

MON AMOUR MON AMI

A FILM BY
ADRIANO VALERIO

SYNOPSIS

Daniela and Fouad live in Gubbio, on the Umbria hills, but they both come from the sea. She is from Bari and he is from Casablanca.

Their bodies bare the signs of a tough life and a severe dependence from alcohol. They met by chance and started to take care of each other, growing a profound and healing bond. Fouad moved to Daniela's place and they shared the same roof for two years.

Now that Fouad needs a residency permit, in order to get access to the health assistance he needs, he proposes to Daniela. She seems fine with the idea but just a few days before the wedding, the ambiguity of Fouad's feelings starts worrying her.

Is it possible to stage a wedding with someone who really loves you?

THE STORY

Fouad (39) and Daniela (59) both come from places by the sea, he from Casablanca and she from Bari. They are both from middle class, religious families. Fouad's father was an Imam, Daniela's, the Head of a company, a Christian and esotericism scholar. Life's hazards bring them to landlocked Gubbio, on the hills of Umbria.

Daniela for years has been living in a three-storey tower of sorts, an unfinished large house. A crumbling property of the family that she has been trying to sell in order to deal with her increasingly dilapidated financial condition. For years, Daniela has lived on a deadly diet of Grappa and cocaine until the "voice of her father" saved her from the edge of the abyss.

Fouad came to Italy for a delicate jaw surgery. Once out of the hospital, he could not find a job. A criminal conviction of a presumed robbery took away his right to obtain a residence permit. Since then, he had no option but to live illegally in Italy, all along hoping to get the required medical assistance. He drank he claimed, to survive the cold of the deserted factory he used to sleep in, and in order to numb the sadness he felt in his bones

They knew the same demons, Fouad and Daniela.

One day they met, random. She needed help for housework and shopping, and he needed a home. Both having been through a rehabilitation program for alcoholics, they decided to live together.

Daniela and Fouad recognized themselves in each other, they saw in one another the wounds from a difficult life, from wrong turns, from hitting rock bottom. In two years of a shared life, they kept each other company, they helped, listened to and loved each other. They had a lot of fun and felt protected by each other.

But a problem persisted. Fouad's jaw, which has a metallic plate that should have been removed for a while now hurts, hurts more and more. He desperately needs a Residence Permit, which will allow him to get free medical care. Residence permit and medical care that he is constantly denied due to his criminal record.

The only apparent solution for him would be for Daniela to legalise his status by marrying him. She accepts, but a little later she starts suspecting that he is really in love with her. She begins to feel uneasy about the idea of having a white wedding with a person who loves her for real.

Daniela changes her mind and asks him a little more time to think about it.

Fouad feels rejected and sees the impossibility for him to live his dream of true love and along with that his hopes of a residence permit and medical care dissipate in front of his very eyes..

Overwhelmed by fear and despair, he starts to drink again. Daniela has to ask him to leave, although she doesn't stop worrying and thinking about him.

It is at this moment that the film starts.

THE FILM

Fouad is packing his suitcases in Daniela's run-down bedroom, his life in pretty much the same condition of damage and decay. Daniela has asked him to leave her home after two years of living together. This is the end of a love story.

Fouad moves in with his brother, in a small studio flat outside of the city. Daniela remains alone in the great decrepit house with Fouad's cat.

Both of them are starting new lives, separately. A new life, new routines, new patterns. Fouad does odd jobs for some farmers nearby. Everyday he visits the mosque and a small bar in the city centre. When he is feeling particularly sad, he takes the funicular and climbs up to Sant Ubaldo to isolate himself from the rest of the world.

Daniela has started to practice Buddhism and is attempting to learn Japanese, while still fighting the overwhelming cold in her big decaying house. Both of them feel the need to talk about what is happening, it is too much to contain in their hearts. Daniela confides in Marlene, her Buddhist practice friend, while Fouad talks with his brother Khalid.

Each one expresses their point of view about their love story; what brought them together and what now keeps them apart.

It's Christmas time and in Gubbio, the world's biggest Christmas tree is getting decorated and illuminated. Fouad is watching it from the street, while Daniela watches it from her window.

Fouad decides to walk to Daniela's house, they sit down to talk.

Could there still be hope, another chance?

NARRATIVE DEVICE

I spent a lot of time with both the film protagonists, who have shared with me their stories and their authentic yet different point of views about their relationship.

The idea is to bring out these different perspectives through a narrative device that blends documentary and fiction elements. The purer documentary approach used to observe their present lives is alternated with sequences in which the characters re-enact situations they have actually lived in the past. The dialogues are a result of guided improvisation, one that draws from the long discussions and interviews I have had with both of them over the months leading to the film.

To dive into this narrative suspended delicately between documentary and fiction, something I have already experimented in some of my past short films, "37°45" (David di Donatello 2014 and Special Mention at Cannes Film Festival 2013) and "Agosto" (Special Mention at Venice Film Festival 2015), I have decided to work with Diego Suarez Llanos (director of photography), long time collaborator of Roberto Minervini, one of the best authors we have experimenting with such cinematic research.

DIRECTOR'S NOTE

I met Fouad by chance in a bar in Gubbio, where I was invited to present my feature film "Banat". We talked a little and then I left. Months later, something from that encounter stayed with me, something about Fouad's enigmatic look, his fierce despair, his kind words. I decided to reconnect with him and went back to Umbria several times to meet Daniela, as well as to get closer to Fouad.

What is most striking with this story is the look Daniela and Fouad have for each other and their absolutely deep connection.

The enthusiasm in which they talk about the happiness of their early days of living together, the hours spent getting to know each other, the pleasure of finding after years of utter loneliness, someone who could understand the other so deeply.

A love story between two people that came a long way, found each other and connected on the hills of Umbria.

Their relationship made me think of Patti Smith's autobiography "Just Kids", where she talks of her love story with Robert Mapplethorpe with the backdrop of a cold and hostile New York City, where they both landed without a penny. In a cold night of starvation, they made a promise that they would take care of each other forever, regardless of what would become of their love story. And I have a feeling that Daniela and Fouad, are not too far removed from this scenario even after the present difficult phase.

Their situation is complex but what is visible is that in every look, every word they exchange is a feeling of deep love and great respect for the other, which is a real mercy for them, a mercy that makes it possible to emerge from the darkness of the past, a darkness that would otherwise be impossible to overcome. This is a rare emotion that I do wish the film captures.

Adriano Valerio

ADRIANO VALERIO / DIRECTOR

Law graduate from the University of Milan, he studied cinema with Marco Bellocchio before moving to Paris, where he gained a Bachelor in Fine Arts at the International Film School of Paris (EICAR).

He currently teaches Film Direction and Film Analysis in the same school. He also collaborates with the Fine Arts Lebanese Academy in Beirut, the Institute Marangoni and the Italian Cultural Institute in Paris. He took part in the Berlinale Talent Campus and the Locarno Film Academy.

His short « 37°45 » won the David di Donatello and the Nastro d'Argento Special Prize (2014), besides a Special Mention at Cannes Film Festival (2013) and more than 50 awards.

His first feature « Banat - the Journey » was presented in Venice at the Critics' Week (2015) and was nominated at the David di Donatello for Best Emerging Director and shown in more than 65 Festivals worldwide .

His last short « Agosto » won a Special Mention at Venice Film Festival (G.A.I. section, 2016).

He lately shot two episodes of the tv series Close Murders, produced by Rai and Freemantle.

FILMOGRAPHY

BANAT - (87', 2015) nominated at David di Donatello for Best Emerging Director (2016); at Venice Film Festival Critics' Week (2015); Corso Salani Award for Best Film, at the Trieste Film Festival (2016); Silver Award, at Louxor International Film Festival (2016); Best Cinematography Award, Tirana International Film Festival (2015); Busan International Film Festival, and another 65 film festivals worldwide;

AGOSTO (AUGUST) (15', 2015)- currently in distribution
Special Mention at Venice Film Festival (G.A.I. section, 2016),
Best Cinematography at Visioni Italiane, Bologna (2015),
Among other festivals participations, Milan Film Festival;

37°45 S (12', 2013) Special Jury Mention, Cannes Film Festival (2013), David di Donatello for Best Italian Short (2014), Special Prize at Nastro d'Argento (2014), 41 awards in 120 Festivals all over the world.

DUGONG FILMS

COMPANY PROFILE

The Dugong is a large marine mammal belonging to the Sirenia order. Some believe that dugongs were the inspiration for ancient sea-faring tales of mermaids and sirens. From this creature Dugong takes its name, a Rome based audiovisual production company established in 2010.

Dugong's specific strategy of finding talent, innovative projects and working with professionals in an international framework has proved extremely successful. Its productions, despite the company young age, have already harvested a number of hits including Stefano Savona's acclaimed feature documentary '**Tahrir – Liberation Square**', premiering in Locarno Film Festival 2011 and screening in major festivals like the New York FF, Doc Lisboa, Dubai IFF, Viennale. It won the **David di Donatello** as 2012 best feature documentary and a **Silver Ribbon**. It has been distributed theatrically in France and the USA and sold to more than 20 countries by Doc&Film.

Dugong won the 2011 **Venice Film Festival Orizzonti Award** and a **Silver Ribbon mention** with '**In Attesa dell'Avvento**' a short film by Arturo Lavorato and Felice D'Agostino.

In 2012 Dugong produced '**A Short History of Abandoned Scenes**', directed by renowned video artist Ra di Martino, coproduced with Nomads Foundation, and presented among others at Rotterdam FF, Tate Modern in London, Kino der Kunst in Munich, Kasseler Doc Fest, Cairo, Jakarta, Dallas, Beograd, Lima Museum of contemporary arts.

In August 2013 it produced '**Bluster Rootless**' the official trailer for the prestigious Raindance Film Festival in London, directed by Giovanni La Parola.

In 2013 co-produced with PicoFilms '**La Passione di Erto**', a feature length documentary directed by Penelope Bortoluzzi, selected by Locarno Film Festival and in competition at Turin Film Festival.

Always in 2013 Dugong co-produced the short film '**Requiem**' by Valentina Carnelutti, **winner of Turin Film Festival** and nominated for a **Silver Ribbon**.

In 2014 Dugong coproduced with France the docu-fiction '**Amori e Metamorfosi**' by Yanira Yariv, official selection Locarno Film Festival.

In 2014 it coproduced the short film '**Stella Maris**' by Giacomo Abbruzzese, winner of Canal Plus Award in Montpellier Film Festival, selected in 2015 Clermont Ferrand competition and winner of the Golden Egg at the 2015 Kustendorf Film Festival directed by Emir Kusturica.

In 2014 it produced the short film '**Séance**' by Yuri Ancarani, commissioned by Maurizio Cattelan and aired on Sky HD.

In 2016, it coproduced the feature length documentary '**The Challenge**' by Yuri Ancarani, winner of the Grand Jury Prize at Locarno Cineastes du Present competition and, by the same director, produced the short **Whipping Zombie** commissioned by the UN and shot in Haiti, selected in Rotterdam Film Festival 2017 and in international competition at Cinema du Reel.

In development is Giacomo Abbruzzese's feature film **Disco Boy**, supported by the French-Italian development fund (CNC-MIBACT) in co-production with Stromboli Films ('Despues de Lucia'), the horror comedy **Li Muerti** by Massimiliano Verdesca, supported by MIBAC development fund, and the documentary feature **L'Avamposto** by Edoardo Morabito, a modern time *Fitzcarraldo* set in the Amazons and supported by the Brazilian-Italian development fund.

In production is '**Samouni's Road**', a feature length part documentary and part animation directed by Stefano Savona and illustrated by Simone Massi (David di Donatello winner), a French-Italian coproduction supported among others by Eurimages, the Italian Ministry of Culture (MIBAC), Cinema du Monde (CNC, France) and Arte. Doc&Film (France) is the International sales agent attached, Jour-de-Fete the French distributor and Parthenos the Italian one.

Also in production is the documentary feature **Gold Is All There Is** by Andrea Caccia, an Italian-Swiss-French co-production supported by Piedmont and Lombardia Film Commissions, French CNC, MIBAC, RSI and Ticino Film Commission; and Ra Di Martino's new feature film set in Morocco: **La controfigura - The stand in** winner of the Post Production award at Milano Film Festival and of the Eurimages Lab Project Award at Karlovy Vary International Film Festival 2017.

www.dugong.it

FILMS GRAND HUIT (FRANCE)

Both graduated from the Gobelins cinema school, Lionel Massol and Pauline Seigland founded Grand Huit Films with the desire to create a free and structured space for authors. Their common wish is to use their energies and complementary experiences to establish a favorable environment for the emergence of singular films. The network they built over the years and the generation they grow with are the foundations of their company. Resolutely thought as an open minded and engaged structure, Films Grand Huit must carry their artistic expectations and their projects further. Grand Huit Films won the 2015 New Producer label.

Filmography :

- LITTLE HANDS by Rémi Aller 2017 (Broadcast on Arte, Brussels Short Film, Telluride film festival, etc.)
- MAD by Sophie Taverit 2017 (Festival St Paul Trois Châteaux, Festival Jean Carmet)
- AND STILL WE WILL WALK ON by Jonathan Millet 2017 (Broadcast on France 2, Clermont Ferrand, Festicab Burundi, Kinoma Festival...)
- SO LONG MARIANNE by Clémence Madeleine-Perdrillat 2016 (Broadcast on France 3, Festival Off Court Trouville, Aubagne Film Festival)
- EN MOI by Laetitia Casta 2016 (Broadcast on Canal+, Semaine de la critique, Cinemed Montpellier, Aubagne Film Festival, Athen's Festival...).
- THE GAS STATION by Djinda Kane 2016 (Skeptto International film festival, Détours en cinécourt, Selectionned for Prix Cannes Unifrance)
- JOHN MARR by Camila Beltrán 2016 (Broadcast on France 3, shown at La Cinémathèque Française, etc.)

www.filmgrandhuit.com

TECHNICAL SPECS:

Film Title: "Mon amour mon ami"

Director and screenwriter: Adriano Valerio

Year of production: 2017

Production Company: Dugong Films, Films Grand Huits

Country: Italy, France

Color

Length: 15'

Languages: Italian (English subtitles)

Cinematographer: Diego Romero Suarez-Ilanos

Editor: Alice Roffinengo

Sound: Enrico Ascoli

Featuring Fouad Miftah and Daniela Brandi

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