

# VareseNews

## Cinema is poetry, commitment and fun

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There was great interest in Francesca Comencini, so much so that part of the hall was filled well in advance of the start of the meeting. A very young audience came to listen to the film director and writer, the special correspondent for the opening of the seventh *Cortisonici* Festival.

Mauro Gervasini presented Ms Comencini, explaining some aspects of her professional life including the attention she gives to regions and towns, always with an original perspective.

The film director started speaking about her films by explaining the reasons for *Our Country*. "This film is a choral piece, that came from observing the exchange of money. It's a tough film, that begins with the indignation about what's happening in Italy. It was made a few years ago, but it's still very topical. I managed to bring things in, almost stealing footage taken before the actual filming."

Gervasini then spoke about a different approach to casting, which allowed discovering new talent, such as Luca Argentero. "He struck me immediately, and I asked him why someone like him had decided to take part in Big Brother. He was ideal for my main character. Another discovery in the film was Laura Chiatti."

*I like to work (Mobbing)*, which stars the actress Nicoletta Braschi, and the documentary *In fabbrica* (In the factory) are examples of Ms Comencini's commitment and attention to the world of employment.

"I've always been struck by the fact that women and mothers are most affected. This is strange in a country that is fanatical about its relationship with motherhood. I've discovered how afraid people are to talk about this. There's a lot of suffering with strong emotions, so I decided to make a fictional film and not a documentary. The recurrences of mobbing in private are the most delicate aspect. The film is based on real stories, nothing has been invented. Mobbing is the result of a mentality that concerns various groups, when there is strong competition. Instead of coming together, we lash out against someone."

The female characters are always very strong, and they are contrasted with male characters that are either absent or immature. “This isn’t an ideological choice, I’m not taking sides. It’s just that I’m better at telling the woman’s side, because I’m more familiar with it. I don’t have a bad relationship with men. I’ll get better.”

With *White Space*, Ms Comencini goes into the topic of motherhood in more depth. “It’s a gentler, more delicate film, also because the topic isn’t mine. Margherita Buy was great, and it was wonderful to work with her.”

Emotions play a central role. “You have to be convincing, it isn’t a question of technique. Today, it takes great passion because it’s more difficult to make films. A director must get others intimately involved in the project, but, at the same time, protect his personality. As a result, you sometimes feel a bit lonely, but that’s my job. There is also something particular about being a woman. When I work, I’m firm, but without becoming competitive.”

The films of Comencini do not cost a lot. “The most expensive cost less than €3 million. *Mobbing* cost €200,000. In Italy, filmmaking is paid for almost entirely by Medusa and RAI Cinema. This is the main problem, because this duopoly determines how films are made. Then, there is the fund for show business, FUS, which acknowledges the films of public interest, but it’s not consistent.”

Two full hours with Francesca Comencini talking about films. How time flew!

She was clear and direct, and she did not refuse to answer any question; she revealed so much about her work and about how to interpret filmmaking today.

Her experience as a jury member for the Berlin Festival was also interesting. “Cinema can be poetry, a statement, commitment and fun. It’s not good if it ends.”

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