


VENICEFILM

RED LAND

(ROSSO ISTRIA)



A Film
by

Maximiliano Hernando Bruno

2017

Technical sheet

Directed by **Maximiliano Hernando Bruno (debut film)**
Screenplay **Antonello Belluco and Maximiliano Hernando Bruno**
Photography **Giovanni Andreotta**
Scenography **Paolo Bandiera**
Costumes **Fulvia Amendolia**
Music **Pericle Odierna**
Assistant director **Massimiliano Battistella**
Production coordinator **Alessandro Centenaro**

Starring: **Franco Nero, Geraldine Chaplin, Sandra Ceccarelli, Selene Gandini, Romeo Grebensek**

A **Venicefilm srl** production

In collaboration with **ANVGD - National Association Venezia Giulia and Dalmatia; Veneto Region - Cinema and Audiovisual Fund; Treviso Film Commission.**

Shooting weeks: **8 weeks**
Start: **April 2016**
End: **December 2016**
Locations **Veneto, Friuli, Istria (Croatia).**
Theatrical release **2017**
Nationality **Italian**
Shooting format **4K UHD (UltraHighDefinition)**
Language **Italian / English**

Contacts:

Venicefilm srl
Web: www.venicefilm.it
E-mail: produzione@venicefilm.it
Tel. 049 625522

The film

It's September 1943, the days when chaos breaks out in the parts of Italy tormented by the war. Marshal Badoglio, head of the Italian government, manages to get the Allied forces to agree to an armistice and flees Rome along with the king, leaving Italy in pandemonium. The army can no longer tell who the enemy is and who is on their side. The story becomes a tragedy for the soldiers, who are left to their own defenses, but also and especially for the civilians of Istria, Fiume, Giulia and Dalmatia, who now must face a new adversary: Tito's partisans, steadily advancing and driven by anti-Italian rage.

In this dramatic historical context, Norma Cossetto emerges as a key figure – a young Istrian woman, student of the University of Padua, barbarically raped and murdered by Tito's partisans – chosen for this brutal crime only because she was guilty of being Italian.

Plot

End of the 1990s. A rainy day. A woman traveling by car with her husband crosses the Italian border. Their journey ends in Visinada, a small town on the Istrian peninsula. The woman enters a house, which was her home until the end of the Second World War, until the time of the exodus.

Passing through the doorway of that house, the doors to her memory open, and everything that happened in that corner of the world in 1943 comes rushing back to her.

Fascism is reaching its end. Mussolini is arrested. Life goes on nonetheless.

Norma Cossetto, a twenty-three-year-old woman, passionately kisses a Navy official. They're in Padua. Soon, she has to take her final exam and prepare her thesis on her Istrian homeland (Istria Red); he, as a sailor, has orders to get to La Spezia.

Back home in her Istria, in Visinada, she starts to perceive that something is about to happen. Since Fascism has been gravely wounded, destabilized after Mussolini's arrest, the Italian troops in Istria are uneasy; meanwhile, the Slavic forces are secretly getting organized.

But during those carefree summer days, people don't realize what is in store for them.

The parish priest, the pharmacist, the chief of police, the militia men, the numerous Italian families – all carry on living as they always have been.

Nobody notices the enemies in their midst. The Italian landowners continue working with the Slavic sharecroppers. Everybody seems to be getting along splendidly, as has always been the case.

However, in Trieste, where the military headquarters are, that calm felt throughout the Istrian peninsula is not so strong and secure. The officials know about the advancement of Tito's Communist partisans and are afraid – not only for the Italian lands which may

be lost, but especially for their families residing in Istria.

September 8, 1943: the moment when everything changes.

The people in Visinada are bursting with joy.

The Fascists are embarrassed and don't understand what this event means and what it might bring.

The numerous families, among them the Cossettos and the Visantrins, families of the Fascist hierarchy, find themselves facing not only an ideological and physical threat that could strike from outside, but also a threat coming from within their own families.

Adria, Norma's longtime best friend, joins Tito's resistance movement along with her brother Angelo. Giorgio Staniscia, a friend of Norma's, deserts the army for the resistance. That nucleus of people in that small village end up living out the drama of division, of separation, and of the beginning of the civil war.

While Tito's Slavs advance, at the General Command in Trieste the German-Italian troops are figuring out how to regain control of Istria.

Norma's father is in command in Trieste and everyone in Visinada knows just how important he is.

Norma's close friends try to get information out of her... but Norma has always been and will always be a simple, honest girl. She hasn't the slightest idea what is coming.

In Visinada the Italian collaborators help Tito's partisans gain control of the town. Mate, the partisan leader, intends to terrorize the people of Visinada.

Norma, along with many others, is arrested for information.

This doesn't worry their families, who assume that everything will be resolved with some simple questioning.

But that will not be the case.

The Germans are ready; Operation Cloudburst is on its way from Trieste.

The German-Italian troops take Istria back, town by town.

Mate and his men retreat from Visinada but take about thirty prisoners with them, including Norma.

The epilogue will be something that history has hidden for a very long time.

The Germans take Visinada as well, but there isn't enough time to track down and save those who are about to undergo what was only the beginning of the atrocities inflicted upon thousands of Italians until the end of the war.

The plotline goes back to the present day. The woman from the beginning of the story has returned to that foiba at Villa Surani. She is the last living survivor, to tell of what never should have happened and must never happen again.

Artistic Motivations

Countless films on World War II have been made.

Many of us wonder why must continually go back to that period of time, since a great deal has already been said about it.

But I don't really think this is true...

Let's remember the historian De Felice, and what he said about the history of Italy: "...our Country will be a skyscraper built on stilts." This crucial sentence conveys a desire to go beyond what the pages of history have written about our Italy. Much is still being hidden. Much has been dealt with too carefully, without the courage to disclose what History really intends to teach us.

Thus I keep wanting to tell more – so much more than what the others, even after all this time, have told. Probably because this Istria Red story has to do with my own life. The drama of the "foibe" killings and the exodus from the Italian part of Istria has stayed with me as a part of my soul because my family, half Slovenian and half Italian, lived through that tragic story which nobody, not even school textbooks, has had the courage to tell.

I've read a lot... I've heard a lot... of the refugees' personal accounts, both well-known and unknown; written by my grandfather's hand and also told by my mother, for whom the memory of that time, when she was just thirteen, is still fresh in her mind – an existential torture from which she has never found relief.

My task has been to choose one story out of the many that ought to be shared. A symbolic story. The story told in this film is about a small Istrian town. A girl was living in that place – Norma Cossetto. I've chosen her as an example, as a symbol of the countless others who suffered in silence and will remain silenced and hidden.

Norma, twenty-three and just emerging into the joy of her young existence, went through what no one, ever, should have to go through.

This is not a story of any political side, color, or message; it is simply a story that intends to show the humanity of people, whose souls are the same color, and that no individual should be robbed of their thoughts, their hopes, their ideals, and their belief in God. This goes for, and will go for, everyone – in the hope of a time of perpetual peace.

Antonello Belluco

(screenwriter)

Cast

Cossetto family

Norma – **Selene Gandini**
Licia – Maria Vittoria Casarotti Todeschini
Mother – Carla Stella
Giuseppe Cossetto – Giancarlo Previati
Noemi – Monica Garavello

Visantrin family

Giulia (as an adult) – **Geraldine Chaplin**
Teresa – **Sandra Ceccarelli**
Adria – Eleonora Bolla
Angelo – Diego Pagotto
Giulia (as a child) – Valentina Bivona

Other roles:

Ambrosin – **Franco Nero**
Mate – Romeo Grebensek
General Esposito – Alvaro Gradella
Captain Parisse – Alessandro Albertin
Stefano – Andrea Pergolesi
Amedeo – Christian Renzicchi
Priest – Vasco Mirandola
Boris – Pierpaolo Sovran

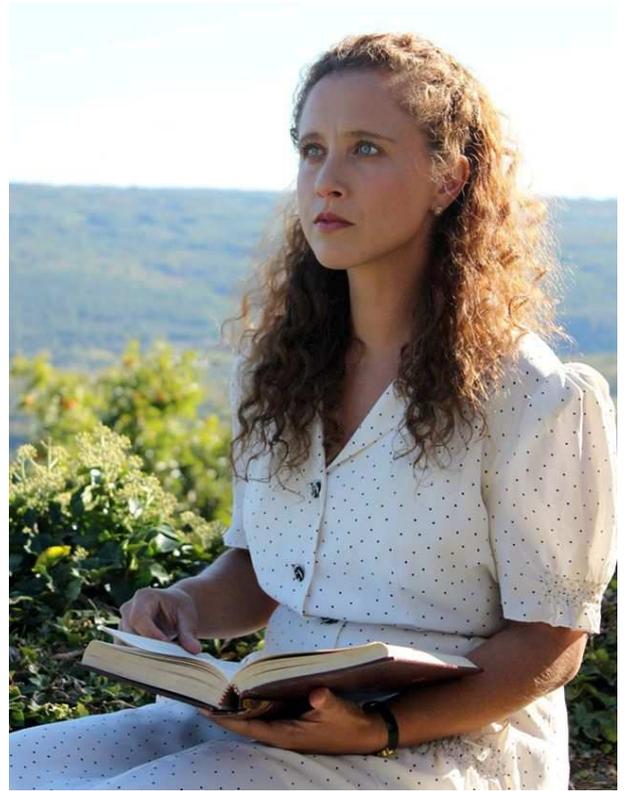
Starring



Franco Nero (set photos – “Red Land”)



Geraldine Chaplin



Sandra Ceccarelli and Selene Gandini (set photos – “Red Land”)



Romeo Grebensek (set photos – “Red Land”)