



78th Venice International Film Festival – in competition

GOON FILMS, LUCKY RED and RAI CINEMA present

FREAKS OUT

a film by
GABRIELE MAINETTI

original story by **NICOLA GUAGLIANONE**
screenplay by **NICOLA GUAGLIANONE** and **GABRIELE MAINETTI**

produced by
ANDREA OCCHIPINTI, GABRIELE MAINETTI
a **GOON FILMS, LUCKY RED** with **RAI CINEMA** production
in co-production with **GAPBUSTERS**
in collaboration with **VOO e BE TV**

Italian distribution



Italian theatrical release
28 OCTOBER

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CREDITS NON CONTRACTUALS

Main Characters and Cast

Fulvio	CLAUDIO SANTAMARIA
Matilde	AURORA GIOVINAZZO
Cencio	PIETRO CASTELLITTO
Mario	GIANCARLO MARTINI
Israel	GIORGIO TIRABASSI
Il gobbo	MAX MAZZOTTA
Franz	FRANZ ROGOWSKI

Crew

Director	GABRIELE MAINETTI
Original Story	NICOLA GUAGLIANONE
Screenplay	NICOLA GUAGLIANONE, GABRIELE MAINETTI
Cinematography	MICHELE D'ATTANASIO
Editing	FRANCESCO DI STEFANO
Costumes	MARY MONTALTO
Set design	MASSIMILIANO STURIALE
VFX Supervisor	STEFANO LEONI
Music	MICHELE BRAGA, GABRIELE MAINETTI
Sound	ANGELO BONANNI
Sound design	MIRKO PERRI
Sound engineer	FRANCO PISCOPO
Make up	DIEGO PRESTOPINO
Hairdresser	MARCO PERNA
General organizer	GIUSEPPE GIGLIETTI
Director's assistant	GIUSEPPE CURTI, GIAIME GRIECO
Casting	FRANCESCO VEDOVATI
Produced by	ANDREA OCCHIPINTI, GABRIELE MAINETTI
Associate producers	MATTIA GUERRA, STEFANO MASSENZI
Executive producer	JACOPO SARACENI
Line Producer	
for Lucky Red	TOMMASO ARRIGHI
Delegate producer	
for Lucky Red	SERENA SOSTEGNI
Co-produced by	JOSEPH ROUSCHOP, JEAN-YVES ROUBIN, ISABELLA ORSINI
a production	GOON FILMS, LUCKY RED with RAI CINEMA
in co-production with	GAPBUSTERS
in collaboration with	VOO e BE TV
with the support of	REGIONE LAZIO, AVVISO PUBBLICO ATTRAZIONE PRODUZIONI CINEMATOGRAFICHE (POR FESR LAZIO 2014-2020), UNIONE EUROPA CONSIGLIO DEI MINISTRI REGIONE LAZIO POR FESR, PROGETTO COFINANZIATO DALL'UNIONE EUROPEA
with the contribution of	REGIONE CALABRIA e FONDAZIONE CALABRIA FILM COMMISSION
with the contribution of	REGIONE LAZIO FONDO PER IL CINEMA E L'AUDIOVISIVO
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with the support of	CASA KAFKA PICTURES MOVIE e TAX SHELTER EMPOWERED BY BELFIUS

Synopsis

Matilde, Cencio, Fulvio and Mario form a family in the circus where they work as 'freaks' in 1943 Nazi-occupied Rome. Israel, the owner and putative father, disappears in an attempt to find an escape route overseas for them all. The four friends are in disarray. Without anyone looking after them but, above all, without the circus, they lose their womb and feel lost as rudderless sideshow attractions in a city at war.

Director's notes

The challenge

Freaks Out was born out of a challenge: the telling of an adventure, a coming-of-age-story and a reflection on diversity set against one of the darkest moments on the 20th century. We did so by approaching the occupied Rome of 1943 with emotion and respect; yet, with an unrestrained use of fantasy. That's how the four freaks came about. They are unique individuals who happen to live a story bigger than themselves.

What would you like to do?

After *Lo chiamavano Jeeg Robot*, Nicola Guaglianone and I asked ourselves, “*What can we do as ‘cool’ as that?*”. A sequel was not in discussion. Therefore, we started to write down some ideas, driven by the only, great question of: “*What would you like to do?*”. A film should be the result of passion, not of calculation.

Got it!

Guaglianone was the first to think about the freaks: he is a great fan of the subject, he previously had a chance to develop this topic in another film he wrote, work on the same subject by writing *Indivisibili*. At first, I didn't understand: being myself a great fan of *Freaks* by Tod Browning, I remembered how that film, uniquely beautiful as it was, had impacted on the-director's life, banned from Hollywood for showing diversity. I was rather doubtful. I had not yet imagined a more “pop” vision that one could imprint on the world of the *freaks*, therefore empathizing with such “different” characters and ultimately bringing the viewer to stand by their side. Meanwhile, I was deeply involved with a personal obsession of mine: WWI. At one point, there were seven different stories on the table. As it had already happened with *Jeeg*, we were “condensing” each story until one day Nicola told me, “*I got it! We'll give the freaks superpowers in WWI*”. That's when I started to envision the film for the first time, and it is from there that we started conjuring up our “heroes”.

The protagonists

The idea of the superpowers worried me at first: I didn't want to replicate *Jeeg*. What interested me, most importantly, was that the protagonists' strength could be the result of the union of four special persons, not of their singular powers. I attempted to make their skills original and “cinematographic” in my own way while keeping in mind and thus exalting the characters' humanity. Browning himself and a masterpiece such as *La donna scimmia*, by Marco Ferreri, served as models. We always thought that our protagonists would have to be real people and tried to look at them with no pity. They refuse, in fact, any sort of self-pity and live as human beings, not as monsters.

Going back to the superpowers, after *Jeeg* I was described as the Italian example of “cine-comic”. The point is: I believe cine-comic to be more of a journalistic term than a real genre. As a term, it risks applying the same tag to very different movies, such as the Marvel's movies, Brian Singer's *X-Men* and a great modern western,

The (super)powers

Logan. Superpowers do not make something cine-comic; otherwise, *Ghost*, *The Sixth Sense* or *The Prophet* by Jacques Audiard would be cine-comic. As for comics, I have never read many, perhaps some Dylan Dog (thanks to the sex content). I am a son of my time: cartoons were more important to me (Jeeg Robot, indeed). When I grew up, I entered the world of manga, where the division between good and bad is not so Manichean: *Devilman* is a perfect example. I mean, who would ever choose *Spiderman* over this?

Villains

Understanding without prejudices. Even the villains. I believe that the success of a film like this one (or like *Jeeg*) can be measured by its ability to make the antagonists ~~the~~ three-dimensional. Franz, the villain of *Freaks Out*, represents, obviously, one of history's darkest pages; also, he is a total loser, the result of a family and social frustration, to which Franz Rogowski has given an almost "inexplicable" tenderness. The villains who scare me the most, in the history of cinema, are those who hide a weakness, a suffering: *The Silence of the Lambs'* Buffalo Bill and Darth Vader, from the original *Star Wars*, are two examples. That's why when approaching Franz as a character we attempted to look for the reasons why he welcomed evil into his life. I believe that the focus on the facets of the characters, even the most unexpected and unforeseen, is somewhat tied to the Italian cinema tradition, which never thrived on the cult of the knight in shining armor. Indeed, when looking at Commedia all'italiana, one notices a world populated by irresistible characters who are meager, sinister and at times even monstrous.

A feminine film

When *Jeeg* came out in cinemas, I suffered with the idea that people might think of it as a "male" movie. On the contrary, I have always seen it as a film deeply rooted in the feminine. Ilenia Pastorelli's Alessia is the true engine, a sort of "mentor" touched by the grace of being able to believe in a superhero (and certainly not one of the most traditional). Equally, the feminine is central in *Freaks Out*, where men are all, more or less, crybabies. Matilde (interpreted by a true revelation, Aurora Giovinazzo) is the real guide of the group. We have told the story of a pure girl entering adult life. We were not interested in a "fake" feminine, à la *Wonder Woman*, with women punching around like blacksmiths. We wanted, instead, to accompany a kid in the discovery of her own strength. Which is, ultimately, women's strength, a kind of strength which I find neither in the men who surrounds me nor in myself but that I have always seen, since I was myself a kid, in the women of my family and now in my partner.

Gabriele Mainetti

The Director

Gabriele Mainetti (Rome, 1976) is a director, actor, composer, and cinema producer. After his two shorts, *Basette*, selected the Locarno Festival, and *Tiger Boy*, shortlisted in the Oscar nomination he directed *Lo chiamavano Jeeg Robot* (*They Called me Jeeg* - 2015), produced by his own company, Goon Films. The film won several awards including seven David di Donatello (Italian Academy Awards), 2 two Silver Ribbons (Nastri d'argento – Italian Film Journalists Awards), 4 four Ciak d'Oro and the Golden Globe from the foreign press in Italy.

Freaks out is his second feature film.