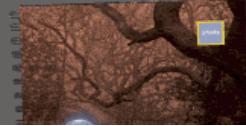




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Creative Connections

PRODUCTION
Wanda Paris

PRODUCTION
Filmmaster Productions Madrid

PRODUCTION
Filmmaster Productions

PRODUCTION
theinstitute

DIRECTOR
Marco Gentile

With a body of work that includes an online “bomb” lampooning the Berlusconi admin’s capers, plus glossy, UK-made spots for Sky and adidas, [Marco Gentile](#) is as handy at European satire as he is at the US-style visual flare he learnt at a Boston college. So, stylistically and geographically straddling two continents, the international director describes himself as a “privileged gypsy”

It’d be difficult to pinpoint Marco Gentile’s nationality just by watching his visually rich reel. If you didn’t know his name, you wouldn’t know if he was Italian, English or American.

Born in Brescia, 60 miles from Milan, Gentile fell in love with film when his mother took him to see Federico Fellini’s *And The Ship Sails On*, aged seven, and was “totally enchanted, totally captured by those images”. But although he took a keen interest in screenwriting, photography and moving images, he studied humanities and didn’t attempt to break into directing until he was 24, around 12 years ago. This was when the music video treatments he’d started writing for friends in Milan caught the attention of Filmmaster Clip ([Filmmaster](#)’s now defunct promo wing) and he got his first job behind the lens.

Blowing up Berlusconi

Shortly afterwards Gentile won a prestigious Fulbright Foreign Scholarship to take a masters in media arts at Emerson College, Boston, USA. “I had the chance to open up my horizons, get to know a different culture, and it was also very interesting because European filmmaking and US filmmaking are very different.” Gentile knew that he would learn a lot about craft and visuals thanks to the intense practical nature of the course, and that is now reflected in his work. “I think I use my European background, but then when it comes to making [films] I definitely have a [more technical] approach and that happened in the United States.”

In 2007, armed with new skills, Gentile came back to Milan and spent the next couple of years shooting promos for top Italian bands. He also made his first commercials and in 2010 shot *Life and Roll* for Rolling Stone, which he sees as his breakthrough moment. The slick online film through DLV BBDO was a satirical, yet serious, comment on the government’s (then under Berlusconi’s leadership) ‘backstage’ antics, which were allegedly more salacious than a rock band’s. “There wasn’t a big budget, but when I saw the script I knew that it was powerful,” says Gentile. “I knew that putting together a hot theme like that with a cool brand like Rolling Stone would be a great mix [and would] create something explosive... [would] create, like, a bomb.”

The film captured the attention of not just the public, but the international ad industry too. He signed with **Wanda** in France and Stamp in London, which no longer exists, but with whom he shot several films including a big adidas spot starring Lionel Messi. "It's not very common for an Italian, or south European, director to get the chance to shoot commercials for the UK market," says Gentile, who's also made a series of glossy films for Sky Atlantic in the UK. "The north European countries have a strong visual style in ads, whereas I think south Europeans concentrate more on a type of comedy, but they don't really pay attention to the visuals – the craft." This is where Gentile's time in the States pays off. "Because of [the US] influence, my style is not completely Italian, so it's appreciated in other countries. I don't say it's good or bad, but when they see my work they don't say immediately, 'Oh that's an Italian commercial'."

The Italian production scene is unique in that, save for three or four individuals, directors are not signed exclusively to production houses. It may sound bizarre to outsiders, but it's common practice for several companies to sit in on a brief and frantically try to beat the others to contacting the same director. Gentile is one of the exceptions, having signed exclusively with Filmmaster, possibly the country's biggest player. "I think it's a much better way to work," he says. "You have the chance to create a team, from the producers to the people working with you in post production, and they really take care of the director. You get to know the people that you work with and that helps a lot when it comes to future projects."

With the future in mind, Gentile recently signed with Michael Bay and Scott Gardenhour's LA production company, The Institute, for US commercials representation and has been talking with them about the possibility of upcoming feature developments. That's his primary goal and he's currently working on an Italian script.

The world at his feet

With all the globetrotting, Gentile is unmarried at 36 and though he does have a girlfriend, he admits it's difficult to maintain a relationship when you're working outside a normal nine to five. "I think I will [marry] one day, but I'm following my dreams, my career and what I'm focused on, so I'm definitely sacrificing a little bit of my personal life with that." However, when he does eventually tie the knot, he won't be limiting his work to one place. "I think I will find a woman who is a traveller like me and enjoys the kind of gypsy life – the privileged, gypsy life – of a director."

Gentile's future life partner will certainly need to embrace world travel, and though it might make it hard to pinpoint his nationality just by watching his reel, his international, chameleonic style is arguably his greatest strength.

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