the crater, they are stars. Music is not the focus of the film; it's just the starting point, a stake and an alibi for the virtual engine of the plot. To tell Rosario's wagger, we chose a typically neomelodic song, specifically written for Sharon. "O silenzio do dolore"/"O Silenzio do dolore" (The Silence of Suffering) has lyrics that refer to a father-daughter relationship. It is also a song that has elements of Rosario's true story, the one that is not told in the film.



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FESTIVALS

World Premiere
Venice International Film Critics' Week – Competition (2017)

International Premiere
Tokyo Film Festival – Competition (2017)
Special Jury Prize

Rabat Film Festival, Morocco – Panorama (2017)

Geneva GIFF, Switzerland – Competition (2017)

Goteborg FF – Five Continents (2018)

Crossing Europe FF (Austria) – Competition (2018)
Special Jury Prize



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