

PRESS KIT

# l'Amatore

*a film by*  
**Maria Mauti**



OFFICIAL SELECTION  
**INTERNATIONAL  
FILM FESTIVAL  
ROTTERDAM**  
2017



Festival del film Locarno  
Official selection

## REVIEWS

“Somewhere between a story and a biography, between architecture and a portrait of a city, Maria Mauti’s first work has the ambition - and the courage - to escape from usual categories and tread little beaten ground. L’Amatore is not the official portrait of an architect and influential man of the Fascist period, rather it is a sort of daguerreotype that has the lightness of Guido Gozzano, its witty guises hiding illusions of an era that match those of the time in which we live. Maria Mauti is brilliant at balancing the solidity of the buildings and villas designed by Portaluppi and fantasy, so much so that whenever a real figure peeps into the shot one wonders if by chance it might be a ghost from the past”.

### **Carlo Chatrian**

*Festival del film Locarno*

“The highly effective combination of old footage and the new sequences turns places, architecture, objects and rituals in our everyday life into tangible proof of a less remote - but not less relevant - past”.

### **Roberto Dulio**

*Domus*

“The texts by Antonio Scurati, read by Giulia Lazzarini, with Maria Mauti investigating the apparent exuberance of Portaluppi, rightly leave us with an enigma of performed, ephemeral happiness, allowing us to doubt and at the same time to know a piece of history, cinema offers its priceless critical freedom, making for an open piece of work”.

### **Silvio Danese**

*Il Giorno*



## SHORT SYNOPSIS

The film *l'Amatore* (the Amateur) is a journey within the intimate folds of a well-known architect, Piero Portaluppi, who worked during the twenty years of Fascism, through the discovery of his work in the present and through his film journals; unreleased 16 mm archives shot and edited by the architect.

A charming and powerful man, Portaluppi lived through this magnificent and tragic era with indifference and irony, without restraints and by creating beauty. In the meanwhile, history relentlessly marched on in step with the events of the times.



*l'Amatore*

## **l'Amatore (the Amateur)**

*collector, amateur, seducer*

### **EXT – Garden – Day - archive 16 mm b/w**

An elegantly dressed woman wearing a hat from the 1930s turns slowly towards the camera. The way she cautiously looks around discloses the secrecy of the encounter. She walks towards the lens, a little reluctantly, changes her pace, and takes two steps back, in line with the rules of seduction. She stops and poses, offering her profile so the camera gets a good shot of her.

*l'Amatore (the Amateur)* is the story of a seducer, a man with unusual obsessions, who buys a movie camera in 1929 and since then, does not stop shooting and editing the world around him. His name is Piero Portaluppi and he was one of the most famous and important architects during Fascism.

Eclectic and agnostic, Portaluppi fabricated a persona of a thousand faces for himself, bolstered by natural talent and true ambition. His personal style towards the world and himself portrays irony. He lives the enthusiastic and ambiguous years of the growing regime from a distance. And at the same time, he allows himself to reach his full professional growth. He too gains success thanks to the exceptional fortune that overwhelms a specific art design during Italy's Fascist era, the one he is most committed to, Architecture. Portaluppi is first and foremost the architect to the upper middle-class. A man who accomplishes everything he desires, success, power, women, talent, but during the war, he loses what is most important to him in life. History mercilessly interrupts the existence of the man. His son dies in

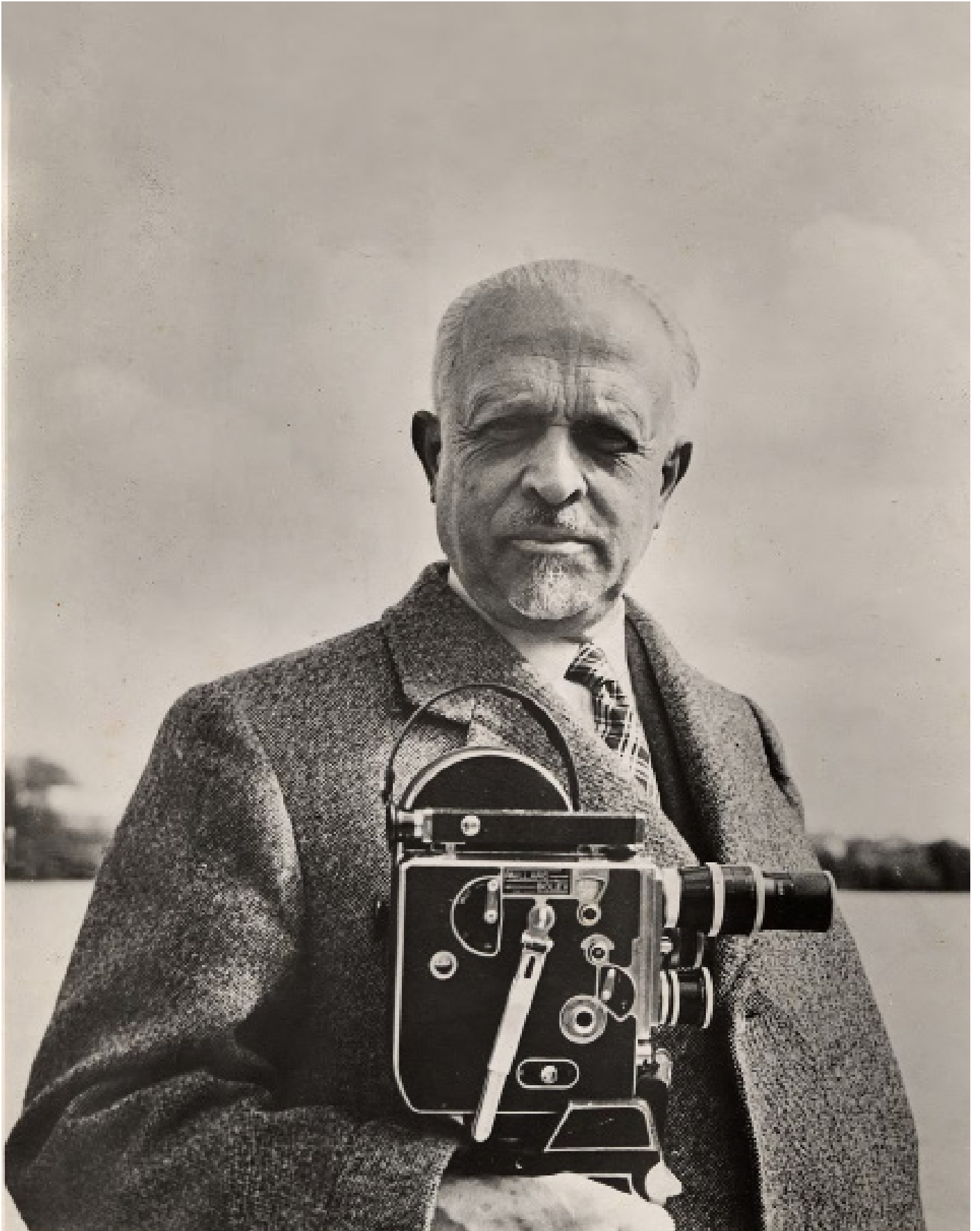
the sea off Algiers. His creative vein is irremediably spent. History follows the portaluppinian thread and its predisposition towards restrictions, and at the same time it reveals the dramatic side of events, devoid of a happy ending. The line between magnificence and poverty is blurred. Weakness and power.

The film arose from a fact. For more than thirty years since his death, Piero Portaluppi's 16 mm reels, shot and edited throughout his life, had been locked up in a trunk. A tiny hidden treasure. This film is a reinterpretation of this film diary, much like a journal filled with notes that provides us with his view of the world. The architect's attitude towards design adapts perfectly to the seventh art. Portaluppi obsessively splices and puts together edited footage in veritable catalogues created throughout the decades. The human and cinematic material is rich in mystery. The reinterpretation of the archives penetrates the mysteries of somebody full of light and shadows.

The fragmented portrait revealed by the edited footage finds its counterpoint in the present world, his work shot today; buildings of great beauty and enchantment. His architectural works become silent containers of our times, disclosing the role of an architect in the building of an identity.

In the film, Piero Portaluppi's descendants live in the architecture he designed, leaving his habits and lifestyle intact. And they accompany us like presences and people in the reappropriation of memory.

PIERO PORTALUPPI



**l'Amatore**

## **l'Amatore (the Amateur)**

*“...what has always been necessary to me: to look inside a man, what feelings move him, what thoughts, through his journey towards happiness or unhappiness or death.”*

Michelangelo Antonioni

When more than ten years ago one of Piero Portaluppi's great grandchildren, Piero, who was named after him, discovered the hundred reels inside a trunk, I was given the task to watch the material. Nobody knew what was on the film. I approached it not knowing what I might find with the same discretion we feel when we find somebody's secret diaries and we ask ourselves if we have the right to enter their lives. At the same time, we are seduced by the opportunity of being able to look into someone's innermost intimacy. I watched the footage on an old Moviola, noting down the places, the dates, the titles Portaluppi had given me through his captions. And soon I realised that the reels had been edited so that someone would watch them. To the extent that the content could be recreated even without the presence of the filmmaker. Except one, a private gift to a lover who was present, with all the others.

For these past few years, the feelings I got from the images I had watched have always been with me. I carried around the sense of pleasure and solitude they had left me with, the feelings that this visual material had given me of the man. A vibrant vitality, the desire to invent and construct, the incapacity to express his feelings, the rules of a social class, the detachment, the irony, the seduction, the sensation of death that transforms his face and makes him look thoughtful in the colour reels. In the background, we witness the arrival of a new era and the regime it brought with it. History walks relentlessly

alongside the events of the man. A grand and tragic era that leads to the collapse of illusions, both collective and personal. That era in history, the disaster of the regime and the consequences on the lives of individuals, reopens a stinging cause for reflection on our own present. A world that repeats itself like a tangle of contrasts and questions is what the film wants to confront.

The film begins with the visions of man and an era that stuck in my mind, and from the desire to bring to the surface that which for years had been buried.

Portaluppi is a powerful and controversial figure, full of light and shadow. We want to portray his personal side, “to look inside the man”, but respect the mystery surrounding him. And Portaluppi provides all the magnificence and weakness of a social class that is rarely talked about; the upper middle-class. He is the emblem of a city, Milan, which in the film is seen through a different point of view from the conventional one. He represents the values of a country that struggles to change, which is resistant to change. And he is the epitome of the artist, including the mysteries, who at a certain point loses his creativity.

The 16 mm film and the architecture are the precious materials for the staging of the memory, imagination, time and space, with which to rethink the present.

## DIRECTOR'S BIO

Maria Mauti was born in Milan in 1974 and she graduated in Philosophy. She is a documentary filmmaker and since 2003 she has collaborated with the satellite channel, Classica that airs on Sky, writing and directing programs on contemporary Italian music, opera and dance.

She has made several documentaries on influential people in the arts and culture including Daniel Barenboim, Carolyn Carlson, Pina Bausch, Antonio Pappano, Bill T. Jones (documentary selected at the American Dance Festival), Fabio Vacchi and Ermanno Olmi, Azio Corghi and José Saramago, Alicia Alonso of the Ballet Nacional de Cuba, and Meredith Monk, to name a few.

This has given her the opportunity to collaborate with several institutions and organizations including Il Teatro alla Scala in Milan, the Teatro Colón in Buenos Aires, the Venice Biennale, I Teatri di Reggio Emilia, the Maxxi Museum in Roma, the Teatro La Fenice in Venice, Auditorium Parco della Musica in Rome.

Since 2011 she has collaborated with the Teatro Grande in Brescia on a series of short films about opera as part of the Dietro le quinte project and in 2013 she directs the documentary about the history of the Teatro Grande in Brescia called Memorie (Memories), shown as an installation piece in the grand hall of the theatre.

The film, l'Amatore (the Amateur), is her first feature-length film.



**Maria Mauti**

*writer and director*

**l'Amatore**

## CREDITS

**Fondazione Piero Portaluppi**

*presents*

**MP1**

*production*

# **l'Amatore (the Amateur)**

*Genre* **DOCUMENTARY**

*Format* **16 MM | HD**

*Duration* **90'**

*Country of Production* **ITALY**

*Year* **2016**

*director and writer*

**Maria Mauti**

*producer* PIERO MARANGHI,

*executive producer* RAFFAELLA MILAZZO,

*story* MARIA MAUTI *and* PIERO MARANGHI,

*narrator's text written by* ANTONIO SCURATI,

*narrator* GIULIA LAZZARINI,

*director of photography* CIRO FRANK SCHIAPPA,

*sound mixers* PAOLO BENVENUTI *and* SIMONE OLIVERO,

*editor* NURIA ESQUERRA

*in collaboration with* VALENTINA ANDREOLI

*in association with* ZUCRE!

*with the support of*

FONDAZIONE SVILUPPO E CRESCITA CRT

FONDAZIONE ARALDI GUINETTI

PIRELLI

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