



TARANTULA Presents

# WHAT'S LEFT?

CERCLE  
CULTUREL  
CURIEL

A FILM BY  
DONATO ROTUNNO

press  
kit



TARANTULA



FILM FUND  
LUXEMBOURG

CERCLE CULTUREL E RIECREATIF  
*Eugenio Curiel*  
ASSBL





Tarantula presents

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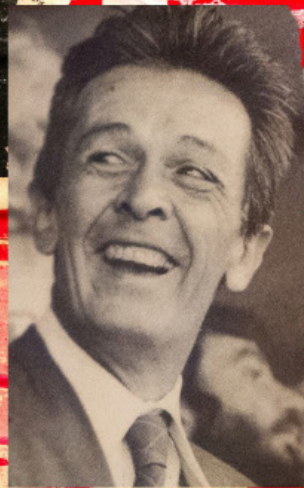
75 min – Luxembourg – 2024 - 1.85 - 5.1 - 4K





FESTIVAL NAZIONALE DE L'UNITA' FIRENZE  
30/8-14/9 LE CASCINE

13/9/1975  
LE DONNE UNITE  
FORZA  
DI RINNOVAMENTO



FESTIVAL NAZIONALE  
DE L'UNITA' MODENA  
3/18 SETTEMBRE '77



1

MAGGIO  
UNITA' DEI LAVORATORI



25  
Trentes  
annivers  
della  
Liberaz







## LOGLINE

On the eve of their building's destruction after more than 50 years, how did the Cercle Culturel Curiel and its trattoria, come to have a major influence on the political and cultural life of Luxembourg ?

## SYNOPSIS

In the house located at 107 Route d'Esch, the Circolo Eugenio Curiel association finds themselves in a pickle.

The Luxembourgish headquarters of the Italian Communist Party - which ceased to exist in 1991 to form the Social-Democratic Party, was targeted by the real estate projects spreading all over the capital. The building was destroyed at the beginning of 2024.

Architecturally speaking, the building was nothing out of the ordinary. Yet, since the Circolo acquired it in 1978, it made the days of several Luxembourgish political organizations and other associations. Meeting rooms and the trattoria are both part of a memorial in the hearts of the Left Parties.

Keeping a trace means above all talking about the birth of a cultural cradle for Luxembourg, the result of which surrounds us and feeds us unconsciously today. Public figures, economic players, representatives of the cultural world, many of them have nourished themselves intellectually and physically in this unlikely place.

The relationship between activism and cuisine has been the hallmark of the place. A balance between head and belly.

# CIRCOLO CULTURALE E RECREATIVO

The association « Circolo Culturale e recreativo Eugenio Curiel » was founded in 1971 in Luxembourg and was named after the communist activist scientist and physicist Eugenio Curiel, assassinated by fascists in Milan in 1945. The people who founded and opened Circolo Curiel were all part of the Italian left-wing Party, and particularly of the Communist Party. Their goal was to create a place where Italian immigrants could meet, as well as all the people who supported social justice and civil liberties.

In 1971, The Grand-Duchy of Luxembourg was different from what we know today. Chances to meet and more generally social life were more limited than today. The presence of Italians, who were mostly metallurgists, miners or builders, was very important. Most of them were affiliated to or voted for the Communist Party.

This is how a group of friends and comrades spotted a space at the ground floor of an old house located at 107, route d'Esch, in Luxembourg-city.

After signing the lease, this group of Italians finally had a place for entertainment, meetings, political discussions and the chance to speak about Italy in Italian. The future Circolo Curiel had their headquarter.

After being tenants for 7 years, the group of Circolo end up buying the building in 1978 thanks to a loan and to the amount of donations sent by their members. Some volunteers even chose to send a percentage of their salary each month. A sort of voluntary self-tax.

Besides these donations, the members worked late hours during their free time to renovate the building to create a proper cultural center. The material that they used was often picked up on construction sites. They even extended the space by hammering part of the courtyard's wall, creating a second room.

It was time for Circolo to have a complete makeover, which led to the closing of the building until the 1st of May in 1983. At the reopening, the members discovered that their small café on the ground floor turned into a restaurant. The first floor also gained a new conference room, which will be joined by a library two years later.

Circolo started to look like a small firm and needed to make up for it by hiring. Marilena became the first cook to take over the kitchen until the beginning of the 00's. The restaurant was only open in the evenings from Monday to Saturday. Their.... Was set from the start: garganelli and other homemade pasta, their famous saltimbocca, polenta,





# EUGENIO CURIEL

cod and veal liver venetian style became quickly their signature dishes.

This is how Circolo gained in popularity, becoming more and more of a landmark amongst the Italian immigrants and their families. To access the building, people needed to pay upfront or to get an annual pass through the association. After years of presence in Luxembourg-city, Circolo Curiel became a well-established building above and beyond the Italian community.

The restaurant also became a landmark to those who weren't Italian: a trattoria's welcoming atmosphere with vichy-checked table clothes, a high-quality Italian cuisine and a huge fireplace that made the place even cosier during autumn and winter. Numerous cultural events turned the place into a venue full of life. Screenings and political debates filled up the entire conference room on the first floor.

As time went by, the initial collection of books became richer thanks to private donations and purchase made by the Committee of Circolo Curiel. Today, the library has more than 9000 books which make it the biggest private collection of Italian-language books in Luxembourg.

The building is now part of a real estate project that affects most of the street. Due to the association owning the house, a common ground has been reached with the real estate group: once the project is over, Circolo can move into one of their newly constructed buildings. This will give the Circolo a surface area equivalent to the one that existed before the building was destroyed, enabling it to rise from the ashes.

We truly believe that Circolo has fundamentally followed through with their mission: a place of meetings, debates, of cultural exchange with an ethical identity and clear values. A place where ideals, values and hopes for the Left can find shelter and are deeply rooted.

CIRCOLO CULTURALE E RICREATIVO  
*Eugenio Curiel*  
ASBL





iluppare  
sistenza  
democratica  
conomica  
ia

ap

festival nazionale unit



PARTITO COMUNISTA ITALIANO FESTIVAL PROVINCIALE





# INTERVIEW WITH DONATO ROTUNNO

## **What was the starting point of this documentary?**

Everything started in 2022. The Committee of Circolo Curiel informed me that the building and headquarter of the association was going to be torn down. This place that welcomed 50 years of activism's events, of encounters around shared meals or cultural and political activities that link the associative world and the Italian community to our country.

In front of this void, the members of the Committee and their supporters realised that they would leave no trace of their half a century of activism. They approached me to imagine capturing, through a documentary or at least an audiovisual project, what happened within these walls. The machine was set in motion.

## **How did you come up with the idea of such a documentary to retrace 50 years of existence?**

My first reflex was to research and collect all traces of activities that happened in this building. We can distinguish three types of activities: political commitment, cuisine, and culture.

This includes on one hand the Italian associative world and several immigrant communities living in Luxembourg, and on the other hand, a part of the Luxembourgish community.

So, our first idea was to collect written testaments, photographs, flyers, posters to have a good raw material, foundations for the movie. However, we quickly realised that there were only a very few documents had been kept.

These decades' communication was mostly spoken and not digitalised like it is nowadays.

Ces décennies-là étaient principalement marquées par la parole, et non par le monde numérique dans lequel nous vivons actuellement. So, we came up against the fact that there was no trace of it, no archives (apart from accounting

and administrative archives, with the association's status and so on). There were no visual documents technically speaking. The first question that popped into my mind was: how can one talk about 50 years of activities without any visual support?

What remained was testimonies based on the memory of a group of people ready to expose themselves through their journey within Circolo Curiel.

## **So, you had to create a setting that would bring out their recollection, both their individual and collective memory?**

That is right. Memory is ephemeral, contradictory, volatile and it permanently evolves throughout our existence. It was mandatory to create a space that would bring out these memories and stage them during our exchanges. I then had the idea of allegorically recreating this building in a studio.

Subconsciously, our participants lived their story again, filled with emotional moments, encounters, thoughts to share with the viewers thank to this setting. This allowed us to settle into this framework and let the time pass to bring out these impressions, these memories.

## **The movie reveals that similar places exist in Europe, in Switzerland in that case, where you visited the "Coopi". Could you tell us more about it?**

Circolo Curiel is an example of what happened during almost a century everywhere in Europe, where immigrants of different cultural backgrounds moved. To understand the importance of Circolo Curiel, it was interesting to take Cooperativo in Zürich as an example. After 117 years of existence, they had to completely shut down in May 2023 whereas Circolo Curiel will come back from their ashes. It seemed that while talking about a subject so local, giving at least one other example in another country would contribute to making the theme universal.



**What role has Circolo Curiel played in Donato Rotunno's life?**

I frequented this place during a moment of my life where committing to the associative world was very important to me. I spent numerous evenings facing other people's opinions and listening to elderly people's speeches, those who played a role in the history of the Italian community in Luxembourg by getting involved in the political and cultural life of the country.

**Are physical locations still wanted amongst the younger generation to get politically committed?**

In any case, this political commitment does exist. In my opinion, we are the ones who need to make sure that they agree with the values that we are defending. It is sensible and even necessary for an evolution to happen because in order to come back from the ashes, one needs to reinvent themselves. Today's generations have discovered new ways of communicating, new ways of fighting, new ways of being an activist. Do they need a fixed spot, a place where they can meet up, get together and feel each other's closeness? I firmly believe so.





BERLINGUER

34

25  
APRILE

**rinnovare e sviluppare  
l'unità della Resistenza  
per la crescita democratica  
e la rinascita economica  
dell'Italia**



festival nazionale l'unita' torino 1971







# **RECIPE OF SALTIMBOCCA DEL CIRCOLO FOR 4 PEOPLE :**

- 4 veal escalopes
- 4 to 6 slices of prosciutto crudo
- Salvia leaf
- Butter
- Flour
- White wine (preferably italian and dry)
- Salt and pepper

1. Use a meat mallet to make the escalopes thinner.
2. Lay a slice of prosciutto crudo on the meat and add a salvia leaf on the center. Attach everything by sliding a toothpick from the longest side of the escalopes.
3. Pour flour on a plate. Coat the escalopes entirely in flour evenly.
4. Put some butter in a pan until it melts. Add the escalopes, 2 minutes per side on medium heat.
5. Add salt and pepper. Poor a glass of white wine and wait until it's completely evaporated.





a **Tarantula** production

with the support of **Film Fund Luxembourg**

**and the participation of** **Circolo Culturale e Recreativo Eugenio Curiel**





# Participants

Franco Barillozzi  
Corinne Cahen  
Maria Luisa Caldognetto  
Remo Ceccarelli  
Milena Crespi  
Mars Di Bartolomeo  
Mauro Doro  
Giovanni Grilli  
Alexis Juncosa  
Luc Koedinger  
Enrico Lunghi  
Marcello Passeri  
Umberto Picariello  
Maria Grazia Puglisi  
Paca Rimbau  
Samir  
Roberto Serra  
Sandro Testi  
Claude Turmes  
David Wagner





## DONATO ROTUNNO

Donato Rotunno was born in Luxembourg in 1966 and graduated from the IAD in Belgium in 1992. He founded Tarantula Luxembourg in 1995, with which he has since produced over 50 feature films. He has developed his career as a director around subjects specific to Luxembourg, including immigration, multiculturalism, politics and the relationship between contemporary art and cinema. His first feature film, *In a Dark Place* won the prize for best artistic contribution at the Lëtzebuurger Filmpräis in 2007. His second feature, *Baby(a)lone*, adapted from Tullio Foggiarini's novel *Amok*, was selected for numerous international festivals and chosen to represent Luxembourg at the 88th Academy Awards in the Best Foreign Language Film category. *Io sto bene*, his third film, had its world premiere at the Festival Alice nella città in Rome in 2020, and represented Luxembourg at the Academy Awards for Best Foreign Film in 2021.

With *What's left?*, he looks at the Cercle Culturel Curiel and its influence on political and cultural life in Luxembourg. He is currently working on his next documentary, *Capitales Europe - la bataille des sièges*.

### FILMOGRAPHY

- |      |   |
|------|---|
| 2024 | <b>CAPITALES EUROPE</b> / Documentary, 52' / 80'<br>Pre-production, to be released in 2025  |
| 2024 | <b>WHAT'S LEFT?</b> / Documentary, 75'<br>***Villerupt Film Festival 2024<br>*** Politik - Rencontres Internationales du Film politique de Liège 2024                   |
| 2020 | <b>IO STO BENE</b> / Feature Film, 95'<br>***Alice nella Città Film Festival - Roma 2020<br>***Villerupt Film Festival 2020<br>***Mons International Film Festival 2021 |
| 2015 | <b>DREAMS HAVE A LANGUAGE</b> / Docu-fiction, 48'   |
| 2014 | <b>BABY(A) LONE</b> / Feature Film 90'<br>***Official Competition Goa Film Festival (India) 2015<br>***Official Competition Stockholm Film Festival 2015                |
| 2012 | <b>TERRA MIA TERRA NOSTRA</b> / Documentary, 82'<br>*** Villerupt Film Festival 2012  |
| 2011 | <b>BLÀ, BLÄ, BLÁ</b> / Documentary, 52'   |
| 2006 | <b>IN A DARK PLACE</b> / Feature Film, 110'<br>*** Sitges Film Festival 2006  |
| 2005 | <b>LANDSCAPE WITH A CORPSE</b> / Short-movie, 30'   |
|      | <b>LES MESURES DU RECTANGLE</b> / Documentary, 52'  |
| 1999 | <b>ANDRÉ ET LES VOIX DISSIDENTES</b> / Documentary, 52'   |





**TARANTULA**

Tarantula Luxembourg was founded in 1995 by producer, scriptwriter and director Donato Rotunno. Today, the company makes its mark on the European audiovisual landscape through its assertive editorial choices and its regular presence at major festivals such as Cannes, Toronto, Venice and Locarno. The company has produced numerous fiction and documentary films. Many of them tackle the context of immigration and politics with a sense of poetry and a specific artistic vision.

Tarantula's co-productions include *A piece of sky* by Bénédicte Liénard (Official Selection Un Certain Regard in 2002), *Fratricide* by Yilmaz Arslan winner of the Silver Leopard at the Locarno Festival in 2004, and *Mobile Home* by François Pirot, selected for Locarno Festival in 2012, *Carré Blanc* by Jean-Baptiste Leonetti, *A wedding* by Stephan Streker, *Two of us* by Filippo Meneghetti and *Horizonte* by Cesar Augusto Acevedo, all presented at TIFF, and more recently, *Fire will come* by Oliver Laxe (Jury Prize - Cannes Festival 2019 - Un Certain Regard), *Harka* by Lotfy Nathan (Prize for Best Actress ex-aequo at Un Certain Regard at the 75th Cannes Festival) and *Blanquita* by Fernando Guzzoni (Orizzonti Prize for Best Screenplay) and *Holly* by Fien Troch presented in competition in Venice in 2022 and 2023 respectively.

Tarantula Luxembourg participates in the European film industry through numerous co-production projects and seeks to produce films that are relevant to the constantly changing society in which we live... *What's Left?* is one of them.





TARANTULA

# WHAT'S LEFT?

CERCLE  
CULTUREL  
CURIEL

A FILM BY  
DONATO ROTUNNO

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