

Shattered Ravings

Excursions into Sci-Fi, Fantasy, Horror...and everything in between...

Documentary Review – Hanging Shadows: Perspectives on Italian Horror Cinema (2007)

Posted on [July 15, 2014](#)

[Hanging Shadows: Perspectives on Italian Horror Cinema](#)

Directed by [Paolo Fazzini](#)

Courtesy of [MVD Entertainment](#)

Original Release Date: 2007

DVD Release Date: February 18, 2014



If you are a true horror fan like me, then you probably realize how much we owe Italian directors for the frights and gore that we have today. Much of what the modern genre is for us is a result of what Italian filmmakers did decades ago. But if you don't understand just

how much influence these European masterpieces hold, then this documentary is definitely for you. *HANGING SHADOWS* is an in-depth at some of horror's most influential Italian filmmakers, and it is a film that every single horror fan should own.

If you are not familiar with *HANGING SHADOWS*, here is the synopsis courtesy of MVD Entertainment:

Before The Ring and The Grudge, there was Suspiria. Hanging Shadows offers a critical appreciation of Italian horror cinema, pioneered by directors such as Dario Argento and Maria Bava, a genre that influenced filmmakers from Quentin Tarantino to Takashi Miike. With its roots in the pulpy crime novels of the 1920s and 30s, Giallo cinema (the term refers to the lurid yellow covers that graced the early novels) or Italian horror cinema, as it's more commonly known, first emerged in the late 1960s. Following the neo-realists, the giallo films represented a radical break with Italy's cinematic past, and much like film-noir in America, were often derided by critics as mere genre films – movies made by artisans (not artists). The films, however, have since developed a fervent cult following and their influence can be seen in the work of numerous contemporary filmmakers, most prominently in the young Asian directors who are developing their own wildly-popular brand of horror cinema. This documentary presents an informative historical overview of the giallo genre, exploring its genesis and chronicling the films, directors, and personalities that made up its golden age. Featuring interviews with Dario Argento, Lamberto Bava (director and son of Maria Bava), Antonella Fulci (daughter of director Lucio Fulci), Franco Ferrini (co-writer of Sergio Leone's Once upon a time in America and numerous Argento films), Ruggero Deodata (Cannibal Holocaust), Giannetto De Rossi (make-up artist on Fulci's films), and many others, Hanging Shadows is a fascinating study of a group of films and filmmakers that redefined the horror genre and forever changed the way we think of horror films.

I've been waiting for a documentary like this for a long time. It is chocked full of interviews with some of the greatest horror filmmakers of our time. No horror fan in his or her right mind can refute the influence of Bava or Fulci or Argento or Deodata...so it is a real treat to see them onscreen.

HANGING SHADOWS is pretty simplistic with its presentation; the majority of the film is made up of the interviews. There are a few cutaways to film clips, but these are minimal. This is not a negative by any means...but I feel I must mention it so you know what you're getting when you buy this DVD.

I particularly like hearing the mindset of each director as they discuss some of their most influential works. For example, a couple of them don't like gore...but have them in their movies anyway. I am not going to divulge names here because you need to watch the documentary!

HANGING SHADOWS is a big win for me, and any fan of horror cinema needs to own a copy. Whether you are well-versed with Italian cinema or not, chances are you will be after this film is over. It is available now, so give it a look.

MSB

This entry was posted in **Uncategorized** by **Matthew Scott Baker**. Bookmark the **permalink** [<http://matthewscottbaker.com/blog/2014/07/documentary-review-hanging-shadows-perspectives-on-italian-horror-cinema-2007/>] .