

Fire At Sea

Cert 12A Italy 2016 108 mins

Crew

Director /
Writer /
Cinematographer Gianfranco Rosi
Editor Jacopo Quadri
Original music Stefano Grosso

Cast

Samuele Pucillo Himself
Pietro Bartolo Himself
Giuseppe Fragapane Himself
Samuele Caruana Himself
Maria Costa Herself
Francesco Mannino Himself

Synopsis

Italy, the recent past. Situated some 200km off Italy's southern coast, Lampedusa has hit world headlines in recent years as the first port of call for hundreds of thousands of African and Middle Eastern migrants hoping to make a new life in Europe.

Film-maker Rosi spent months living and filming on the island, and his documentary sets the migrants' dangerous crossing against a background of the ordinary life of the islanders - including Samuele, a twelve-year-old boy from a fishing family, and Pietro Bartolo, a local doctor who treats the migrants on their arrival.



Booking Information

Distributor: Artificial Eye

DVD bookings:

BFI Film Distribution

020 7957 8938

Bookings.films@bfi.org.uk

www.bfi.org.uk/distribution

Available: now



Reviews

Sometimes real life provides us with symbolic imagery that is every bit as potent and sophisticated as anything you would find in a fictional narrative. And one of the great strengths of Gianfranco Rosi's Berlin film festival prize-winning documentary is that the director is able to look at a dauntingly huge topic of global import – the migrant crisis – and find within it the little moments of poetic resonance that illuminate the human lives behind the stark statistics ...

Migration is a topic that could hardly be more charged, but Rosi is no brow-beating polemicist. His approach is unobtrusive and observational rather than confrontational. The two worlds, that of the newly arrived refugees, adrift and traumatised, and the timeless locals, shaped by generations of devotion to the sea and the church, have surprisingly little interaction.

However, Rosi seeks out threads between the two communities....

Wendy Ide, The Observer, September 2016

...The scenes of migrant misery are harrowing. Those boats so heaving with crowded life that they are near-certain candidates for crowded death. Those dying bodies hauled from the fresco of pain and horror. And that shot of a boat's lower deck after the rescue of the living: a charnel house of the dead, a freeze-frame of purgatory.

Assembling other "plots" around this infernal pivot couldn't, you'd think, enhance its power. Yet it does — by deepening the sea of humanity that washes the world of headline horror.

...There are scenes of family life; scenes with the island's doctor dazed by overwork as refugee crisis is piled on routine care; scenes even with the island radio's DJ, pouring the balm of pop or Verdi over beleaguered lives. It's an amazing film. Life and death; mundanity and mortality; growing up and growing old; family and country; conflict and concord. Each is made more vivid, more complex, more intricately human, by its interaction with the other.

Nigel Andrews, Financial Times, June 2016

FILM FACTS...

- ☆ The film premiered at the Berlin Film Festival 2016, where it was awarded the Golden Bear. It was nominated for the Best Documentary Oscar at the 2017 Academy Awards
- ☆ Italian Prime Minister Matteo Renzi took 27 copies of the DVD for fellow heads of state to an EU summit on migration, saying that "after having seen it, it will be possible to discuss immigration in a different way."