

**Willem Dafoe in
PASOLINI**

Directed by Abel Ferrara

France, Belgium, Italy, 2014, 84 mins, Cert 18
A BFI Release

Venice Film Festival 2014 – In Competition
**Presented at the New York Film Festival, Toronto Film Festival,
San Sebastian and BFI London Film Festival 2014**



Opening on 11 September 2015 at the ICA, HOME Manchester, Glasgow Film Theatre, Watershed Bristol, Tyneside Cinema, QFT Belfast and selected cinemas UK-wide. Also launching on BFI Player. At BFI Southbank, Ciné Lumière and other West End sites from 18 September

On 2 November 1975, aged just 53, Pier Paolo Pasolini, the outspoken writer, filmmaker and Marxist was found dead on a beach on the outskirts of Rome, left badly beaten and run over by his own car. His murder ignited a series of theories and conspiracies that continue to this day, with the case still open despite a conviction. In *Pasolini*, opening in selected cinemas on 11 September, director **Abel Ferrara** (*Bad Lieutenant, Welcome to New York*) charts the last day in the legendary Italian's extraordinary life. He layers real events with vibrant imaginary scenes from an unmade Pasolini film, to create a cool and engaging portrayal of a fearless intellectual who was irresistibly drawn to the low-life on the streets.

In their fourth film collaboration, Ferrara cast **Willem Dafoe** (*Shadow of the Vampire, Spider-Man, The Grand Budapest Hotel, Antichrist*), as Pier Paolo. Bearing an uncanny likeness, Dafoe was given some of Pasolini's own clothes, his glasses and personal objects (even furniture was provided for the film) to enable him to authentically inhabit the role.

In support, playing key figures in Pasolini's life are **Maria de Medeiros** as Laura Betti (the actress and close friend), **Riccardo Scamarcio** as actor Ninetto Davoli (a dear friend and sometime lover who appeared regularly in Pasolini's films) and **Ninetto Davoli** himself as a character from the unmade film, *Porno-Teo-Kolossal*.

Based on an idea by Abel Ferrara and Nicola Tranquillino, the film's screenplay is written by Maurizio Braucci (*Gomorrah*). In meticulously researching Pasolini's life during his last few days, Ferrara gathered memories and stories from his relatives and friends, and spoke to Giuseppe (Pino) Pelosi, the rent boy who was jailed for the murder when he was 17.

At the time of his death, having recently finished what would become his most famous film, the notorious *Salò*, Pasolini inspired both love and hate, and opposition from the Italian establishment. He was in battle with the censors over *Salò*.

As the fateful day progresses, we see the close relationship between Pasolini and his mother Susanna, with whom he lives; he enjoys lunch with family and friends and works on the screenplay and a novel (*Petrolio*, which was published posthumously). In two media interviews he passionately expresses his radical views. Late in the evening he drives off in his Alfa Romeo and the events that led to his brutal death unfold.

Willem Dafoe has said that the film is not a biopic of Pasolini and that he didn't "play" him. *"We imagine his state of mind on the last day of his life. So the performance was not an imitation or interpretation of who he was, but more a record of me inhabiting the actions and thoughts of a man that happened to be Pier Paolo Pasolini."*

Abel Ferrara doesn't accuse or investigate in this inventive and frank, yet elegant tribute, which has a timely release in the UK, just ahead of the 40th anniversary of Pasolini's death in November 2015.

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Images are available at www.image.net >BFI>Theatrical releases

More details on this film and the cinemas showing it are at

www.bfi.org.uk/releases

Notes to editors

- There will be a previews of *Pasolini* during the Cambridge Film Festival on 5 and 6 September
- *Pasolini* will be released on Blu-ray and DVD by the BFI on 19 October
- Also on 19 October, the BFI will release *The Pasolini Collection*, a Blu-ray box set containing *Salò*, *Arabian Nights*, *Canterbury Tales*, *Decameron*, *Theorem* and *Medea*

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