

Soul
Film FILMKULTUR

THEY CALL ME ONION



PRESSBOOK

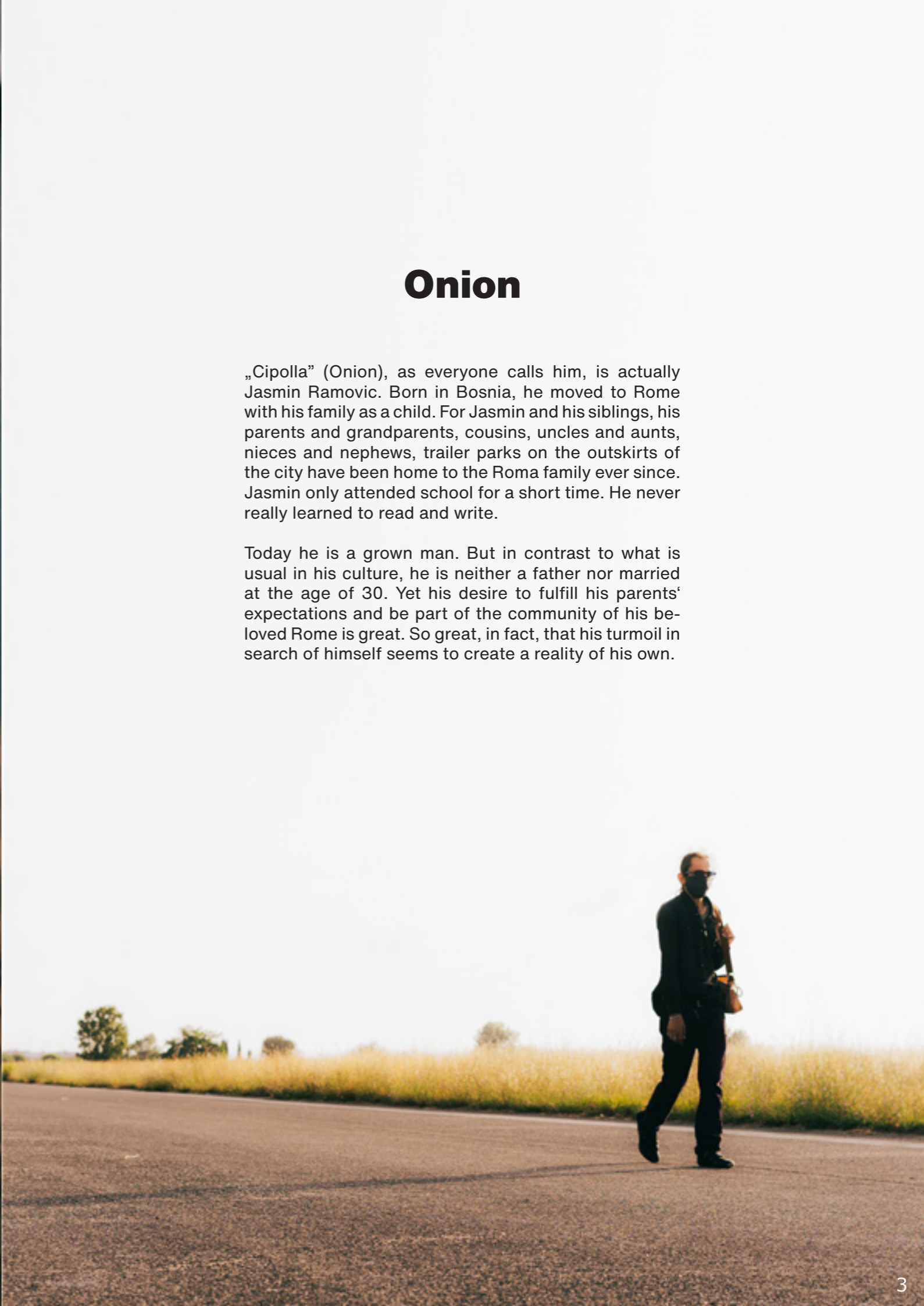
FILMKULTUR PRESENTS A SOUL FILM PRODUCTION FILM "THEY CALL ME ONION" STARRING JASMIN RAMOVIC
PRODUCED BY ROBERTA SANTORO EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS GIANSALVO PINOCCHIO, RICCARDO BAIOTTO PRODUCTION DESIGNER SANDRA BIDOLI LAURA LORENZO EDITOR LORENZO PIETRO FAGGIOLATI
MUSIC BY PERICLE ODIERNA COLORS BY SANDRA BIDOLI VFX BY FEDERICO GIOVANNINI SOUNDTRACK & DESIGN HOLGER GUTT, MICHAELA SMYKALLA
DIRECTED BY GIANSALVO PINOCCHIO, RICCARDO BAIOTTO



Onion

„Cipolla” (Onion), as everyone calls him, is actually Jasmin Ramovic. Born in Bosnia, he moved to Rome with his family as a child. For Jasmin and his siblings, his parents and grandparents, cousins, uncles and aunts, nieces and nephews, trailer parks on the outskirts of the city have been home to the Roma family ever since. Jasmin only attended school for a short time. He never really learned to read and write.

Today he is a grown man. But in contrast to what is usual in his culture, he is neither a father nor married at the age of 30. Yet his desire to fulfill his parents' expectations and be part of the community of his beloved Rome is great. So great, in fact, that his turmoil in search of himself seems to create a reality of his own.





Synopsis

Hopeful, positive and sociable - that's Jasmin Ramovic without a doubt. So in 2018, while filming in his neighborhood, he strikes up a conversation with directors Riccardo and Giansalvo, invites them to join him in the trailer park, and shows them around. In the process, Jasmin tells them about an eviction notice that would force him and his 14 siblings, as well as his parents and relatives, onto the street.

What gives him hope at this time is the prospect of social housing. His parents already made the application when the city announced the eviction of the trailer park in Ex-Fiera. Life in the camp, however, does not seem to have changed as a result of this uncertainty.

As Jasmin leads the camera crew through the camp, everyone goes about their usual business. The children play and have fun using an action cam to show their home from their perspective. In the evening, everyone gathers around a campfire, as they often do. They talk, smoke and warm up.

Then, when the day of eviction arrives, no one shows up to enforce it. The relief is great. And even before they would actually lose their home of the last eight years, Jasmin and his parents even receive the promise for the apartment.

Everything seems to be taking a positive turn and the long-awaited wish of a harmonious life in the circle of his closest family could finally come true

for Jasmin. But things are to turn out quite differently and the move marks the beginning of an emotional roller coaster for him.

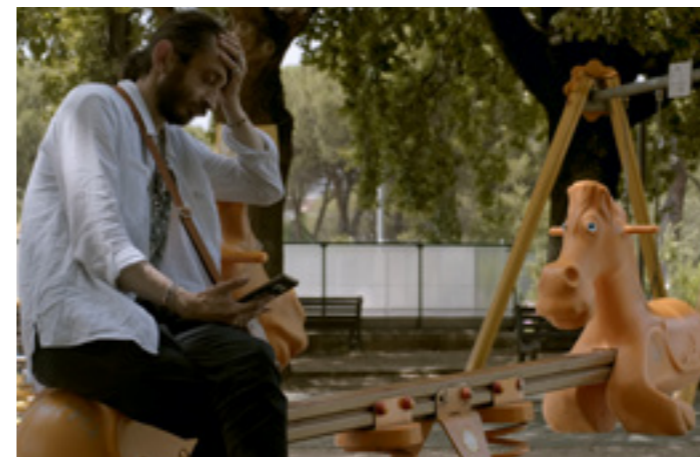
Unexpectedly, his grandparents die within a few months of each other. For Jasmin, it means the loss of the protectors he sees in them. This, and the closeness in lockdown that the pandemic brings, increasingly leads to conflict between him and his father. Jasmine ends up on the streets.

During this difficult time, the directors decide to help Jasmin out of a jam when, for example, he faces problems applying for social benefits due to his illiteracy. To do this, they consciously leave the professional distance to their protagonist.

As they increasingly become part of the action, the viewer can witness how the camera uncovers revealing contradictions and secrets.

What is the real state of Jasmin's father's health? Is the illness that suddenly brings them back together and erases seemingly irreconcilable frictions more metaphor than reality? What's the story behind the friend's relocation who took him in? What are the real consequences for him? And what role does the elusive cousin Tony play for him?

Fact and fiction begin to collide and reveal a façade. In the process, the hidden story of a man who thought he was looking for a home but was really searching for himself comes to light.





Directors Comment

The documentary was born out of sincere curiosity to get to know directly people who in our society are seen as ghosts. And like all absences, this one is filled primarily of ideology, which especially when we started this project was extremely polarized. Through the filming we got to know Jasmin Ramovic aka Onion, and we weaved a relationship that soon from the surface of professionalism evolved into something deeper, into friendship. This development also and especially passes through the camera, almost as if it were a silent character who introduces and acquaints us with Jasmin.

The first third of They Call Me Onion has a rougher style, which is meant to both call back to the simmering of the gypsy camp and the community life that takes place there. Voices that overlap, characters that struggle to stay in front of the camera, instrumentation in the field of view. All these elements also serve to highlight an element of self-staging that is inevitable in the exact moment that an outside eye observes them. The barrier of fiction is (perhaps) circumvented by the filming with the action cams, with the children using them instinctively, playing with language. The “deception” of selected, cut, sometimes agreed upon interviews is short-circuited by this dance, which hints at a mystery that goes far beyond words, despite nothing in this world can claim to be pristine.

The stylistic mellowing of the second third of They call me Onion coincides with Jasmin’s longed-for obtainment of a home. This coincides with a narrative that focuses more on the character’s individualistic dimension, which is almost impossible to conceive in a collective dimension such as that of the communal life of the gypsy camp. Jasmin begins to open his intimacy to the camera, to the viewer and to us as filmmakers. Only under this limelight, Jasmin is now unchallenged master of the stage and is free to tell his story. But we, as human beings, are not our story: indeed, we must never forget that this is ultimately a fiction that we choose to believe.

Thus, the last act of They Call Me Onion becomes a tale that Jasmin infuses with truths, unspoken, false leads and lies. As much the viewer as we filmmakers (sometimes even the camera) are challenged by it all, our beliefs are tested and the point of view made insecure. Yet who can say they have ever told their story objectively? The truth does not seem to be in the sense, in the surfaces of the images, but in the emotional spaces they open up and into which Pericle Odierna’s music leads us.

About the Directors

Giansalvo Pinocchio



Born in 1997, graduated in directing from the Gian Maria Volonté School. In 2019, he directed the collective movie L'ultimo piano, presented at the Torino Film Festival. He directs several shorts and works as an assistant in auteur works, such as the David di Donatello winner Volevo Nascondermi. He has just finished shooting the docu-series Zona Protetta, produced by Kon-Tiki Film and Rai Fiction.

Filmography

2017 - Almost Dead (Short Movie)
 2018 - Rotten Goods (Short Movie)
 2019 - L'ultimo piano (Collective Feature)
 2019 - Lost & Found (Short Movie)
 2020 - Why my name? (Short Movie)
 2022 - Zona protetta (Docuseries)
 2023 - They Call Me Onion (Feature)

Riccardo Baiocco



Born in Rome in 1997. He graduated with honors in Film Studies at La Sapienza University of Rome in 2019 with a thesis on Adam McKay’s cinema. He specializes as a film critic at Sentieri Selvaggi film school, with which he began collaborating at the end of his studies in 2022. In 2021 has been selected by Biennale College Cinema with the project Prognosi riservata, written by Giorgio Maria Nicolai and Francesco Logrippo.

Filmography

2017 - Almost Dead (Short Movie)
 2018 - L'urlo (Short Movie)
 by Valerio Ferrara, 1. A.D.
 2018 - Cinéma Synchronique (Short Movie)
 by Louis Samuel Andreotta, 1.A.D.
 2023 - They Call Me Onion (Feature)

Film Editing Comment



The history of „They Call Me Onion“ was characterized by constant growth and change. In order to keep up with this transformation, we also had to be flexible in our visions for the film during its realization and rethink them again and again.

Thus, the project began as a 34-minute short film and initially included only footage shot at the trailer park and Jasmin's new home in 2018. Our initial approach aimed to narrate Jasmin's leap into a new reality by juxtaposing the two very different styles of camera work in the trailer park and in the social housing.

When the decision was made in 2021, after COVID Lockdowns, to continue telling Jasmin's story, filming continued. The new developments changed both the style of camerawork and the storyline. As a result, the existing footage not only had to be cut, but was given a completely different emphasis and direction in the new concept.

Instead of trying to blend the different shots together, we emphasized the differences as much as possible. In this way, they reflect the changes in Jasmin's story, who goes from a noisy, chaotic life in a large family to an unusually lonely situation.

In keeping with the raw style of the footage and the living conditions in the trailer park, the segment is edited in a more cadenced style. It reflects the constant movement and soundscape in the trailer park. Compared to the second part, the cuts are harder, related to the camera movements, sometimes even alienating.

Contrast this with the editing and style of camera work in the following part, which is modeled after a feature film look. Long standing images, plenty of room for environmental shots, clean cuts that harmonize with the music. When the plot starts to change again in the later part, the editing breaks as well. It speeds up again, jump cuts are used.

Overall, the editing creates a connection between Jasmin's feelings and words, the wildly varying camera work, and Pericles' music.

Music Comment

Known for his award-winning film and theater scores, Pericle Odierna completes the debut film of two emerging directors Giansalvo Pinocchio and Riccardo Baiocco with his sensitive composition. With this score, the eminent Italian composer and musician has once again demonstrated his understanding of the interplay between film and music.

In doing so, Odierna subtly incorporates the sounds of Italian and Roma culture and unites them into an expressive synthesis of the arts. In keeping with the genre of the documentary, he leaves the story and the protagonists the primary space.



Crew

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| Producer: | Roberta Santoro |
| Executive Producers: | Giansalvo Pinocchio, Riccardo Baiocco |
| Directors: | Giansalvo Pinocchio, Riccardo Baiocco |
| Cinematographers: | Sandra Bidoli, Laura Lorenzo |
| Camera Operators: | Sandra Bidoli, Laura Lorenzo, Giansalvo Pinocchio |
| Sound Operators: | Luciano Marzocchella, Cesare Secli, Emanuele Sica, Maurizio Massa, Ivano Staffieri |
| Editor: | Lorenzo Pietro Faggiolati |
| Color Grading: | Sandra Bidoli |
| VFX: | Federico Giovannini |
| Composer: | Pericle Odierna |
| Foley Design: | Michaela Smykalla, Holger Gutt |
| Sound Mixing: | Holger Gutt |
| Script Consultants: | Giorgio Maria Nicolai, Francesco Logrippo |
| Still Photographers: | Alessandro Guerriero, Christian Di Virgilio |

Production



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Festivals & Awards

Torino Film Festival 2022
Doc/It Professional Award for Innovation

They Call Me Onion directed by Giansalvo Pinocchio and Riccardo Baiocco has the will to propose a personal cinema respectful of its character and intended audience. A sincere portrait of a contradictory and indecipherable character, told with a lot of heart and desire to be involved.. A film that explores, regardless of the traditionalist rules of documentary filmmaking, more nuances of a cinematic language that offers endless possibilities. They Call Me Onion is a tender but contemporary film that hits the mark with the representation of a universe treated with the genuineness of a concrete cinema.



47. Laceno D'oro 2022
Festival internazionale del Cinema



They Call Me Onion

Original Title: Mi Chiamano Cipolla
Duration: 68 Minutes
Image Format: 1.77:1, 2K, 25fps
Sound Format: 7.1 Dolby Surround
Languages: Italian, Romani
Country: Italy
Subtitles: English
Release Date: 2023

