

The

Standard (Circulation/Reach:
200,000)

P15|Weekend Glitz|By Disu Dang

Word Count: 626 words

2022-11-25

Voice of controversy

Living a bold life and dying a mysterious death, Pier Paolo Pasolini was fascinating in his own right. And then there was his works.

One of the most prolific intellectuals of his time, Pasolini was a multitalented filmmaker who was also a writer, a journalist, a visual artist, an actor and an activist. Openly gay and an avowed Marxist, he was never afraid to voice his criticisms of sociopolitical problems.

On the centenary of the Italian director's birth, the Hong Kong Arts Centre is going to present the most comprehensive retrospective of documentaries by Pasolini from December 1 to 4.

"Although they're filmed half a century ago, the issues that Pasolini touched on in these films are still relevant today, such as the conservation of heritage, ideological pluralism, and consumerism and sustainability," said project manager Jacqueline Tong.

He directed 12 fictional films and eight documentaries, covering themes such as social class, sexual preferences and political issues.

Best known for his outspoken attitude on sensitive matters, Pasolini was charged more than 30 times for content in his works deemed inappropriate at the time.

"Pasolini was one of the most controversial Italian film directors at the time and even to this date. He persisted with his ideas in a more conservative time, even having to constantly face violent threats," said Tong.

His documentaries are particularly worth seeing because they offer much-needed insight into the mind of the man who created some of the most controversial films ever made.

The screening consists of four documentary features, five documentary shorts and one fiction feature, all directed or influenced by Pasolini. It also includes two short documentaries directed by Cecilia Mangini, who was Pasolini's friend and is recognized as the first female documentary filmmaker in Italy.

The fiction feature, *Pasolini*, is an unconventional biopic featuring the last days before the director's murder, unsolved to this day.

He was found dead on the beach at Ostia in 1975, three weeks after his most controversial film, *Salo, or 120 Days of Sodom*, was released.

An autopsy revealed he had been run over several times by his own car, his testicles crushed by what was suspected to be a metal bar and his body partially set alight with gasoline.

The crime was long viewed as a mafia-style revenge killing, an act of vengeance against his political stance and contentious opinions.

But if his death was unusual, so were his works. "If there is one screening not to be missed, I would say it's Love Meeting," said Tong.

The 92-minute documentary was shot in Italy in 1964, showing Pasolini interviewing strangers in the street about controversial subjects such as sex, prostitution and homosexuality.

"Because he openly discussed these questions in the context of religion, politics and people's social status, it probably would resonate with today's youth the most."

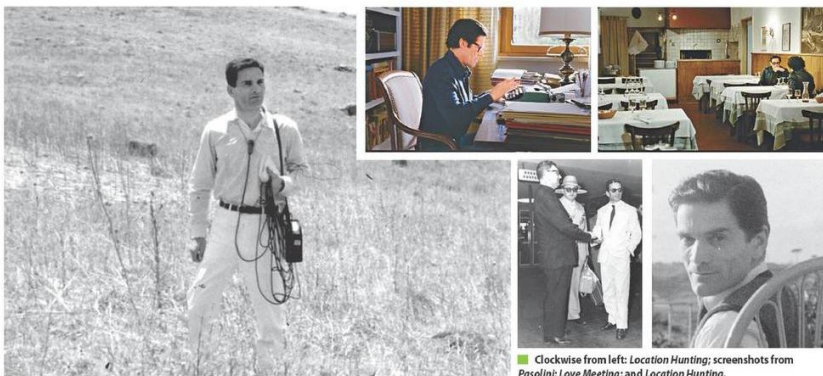
Tong's personal favorite is Notes Towards an African Orestes. "It talks about post-colonial Africa, about the complexity of nation building in a country that was just shattered by war," she said.

"Pasolini changed his initial idea after making half of the film. That kind of exploration and freestyle is something I really like."

Religion is also one of the themes Pasolini explored a lot in his works. In Location Hunting in Palestine, he recorded his attempt to shoot his biblical epic in actual historical locations, narrating his inner thoughts on Jesus Christ and his growing disillusionment.

Tong said: "Anyone interested is welcome to the screening as this is a rare chance to see Pasolini's documentaries on the Hong Kong screen. However, we do think some films are apt for more mature audiences, as they present complex and disputable topics."

Documentary Film Retrospective of Pier Pablo Pasolini will be showing at Louis Koo Cinema, Hong Kong Arts Centre.



■ Clockwise from left: *Location Hunting*; screenshots from *Pasolini*; *Love Meeting*; and *Location Hunting*.

Voice of controversy

Disu Dang

Living a bold life and dying a mysterious death, Pier Paolo Pasolini was fascinating in his own right. And then there was his works.

One of the most prolific intellectuals of his time, Pasolini was a multitalented filmmaker who was also a writer, a journalist, a visual artist, an actor and an activist. Openly gay and an avowed Marxist, he was never afraid to voice his criticisms of sociopolitical problems.

On the centenary of the Italian director's birth, the Hong Kong Arts Centre is going to present the most comprehensive retrospective of documentaries by Pasolini from December 1 to 4.

"Although they're filmed half a century ago, the issues that Pasolini touched on in these films are still relevant today, such as the conservation of heritage, ideological pluralism, and consumerism and sustainability," said project manager Jacqueline Tong.

He directed 12 fictional films and eight documentaries, covering themes such as social class, sexual preferences and political issues.

Best known for his outspoken attitude on sensitive matters, Pasolini was charged more than 30 times for content in his works deemed inappropriate at the time.

"Pasolini was one of the most controversial Italian film directors at the time and even to this date. He persisted with his ideas in a more conservative time, even having to constantly face violent threats," said Tong.

His documentaries are particularly worth seeing because they offer much-needed insight into the mind of the man who created some of the most controversial films ever made.

The screening consists of four documentary features, five documentary shorts and one fiction feature, all directed or influenced by Pasolini. It also includes two short documentaries directed by Cecilia Mangini, who was Pasolini's friend and is recognized as the first female documentary filmmaker in Italy.



The fiction feature, *Pasolini*, is an unconventional biopic featuring the last days before the director's murder, unsolved to this day.

He was found dead on the beach at Ostia in 1975, three weeks after his most controversial film, *Salo, or 120 Days of Sodom*, was released.

An autopsy revealed he had been run over several times by his own car, his testicles crushed by what was suspected to be a metal bar and his body partially set alight with gasoline.

The crime was long viewed as a mafia-style revenge killing, an act of vengeance against his political stance and contentious opinions.

But if his death was unusual, so were his works. "If there is one screening not to be missed, I would say it's *Love Meeting*," said Tong.

The 92-minute documentary was shot in Italy in 1964, showing Pasolini interviewing strangers in the street about controversial subjects such as sex, prostitution and homosexuality.

"Because he openly discussed these questions in the context of religion, politics and people's social status, it probably would resonate with today's youth the most."

Tong's personal favorite is *Notes Towards an African Orestes*. "It talks about post-colonial Africa, about the complexity of nation building in a country that was just shattered by war," she said.

"Pasolini changed his initial idea after making half of the film. That kind of exploration and freestyle is something I really like."

Religion is also one of the themes Pasolini explored a lot in his works. In *Location Hunting in Palestine*, he recorded his attempt to shoot his biblical epic in actual historical locations, narrating his inner thoughts on Jesus Christ and his growing disillusionment.

Tong said: "Anyone interested is welcome to the screening as this is a rare chance to see Pasolini's documentaries on the Hong Kong screen. However, we do think some films are apt for more mature audiences, as they present complex and disputable topics."

Documentary Film Retrospective of Pier Paolo Pasolini will be showing at Louis Koo Cinema, Hong Kong Arts Centre.



■ From left: *Love Meeting*; *The Wall of Sana'a*; two screenshots from *The Motorbike Boy*; and *The Anger*.