FRED KUWORNU: BLAXPLOITALIAN (2016, 65’)

On the occasion of Black History Month, the Italian Studies Program at UNLV presents a documentary revealing the careers of black actors in Italian cinema. The film is in Italian with English subtitles. Q&A with Director Fred Kuwornu.

February 27, 2017 at 6:00 PM

CBC-A 106
BlaxploItalian is a diasporic, hybrid, critical, and cosmopolitan dimension documentary that uncovers the careers of a population of entertainers seldom heard from before: Black actors in Italian cinema starting from 1915 when the first black actor appeared in an Italian film. BlaxploItalian cleverly discloses the personal struggles classic Afro-Italian, African-American, Afro-Caribbean, and African diasporic actors faced, correlating it with the contemporary actors who work diligently to find respectable and significant roles. Thus our alternative aim is for the stories in BlaxploItalian to serve as a call-to-action with the intention of challenging worldwide mainstream filmmakers and audiences into calling for an enhancement and practicing of ethnic and racial diversity in casting for important roles within the international film/media industries.

The fight for diversity and increased inclusion in the media, specifically film and television, is not limited to the United States or the United Kingdom, but is a global concern. Much like how #OscarsSoWhite exposed this problem to a new generation of filmgoers, what we are doing with our BlaxploItalian documentary is introducing to audiences precisely how global this issue is, starting with one of the last places you expect to find the African diaspora – Italy.

Fred "Kudjo" Kudjo is an activist-producer-director-speaker born and raised in Italy and based in Brooklyn. His mother is an Italian Jew, and his father a Ghanaian surgeon who lived in Italy since the early 60's. Fred Kuwornu holds a Bachelor's degree in Political Science and Mass Media, from the University of Bologna. After his experience, working with the production crew of Spike Lee film's "Miracle at St. Anna", in 2010 Fred Kuwornu produced and directed the Award-winning documentary Inside Buffalo about the African-American veterans who fought in Italy during World War II.

In 2012, he released "18 IUS SOLI" which examines Afro-Italians in Italy but also specifically looks at questions of citizenship for the one million children of immigrants born and raised in Italy but not yet Italian citizens. In 2016, He released "Blaxploitalian 100 Years of Blackness in Italian Cinema." His next projects, with the production company Do The Right Films Entertainment is: "Blackitaliano", a documentary about a contemporary concept of Italian and African descents.

List Credits

Director Fred Kudjo Kuwornu
Producer Kalon Jackson
Producer Elliott Lee Cowart
Producer Curtis John
Associate Matteo Tosi
Associate Stefano Fregni
Cinematography Luigi Benvisto
Cinematography Enrico Datti
Editing Luigi Benvisto
Editing Filippo Feel Cavalca

Trailer: https://vimeo.com/172214636