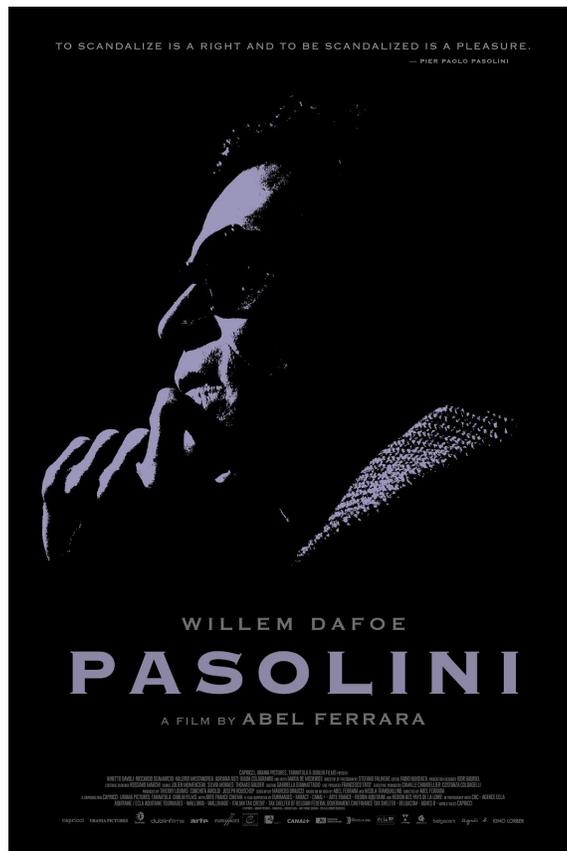


KINO LORBER

presents

PASOLINI

A film by Abel Ferrara



****Official Selection | Venice Film Festival****

****Official Selection | New York Film Festival****

****Official Selection | Toronto International Film Festival****

France, Belgium, Italy / 2014 / 84 minutes / Color / 1.85:1 / English

Publicity Contact: David Ninh, dninh@kinolorber.com

Distributor Contact: Chris Wells, cwells@kinolorber.com

Kino Lorber, Inc., 333 West 39th St., Suite 503, New York, NY 10018
(212) 629-6880

Synopsis:

Pasolini, directed by Abel Ferrara, stars frequent collaborator Willem Dafoe as Italian poet and film director Pier Paolo Pasolini and chronicles his final hours on November 2, 1975. The film follows him as he works on his controversial classic, *Salò, or the 120 Days of Sodom* and leads up to his brutal murder on the beach in Ostia on the outskirts of the city. Facing resistance and persecution from the public, politicians, censors and critics, Pasolini visits with his beloved mother and friends, including actress Laura Betti (played by Maria de Madeiros) and continues his work on an ambitious new novel and screenplay - all the while cruising in his Alfa Romeo for adventure and connections with beautiful younger males in the dark streets of Rome.

Director's Note:

*In search of the death of the last poet
only to find the killer inside me
Sharpening his tools of ignorance on the
memories of never forgotten acts of
kindness in words and deeds,
ideas impossible to comprehend.
in a school in Casarsa I sit at my teacher's feet
yearning then hearing the music of the waves
that wash the feet of the
messiah on the beach at Idroscalo,
those who weave their spell in silver are forever bound to the lithe body
of Giotto constantly in search of the creation of the winning goal
forever offside forever in the lead of the faithful of which I am one.*

Abel Ferrara
Rome 2014

Director's Biography:



Abel Ferrara was born in 1951 in the Italian neighborhood of the Bronx.

In high school, he met Nicholas St. John, who would eventually become his primary screenwriter. As boys, they started shooting in Super 8, filming the streets of New York, especially the tougher neighborhoods. His debut on the big screen was in 1979 with *THE DRILLER KILLER*. In this film, Ferrara also plays the protagonist, a young painter from New York who becomes crazy and violent. In 1981, Ferrara created the character of a young blind woman who decides to take revenge on her aggressors after they rape her in *MS. 45*. In *CHINA GIRL* (1987), he told the story of an impossible love that takes place amongst ethnic conflicts between different gangs in Manhattan. Throughout the years, Abel Ferrara has created an image of himself as a truly American auteur with a pessimistic vision of his country. Towards the end of the 1980s, Ferrara directed various episodes of *MIAMI VICE*, and two films for TV, *THE GLADIATOR* and *CRIME STORY*.

In the early 1990s, Ferrara successfully retained his stylistic edge while gaining a wider audience. In 1990, he jumped into the international spotlight with his bloody thriller, *KING OF NEW YORK*, interpreted magically by Christopher Walken, who plays a drug lord. He followed that up in 1992 with *BAD LIEUTENANT* to great critical praise, with Harvey Keitel as a corrupt police officer looking for redemption. After these successes, Ferrara tackled a remake of *INVASION OF THE BODY SNATCHERS* in 1993, under the title of *BODY SNATCHERS*. Also in 1993, he released *DANGEROUS GAME*, in which Madonna plays a movie star battling her tyrannical director. Ferrara's films, utterly unique, profoundly strange, show us a tough world apparently without hope.

In 1995, he released *THE ADDICTION*, a metaphorical exploration of vampirism shot in black and white, including in the cast Christopher Walken, Lili Taylor, and Annabella Sciorra. The next year, *THE FUNERAL*, with Christopher Walken, Chris Penn, Isabella Rossellini, Vincent Gallo and Benicio Del Toro took the public into the world of a violent and oppressive mafia family. This intense film was followed in 1997 by *BLACKOUT* with Claudia Schiffer, Beatrice Dalle, and Matthew Modine, the story of an actor and two women caught up in a vortex of sex, drugs and excessive alcohol. In 1998, Ferrara once again directed Christopher Walken in *NEW ROSE HOTEL*, a psychological thriller co-starring Asia Argento and Willem Dafoe. In 2001, *R XMAS* told the tale of a Christmas spent with a drug-trafficking immigrant. In 2002, Ferrara moved to Rome, Italy where he directed *MARY*, starring Forest Whitaker and Juliette Binoche as an actress playing Mary Magdalene. The film remained true to the profound rein of Catholicism that has always run through the director's work. *MARY* won the Grand Special Jury Prize at the Venice Film Festival.

In 2007, he directed a comedy with Modine, Bob Hoskins and Willem Dafoe, *GO GO TALES*, which premiered at the Cannes Film Festival. In April 2011, Ferrara shot his first feature in four years, *4:44 - LAST DAY ON EARTH*, starring Willem Dafoe and Ferrara's longtime companion Shannyn Leigh. This was Dafoe's third collaboration with Ferrara after 1998's *NEW ROSE HOTEL* and 2007's *GO GO TALES*. The film was shot in one location, an apartment, set during the course of the last 24 hours before the biblical apocalypse. Ferrara's longtime cinematographer Ken Kelsch shot the film. *4:44 - LAST DAY ON EARTH* competed at the 68th Venice International Film Festival in September 2011 and released in theatres in March 2012. In April 2013, Ferrara began shooting a fictionalized version of the Dominique Strauss-Kahn sexual assault case titled *WELCOME TO NEW YORK*. It starred Gérard Depardieu in the role of Dominique Strauss-Kahn and Jacqueline Bisset as Anne Sinclair. It was released on May 17th, 2014 on VOD.

PASOLINI, starring Willem Dafoe and shot in Italy in the authentic locations of his life, tells the story of the great Italian artist's last day before his murder. The film premiered at the Venice Film Festival and will be released theatrically this year.

Ferrara followed *PASOLINI* with three documentaries looking at his life and work in Italy: *PADRE PIO*, an investigation into the life of the Southern Italian saint; *ALIVE IN FRANCE*, a concert film following Joe Delia, Paul Hipp and Abel Ferrara performing their own songs from the films as a retrospective of those films traveled through France; and finally *PIAZZA VITTORIO* which premiered at both the Venice and New York Film Festivals, a film that explores immigration and life in the famous Italian Square made famous by the *BICYCLE THIEF*. *TOMMASO*, the 5th collaboration of Ferrara and Dafoe, will screen at CANNES this

spring, a very personal film exploring their lives as American artists living in Rome, with Cristina Chiriac and Anna Ferrara (their daughter) starring.

SIBERIA, now in post production, expresses the more dreamlike side of Ferrara's work and imagination. With Willem Dafoe and co-written with Chris Zois, this Alice in Wonderland study of the nature of dreams, memory and the extremities of man in nature was shot in the Italian Alps, the Mexican desert and the Meadows of Bavaria.

Complete Filmography:

WELCOME TO NEW YORK (2014)
4H44 (2012)
MULBERRY ST. (2010, documentary)
NAPOLI, NAPOLI, NAPOLI (2009)
CHELSEA ON THE ROCKS (2008, documentary)
GO GO TALES (2007)
MARY (2005)
'R XMAS (2001)
NEW ROSE HOTEL (1998)
THE BLACKOUT (1997)
THE FUNERAL (1996)
THE ADDICTION (1995)
DANGEROUS GAME (1993)
BODY SNATCHERS (1993)
BAD LIEUTENANT (1992)
KING OF NEW YORK (1990)
CAT CHASER (1989)
CHINA GIRL (1987)
FEAR CITY (1984)
MS. 45 (1981)
THE DRILLER KILLER (1979)

A Conversation with Abel Ferrara:

From CARO, ANGELICO MAESTRO / MY DREAMS INTACT
by Evan Louison for 1985 {www.1985artists.com}

*I fled with my mother, a suitcase,
& a few gemstones
that turned out to be fake*

*we left my father
next to a little fire for the poor*

*on a train as slow as a cargo train
across a plain covered by a light,
hard layer of snow
we were going towards Rome*

- Pier Paolo Pasolini

For many, American visionary Abel Ferrara requires little introduction. But for some, they have only heard the printed & whispered legend, what little fantastic truth left in it spliced & sutured through with gossip and hushed tones that hint at a dangerous, outlaw persona. Tales of discord and excess, rumors of a self-destruct button pushed one too many times, and a decline that never took place. In truth, what his lasting resilience & repeated resurrections draw light upon is a spirit of perseverance found only in the most brilliant of artisans. From raw, gangster epics such as KING OF NEW YORK and THE FUNERAL, to fables of redemption through the lens of a corrupt urban landscape such as BAD LIEUTENANT and MARY, the man many expected to wither away into the shadows has continued to present us with some of the most powerful cinematic works we have.

From some hotel in the strange city of Rome, I write this & remember so well being young & wandering New York, obsessed, looking for Abel, for signs of him, everywhere, the ghost of him, the vision I had of him as a kid. He was like a tide always rolling in & out of the same shores as I rolled.

To Abel, Pasolini always represented a venerable, reverent master. "The real deal," as he would say. Just as Abel always represented, the same, for me. He has pursued Pier Paolo, much as I discovered when I was 20, as I have pursued him.

There is something, something, something in the cinema that inspires the reporter in us all. The divine Clark Kent, awakened through the dream of being Superman. We start at the comics, &

move beyond, into the bowels of the police blotter. We imagine ourselves heroes, & search for some truth, as a way to make the dream come true.

Now, after a series of consecutive works still unwaveringly driven, Abel leans more and more towards the same cut of relentless questioning those of us familiar & obsessed have by now come to expect of him, with PASOLINI, a portrait of the late poet & maestro di regia Pier Paolo Pasolini, played by his most oft collaborator as of late, Willem Dafoe, the crown prince of immersive portrayals, from Jesus Christ himself to Max Schreck in the flesh. Its focus zeroes in on Pasolini on the last day of his life, cut short by a brutal, yet unsolved homicide.

Truth requires a beginning, a middle and an end, and is always hidden. What follows is a dialogue between two masters and a member of their congregation, moderated and woven together from separate times, blurring the line between the story & the storyteller till we can no longer see it, dreaming of a continuum where the recorded truth & the narrative fiction can coincide peacefully. *The Poet, The Heretic, A Student*, not necessarily in that order.

I spoke to Abel in Rome. We had not seen each other since the US premiere of MARY, 2008.

Evan Louison: So, tell me about the new picture.

Abel Ferrara: We're coming from a point of a lot of respect. We dig the guys work, we dig everything about him. He's really, ya know, essential viewing for me, from the first time I saw him. His death, in 1975, was also kind of a very outrageous moment, all the bullshit surrounding him, the killing, when it comes down to it, we probably were gearing up to make this movie from the moment we heard he was dead.

EL: You felt a sense of being destined to make this one?

AF: Ya know, in a sense, we never thought about doing films on real people, until lately, when the documentary thing started bringing us to that [Ed. Note: Between GO GO TALES & 4:44, Abel completed three documentary-narrative hybrids, CHELSEA ON THE ROCKS, MULBERRY STREET, & NAPOLI NAPOLI NAPOLI). And something between doing those documentaries & then doing 4:44 about the last day in the life of a character, the character that Willem played there, we liked the structure of it, there was something there, & trust me, we're not into making a biographical movie, but we are interested in [Pasolini] & his work, his life, & where he was going.

AF: We kind of used the events of the last day, we researched them in a documentary way, against his writings. He was writing a book called Petrolio [Ed. Note: Unfinished manuscript which dealt with corruption in the Italian oil industry], so we shot a few scenes from that, & we also shot a few scenes from the movie he was gonna do after SALO [or 120 Days of Sodom, 1975], called *Porno-Teo-Kolossal*, which was a script he was gonna do with Nenneto Davoli & Eduardo De Filippo.

EL: You talked about 4:44 being a focus on the last day on earth, not just for one man, but for all mankind. But that phrase is something I remember you saying a lot when we first met, & as an expression, seems to have stuck with you over the years.

AF: Oh yeah, you remember that?

EL: I remember you saying to me, "this is my last day on earth." What is it about someone's last days, someone's last hours, what they do, & how they spend that, that sets it all on fire for you?

AF: Well, Willem was expressing it as, every time you go to sleep, who knows if you're even gonna wake up? Especially when you're getting to be our age, ya know what I mean? It could be about anybody though. You really don't know when you're gonna die, & in a sense, if you really look at life the right way, if you can live in the moment, I think you're better off, without all of what becomes a lot of false expectation. You know how life is: you're planning for shit that never happens, you're planning on stuff, making plans, it's kind of... I don't know... We have what we have, we have this moment, & you could say it's a day, ya know, "one day at a time," but that expression, it's an expression that just has always had a resonance [for me] --- You live every moment as if it's your last, you live every day of it all as if it's your last. It resonates. You try to, I try to. I try to give it more, give it no timeframe, & not get caught up in the spirits & resentments & the guilt of the past. Every thought, every action, of how you feel right now, it has great effects. So all you can affect, is really just this second. To try to take your life in a more spiritual way, that's something that makes a lot of sense to me.

EL: Do you feel like the currents you're describing, of the pursuit of a more spiritual side of things & trying to develop that wherein it's been lacking previously or even a failing of yours in your past, that those are something you & Pasolini had in common? Because to me, I've always felt like you guys were like the same thing.

AF: When you say that, how do you mean?

EL: I feel like you were making documentaries about the world you saw around you & really about yourself long before you started admitting it, started calling your pictures documentaries & started calling your films autobiographical, & I feel like Pasolini did the same thing --- he called it like he saw it in the world around him, & made films that came as much from him as it did from his very real-world subjects. Since I've come into contact with both your work & his, & I came into contact with yours way earlier, I always felt like they were intertwined in a really palpable way. I mean, yes, you were making hardcore films from the street that were stylized versions of reality, but in a way, so was he, especially in the beginning. Is that something you were conscious of?

AF: Well I was a student of his, of his films. He wasn't [a student] of mine.

EL: Much in the same way that I've been a student of both of yours, of your films. Did you feel like you were pursuing him in the same way?

AF: He was a part of a tradition, a movement --- Rossellini, Antonioni, & Bertolucci after that. I'm sure if you're hard pressed you could call it all the same style. These guys are working with the same DPs, & a lot of the same actors. He wasn't the only one using guys right off the street. In some ways, you get a real powerful performance when you utilize non-actors. At the same time, he used opera singers, he used musicians. He ran the whole gamut of it. For him, these films didn't come out of left-field, he was a writer, a poet, a politically active guy, a journalist, but not just any journalist. He was a rabble-rousing, muckraking, troublemaking motherfucker.

EL: Yeah, but that's the thing I'm talking about: So were you. That's what it seems like you were after too --- to stir it up. To tell the truth, no matter what, or at least seek it. I feel like now, at least recently, you're finally laying claim to it, at least more officially, actually making so-called "documentaries," actually making things that are more "historical," or "biographical." Is there something that's the same about being a journalist & being a filmmaker? Is there something that was always a document of the world around you, of your world, even in the scripts you did not write?

AF: Yeah man, that's really the crux of it. The events that happened, versus the events you create, versus the imagination. For me, I want to use it all. When I rethink it, I mean, first of all, no matter what you read, if it's in a newspaper or a book, the difference between a fiction & a non-fiction, it's really just your perception of it, how you read it, & what you believe & what you don't believe. And even your imagination, how do you separate that from your consciousness, from the events you experience in your subconscious, what you think you see, what you dream. You're looking at something on this side of the street, when your mind is absorbing something on that side of the street. Not to get complex about it, but when you look at the events of someone like Strauss-Kahn or Pasolini, you can fictionalize it, but who's to say what's true? In the end, I guess it doesn't matter. You're making a movie, so you accept that some of it, even events that really happened, some of it no one knows, some of it you can assume, some of it you can imagine. If someone tells you something, is that really the truth? Just because you put a camera on somebody & they're talking to you, or just because you're a journalist, you ask someone a question, does that mean you're getting the right answer? This pursuit of the truth is really the deal. Doing a documentary, the reason we incorporated a lot of fictional elements is we're trying to get at...

EL: What no one can know?

AF: Exactly man. At least, a perception of what is real. Sometimes you have to make it up.

EL: You have to make it up to find the truth.

AF: Yeah, I mean, the truth isn't just there. You gotta seek it out. And you're gonna use your imagination to get at the center of it. Pasolini was talking about naming names of who blew up the train station, who blew up the airplane with some left-wing oil guy on it. He's saying, "hey man, I'm gonna find out the truth here." But you know, I'm not a detective, I'm not a journalist, I'm a filmmaker. I'm an artist. I'm gonna find the truth through my imagination.

EL: Is that the position you feel the film takes in regards to his death?

AF: Listen, when you're living a certain lifestyle, & I mean, he was living on the edge, & he knew it. He knew it. He was kind of an in control, out-of-control human being. Let's put it this way: when he died, the people who knew him, they were not surprised.

EL: Because he was searching for something.

AF: Well yeah... But... Maybe he found it.

AF: When he was found dead in the middle of nowhere, on a beach 45 minutes from where you are right now, it was not a shock to a lot of people, the people who were close to him, they had to accept it. You can spin it a lot of different ways. But I think a lot of the spinning of his death, it's more for commercial reasons.

EL: Do you feel like he was searching for something in his choices that was similar to what you were searching for in your past choices? And now that you're on the other side of a lot of those choices, do you feel like you've surpassed a point that he maybe never got a chance to be past?

AF: That's a tough question. I don't know how he was. I don't want to make a judgement on where he was at. Where I'm at, personally, is I've confronted the alcohol & drug use, & really abuse, not use, ya know? I changed. I stopped. It just was a conscious decision that that's not where it's at. What's stopping it, for me, it's just me being convinced that by far, it's the right decision, the right way to live. It would be presumptuous of me to make a value judgement on his lifestyle. I can make it on mine. Mine was at zero. But I'm not gonna make it on him. And again, I'm not making a documentary on Pier Paolo Pasolini. Willem is playing him. I'm making a film as much about Willem as much as Pasolini, & I'm making a film about me just as much as I'm making a film about Willem or Pasolini.

EL: That was something that I wanted to get at. Between you & Willem, is that link, is there something in that continuum & dialogue, is that something that's palpable across this whole span of films from NEW ROSE HOTEL onward, & has the relationship reached some kind of culmination in this film?

AF: Well, it's only the fourth film we've done together, so I don't think it's the culmination, not yet. Listen, he came from the mid-west, I came from New York, but he came here at the same time I started out doing shit, & we have a lot of the same influences. Pasolini is just one of them. And we have a lot of the same history. Every director is looking for an actor that can help you balance the whole act. You need the actor, he's the front man, he's the guy the camera's pointed at. Everybody else is involved, the writers, the editors, the musicians, the DP, everyone's important, including me, but the camera's pointed at one guy. The actor. It's not pointed at the crew, it's not pointed at the director, it's not pointed at me, even if it is, in a way. He's gotta embody the hopes & dreams of the whole gang.

EL: If you look at some of the stuff that Pasolini wrote, when he was younger, in his films & his writing, & then examine the stuff he wrote when he was older, you can sense the progression in how he changed.

In ACCATONE, the main character is about to jump off the bridge into the river & the little kids on the shore yell at him, "*Are you going to jump with your chain?*" And he says to them, "*I want to die with all my gold on, like the pharaohs.*"

You take a line like that, & then examine his poetry later on, where he said, "*I am a force of the past. The world has tired of me. It just doesn't know it yet,*" is that a progression you identify with, the same as your work, your writing has changed? First you have a nihilistic perspective, then you move forward, & it seems completely different. At the age of 39 with his first film, he's documenting something nihilistic about the slums, & then he's older & he looks back at that time & he sees how he's grown, how he's grown old.

AF: Well he was filming all of it in such a loving way.

EL: There was mercy.

AF: There was compassion. He was in love with them, & then he became more jaded later on when what he felt was the destruction of his culture, & his world, of Italy, by consumerism ---

EL: Right. He called it acculturation.

AF: ---Exactly. He called it the "*evil to end all evils,*" worse than the fascists of SALO, worse than all of that. He's complex. The characters in his films, his poetry, it's complicated, but his attitude towards these young men, you could call it nostalgic, you could call it whatever, but it's coming from someone who was openly gay in a very tough world to be that way. The guiding light for me, is the pursuit of freedom. I mean, the guy's not taking a backwards step.

He's not backing up for one second. His work, his art, his life, to be open the way he was, like him, he was taking the position of all positions. Never mind the brilliance of his poetry, his films --- just as a free man, as a free individual, living the life he wanted to live, that's the real deal.

EL: There is a certain mercy & compassion to both of your work. There is a lack of judgement towards the darkness, it's not just the pursuit of freedom that links your worlds.

AF: It was a tragedy losing him. He was 8 or 9 years younger than I am now. The two scripts he was readying to make, they were off-the-hook, beautiful screenplays, writing a 1700 page novel, SALO is a fucking masterpiece no matter who you ask, he was at the height of his game.

EL: When he died, his friends said "We have lost the poet. And the poet is so rare, he only comes around 3 or 4 times each century."

AF: We talked to a lot of people, his friends. Not one person had a bad word to say about him. And trust me, these people are opinionated. Not one fucking negative thing. You know how difficult that is, in your life? They broke the mold. He was a saint among men.

Willem Dafoe's Biography:

Having made over one hundred films in his legendary career, Willem Dafoe is internationally respected for bringing versatility, boldness, and dare to some of the most iconic films of our time. His artistic curiosity in exploring the human condition leads him to projects all over the world, large and small, Hollywood films as well as Independent cinema.

In 1979, he was given a role in Michael Cimino's *Heaven's Gate*, from which he was fired. Since then, he has collaborated with directors who represent a virtual encyclopedia of modern cinema: Kathryn Bigelow, Sam Raimi, Alan Parker, Walter Hill, Mary Harron, Wim Wenders, Anton Corbijn, Zhang Yimou, Wes Anderson, Martin Scorsese, David Lynch, Oliver Stone, William Friedkin, Werner Herzog, Lars Von Trier, Abel Ferrara, Spike Lee, David Cronenberg, Paul Schrader, Anthony Minghella, Scott Cooper, Theo Angelopoulos, Robert Rodriguez, Phillip Noyce, Hector Babenco, Andrew Stanton, Josh Boone, Kenneth Branagh, Sean Baker, and Julian Schnabel. His natural adventurousness is evident in roles as diverse as the elite assassin who is mentor to Keanu Reeves in the neo-noir *John Wick*, as the obsessed FBI agent in the cult classic *The Boondock Saints*, and as Vulko the mentor to *Aquaman* in James Wan's billion dollar blockbuster. His voice work can be heard in as Gil the Moorish Idol in *Finding Nemo*, as Ryuk the Death God in *Death Note*, and as the narrator of *Vox Lux*.

Upcoming projects include Dee Rees' *The Last Thing He Wanted*, Edward Norton's *Motherless Brooklyn*, Robert Eggers' *The Lighthouse*, Abel Ferrara's *Tommaso*, and Ericson Core's *Togo*. He recently completed lensing Wes Anderson's *The French Dispatch* and Abel Ferrara's *Siberia*.

Dafoe has been recognized with four Academy Award nominations: Best Actor in a Supporting Role for *Platoon*, Best Actor in a Supporting Role for *Shadow Of The Vampire*, for which he also received Golden Globe and Screen Actors Guild nominations, Best Actor in a Supporting Role for *The Florida Project*, for which he also received Golden Globe and Screen Actors Guild nominations, and most recently, Best Leading Actor for *At Eternity's Gate*, for which he also received a Golden Globe nomination. Among his other nominations and awards, he has received two Los Angeles Film Critics Awards, a New York Film Critics Circle Award, a National Board of Review Award, an Independent Spirit Award, Venice Film Festival Volpi Cup, as well as a Berlinale Honorary Golden Bear for Lifetime Achievement.

He and his wife, director Giada Colagrande, have made four films together: *Padre, Bob Wilson's Life and Death of Marina Abramovic, A Woman*, and *Before It Had A Name*. A fifth, *Tropico*, is currently in pre-production

Dafoe is one of the founding members of The Wooster Group, the New York based experimental theatre collective. He created and performed in all of the group's work from 1977 thru 2005, both in the U.S. and internationally. Since then, he worked with Richard Foreman in "Idiot Savant" at The Public Theatre (NYC) and most recently two international productions with Robert Wilson: *The Life & Death of Marina Abramovic* and *The Old Woman* opposite Mikhail Baryshnikov. He most recently performed a new theatre piece, *The Minister's Black Veil*, based on Nathaniel Hawthorne's short story and directed by Romeo Castellucci.

Willem Dafoe to Maurizio Braucci:

Concentrating on his last day gave us a structure, and using those events and including suggestions of his projects he was working on that day, SALO, PETROLIO and PTK, we set out to create a portrait.

We imagine his state of mind on the last day of his life.

The performance was not an imitation or interpretation of who he was, but more a record of me inhabiting the actions and thoughts of a man that happened to be Pier Paolo Pasolini.

When you are learning things by being inspired and educated by such a visionary thinker and artist, that opens you up to challenge and change your thoughts. That is the heart of the personal transformation that fuels the interior life of the performance.

In approaching the role of Pasolini I had to be free of the pressure of representing a much loved, almost holy figure.

Like with Jesus: I wasn't playing THE Jesus, I was playing a Jesus.

It may sound coy but it was the same with Pasolini.

Of course, the preparation for these two roles couldn't have been more different. But with both, I had to cleanse myself of an expectation, or any images or thoughts I had of the figure before, and work from zero.

We were making a film and had to create our own reality.

However, we wanted to be guided by as many facts as possible and not consciously invent things without a factual base. We very much depended on the information, memories, stories and opinions of Pasolini's surviving friends and family. We were blessed by their generosity. The invention comes unconsciously in the gaps between the facts, the poetry, the inability to reproduce and the reflections on his life.

We used the actual locations of real life events and even PPP's personal objects and clothes that friends and family gave us. These relics have great power and magic, and help in making contact with the past. I am like a medium inviting something to appear through my committed actions.

The extreme divisions between different aspects of his life, though not at all a secret, were separate and discrete. But there didn't seem to be any denial: one part of his life made space for and fed the other. They were connected.

He was able to serve so many masters of his heart and body, even if they seemed so contradictory.

How did I feel playing him? I didn't "play" him. I just tried to be his flesh, his voice, his presence in the last day of his life...

He was inspiring in his work, courageous in his life and a visionary thinker.

He foresaw an anthropological evolution of Italian culture that is still happening.

While many of his observations were specific to Italy, they apply to us all.

The deadening conformism, homogenization, impotence of peoples brought about by the false freedom of progress - the culprits of television, consumerism, false tolerance, corruption - can now be joined by globalization, the internet, and the multinational corporate culture.

He fought in his art and life a fight to preserve what is human and beautiful, and that fight is still on.

Notes on the screenplay by Maurizio Braucci:

This "Pasolini" by Abel Ferrara has resulted from a very elaborated screenplay because we searched how to make a story about a myth of the twentieth century, a complex and immense character, during his ultimate days of life (from 00h30 on the 31st of October until the 2nd November 1975) without making the mistake to create a film only for nostalgic ones and experts of the great poet of Casarsa. This Pasolini had to become especially for the youngest ones – and Abel and I kept constantly this goal in mind during the writing and rewriting sessions – a movie that would not require before entering the theatre, any foreknowledge of the biographical whereabouts of the character we wanted to bring alive.

At the same time, it had to be a movie that made no restrictive and didactical concessions but restored all the controversial themes, experimental and radical ones, from Pasolini's last working period to the public. We started from a very precise documentation about his entire work, we have been reconstructing his last days thanks to the interviews with his relatives and close friends (especially his cousins Grazielle Chiarcossi and Nico Naldini and his deeply beloved friend Ninetto Davoli), we searched and found documents that could prove all of their sayings, we interrogated all the people that possessed some information about his violent death (from Pino Pelosi to the lawyer (attorney) Guido Calvi, to the judges of his various trials or the different re-investigations) and eventually (finally) we wanted to know the point of view of the experts of the artist Pasolini (like Walter Siti, Dacia Maraini, Virgillio Fantuzzi). While we did all this, we dictated ourselves two rules to be followed for the elaboration of this screenplay: respecting the facts, which meant only taking into account the truly moments Pasolini went through in his last hours; only showing the works he was creating in those days and which remained therefore mostly unfinished. The final script has become a narrative flow in a way that reminds the technique of glazing used in paintings – putting layers of colours with different tonalities one upon another and playing with their transparency in order to obtain a more intense and a more brilliant result at the same time – as a matter of fact, Ferrara has overlapped the realistic events of these last hours and the characters who took part in it, with the imaginary that emerged from the subjects Pasolini was developing at that moment, like a few chapters of his novel “Petrolio” (the notes 55, 97, 98) and some parts of his screenplay “Porno – Teo – Kolossal” together with the two ultimate interviews he granted to the French television on the one hand and to Furio Colombo of La Stampa on the other hand, in which the controversies and Pasolinian poetics of that last period were reviewed. The set design has also contributed to a philological reconstruction of the environment through the objects, the books, the newspapers or tags on the city walls.

Nevertheless, as already has been said with the example of the glazes, the narrative levels have been interwoven to give a bigger visual strength and intensity and liberate the story from the chronicle and documentary style. The editing of Fabio Nunziata has completed this attention span wanted by the director.

The screenplay was written simultaneously in English and in Italian, starting from one language or the other, according to the situation. For some scenes we worked side by side with Willem Dafoe, adapting with his aid the Italian dialogues into English dialogues, or choosing, when he was going to speak Italian in a scene, those words that could express precisely his interpretation of our Pasolini. At the end, since we are talking of an international production, the original version will be in English and a little bit in Italian in those parts shot with his fellow mates, while the release in Italy will be completely in our (beautiful) language.

I attended all the reshoots, continuing to modify at several moments the dialogues with the actors – especially with Ninetto Davoli and Riccardo Scamarcio for the scenes of Porno-Teo-Kolossal, when new ideas were coming up or when they felt the characters in a different way. The reconstruction of the background of this story was a hard job, we visited several times the hemerotheque of the National Library of Rome searching for pieces of information that could render the climate of Rome in those days, a quite violent climate, which had made the

assassination of Pasolini possible. We did the same research for all the documents of the criminal investigations, we read all the objective information about the circumstances of the murder and we studied with great care the principal trial of 1976 that, in my eyes, remains, thanks to the relationship with the proficient Faustino Durante, the most reliable survey on that case. But, I repeat that this constitutes nothing more than the background in which the heart of a great poet is beating his last hours and that beat became the rhythm of our movie.

Pier Paolo Pasolini Biography

Pier Paolo Pasolini was an Italian film director, poet, writer, and intellectual. He is recognized for his socially critical and stylistically unorthodox films.

Pasolini was born in Bologna in 1922 to an Italian army officer and schoolteacher. While he was a toddler, his father was arrested for gambling debts and his mother moved with her children back to her family home in Casarsa della Delizia in the Friuli region of Northeastern Italy. Pasolini became inspired by the region and began to start writing poetry at the age of seven. He was also very interested in the local language from Friuli and began to study it, later publishing a book of poems titled *Poesie a Casarsa* in Friulian. He said that he learned Friulian "as a sort of mystic act of love, a kind of félibrisme, like the Provençal poets."

Pasolini attended the University of Bologna where he studied art history and literature. He was interested in the lives of peasants and joined the Communist Party as a young man, but he maintained an attitude of questioning. In his works, he often explored ideological problems shaped by his political experiences. Due to Pasolini's skeptical nature, fellow party members started to become skeptical of his loyalty. This mutual schism led to his expelling from the party for alleged homosexuality. Despite these experiences, Pasolini regarded himself as a Communist to the end of his life.

From 1943 to 1949, Pasolini worked as a teacher in almost total obscurity. His essay on Pascoli and Montale, showing his skills in close textual analysis, appeared in 1947 in the Bolognese review *Convivum*. An essay on Giuseppe Ungaretti, written in the years 1958-51, was later included in *Passione e ideologia* (1960). In 1949, Pasolini moved with his mother to Rome, and his poverty-stricken existence there furnished the material for his first two novels, *Ragazzi di vita* (1955; *The Ragazzi*) and *Una vita violenta* (1959; *A Violent Life*). Both novels were translated in the 1960s into English. Tommaso, the protagonist in *A Violent Life*, is a homosexual, who with his friends lives in a world without hope. After being released from prison, he gets an opportunity to change his purposeless existence. These brutally realistic depictions of the poverty and squalor of slum life in Rome were similar in character to his first film, *ACCATTONE* (1961), and all three works dealt with the lives of thieves, prostitutes, and other denizens of the Roman underworld. *ACCATTONE*, a re-working of his own novel *A Violent Life*, centered on the life of a pimp in Rome. Franco Citti, the then amateur actor, played the eponymous hero. The theme of prostitution continued in Pasolini's homage to Anna Magnani, *MAMMA ROMA* (1962), which portrayed Rome's underworld realistically. Magnani played a prostitute who has to go back on her profession.

Pasolini's best-known film, *IL VANGELO SECONDO MATTEO* (1964; *THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO SAINT MATTHEW*), is an austere, documentary-style retelling of the life and martyrdom of Jesus Christ. The comic allegory *UCCELLACCI E UCCELLINI* (1966; *THE HAWKS AND THE SPARROWS*) was followed by two films attempting to re-create ancient myths from a contemporary viewpoint, *OEDIPUS REX* (1967) and *MEDEA* (1969). Pasolini's use of eroticism, violence, and depravity as vehicles for his political and religious speculations in such films as *TEOREMA* (1968; "THEOREM") and *PORCILE* (1969; "PIGSTY") brought him into conflict with conservative elements of the Roman Catholic Church. He then ventured into medieval eroticism with *IL DECAMERONE* (1971) and *THE CANTERBURY TALES* (1972).

Pasolini has presented his approach to cinema in a number of essays. His opposition to the liberalization of abortion law and criticism of the radical students made him unpopular on the left. From *PORCILE* (PIGSTY) his films became increasingly controversial. His last film, *SALÒ O LE 120 GIORNATE DI SODOMA* (1975; *Salò, or the 120 Days of Sodom*), linked fascism and sadism. Set in the last years of WWII in Italy and centers on a group of fascists who round up nine adolescent boys and girls and subject them to a 120 days of physical, mental and sexual torture. The film was banned virtually everywhere and continues to be critically discussed.

Pasolini's creative productivity did not stop in films. He wrote several tragedies in verse and published in 1971 a new collection of poetry, *Trasumanar e Organizzar*. In 1972, his critical writings were collected and published under the title *Empirismo Eretico* (Heretical Empiricism). He also contributed to the Milanese newspaper *Corriere della Sera*. On the morning of November 2nd, 1975, his body was discovered on waste ground near the seaside resort of Ostia. A young male prostitute was tried and convicted for the murder in 1976, however, the circumstances are still debated. Pasolini's massive unfinished novel, *Petrolio*, was published in 1992.

Credits:

Pier Paolo Pasolini - Willem Dafoe
Epifanio - Ninetto Davoli
Ninetto Davoli - Riccardo Scamarcio
Nico Naldini - Valerio Mastandrea
Susanna Pasolini - Adriana Asti
Laura Betti - Maria de Medeiros
Carlo - Roberto Zibetti
Andrea Fago - Andrea Bosca
Graziella - Giada Colagrande
Pino - Damiano Tamilia
Furio Colombo - Francesco Siciliano
Narratore - Luca Lionello
Marble Hall Politician - Salvatore Ruocco

Directed by:

Abel Ferrara

Screenplay by:
Maurizio Braucci

Based on an idea by Abel Ferrara and Nicola Tranquillino

Producers:
Thierry Lounas
Conchita Airoidi
Joseph Rouschop

Executive Producers:
Camille Chandellier
Costanza Coldagelli

Line Producer:
Francesco Tato

Director of Photography:
Stefano Falivene

Editor:
Fabio Nunziata

Production Designer:
Igor Gabriel

Costume Designer:
Rossano Marchi

Sound:
Julien Momenceau
Sylvia Moraes
Thomas Gauder

Casting:
Gabriella Giannattasio

Capricci, Urania Pictures, Tarantula, Dublin Films with Arte France Cinéma

Support:

Eurimages

Film recognized as "Film Di Interesse Culturale" with the contribution of Ministero Dei Beni E Delle Attività Culturali e Del Turismo - Direzione Generale per il Cinema

with the participation of Canal+
and Arte France

Région Aquitaine, in partnership with Cnc and the Participation of Agence Ecla Aquitaine / Ecla Aquitaine Tournages

Région Des Pays de La Loire, in partnership with Cnc

with the participation of Wallonia, Wallimage

About Kino Lorber:

With a library of over 2,800 titles, Kino Lorber Inc. has been a leader in independent art house distribution for 35 years, releasing 30 films per year theatrically under its Kino Lorber, Kino Classics, and Alive Mind Cinema banners, garnering seven Academy Award® nominations in nine years, including documentary nominees *Fire at Sea* (2017) and *Of Fathers & Sons* (2019). Current and upcoming releases include Berlinale Golden Bear winner *Touch Me Not* and Cannes winners Jean-Luc Godard's *The Image Book* and Jafar Panahi's *3 Faces*. In addition, the company brings over 350 titles yearly to the home entertainment and educational markets through physical and digital media releases. With an expanding family of distributed labels, Kino Lorber handles releases in ancillary media for Zeitgeist Films, Carlotta USA, Adopt Films, Raro Video, and others, placing physical titles through all wholesale, retail, and direct to consumer channels, as well as direct digital distribution through over 40 OTT services including all major TVOD and SVOD platforms.