

KINO LORBER

IL DONO

A Film by Michelangelo Frammartino



*Restored in 4K in 2022 by courtesy of Coproduction Office and
Cineteca di Bologna*

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Film Notes/Synopsis:

The camera captures little of what is real. Or at least so the viewer might conclude after having seen *Il dono*, the beautiful film by Michelangelo Frammartino. The film relates the intersecting stories of an old man and a young girl with extreme economy of means. We know nothing about these beings except that they live in the village of Caulonia in Calabria.

Nevertheless, we would be foolish to limit ourselves to this observation. The director, by his own admission, ventures a story of surfaces yet ends up bringing out the truth of places. Despite remaining outside, on the thresholds of houses, he manages to penetrate their intimacy.

The village is there. Like the one in Kiarostami's *The Wind Will Carry Us*. With the same apparent hostility. The same barking dogs. The same steep terrain. The same verticality. And above all, the same movements: an apple rolling down a terrace here, a ball hurtling down the street there. Frammartino forges ahead, taking risks to impose what resists and to attain what, through laziness, we forget or simplify. Time, for example... In this case, the plural form would be more fitting since the filmmaker wants to capture these co-existing moments. Rather than submitting to the dictatorship of action, time accompanies a myriad of tiny changes. *Il dono* shows us variations of life, reduced to gestures yet substantiated by its own depth...

We come to understand the harrowing loneliness of the old man who sees his animals disappear one after the other and who, before leaving this earth, has nothing left except concern for his neighbour. By giving her a scooter, by giving her back her freedom, he acknowledges that he has been moved. The mystery (of a feeling, a gesture, a landscape, a film) has this beauty in that it is sometimes combined with giving. As Frammartino (who chose this title as a tribute to Derrida) reminds us, the gift is not the same as an exchange because it asks for nothing... This is what so deeply unites the pair, the world and this cinema: an absence of concession, the desire to offer without expecting anything in return, a matter of choice. No question. No answer. Simply an invitation – for the girl and for the viewer – to receive and go forth. - [Yannick Lemarié](#)

Director's Bio

Michelangelo Frammartino was born in Milan in 1968. He studied Architecture at the Politecnico di Milano, where he developed a passion for the relationship between physical space and photographic images, video, and cinema. After graduation, he continued his studies at Civica Scuola del Cinema in Milan, where he designed video installations influenced by Studio Azzurro's art research. Frammartino's debut *Il Dono* (2003), a no-budget feature film, shot in his parents' village in Calabria, premiered at the

Locarno Film Festival. It went on to win the Grand Prix at the Annecy Film Festival and the Jury Prize at both Thessaloniki and Warsaw. Frammartino's second feature, *Le Quattro Volte* (2010), premiered in Directors' Fortnight at the Cannes Film Festival. The film won the Europa Cinemas "Best European Film" award in Cannes, the main prize at CPH:DOX, and was the 2010 Directors' Fortnight "Coup de coeur". In 2013, Frammartino's installation *Alberi*, a 26-minute loop, premiered at MoMA PS1 and was subsequently shown at other museums, including Centre Pompidou's 2021 Hors Pistes Festival. Frammartino's third feature film, *Il Buco* was shot in Southern Italy, in the neighboring regions of Calabria and Basilicata which continue to inspire him and where all his previous works were shot. With the approach of an anthropologist, Frammartino captures the traditional and transcendent with a simplicity and spirituality that is unique to his filmography

Restoration Credits:

Restored in 4K in 2022 by courtesy of Coproduction Office and Cineteca di Bologna at L'Immagine Ritrovata and Augustus Color laboratories, from the original camera and sound negatives, with Michelangelo Frammartino's supervision.

Italy | 2003 | 80 minutes | Italian