Maybe not from the small circle of art bohemians (who also chase each other on the red carpet when they are a bit tipsy) but surely it is the most awaited event in the city. Let's talk about the Venice Film Festival now in its 76th edition. From Wednesday 28 August to 7 September the places otherwise closed all year round (the Palazzo del Cinema, the former Casino, the Sala Darsena) and those built on purpose like the Palabiennale and the Sala Giardino (half of the projections for the public) come to life with the press, insiders and many fans. The festival is also equipped with a market that focuses above all on the Excelsior (it also contains a section dedicated to literary rights but is almost torn to pieces by the Toronto one, which happens only a few days later) while the curious - and the only one of its kind for a film festival on which he focuses a lot - VR, Virtual Reality, is located on the Island of Lazzaretto Vecchio (where biennial appetites are being extended at the expense of a museum of the lagoon that some local archaeologists would like to give birth to).
On stage they will parade, especially in the early days (and every time before their film is shown in the Sala Grande) the big stars of the global industry. This year to open the dances - metaphorically we mean because the film (in competition) talks about family dramas - they will be the greatest French actresses (Catherine Deneuve and Juliette Binoche) directed by Kore-Eda Hirokazu for La Verité.

The Golden Lion for Lifetime Achievement Pedro Almodovar, of which we have just seen in Dolor y Gloria his artistic will (very political), will be present with a masterclass and will be the protagonist (will he go or will he not go?) Of the US bible party cinema, the Variety magazine, which crowds the Terrazza Danieli as usual one day before the start of the festival (27 August). The other Golden Lion for Career 2019 is the British Julie Andrews.

There will also be Scarlett Johansson and Adam Driver for the film Marriage Story by Noah Baumbach from Netflix (present with four titles in the various sections, while Amazon videos with two and Sky with the new episodes of The Young Pope). And finally, for a one / two of big names, on the 29th comes Brad Pitt, the main character of Ad Astra by James Gray (in competition).

Two unforgettable Golden Lions return to competition. Steven Sodebergh (who hasn't seen Sex Lies and Videotape at least twice?) Is perhaps the most awaited with Laundromat a film about the Panama Papers, scripted by a really good (Scott G. Burns) and distributed by Netflix. It is not a brick of journalistic investigation (even if it is taken from a compelling book), it is a thriller with a high rate of stars (who will be in Venice to present the film) including Meryl Streep and Gary Oldman.

Also not to be missed is The King by Australian David Michod with Thimothée Chalamet (out of competition): the young star will be in the room.
Roy Andersson brings the dream and the displacement to the center of the subject with *Om det oändliga* (On the Infinite) after winning (more recently than Sodebergh) a Golden Lion with the wonderful *A pigeon sitting on a branch reflects on existence* (2014). The prolific and elderly Swedish director is actually always engaged in the production of political documentaries and the environment.

Two women in competition for the Lion (the Saudi Haifaa Al-Mansour with the comedy *The Perfect Candidate* and the Australian Shannon Murphy with even her debut film, *Babyteeth*).

Equal to the USA and France: both countries carry 26 between productions and co-productions (counting all the sections, including shorts and Virtual Reality). Italy has 28 including the restoration of the Classics. The latter are the protagonists of the Pre-Opening evening on August 27, with *Extase* (Estasi, 1932) written and directed by Gustav Machatý, with Hedy Kiesler (later Hedy Lamarr, as it was renamed in Hollywood), the world premiere in 4K. Belgian (and French) debut in English for a high-voltage thriller by Olivier Assayas, *Wasp Network*, much awaited by peer critics (and by fans of Penélope Cruz and Gael García Bernal who will also come to the island).

Three Italians in the southern competition 188 films proposed: Mario Martone with the film adaptation of Il Sindaco del Rione Sanità (he was also present last year where he received a prize for the soundtrack of his Capri-Revolution); Franco Maresco with the 'ideal' continuation of his *Belluscone*. A Sicilian story: The Mafia is no longer what it used to be. The protagonist of the squares festivities, the protagonist of the first film, recounts nostalgic of the 'mafia of the past' along with the great photographer Letizia Battaglia that the mafia followed with her relentless reportages for a film in Sicilian dialect that will do as always fall in love and be horrified together also the foreign public; Pietro Marcello with the first fiction film, his *Martin Eden* from the famous novel by Jack London.

Brazilian cinema - in spite of the criticisms leveled at Bolsonaro for the closure of the funding body (some speak of censorship, others say that that entity was an ivory tower difficult to dispute and to attack) - it brings four titles to Venice, there Babenco is intrigued by a documentary film on the life of one of the most famous directors in the country, born Argentinian, directed and produced by his wife (the singer, reality actress and Barbara Paz) at Orizzonti.

Also at Orizzonti, the Italian film produced by Matteo Garrone stands out, written and directed by his (ex) Stefano Nunzia's partner, Nevia, which talks about a story with a highly autobiographical flavor of a neighborhood that interests us a lot because we have already worked there in the past with artistic projects. It is the story of a teenager who lives her adolescence in a container in the very long (and never finished) post-earthquake reconstruction of 1980: the precarious housing units still resist and continue to be a home for even more unfortunate humans than residents.
To finish the numbers of this edition (not counting the Venice Days and the Critics' Week): 63 feature films (including 21 in Venice 76, 17 out of competition of which 10 documentaries; 19 at Orizzonti and the rest in the other sections, Sconfini and College Cinema); 18 short films (13 in competition at Orizzonti), two TV series (including The Young Pope produced by Sky), 36 Virtual Reality works on display by reservation at the Lazzaretto Vecchio, 20 feature films restored in the Venice Classics section.

The parties in the Lagoon are obviously dispersed in a thousand palaces and churches, from the one strictly in Black & White by Vanity to the Scuola Grande della Misericordia to that of B&O (strictly private) to the Ca d'Oro to end up with those of the producers spread evenly between buildings in cities and bathing beaches not far from the Movie Village. Two Lido hotels compete for the largest number of evenings (Excelsior and Hungaria, the latter hosting the two Lightbox parties for the SIAE Award and for the world premiere of The Dalai Lama - Scientist). Be ready to pick up the word of mouth and always keep a suit at hand ...

We will tell you with micro-reviews the films that we liked most directly from the Movie Village and just in time to let you choose to go see them, keep following us!