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History at the Cannes Film Festival â?? Part VII the 1990â??s

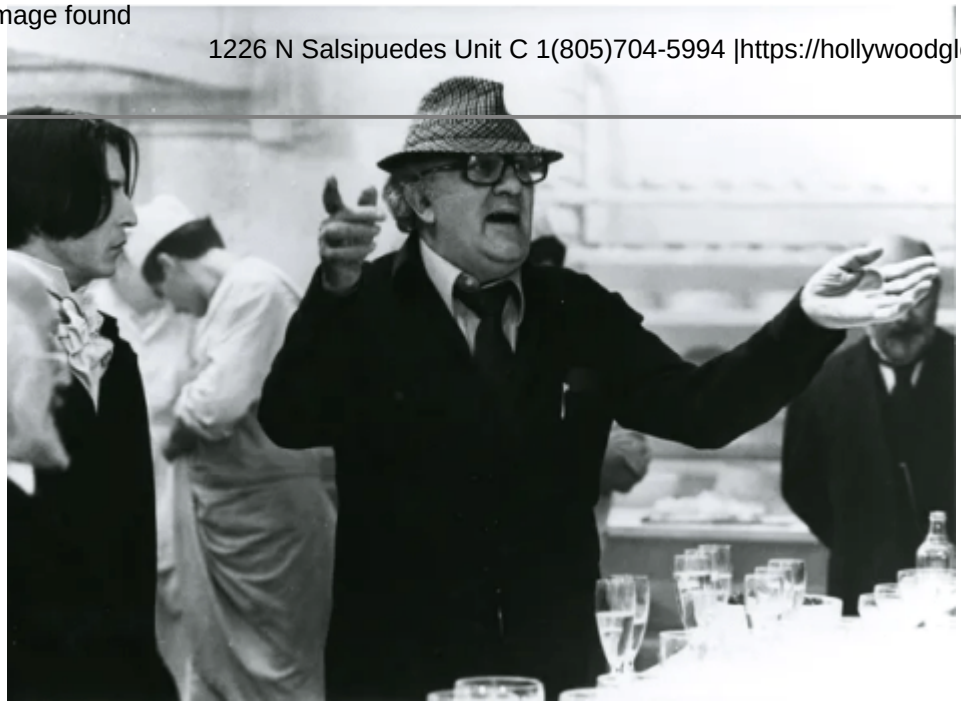
Description

Posted by Larry Gleeson

The 1990s ushered in a time of significant change globally and that change was reflected at the Cannes Film Festival. â??Promotionâ?• became the driving new buzzword. Hardly anyone was more creative than Madonna. After Italian politician, La Cicciolina, answered the age-old question of how to dress at Cannes, the former porn actress wore an outfit that seemed more appropriate for the bedroom than the red carpet, Madonna walked the steps and red carpet with her La Cicciolina-inspired outfit.

True to say cinema had broken loose and perpetual change was underway.

In 1990, Federico Fellini presented *The Voice of the Moon* at the Cannes Film Festival. Fellini had once declared that â??Cannes is like a natural harbor for a film to moor inâ?•. Despite having once said that he didnâ??t like ceremonies, this was his tenth film presented on La Croisette, after films such as *The Nights of Cabiria* in 1957, *La Dolce Vita* in 1960, *Amarcord* in 1974, and *City of Women* in 1980. The Festival paid tribute to him by presenting effigies of his characters on the Festivalâ??s Louis LumiÃ¨re theater stage curtain. *The Voice of the Moon* would be the last film by the legendary director who died in 1994.



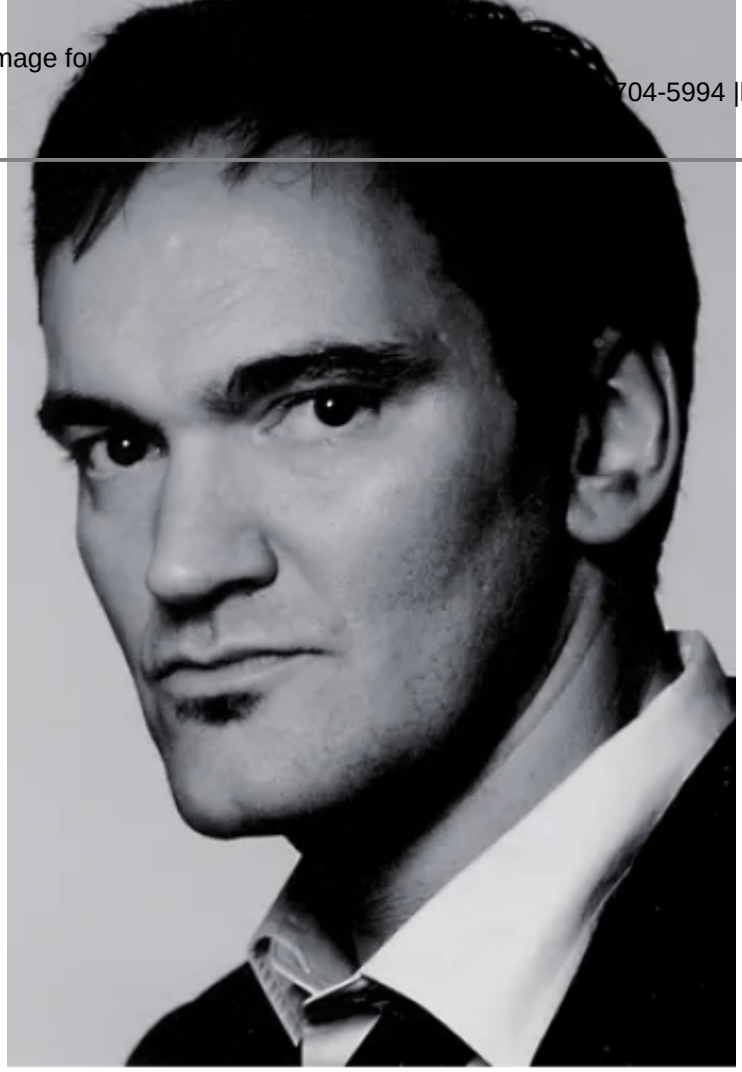
Federico Fellini

(Cr.Cannes_Festival)

In 1991, the award winners chosen under the presidency of Roman Polanski stirred up less debate but nevertheless set a precedent. The members of the jury, swept up by their enthusiasm, attributed all the major awards to the film *Barton Fink*. The Coen brothers won the Palme dâ??Or and the award for Best Director and the award for Best Actor went to its star John Turturro. From then on the Festival forbade future juries from attributing all the major awards to one film.

In 1993, the Palme dâ??Or was jointly awarded to *Farewell, My Concubine* by Chen Kaige, and to a woman, the director Jane Campion for *The Piano*. With the fall of the Berlin Wall, the first â??Cinema & Libertyâ?? conference was held and attracted a hundred plus directors from all around the world. Tellingly, prizes were awarded to representatives from around the world: Africa, Asia, Latin America, and Eastern European countries. The Festival also surpassed 20000 participants.

In 1995, American Sharon Stone was all the rage as she was on full display making a name for herself with controversial scenes in the neo-noir erotic thriller, *Basic Instinct.* The following year Quintin Tarantino premiered his Palme dâ??Or-winning, cult-classic, *Pulp Fiction.*


Quintin Tarantino (Cr. Cannes_Festival)

But, 1995 seemed to be a pivotal year in capturing the spirit of the time with new film genres utilizing the camera as a witness to history and capturing socio-cultural issues of the day such as the phenomenon of suburban slums with Matthieu Kassovitzâ??s film *La Haine (Hate)*, which took the Best Directorâ??s prize, or the fight against racism with the film *Jungle Fever* by the renowned Spike Lee. These new contemporary genres and accompanying film work created a buzz in public opinion as well as a source of controversy.

Cinema Paradiso

Undeniably, the recurrent reproach had been that the Festival rewards cinema dâ??auteur and not what the public wants to watch. The nineties largely proved this wrong. The decade saw the Palme dâ??Or going to *The Piano*, Quentin Tarantinoâ??s *Pulp Fiction*, *Secrets and Lies* by Mike Leigh, and other prizes going to *Hate* by Mathieu Kassovitz and *The Eighth Day* by Jaco van Dormael, all of which were big box office successes. In certain cases, the Cannes Festival has even helped a film to find its public. *Cinema Paradiso* initially met with very poor reception in Italy. In 1989, its director Giuseppe Tornatore shortened it by half an hour before presenting it at Cannes. It won the Jury Grand Prix and went on to be an international success.

FESTIVAL DE CANNES

With its worldwide reputation, the Festival continued to grow throughout the 1990s and left an indelible mark with such iconic moments as the Italian actor-director Roberto Benigniâ??s satisfaction, on his knees under the spotlights, after winning for his film *Life is Beautiful* at the end of the 90s. These films left their mark on the history of worldwide cinema, contributing to the democratization of various social phenomena such as homosexuality with the film *Happy Together* by Wong Kar-Wai.

50 years of promoting cinema

Growing over the years, the Cannes Film Festival celebrated its 50th anniversary in 1997. 1,289 films from all around the world had been part of the official selection since the first Festival in 1946, through 50 years of cinema that has captured the evolution of our societies.

Stay tuned for new awareness and the new millennium!

Category

1. Cannes
2. Cannes Film Festival
3. Film Festival
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Tags

1. Federico Fellini
2. La Cicciolina
3. Madonna
4. Wong Kar-Wai

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