

THINGS TO COME

CINEMA AND FUTURE WORLDS

The retrospective of the 33rd TFF curated by Emanuela Martini

The retrospective of the 33rd Torino Film Festival, curated by Emanuela Martini, is dedicated to the “things to come,” to future scenarios as imagined by science fiction movies and by the authors who described how the world might be in the decades to follow. Ranging from the 1930s to the threshold of the year 2000, the retrospective presents an array of teeming, ascetic or rainy cities; of alienation, aggressiveness and domination; of totalitarian regimes and consumer violence, from the desperate and shocked but always lucid viewpoints of grand filmmakers like Kubrick, Godard, Truffaut, Resnais, Ferreri, Scott, Gilliam, Cronenberg, Kathryn Bigelow and others. Starting in the 1960s, in particular, a myriad of genre films distanced themselves from the wonders of the possible and began to concentrate on the horrors of the probable, not only in the English-speaking world, but in Europe and Asia as well. As usual, the retrospective will be spread over two years and two editions of the festival, and will present not only films of fundamental importance in the contemporary imaginary, but works by filmmakers who only occasionally touched the subject, and genre movies which sometimes are little known and many times have been forgotten, with special attention to the ‘60s and ‘70s, which produced a true flowering of dystopic science fiction.

In 1936, a great American set designer, William Cameron Menzies, directed a movie based on a novel by H. G. Wells that recounted what might happen in an imaginary city at the outbreak of World War II: *Things To Come*, which today seems rather rhetorical and static but nonetheless packs a scenographic punch in its representation of planet Earth in the year 2000. Along with *Metropolis* by Lang, it is one of the keystones of a journey through the utopias (and, above all, the dystopias) created by cinema: how did we imagine our future world? And, in its continuous imaginary interchange with reality, how much has film affected how the world’s present-day aspect has been “created”? How much is there - today, everywhere - of the Los Angeles of *Blade Runner* or the London of *A Clockwork Orange*? Or the piles of wreckage of *Week-end* by Godard or *Crash* by Cronenberg? And what about the political leadership of rock stars that Peter Watkins imagined in *Privilege* or Barry Shears depicted in *Wild in the Streets*? Not to mention the predicted disasters, both ecological (from the death of grass to cannibalism, from floods to glaciations) and psychological (atrophied feelings, the end of the male species, violent public games to channel aggressiveness, the chase after eternal youth which transforms humans into robots and, inversely, the progressive humanization of robots, androids, replicants, cyborgs...).

Film has shown us all this (and much, much more) without ever leaving our planet. Initially, it groped its way, taking inspiration above all from the great literary dystopias of Orwell and Huxley, and then, when sci-fi movies achieved the same levels as sci-fi literature (more or less in the ‘60s), it took its cue from the most clear-eyed genre authors of the post-war period (Bradbury, Sheekley, Matheson, and later Kingsley Amis, Philip Dick, William Burroughs, J. G. Ballard, William Gibson) and projected the data of reality into the future, in a narration that combines projection and anticipation, and continues to warn us not to lose sight of humanity, whatever form it might take.