

Gaudi s.rl. present

screening

06/09/2010
SALA PASINETTI
19.30 pm

07-09-2010
SALA PERLA
17.15 pm

08/09/2010
SALA VOLPI
15.00 pm

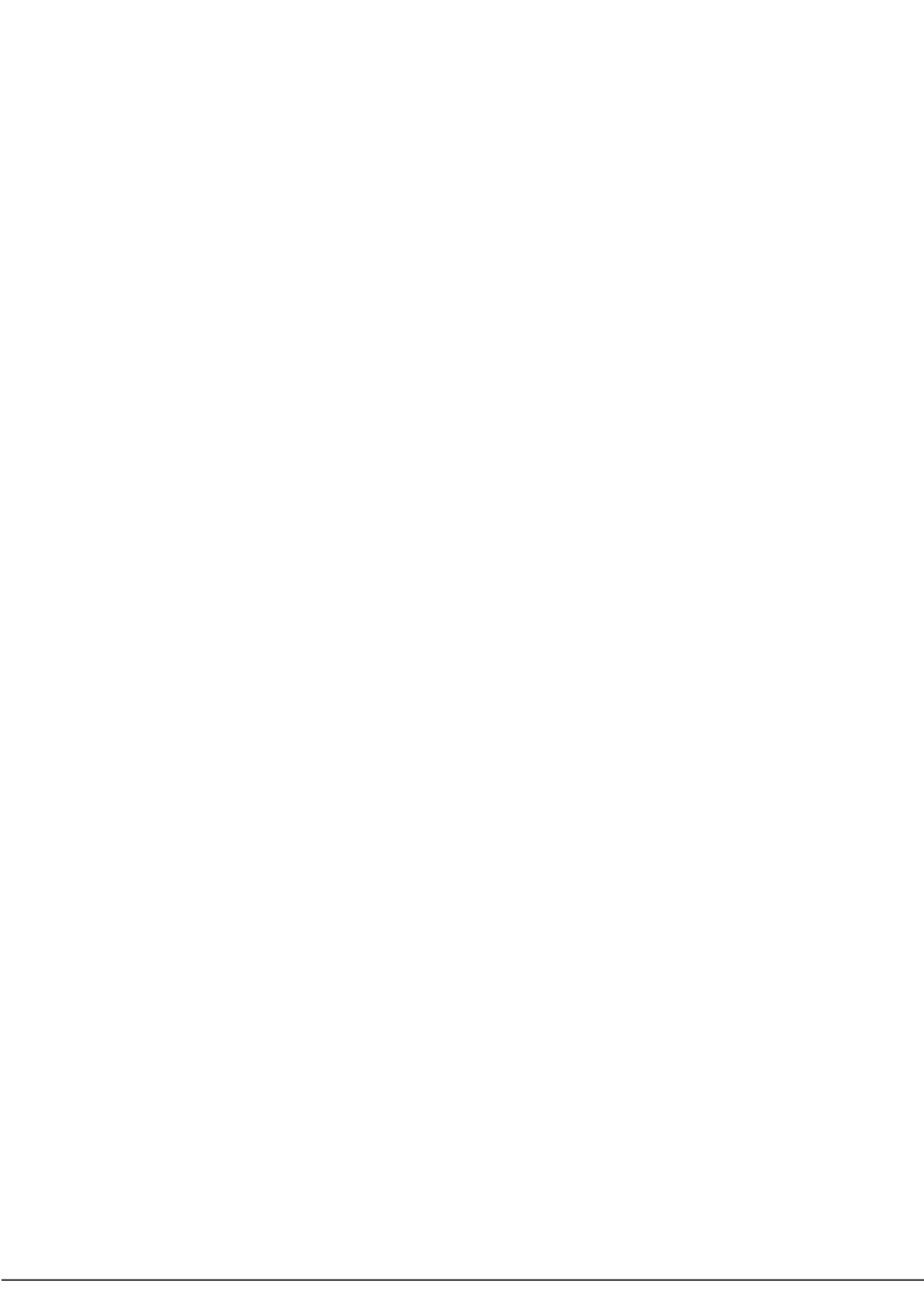
per questi stretti morire

(cartografia di una passione)

ALBERTO MARIA DE AGOSTINI (1883-1960)



a docu-film by Isabella Sandri and Giuseppe M. Gaudino





Gaudri presents

By these straits to die (cartography of a passion)

Alberto Maria De Agostini (1883-1960)

Italy 2010 - 93 min.

Written, filmed and edited by
Isabella Sandri & Giuseppe M.Gaudino

music
Epsilon Indi

Production company
Gaudri srl

producer
Giuseppe M.Gaudino

Made with support from
Ministry of Culture.
the Piemonte Doc Film Fund, regional Documentary Fund.

in collaboration with:
National Museum of the Mountain - Cai - Turin.
'Maggiorino Borgatello' Museum, Punta Arenas, Chile.
IILA Italo-Latin American Institute - Rome.
University of Cassino.

costumes
Alessandra Torella, Giuseppe M. Gaudino.

set design
Giuseppe M. Gaudino.

Assistant director and casting
Emanuele Donadio.

scientific consultant
prof. Nicola Bottiglieri - University of Cassino.

Main cast
Federico Tolardo - Emanuele Buganza.



Synopsis

The perseverance, excess and suffering in the life and works of the explorer, filmmaker and photographer Alberto Maria De Agostini (1883-1960) are arbitrarily reinvented. Having left his village in Piemonte at the age of 26 to become a missionary, he reached Patagonia and the Tierra del Feugo in 1910. He scaled mountains, discovered fjords and explored glaciers, naming them all. On encountering the anguish and pain of the destruction of the last Indio natives, he expressed these feelings eloquently through the photo plates and frames of his beautiful film *Terre Magellaniche*. All of this ends up as an imaginary and chaotic repository of memories, amongst the sad, hoarded remains of “white civilisation”, in which two kids (assistants to the past, indefatigable workers, fanatical innocents) rummage around in search of traces of the artist, whose name is virtually unknown in Italy. The Indio people, ever-present ghosts, accompany them in remembering their elimination and that of a nature and a land stolen from them by colonisers.

Directors' Statement

“Whilst my physicians by their love are grown /
Cosmographers, and I their map, who lie / Flat on this
bed, that by them may be shown / That this be my
south-west discovery,
/ Per fretum febris, by these straits to die, / I joy,
that in these straits I see my west; / For, though their
currents yield return to none, / What shall my west
hurt me? As west and east / In all flat maps (and I am
one) are one, / So death doth touch the resurrection.”
(John Donne, 1623). Nothing remains of De Agostini.
Nothing personal. There are no diaries, notebooks,
notes or confessions. Over the last three years of our
work and investigation we have often asked ourselves
what kind of man he was. The only answer we could
come up with was an image, that of a Man-Map. He is
his place, the place that he loved, which is more than
an emblematic metaphorical symbol – it is the body.
We think that he scrunched himself up, reuniting the
two edges of the map and finding his paradise simply
through the meaning of his work.

NOTES ON Alberto Maria de Agostini'S LIFE (1883-1960)

ALBERTO MARIA DE AGOSTINI (1883-1960) if “By these straits to die” is an arbitrary biography these instead are the real facts of his life, gathered from direct testimony, documents, books, newspapers, magazines, and thanks to his letters

Those who knew him say he was indefatigable, frenetic, that he walked so quickly that few were able to keep up with him, even when he was an old man. He was a sort of Leni Riefenstahl in a cassock – he experimented with new techniques (he was among the first to use Ferrania colour films at the start of the '40s), he could spend a fortnight in one place in order to capture a photograph, he favoured the use of the tripod that he took with him even on the most dangerous and apparently impossible missions. There are accounts of how much he loved to live frugally. One day when he was at Valdocco, in the Salesian mother house in Turin, the brother who ate on the other side of the table saw him putting some leftover bread into the drawer beneath the table. De Agostini then set out on a long journey and on his return, months later, he opened the drawer and pulled out the piece of stale bread and ate it there as though there were nothing unusual in this.

He was modest and reserved, a taciturn man. Nobody imagined he was a celebrity, an authority in his field and when, on his death, telegrams arrived from all over the world his brothers were astonished.

The Argentine glaciologist Bertone remembers the straightened circumstances in which De Agostini lived because his books, which were full of maps and photographs, were so expensive and accurate, and when he went round the bookshops of Buenos Aires carrying volumes of ‘*Ande Patagoniche*’ (‘Patagonian Andes’) to try and sell them.

Until 1958, two years before his death, he still had debts (a million lire at the time) thanks to his expeditions which he had financed himself, without any sponsor, in a spirit of independence and with scant means, struggling to find even a part of the required costs.

On 1st July 1938, worried, he writes to his superior, Don Ricaldone, because, having already carried out three expeditions to the Patagonian Andes, he needs his permission to return there and complete his work. And this was work that was often interrupted

because of bad weather or because he did not have a topographer with him but above all because he did not have sufficient personnel for the transport of equipment and supplies and he did not have the means to provide these. Furthermore, while he was there struggling with these difficulties, four Italian mountaineers from the G.U.F (Gruppo Universitario Fascista – Fascist University Group) appeared, who, using data provided by De Agostini himself in his articles in *Corriere della Sera*, had proceeded towards Mount Fitz Roy and the same mountainous region he had explored the previous year. Apart from this, De Agostini is worried because ‘after having understood the great explorative and mountaineering value of the region they are planning another expedition to the same area to achieve those very explorative aims that I have been trying for years to achieve with no luck because I am alone, and with no support or means’. But when in Italy the Ministry of Press and Propaganda offers to organise an expedition on a vast scale for him with everything he needs, a ‘modern’ expedition (with journalists, radio telegraphers, cameramen), he expresses the desire to carry out his new expedition ‘in the usual private form I have followed for years’. But he had to get a move on because if he had delayed his planned expedition he would have been beaten to it by ‘these G.U.F. mountaineers who, equipped and abundantly supplied, would doubtless have succeeded in their undertaking’.

After the Sarmiento adventure of 1956, when the impossible peak he had tried to conquer on several occasions, was successfully scaled by an Italian team thanks to his help, in 1957-58 he was offered the role of consultant and guide to the expedition financed by Guido Monzino to climb the Paine mountain group in Chile. Unfortunately, on account of his advanced age, his superior refused his request. He was desperate. One of his brothers, Father Entraigas, seeing him in this state and having discovered the whole story managed to make their superior, who was unaware of all the financial background, change his mind. And thus De Agostini went for the last time to Patagonia and finally managed to pay off his debts.

He set out from Pollone, a small village in the Province of Biella, in Piedmont, as a 26-year-old missionary in 1909 and in 1910 he had arrived at Punta Arenas on the Magellan Strait in Chile. He was

already an expert photographer and had previously climbed Monte Rosa and the Matterhorn. But in this he was not an exception. The photographs and the approach to a certain sort of vision in the style of Vittorio Sella and the brothers Guido and Mario Piacenza, just like the mountaineering, the climbs and the passion for the peaks (which in those areas is called ‘mal d’la pera’: rock sickness) and finally the numerous examples of missionaries who had set out in a spirit of heroism and romanticism, nurtured by the prophetic dreams of Don Bosco: he was surrounded by all of this. He really was, in this way, a child of his time. It is the bringing together of all these passions that make him a special character. Apparently Don Bosco in person sent him on his way saying to him at the moment of his departure from Turin for South America: “Are you going to Patagonia to be a missionary or a photographer and explorer?” And there is also a curious coincidence: Alberto Maria De Agostini was born in the same year, 1883, as Don Bosco’s famous dream in which the founder of the Salesian order had seen Patagonia and its native peoples, an extraordinary economic development and immense wealth, gold, oil, minerals hidden in the depths of the mountains. It was the second time he had dreamt of Patagonia. Previously in 1872 he had dreamt of the savages but without understanding which part of the world they belonged to. Only a few years later did he realise that they were natives of Patagonia and he did his utmost to send his missionaries there, something he managed to achieve from 1875, when – in the years that coincide with the great European migration – he sent a Salesian delegation to Argentina with Monsignor Fagnano in the wake of an expedition. Don Bosco says that in his second dream he had seen a rope, marked out like a measuring stick, with lines and numbers that corresponded to the geographic degrees of latitude. And that as it uncoiled in front of him an immense panorama appeared that he saw from a bird’s-eye view and that it extended as the rope did. He saw everything: seas, islands, mountain chains, glaciers and endless plains and also – indicating precisely the latitudes - Tierra del Fuego and Southern Patagonia that would then be crossed by De Agostini. In an interview Alberto admitted that, yes, he had been influenced by that dream.

It was he who made many of the discoveries between the 47th and 52nd Parallels (the Patagonian Andes) and above all in the icy regions south of the 49th. When

he discovered a new fjord or a lake or when he was naming a mountain or a glacier, he “baptised” them by pouring a drop of whisky on the snow or into the water, saying simply, “I baptise you”, and naming them after Italian cities and famous people (Novara, Pollone, Biella; and then Giacomo Bove and Antonio Pigafetta, Luigi di Savoia, Della Vedova, Roncagli, Spegazzini, Schiapparelli, Sella, to mention just a few). He also made observations and gathered scientifically valuable material on the Fuegian archipelago (between the 52nd and 56th parallels). But the presence in his family of Giovanni De Agostini, his brother who was 20 years older than him, and who had founded the publishing house that bears his name, famous for its atlases, must have been an influence, because Giovanni had published in 1891 in Germany a study on Tierra del Fuego. This family link also explains De Agostini’s bravura and passion as a cartographer. He was considered a real authority in the field, both by the Argentines and the Chileans, who made use of his maps without disputing their limits and borders.

When De Agostini arrived in Tierra del Fuego and Patagonia, the Indians had already been decimated. It was towards the end of the previous century that the situation had become critical. The Alacaluf Indians from 4,000 in 1850 by 1908 had been reduced to 300 and by 1946 a mere 80 survived; the Yamanà (Yahgan) numbered 3,000 in 1850 but by 1933 there were only 40 left; the Ona numbered about 2,000 in the middle of the 1800s but less than a hundred about 1920. In the 1950s there were about 50 of them. The Teuelche had already been reduced to a few hundred at the start of the 1900s and died out very quickly.

But it had been for centuries, from Magellan’s discovery onwards, that they had all feared the ‘white killers’ who wanted to take over without any sort of regulation the lands, resources and riches that had been theirs for millennia.

Antonio Pigafetta, Magellan’s chronicler tells how, as they landed at San Julian in 1520, they saw a giant on the shore dancing, jumping in the air and singing. And that was when Magellan shouted ‘Patagon!’ The word was interpreted as relating to the size of his feet, ‘big feet’ literally, but Chatwin explains that in reality it refers to the name of a bizarre character in a romance. What is certain is that among these Teuelche Indians, the first seen by Magellan’s expedition, it

was not uncommon to find tall individuals, up to two metres tall even, and so it must also have been true that they had big feet. Then everything was inflated by the imagination that wanted and had to see the other as different, so as to be able to eliminate him with fewer scruples. This ‘different other’ who was said to be cannibalistic was dragged from his lands and loved ones, taken over the ocean to Europe or to the United States and shown as a carnival freak who would have raw meat thrown at him in the various Universal Expositions, such as that of 1882 at the Jardin Zoologique de Acclimatation in Paris.

The Salesian missions to Dawson Island (Chile) and Candelaria on the Rio Grande (Argentina) were already up and running towards the end of the 1800s but early in the 1900s they had started to empty, revealing their futility since all the Indians were dying. Paradoxically those people, those ‘guests’ for whom everything had been laid on started to vanish. So many plots of land granted in concession by governments, so many plans, projects, works and dreams and then ‘they’ themselves started to vanish. It was an inevitable destiny. They were killed by contact with the whites, forced acculturation and the reduction of their resources and territory. They were decimated by epidemics: smallpox, measles, typhoid, venereal diseases, but a bout of flu was sufficient. And then there was alcohol, with which they were sometimes paid for their work, and which was deviously distributed by the invader.

Unfortunately, without being aware of the damage it would indirectly cause, it was Monsignor Fagnano, courageous defender of the natives, who advised the white landowners and the Europeans who had been granted land by the Chilean and Argentine governments to invest in sheep, in the ‘white gold’ of wool and their meat. This suggestion in a way led in a very short time to the definitive disappearance of the natives who were dispossessed of their lands, hounded and killed in the cause of spreading the activities of the white settlers and sheep farming.

Without land there were not even enough guanacos any more to hunt and so the Indians could only eat ‘white guanacos’, as they called the sheep, which, after all, were living on what had always been their territory. What could be wrong with this? But even the killing of a single sheep gave the white man the pretext to kill as many Indians as he liked in what

were effectively hunting trips.

Above all, the Ona Indians were the most persecuted because they had the misfortune to live in the most attractive areas, those that were most suited to pasture. Someone even discovered gold which between 1888 and 1894 drew all sorts of adventurers, such as the infamous Julius Popper, who created a sort of personal army to wipe out the Indians.

Saddened and indignant this is what De Agostini wrote in 1924 in his book 'My travels in Tierra del Fuego': "Explorers, estancieros and soldiers have no scruples about emptying their Mausers into the bodies of the poor Indians, as though they were wild animals or game, and snatching women and girls from their husbands and fathers to subject them to every sort of abuse; removing them from their homes and hearths and taking them to foreign lands in the name of science, and exhibiting these poor natives to the public, as the most degraded examples of humanity". "The contempt and hatred for the native plunged such depths in the invader that...he offered a pound sterling for every pair of human ears he was presented with". "The acts of torture and cruelty that have been committed since the white man penetrated that region, thus contributing greatly to the rapid extinction of a harmless and vigorous race, will be handed down as a shameful stain on civilisation."

De Agostini filmed them (as well as photographing them) from around 1910 till 1933, the year in which his film 'Lands of Magellan' was shown in Turin for the first time. He had seen them all vanish, a few at a time. As he filmed them he already knew that nothing would remain of their world. Even the forced change of life in the missions had contributed to their decline. In certain moments of his film the captions (it is a silent film) are written in the past tense: "the Ona lived in the western part of Tierra del Fuego and spent their lives hunting", "When the woman found herself freed from her maternal duties she spent her time making guanaco blankets", "Their essentially nomadic life forced them to undertake long and exhausting journeys", "The Yaghan (the Yamanà) lived on the islands, and were especially given to fishing", "The huts of the natives were made with beech branches stuck in a circle into the ground". Everything was already lost; very few of them spoke their own language. They spent half the day as 'savages' in their toldos, in their huts in the

midst of nature, and the other half as workers in the missions: divided identities in a last desperate attempt at forced adaptation. Some of the scenes in the film are really reconstructions of the past, with a script even (a script of 'Lands of Magellan' can be found in the 'Maggiorino Borgatello' Ethnographic Museum at Punta Arenas, in Chile).

The umpteenth unpunished genocide, then. Apart from a few display cabinets with skulls and artefacts in various museums in Santiago in Chile, Berlin, Rome, Punta Arenas, Rio Grande, Turin, to testify to their presence, to remind us they really existed, fortunately we have the beautiful frames of del De Agostini's film (as well as a few reels of cut scenes and repetitions, and unedited scenes, all deposited at the Museum of the Mountain in Turin).

When Pablo Neruda heard about De Agostini's death he said: "The death of Father Alberto De Agostini was a surprise for me. He died far from Chile, a country he loved so much. His works show the majestic landscape of our cordillera, our rivers and our millenary beauty. Through this exemplary man, Chile can recognise itself in the Old World. I would like Punta Arenas to render homage to De Agostini and raise a monument to his memory. In a public square, where the children of this region can absorb his magnificent example. Everyone should admire him because, with simplicity, he consigned to us his profound truths... Without going on at too great a length, I, as a Chilean poet, would like to write the epigraph for this monument to honour the memory of such an illustrious discoverer of a number of aspects of our national history..."

ISABELLA SANDRI

She gained an art degree from the DAMS in Bologna and a diploma in directing from Centro Sperimentale di Cinematografia.

During that time she also makes a number of shorts ('La Vestaglia Rosa'), and documentaries, some with Giuseppe Gaudino ('Joannis Amaelii: animula vagula blandula', and '**Calcinacci**' that won the Spazio Italia Prize at the Turin Festival and was invited to Cinema du Reel in Paris and the Rotterdam Festival).

From 1992 to 1995 she is involved in shooting her first feature '**il Mondo alla Rovescia**', ('The World Upside Down'), that was selected for the Locarno Festival and many others including Rotterdam, Karlovy Vary, Turin, Sao Paolo, and Saint Petersburg.

In 1997 she shoots a documentary in Rwanda, '**Gli Spiriti delle Mille Colline**', on the genocide of the Tutsis but also on the unreported massacres of the Hutus. The documentary is shown at the Venice Biennale, wins the Silver Spire Award at the San Francisco Film Festival and the 2nd Libero Bizzarri Prize.

1997 also saw the completion of Giuseppe Gaudino's film '**Giro di Lune tra Terra e Mare**' ('Moonspins between Land and Sea') which she produced and co-wrote. The film is entered into competition at the Venice Biennale and wins numerous prizes at various festivals around the world (including the Tiger Award at the Rotterdam Festival).

In 1999 with Gaudino she makes '**La Casa dei Limoni**', a documentary about the impossible dream of a young Palestinian girl who lives in the Sabra and Chatila refugee camp in the Lebanon of returning to her grandfather's village in Israel-Palestine.

Her second feature is from 2000, '**Animali che attraversano la Strada**', ('Animals Crossing The Road'), the painful initiation of an adolescent into the world of adults. Set in the outskirts of Rome, it is invited to the Venice Biennale, in the official section 'Cinema del Presente'. RAI is involved in its production. It participates in numerous festivals and is distributed by Istituto Luce.

In 2001 she shoots the documentary '**I Quaderni**

di Luisa', part of the series 'I Diari della Sacher', produced by Nanni Moretti, inspired by true stories from the National Diary Archive at Pieve Santo Stefano. Invited to the Venice Biennale, it is based on the story of a housewife who, in order not to go mad, commits her pain to four notebooks, but, above all, it is the story of her slow but lucid and life-affirming liberation from a marriage that was suffocating her freedom.

At the Turin Festival in 2003 she presents '**La Zattera di Sabbia**', a documentary about the last Tuareg tribespeople to survive the drought in the north of Mali, and who are now struggling not to lose their nomadic and warrior identity in exchange for settling down. At the festival it wins the Special Jury Prize.

From 2003 to 2005 with Giuseppe Gaudino she shoots a documentary film produced by Fandango: '**Maquilas**' on the border factories in the north of Mexico, in Ciudad Juarez, the city where hundreds of women have been found hacked to pieces, for the most part workers in the 'maquilas'. The film is a lengthy journey into the inferno of people who come from a sort of paradise, that of the peasant villages of Chiapas, a paradise that has been gutted by the free trade agreements. It is shown at the Turin Festival where it wins the Special Jury Prize and the Cipputi Prize for best documentary on the world of work.

From 2003 to 2008, again with Gaudino she works on making a documentary film '**Storie d'Armi e di Piccoli Eroi**', shot in Afghanistan on the life of a boy who has been orphaned by 'intelligent bombs' who makes something of his life thanks to writing and books, thanks to culture: words against bombs as a way to use your own simple existence to ensure your country's future.

GIUSEPPE M. GAUDINO

A graduate of the Academy of Fine Arts in Naples, he attends DAMS in Bologna. He then gains his diploma in set design in '82 from Centro Sperimentale di Cinematografia, and goes on to specialise in film and TV direction.

After a number of shorts ('In una Notte di Luna Piena'), documentaries ('Antrodoco, una Storia per due Battaglie'), and theatrical works as director and set designer, he makes the film '**Aldis**' that was invited to participate in numerous festivals, among the most important of which were the XV Berlin International Forum of New Cinema in 1985, the 'XII Student Film Award' Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences of Los Angeles (gaining a nomination for best European student film), and the XLII International Venice Film Festival, in competition in the De Sica Section.

In 1988 with the film '**00580 Annotazioni per un Documentario su Pozzuoli**' – which was selected for the XVIII Berlin International Forum of New Cinema - Gaudino sets out on a creative narrative about the Campi Flegrei that he will develop in further films, documentaries and radio programmes: 'Per il Rione Terra', 'L'Assunta', 'Verso Baia', 'Giro di Lune: video-trailer per un progetto di film', 'Là dove Bocca, Sguardo e Cuore s'incontrano'. One of these is '**Calcinacci**', a 50-minute film in which a gang of youths destroy a city. It wins the Spazio Italia Prize at the Turin Festival and is invited to Cinema du Reel in Paris and the Rotterdam Film Festival.

In 1992 he makes a portrait of Gianni Amelio on the set of the film 'Il Ladro di Bambini' ('The Stolen Children') entitled '**Joannis Amaelii, animula vagula blandula**' and starts work on producing and co-writing Isabella Sandri's first feature, 'il Mondo alla Rovescia' ('The World Upside Down'), that was selected for the Locarno Festival and many others including Rotterdam, Karlovy Vary, Turin, Sao Paolo, and Saint Petersburg.

From 1995 to '97 he makes the feature '**Giro di Lune tra Terra e Mare**' ('Moonspins between Land and sea') which he also produced and co-wrote. The film competes at the Venice Biennale. It wins numerous prizes (including the Tiger Award of Rotterdam

Festival, the Saint-Vincent Grolla d'Oro for direction, and the Directors' Week Award at Fantaporto) and is invited to a number of festivals throughout the world: 41st San Francisco International Film Festival, 8th Fajr International Film Festival Tehran, Cairo Film Festival, Philadelphia Festival of World Cinema, International Istanbul Film Festival, as well as being chosen by the critics of the magazine 'Variety' for a special section at the 33rd Karlovy Vary Int. Film Festival.

At the XIV Mostra Internazionale del Nuovo Cinema di Pesaro in 2000 Gaudino is awarded the CinemAvvenire prize (Venice Biennale – Education Ministry - ARCA) as 'An emerging author of Italian cinema in the '90s'.

In 1999 with Sandri he makes '**La Casa dei Limoni**' a documentary about the impossible dream of a young Palestinian girl who lives in the Sabra and Chatila refugee camp in the Lebanon of returning to her grandfather's village in Israel-Palestine.

In 2000 he writes the screenplay for and produces Sandri's feature, 'Animali che attraversano la Strada' ('Animals Crossing The Road'), the story of the painful initiation of an adolescent into the world of adults in the outskirts of Rome. The film is invited to the Venice Biennale, in the official section 'Cinema del Presente'. RAI is involved in its production. It participates in numerous festivals and is distributed by Istituto Luce.

In 2001 he makes the animated short '**Gli Amori di Aldis. Amore 101, 102, 103...**' winner of a special mention at the Turin Festival and invited to the 31st Rotterdam Festival.

He also makes a documentary produced by Tele+ on the problem of young Albanians in Italy, chosen for the "Festival Internazionale Cinema Giovani" of Turin, entitled '**O' ciuna!**'.

Still in 2001 he shoots the documentary '**Scalamara**', part of the 'I Diari della Sacher' series produced by Nanni Moretti, inspired by true stories from the National Diary Archive at Pieve Santo Stefano. Invited to the Venice Biennale, it tells of the dream of a man of 71 who is still looking for his mother who abandoned him as a child and who has become over the course of his difficult life an unattainable chimera.



In 2003 he makes '**Materiali a Confronto. Albania 1994 – Italia 2002**', a 110-minute documentary chosen for the 60th Venice Biennale - Nuovi Territori section – on the past and present of a corner of the world, a work dealing with images sunk between memory and reality.

From 2003 to 2005 he shoots a documentary film with Isabella Sandri produced by Fandango: '**Maquilas**' on the border factories in the north of Mexico, in Ciudad Juarez, the city where hundreds of women have been found hacked to pieces, for the most part workers in the 'maquilas'. The film is a lengthy journey into the inferno of people who come from a sort of paradise, that of the peasant villages of Chiapas, a paradise that has been gutted by the free trade agreements. It is shown at the Turin Festival where it wins the Special Jury Prize and the Cipputi Prize for best documentary on the world of work.

From 2003 to 2008, again with Sandri, he works on making a documentary film '**Storie d'Armi e di Piccoli Eroi**', shot in Afghanistan on the life of a boy who has been orphaned by 'intelligent bombs' who makes something of his life thanks to writing and books, thanks to culture: words against bombs as a way to use your own simple existence to ensure your country's future.

There is a documentary film on the work of Sandri and Gaudino, entitled "**Les Champs brûlants**" (campi ardenti) by Catherine Libert and Stefano Canepa – France, 2010, B&W and colour, 72 minutes, premiered at the 63rd Locarno Film Festival 2010.

EPSILON INDI

The original soundtrack of the film "Per Questi Stretti Morire [by these straits to die] (ovvero cartografia di una passione)" was composed by Epsilon Indi

Directors Isabella Sandri and Giuseppe M. Gaudino have been collaborating with the roman group Epsilon Indi for many years. Isabella Sandri had just finished taking her film "Il Mondo alla Rovescia", that was to come out in 1995, when she fell in love, hearing it on the radio, with the accordion opening of "Painful Life", a track in the second album of the roman band, because of its slow and recurrent rhythm, melancholic, intimate and relentless. It was the beginning of a collaboration never to be interrupted, always accompanying the tireless activity of the pair of directors. In that same album we find "Calaluna", that long string quartet suite that was to be the soundtrack for one of the major scenes in Giuseppe Gaudino's film "Giro di Luna fra Terra e Mare" (1997).

Epsilon Indi, since the very beginning of their now twenty-three year old existence, have always based their work on the principle of multimedia. The group was born in Rome in 1987, from the fusion of a dance-theater company and a band that produced soundtracks for theatrical performances, films, shorts and documentaries, and it has never been a musical band in the traditional sense. It is a very open group, whose work is essentially based on research, and it is formed by musicians, dancers and technicians. Their activity is not confined to music, it thrives on the interaction between tree forms of art – music, movement and visual art – blending them in a wonderful balance that has often been of inspiration to other, sometimes better known, Italian and foreign bands. The mystery surrounding the Roman band has contributed to its becoming a cult band in our musical panorama, though not always as well known and appreciated as it would have deserved, as for example when in 1999 Epsilon Indi, one of the first groups in Italy to do so, published a CD-Rom containing extra material, texts, pictures and an interactive game, as bonus to the CD of their album "Crystal Soup". Their music is eclectic, they use all sorts of acoustic instruments blending them with the electronic sound, a musical alchemy causing in the listener continual swift changes of mood.

Their production of soundtracks is plentiful and follows closely, since that fateful 1994, the artistic careers of the two authors and directors. As well as the already mentioned “Il Mondo alla Rovescia” (1995) and “Giro di Lune tra Terra e Mare” (1997), we find “Animali che Attraversano la Strada” (2000), The shorts “Aldis Amore 101, 102, 103...” (2000), “Scalamara” and “I Quaderni di Luisa” in I Diari produced by Nanni Moretti for Sacher in 2001, the documentaries “Gli Spiriti delle Mille Colline” (1997), “la Casa dei Limoni” (1999), “O’Ciuna” (2002), “Materiali a Confronto”, “La Zattera di Sabbia”, “Scalo a Baku” (2003), and “Maquilas” (2004). Isabella Sandri directed and produced for Gaundri, the video of the track “For the Last Time” from Epsilon Indi’s album “The Stolen Silence” (1994).

The band has also worked with other directors, creating for example the soundtrack of Nino Bizzarri’s film “Quando una Donna non Dorme” (2000), and has collaborated in 2001 with director Giandomenico Curi for a campaign against torture by Amnesty International.

Epsilon Indi’s discography includes:
“A Distant Return” 2CD, Angel Records 1992;
“A Sud del Cuore” Tape, Epsilon 1993;
“The Stolen Silence” CD, Epsilon 1994;
“Tra Terra e Mare” CD, Epsilon 1997, for the Venice Mostra del Cinema;
“Gaundri Music” CD, Epsilon 1998;
“Crystal Soup” CD+DVD, Il Manifesto/Epsilon 1999;
“Il Pensatoio” and “L’Angelo” in “Ma Non C’è Nessun Biondo”, Materiali Sonori 2006 with Luigi Lo Cascio;
“Per Questi Stretti Morire” CD, Cantoberon Multimedia/Epsilon 2010 for the Venice Mostra del Cinema.

Dance-theater performances:

“E’ Meglio che la Luce Rimanga Spenta” 1990;
“Bianco Sale” 1990;
“A Distant Return” 1993;
“A Sud del Cuore” 1994;
“The Stolen Silence” 1995;
“Dal Sud” 1997;
“Sguardo Rubato” 1998;
“Crystal Soup” 2000
“La Cama” 2001;
“Istruzioni per Rendersi Infelici” 2004;
“Caos” 2006.

The band is now recording a new album, called “Wherein We Are Water” for the label Cantoberon Multimedia/Epsilon.

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ELENA DE STABILE, Isabella BRANCO.

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