

Fabrizio Boni & Giorgio de Finis (Movie: Space Metropolitiz) and Dario & Mirko Bischofberger (Movie: Dog men)

An interview about movie projects and community issues by Eleonora Stassi

The one we are going to tell is a science fiction story. But also a cohabitation tale, about sharing and political engagement.

It is the story of an occupation and of an artistic provocation, of a space ship and a museum.

Space Metropolitiz

www.spacemetropolitiz.com/

In a not-too-distant future only a few homo sapiens are left. Struggling for survival they are forced to live from hunting the last remaining animals in the peripheral ruins of an advanced human civilization. But they are unaware of being stalked themselves by a mysterious scanner.

A science fiction story about hunting and being hunted, about extinction and survival, about dogs – and men.

Dog Men

www.dog-men.ch/

Eleonora Stassi: Could you start by telling me a little bit about your practice in creating science fiction stories?

SM: Science-fiction was always part of my imaginary, playful, cinematographic, literary or just fantastic background, but nothing more. I have never created science fiction stories, except for the games that I used to invent as a child: Space Metropolitiz is

my first space age drift. I think that this also counts for Giorgio de Finis and this shared background allowed us to explore this topic under many points of views: cinematographic, scientific, philosophic, politic, cultural.

DM: “Science fiction” means for us “Abstraction”. In *Dog men* we had the goal to tell the most abstract story with the smallest costs possible and the Science fiction genre is the perfect one to reach this aim.

It was a great challenge: to combine, on one hand, the expectations on a sci-fi movie, that are, as usual, very high in its visual and sonic effects, with the limited budget we had, because we wanted to remain independent.

I like this way of alternative movie making, it's more possible than ever before and I think it's a good training: it's all in that. Somewhere hidden there lies the secret and the power of the so called “independent” or “art house cinema”: you have to make something out of nothing, tell an abstract story with and through daily objects. I believe that story telling comes out of seeing life in its details and, by the way, if we have had a big budget, it would have been useful just to add to the movie an enormous explosion or something pyrotechnical like that and let that money burn!

DM: Out of our plot pool we decided in November 2012 to work on a science fiction movie mostly for technical reasons. We could realise the movie thanks to the affordable possibilities of shooting in full-HD. Then we established that Dog men had to be a black and white movie, to give a timeless connotation, and to realize it during the summer 2013 on the isle of Favignana (Sicily) to have:

- the mediterranean light (no need of light equipment);
- the natural set of caves and rural landscape;
- good and price worth food and wine (low catering costs and holidays included).

ES: It seems to exist behind your project the consideration of the “movie” as expedient to deepen into social and scientific issues. Do you think that a movie can be as social instrument, a research possibility and an experiment?

SM: As anthropologist and documentaries director, I involve the filmic instrument in the investigation of a given context, in addition to the expression of my world view. Space Metropoliz had this connotation from the start: being a socio-artistic experiment to explore the dimensions of imagination, dream or utopia itself in a very different and antagonistic all day life context.

DM: Of course. A science fiction movie is always related to society and to science. It is an abstraction of our civilization, a metaphor for our real world. Otherwise it wouldn't be so interesting for the audience.

ES: How is this opportunity integrated in your movie?

SM: We took always seriously the “game” to bring Metropoliz on the Moon. At the end it's an idea impossible to realize, but simultaneously easy to visualize or imagine. For this we could share it with all the people fascinated or involved by such a crazy mission.

DM: Without judging, it is shown how naturally cruel the world is as a matter of fact: „nature“ and “vicious circle“ seem to be synonyms. We talk about the presumed necessity of violence in nature.

There is also a personal thing about our past we wanted to integrate: to show things that we have heard from our forefathers, living in rural poverty where the struggle for survival is physical, normal things that for us, people of “the first world”, feel as incredible or disgusting. Eating a raw snail, for example, or dogs.

ES: About what is real and what is fiction.

How is the backstage everyday life related to the film utopia?

SM: When we proposed to the inhabitants of Metropoliz our concept, it came out only a point to be clearly defined: the trip to the Moon doesn't had to represent an escape from reality or a surrender. People that occupy a house expose themselves to claim their rights and can't identify with a space colonist.

For this reason, science-fiction had to be contaminated with reality and become an Utopia. The rocket, that the inhabitants had to built, turned into a real vehicle able to bring the Metropoliz on the Moon. Its construction would have ratified the success of the trip and its launch would have been the landing on the white satellite. The combined effort through a symbolic aim could transform the place of departure in the one of arrival, the Metropoliz on the Moon.

DM: I think that for the actors it wasn't more abstract than in other movies: interpreting a human or a humanoid is pretty much the same, you can have a seemingly „cold“ character as an android as well as a police officer giving you a fine for wrong parking. The acting can be the same.

It is just amusing and very fun on the set to see how a virtual or fantastic story is realised and how everybody on the set, when the camera shuts off straight after a futuristic scene, come back to reality: all you can see is funny dressed people looking at each other standing on a sandbar somewhere out there on this planet. Not so different of being on an after hour rave, when someone pulls out the plug.

ES: Are you recording the “afterlife” of your movie project? Do you feel after all still involved in its research aims?

SM: Space Metropoliz gave life to a new artistic project, the MAAM, Museo dell'Altro e dell'Altrove (Museum of the other and the elsewhere) of Metropoliz, curated completely by Giorgio de Finis.¹

DM: This “afterlife” was a main topic of our work from its start. Mirko and I believe in the importance of being timeless in our creations. We made this movie like a writer would have written a statement about this world. This is what we think, how nature follows its rules.

ES: Would you define your movie as an example of a futuristic social sculpture?

SM: After having experienced the afterlife of the movie, with the birth of MAAM, I think that Metropoliz today is going to become an enormous collective artwork, inhabited, lively.

The movie was for sure an innovative example of cinematographic and artistic “construction site”. It had the task to trigger unprecedented processes and to open co-operations sceneries between art and social movements.

DM: You can name it like that, but I would rather call it an essay about the real world.

Captions

1 Dog Men Poster, artwork: Engy Aly + Laura Symul

2 Space Metropoliz Poster, artwork: Valerio Calcagnile; ph. Giorgio de Finis, Illustrations: Giulia Barbera

3 Movie Backstage (Mirko Bischofberger + Gioacchino Balistreri) ph. Eleonora Stassi

4 Movie Backstage (M. & D. Bischofberger, Michelle Ettlin, Irmina Kopaczyńska) ph. Eleonora Stassi

5 Movie Backstage (M. & D. Bischofberger) ph. Eleonora Stassi

6 Movie Backstage (Irmina Kopaczyńska, Daniel Mulligan) ph. Eleonora Stassi

7 Movie Backstage (Irmina Kopaczyńska, Michelle Ettlin) ph. Eleonora Stassi

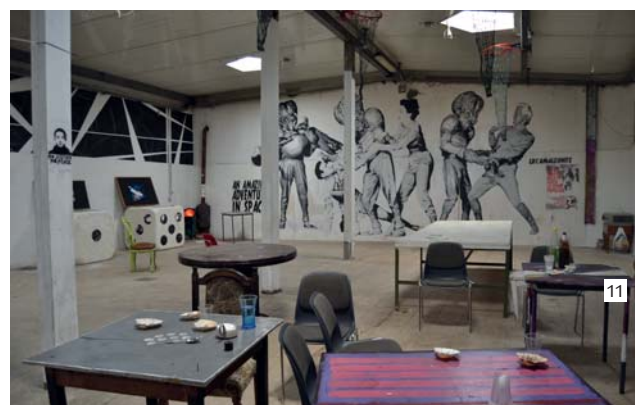
8 Patrizio, ph. Giorgio de Finis

9 La luna al popolo, ph. Giorgio de Finis

10 Rockett, ph. Giorgio de Finis

11 (The) Metropoliz (MAAM - Museo dell'Altro e dell'Altrove di Metropoliz), ph. Velia Calevi (metropoliz 0 to 4)





Fabrizio Boni, born in Bologna in 1973, moved soon to Rome, where after the high school diploma studied at the faculty of Sociology at the university „La Sapienza“. During his studies, he started to use the audiovisual equipment as a research instrument. His thesis was an ethnographical work about the homeless of Termini, the main train station of Rome, and realized his first documentary “Dory e i ragazzi di Via Marsala”.

He continued his research and filmmaker activity studying direction and visual anthropology.

Between 2000 and 2006 worked with the group Laboratorio3, a collective of researchers and sociologists realizing and experimenting socio-anthropological documentaries.

2008 is the year of his first full-length film “C’era una volta Savorengo Ker: la casa di tutti”, together with the director Giorgio de Finis: a documentary about the biggest european gipsy camp, the Casilino 900.

In 2010 Fabrizio founded Irida Produzioni, independent communication and production agency, the one with he produced the documentary “Space Metropoliz”.

Giorgio de Finis

Anthropologist, journalist, filmmaker and photographer. Author of several books and scientific articles, founded and directed “Il Mondo 3. Rivista di teoria delle scienze umane e sociali” and is the ex-director of the “Journal of European Psychoanalysis”.

He researched and taught in different italian and international universities.

From 1991 to 1997 was visiting research associate of Manila University. Since more then ten years he researches on urbanity.

He realized more then 400 documentaries and journalistic services for the television, tv series and programs.

With the documentary «Diari dalla megalopoli. Mumbai», he won the «Premio Zevi per la Comunicazione dell’architettura».

With Stalker/ON realized the documentaries «Rome to Roma. Diario nomade», «Otnarat. Taranto a futuro inverso» for the Apulia Film Commision, «C’era una volta... Savorengo Ker, la Casa di Tutti» (with F. Boni), «Appunti dal G. R. A.».

He conceived the “Monumentalia. Videocatalogo dell’architettura italiana”. He is artistic director of -1 art gallery of Casa dell’Architettura, project space dedicated to street art.

From 2011 Giorgio works at Metropoliz, via Prenestina 913, where he realized the documentary «Space Metropoliz», with F. Boni.

He founded and promotes the MAAM, Museo dell’Altro e dell’Altrove of Metropoliz.

His videos and pictures were presented at the 9th, 10th and 11th Mostra Internazionale di Architettura at the Venice Biennale, at the Chinese National Museum of Beijing, Milan Triennial, Athens, Buenos Aires and Rotterdam Biennials and at the «FotoGrafia Festival internazionale di Roma» (2008, 2009, 2011). For the expo Shanghai 2010 realized the video installations «Sustainable Cities in Italian Style» and «Il Giardino italiano» (italian pavilion).

He is the author of several photographical books as Postcards, Aut not Out. Ritratti di bambini con autismo, Umani, Urbani & Marziani and Diari urbani (introduction of Marc Augé) and, coming soon, «Space Metropoliz. Inizia l’era delle migrazioni esoplanetarie».

Mirko Bischofberger (Bellinzona 1980) is a PhD graduated biochemist at the Lausanne ETH. He is the initiator of the Swiss fiction Movement.

Dario Bischofberger (Johannesburg 1975) is a musician. He works as wine importer in Zurich. Dario and Mirko are brothers and make since their childhood films together.

At first those were just short films on private issues, then music videoclips, then short documentaries on assignment. With their first full-length film OLD IS THE NEW (Switzerland 2012), started their experimentation on movie. In 2014 they realized DOG MEN, „a science-fiction movie inspired by the past“. The Bischofberger brothers spent a large part of their childhood in Southern Italy, where their forefathers used to live as illiterate farmers working in the fields and eating dog meat to survive. These peasants were in fact called “mangiacani” locally, which means “dog eaters” in Italian. It is this historical background of scarce resources that inspired the directors to make a science-fiction movie. The rural poverty of the mangiacani is transposed into an apocalyptic stone pits architecture in a story that is at the same time very new and very remote. With DOG MEN, they were selected for the Solothurner Filmtage 2014. Mirko and Dario are self-taught directors and followers of movie authors. They both write the screenplay and do the direction.