

ABSTRACT PRIN 2017

F-ACTOR. Forms of Contemporary Media Professional Acting. Training, Recruitment and Management, Social Discourses in Italy (2000-2020)

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The project PRIN2017 F-ACTOR. *Forms of Contemporary Media Professional Acting. Training, Recruitment and Management, Social Discourses in Italy* (2000-2020) focused on acting within contemporary Italian film and media industry. It gathered scholars from four different national institutions, i.e., University of Bologna, Sapienza University of Rome, University of Turin, and University of Udine, which coordinated the four different units. The main lens to scrutinize the subject was the notion of 'work', and the fields of inquiry are the education and training actors receive, the access and permanence on the job market, and social discourses around them, to validate, enhance, and promote their personalities.

F-ACTOR brought together different perspectives, such as production studies, stardom and celebrity studies, performance studies, and an overall expertise of the four PIs (Luca Barra, Emiliano Morreale, Mariapaola Pierini, and Francesco Pitassio, who coordinates the project) on Italian film and media industry.

The project particularly pinpointed the role

institutions and practitioners play in devising actresses' and actors' careers. Accordingly, a general census of training and educational initiatives available in Italy has been produced, providing researchers with an additional tool to scrutinize where and in what ways performers are prepared to enter the job market. Specific surveys and interviews have been made on acting methods, schools, institutions, ranging from renowned Centro Sperimentale di Cinematografia and Accademia d'Arte Drammatica "Silvio D'Amico" to new-born initiatives such as Scuola d'arte drammatica "Gian Maria Volonté". Archival research on the genealogy of teaching methods has been carried on, for specific and influential case studies, such as the "Costa Method".

Furthermore, research has been undertaken on the function below-the-line intermediaries hold in facilitating, launching, and managing actresses' and actors' careers. Agents, acting coaches, casting directors, and producers, notwithstanding the growing grey area of self-promotion, are almost unexplored areas of inquiry. Through interviews, seminars, and participant observation on TV and film

production sets researchers achieved a much deeper understanding of the work surrounding the production of the performers' image and its maintenance.

Finally, career pathways require social discourses to raise awareness. Film and TV criticism, grassroots discourse, awards such as the David di Donatello or film festivals have a paramount importance in drawing attention to film and TV performers, acknowledge them, and consecrate their relevance. Through qualitative interviews of key players among film festivals and awards practitioners, researchers achieved an in-depth knowledge of the function actresses and actors play within their organisation, as cogs of an articulated machinery which through celebrity is magnified, while enhancing it. Particular attention has been devoted to film festivals and awards during the Covid crisis, which badly affected film and TV practitioners, and namely performers.

Among the chief deliverables of F-ACTOR we should list:

- A Dossier of reference journal *The Italianist*, which Luca Barra and Francesco Pitassio edited in 2021: *Studying Film and TV Actors (and Their Intermediaries): A*

Cultural and Industrial Approach (<https://www.tandfonline.com/toc/yita20/41/2>).

- A special issue of reference journal *Cinergie*, which Luca Antoniazzi, Cristina Formenti, and Giulia Muggeo edited in 2022: *Actors and the Covid Pandemic in Italy* (<https://cinergie.unibo.it/article/view/15055>).
- A website, collecting all the main outcomes, including interviews and surveys, produced during the project (<https://italianperformers.it/it/>).
- A collection, *Contemporary Italian Screen Performers*, edited by Luca Barra, Cristina Formenti Mariapaola Pierini, and Francesco Pitassio, deemed to be published in 2024 in open access by Palgrave, in the series *Studies in Screen Industries and Performance*, edited by Cynthia Baron.
- Seminars, webinars, and conferences which each individual unit, in cooperation with the others, set up.
- Papers presented at key conferences, such as the American Association for Italian Studies-AAIS, the European Network for Cinema and Media Studies-NECS etc.