

THIS IS NOT A FILM ABOUT HOW WE CAN SAVE THE MOUNTAINS, THIS IS A FILM ABOUT HOW THE MOUNTAINS COULD SAVE US.

77  
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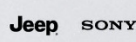
# A FLOWER OF MINE

( FIORE MIO )

WRITTEN AND DIRECTED BY  
PAOLO COGNETTI

COMING SOON

A SAMARCANDA FILM - NEXO DIGITAL - HARALD HOUSE - EDI PRODUCTION WITH THE SUPPORT OF FILM COMMISSION VALLE D'AOSTA  
IN COLLABORATION WITH MONTURA, JEEP TECHNICAL PARTNER SONY PRODUCTION SERVICE L'EUBAGE WRITTEN AND DIRECTED BY PAOLO COGNETTI DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY RUBEN IMPENS  
LIVE SOUND PAOLO BENVENUTI, DANIELE SOSIO EDITING MARIO MARRONE ORIGINAL MUSIC SCORE VASCO BRONDI PRODUCED BY LEONARDO BARRILE, FRANCO DI SARRO, FRANCESCO FAVALE  
WITH PAOLO COGNETTI, LAKI, REMIGIO VICQUERY, ARTURO SQUINOBAL, MARTA SQUINOBAL, SETE TAMANG, CORINNE FAVRE, MIA TESSAROLO





# A FLOWER OF MINE

## (FIORE MIO)

written and directed by **Paolo Cognetti**

produced by  
**Samarcanda Film, Nexo Studios, Harald House and EDI Effetti Digitali Italiani**  
with the support of the **Film Commission Vallée d'Aoste**  
in collaboration with **Montura and Jeep, technical partner SONY,**  
production service **L'Eubage**



distribution



**IN ITALIAN CINEMAS ON 25-26-27 NOVEMBER 2024**

after the Italian release, the film will be distributed worldwide by Nexo Studios

International sales Nexo Studios | [sales@nexodigital.it](mailto:sales@nexodigital.it)

## STARRING

(playing themselves)

PAOLO COGNETTI

LAKI

REMIGIO VICQUERY

MARTA SQUINOBAL

ARTURO SQUINOBAL

CORINNE FAVRE

SETE TAMANG

MIA TESSAROLO

Featuring

VASCO BRONDI

EMIL SQUINOBAL

CECILIA MERCADANTE

## CREDITS

Director

PAOLO COGNETTI

Story and Screenplay

PAOLO COGNETTI

Cinematography

RUBEN IMPENS

Editing

MARIO MARRONE (A.M.C.)

Sound Recording

PAOLO BENVENUTI, DANIELE SOSIO

Original Music

VASCO BRONDI

A co-production

ITALY-BELGIUM

Produced by

LEONARDO BARRILE,

FRANCO DI SARRO, FRANCESCO FAVALE

A production

SAMARCANDA FILM, NEXO DIGITAL, HARALD HOUSE,

EDI Effetti Digitali Italiani

With the support of

FILM Commission Vallée d'Aoste

In collaboration with:

MONTURA and JEEP

Technical partner

SONY

Production Service

L'EUBAGE

Distribution

NEXO STUDIOS

Duration

78 minutes

Year

2024

*"This is not a film about how we can save the mountains."*

*It's about how the mountains could save us.” (Paolo Cognetti)*

## SYNOPSIS

In the company of his inseparable dog Laki, the writer Paolo Cognetti returns to the alpine setting of "The Eight Mountains", this time to make a documentary that tells the story of Mount Rosa through breathtaking landscape scenery and meeting people who, besides finding a home in the mountains, have also found a true "place to experience feelings".

## PRODUCTION NOTES

The main role in **A FLOWER OF MINE** is the most deeply instinctive and emotional to come from Cognetti's work: the mountain he also explored in his documentary *Sogni di Grande Nord (Dreams of the Great North)* directed by Dario Acocella, where he followed in the footsteps of Christopher McCandless in *Into the Wild* with scenes showing the incredible, remote landscape of 'Alaska. This time Paolo Cognetti gets a lot closer to the audience and in **an intimate, introspective, unpredictable way** tells the story of his mountain: the **Monte Rosa, a geographical location but above all a place where we can understand** everything that surrounds us.

When in the summer of 2022 Italy suffered a period of extensive **drought**, for the first time in his life Paolo Cognetti saw the spring run completely dry at his home in Estoul, a small village about 1700 metres above the valley of Brusson. This event upset him so much that it triggered off the idea in him to tell the story of his beautiful mountains, and the **landscapes and glaciers now destined to disappear** or change forever due to climate change. So, Cognetti tells the story of his mountain along the same lines as **Hokusai's 'Thirty-six Views of Mount Fuji'**, a work in which the Japanese artist portrayed Fuji from many different viewpoints, recounting life on different levels: on the mountain sides, in the valleys below, on the summit, but also in nearby towns, from where the mountain's majestic profile can still be seen, in the distance, beyond the fog caused by pollution.

Cognetti is not alone on his journey to Monte Rosa. With him are cinematographer **Ruben Impens**, who he met on set during *The Eight Mountains* and is the director of photography in *Fiore Mio*, as well as the people he met on this journey. Like his lifetime friend **Remigio**, born and raised in Val d'Ayas, where he knows every place and cherishes the memory. Also with him are **Arturo Squinobal**, who has dedicated his life to the mountains - and his face shows all the signs - as well as his daughter **Marta**, whom Paolo has known since childhood and who turned the Orestes Huette into the first, and only, **vegan Alpine lodge**. And then we have **Corinne and Mia** as well, **women from the refuge lodges** who welcome travelers with the warm, relaxed smile of people who love what they do. And then there's the silent yet sharp-witted **Sete, a high-altitude Sherpa** who has climbed three eight-thousanders - Everest, Manaslu and Dhaulagiri - and **divides his time between Italy and Nepal**: spending the summer and winter working in Italy, while in autumn and spring he is a trekking guide in the Himalayas, where his wife and children live. And then there's **Laki, the dog**, his inseparable walking companion.

Completing the journey is singer-songwriter **Vasco Brondi**, a friend who is like a brother for Cognetti, and who, for the first time, has written the entire original soundtrack for a film. Besides the original music he has also written and performed a new song, "Ascoltare gli alberi" (Listen to the Trees), which is the closing music to the documentary. "Fiore mio", on the other hand, the track

which is featured in the ending of the film and inspired its title, has long been one of the most popular songs by **Andrea Laszlo De Simone**, a singer-songwriter and musician from Turin who won the 2024 César Award for Best Original Music in the film *Animal Kingdom (Le Règne Animal)*, becoming the first Italian to win this prestigious award.

## DIRECTORS NOTES

### The Mountains

*“I’ve been looking at these mountains ever since I was a child. They were there, right before my eyes all summer long, the eyes of a lonely little boy looking and watching. During winter, in the city, it was amazing how some images would come back to remind me: a tree, a boulder, a stream, a hut in ruins. It happens to me now too, for no reason, maybe while I’m doing something else in Milan. I’m 45 years old, but when I go up there, I feel like I’m in the body I had when I was young. And it’s not just the body, but the voice and words as well, because I’m a writer. I understand things through words, for me writing and thinking are inseparable. I like to ask questions, for example: what will the mountains be like when I’m gone? Will they miss me, somehow, like I miss them? These are questions I don’t think I’ll find answers to, but they help me see things better. Mountains without me - or anyone else - are mountains that belong to animals that exist, unseen, and live there in the most authentic way. The chamois, the wild goat, the deer. And wolves too. They live beyond us, in spite of us, hidden from us, while we remain unaware of their presence. To see them, we have to lie in wait, in the right seasons, i.e. autumn and spring. We need silence and patience. I wanted the characters in the film to live like animals do, to be, above all, physical bodies, gestures, part of the mountains. Using very few words. I wanted to capture their actions, enter their personal lives with the same silence and patience. Finally, I wanted to talk about ice, snow and water - to go with the flow. It’s about the mountains, their soul, their transformation, their being alive. I discovered something when writing about landscape: I abolished the verb ‘to be’ because it freezes images and I decided to use action verbs, because landscape means action and movement, not images. A tree swaying in the wind, a stream leaping and flowing, a boulder looming above, protectively, casting its shadow. In this film, I would have liked to have used a lot of still images of the mountains, but in such a way that nothing was actually still, and the mountain was alive.*

### The film

*“A Flower of Mine” is my first film as a director, after having written many books and worked as an author on many documentaries. I was lucky to have cinematographer Ruben Impens whom I met working on ‘Eight Mountains’. Ruben is a great photographer and I never needed to suggest shots to him, also because I was almost always in front of the camera. At the beginning, we just said to each other: we want there to be a lot of landscape in this film, lots of mountains above our heads, so that people can get lost in all of it, and be a part of it. From the middle of the film onwards we also pursued a second idea: the idea of me disappearing, gradually. I asked Ruben to film just back shots of me, or take me out of the picture and lose sight of me altogether, so that the viewer could look at a stream and a tree, or watch an animal. I did the same with sound engineer Paolo Benvenuti - he hates radio microphones because they’re too close to the characters, he’s also interested in what surrounds them. Paolo and I have known each other since film school, like Giorgio Carella, my assistant director. Also, for the first time in my life, I was in front of the camera instead of behind it, having taken so many photos in the mountains over the years. For four months I kept my faithful*



*SonyF6 in my hut - it weighed about ten kilos in the rucksack I carried with me every day when I went walking. I collected hours and hours of landscape photos. Sometimes Michele Alliod, who also did the final drone footage over the glacier, would come with me and we'd shoot footage of me wandering about, of me playing with Laki in the snow, me looking for water. Finally, Michel Dalle was our 'wildlife cameraman'. Michel spent a long time hunting chamois, wild goats, marmots, foxes, squirrels, eagles and hawks, because I wanted the film to be full of animals, more than men and women. In the editing room, with Mario Marrone, I just followed the work of my co-authors. Ruben's filming already included cuts, Paolo's microphone already indicated the best sounds, and as for the order of the scenes, that was easy, just one after another, following the seasons. In the editing room, Mario and I realized that the film was telling its own story. I had planned a voice-over using texts from my diary, but then we removed them, because we didn't need them. Being the lone writer that I am, I'm grateful to the film producers and all the other collaborators. A film is a collective endeavor and it doesn't work without mutual trust; and sometimes trust can turn into friendship. I hope our friendship can be felt by watching it.*

*Paolo Cognetti*

## **THE THREE REFUGES**

In Buddhist meditation, the Three Refuges are the Master, the Way and the Community of Practitioners. Paolo's journey in the film is exactly that - 'taking refuge' - a journey to the source of the water that has dried up where he lives, a search for the strength to face an ever-changing world. The spirits of the dead, from long ago as well as very recent, rise up in the night from a fire. There are places with names that only a few people can remember, and those people who can't remember the names don't remember the stories. There seems to be no end to the things Paolo can learn exploring the mountain where he grew up, and which he has chosen to be part of his life forever. Sometimes he too feels like a spirit and Laki, his old dog, becomes his guide. Where will he take him?

### **Il Quintino Sella**

"Nothing," - says Sete, laughing, when Paolo asks him what he'd like to have. Sete is a Sherpa who came to live in Valle d'Aosta a few years ago and now works at Quintino Sella which, at an altitude of 3600 metres, is one of the highest refuge lodges in Europe. What he earns in Italy goes to Nepal, where his family lives and where he's seen many of his friends, also Sherpas, lose their lives beneath an avalanche or down a crevasse. Sete never says they're dead, he says they've 'finished'. And he laughs – not a laugh to relieve nervousness, but a laugh to learn something from.

### **L'Orestes Hutte**

Arturo is the man who took Paolo to the glacier for the very first time. He wasn't a writer yet then, just a little boy, all excited and frightened at having to follow the master who is 80 years old and still continues to explore his glacier, getting his bearings with the help of wild goats. Arturo and his brother Oreste are two mountaineers whose many undertakings also include opening up winter routes on Mont Blanc and the Matterhorn. Oreste is sadly no longer with us but, in his memory, Arturo and his daughter Marta have built the Orestes Hutte, the first vegan refuge lodge in the Alps. It would be easy to think that they feel they are the guardians of the mountain, but when Paolo tries asking them, their answer surprises him.

## The Mezzalama

Mia recently started working at Mezzalama. She is 26 years old and the lodge is 89, and it hasn't changed in all those years. Mia is an anthropologist and a traveller, she has done seasonal work on the glacier and also at McDonald's in Dublin, and doesn't know where she'll be next year. She says working in a lodge is perfect for people who want to escape, and that here she feels 'transparent'. She says working in the lodge is like standing still and that she can come back when she's far away, if she wants to, all she has to do is just close her eyes. She feels like a tree that changes with every season but isn't ready to put roots down yet. And that's OK, even though she feels like crying as she leaves and lets the word "Shit!" slip out, not realizing that she was being recorded.

## PAOLO COGNETTI

Paolo Cognetti was born in Milan in 1978. He made his début with a number of short story collections published by Minimum Fax. He has written **The Wild Boy** - *Il ragazzo selvatico* (Terre di Mezzo, 2013), **The Eight Mountains** - *Le otto montagne* (Einaudi, 2016), **Without Ever Reaching the Summit** - *Senza mai arrivare in cima* (Einaudi, 2018), **The Happiness of the Wolf** - *La felicità del lupo* (Einaudi, 2021) and **Down in the Valley** *Giù nella valle* (Einaudi, 2023). In 2021 he edited *L'Antonia* about Antonia Pozzi (Ponte alle Grazie). 2021 also saw the release, both as a film-documentary and a podcast, of **Big North** - *Paolo Cognetti. Sogni di Grande Nord*. For *The Eight Mountains*, which has been translated for release in over 40 countries, in 2017 he won the Strega Prize (Italy's most prestigious literary award), the Premio Strega Giovani and the Prix Médicis étranger. The film, based on the book of the same title, won the Jury Prize at the 2022 Cannes Film and four David di Donatello Awards in 2023 including Best Film.