

Classic Italian Film Fest Opens in Moscow

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Ennio Flaiano, Federico Fellini, and Anita Ekberg during the making of *La Dolce Vita*/ *Gazzetta del Popolo*/ Wikimedia Commons

Federico Fellini, Luchino Visconti, Franco Zeffirelli... Whether you've been watching their movies your whole life or have only heard their names before and want to know what all the fuss is about, don't miss out on this fall's Festival of Italian Cinema at the AZ Museum in Moscow. Here is your chance to watch some of the most iconic Italian classics on the big screen, learn more about them and their directors in a series of lively lectures, and check out this off-the-beaten-track gem of a museum into the bargain.

The festival, inspired by the museum's recent [exhibit](#) at the Franco Zeffirelli Foundation in Florence, is devoted to the cinema of the "second Italian Renaissance" — a period that produced groundbreaking films that helped shape the cinematography and culture of the 20th century. Each screening is preceded by an hour-long lecture — and before you start nodding

off, don't worry: It's not another routine biographic overview. Experts are invited to speak on the films' significance and the productions, and the hour is interspersed with bits of trivia even the biggest film buffs may not know. Ever heard of Brother Sun, Sister Moon, a film about the medieval Saint Francis of Assisi? Now picture the Beatles (no joke) as the Saint's closest companions. That, apparently, was the director's initial vision for the project.

The AZ Museum itself, currently showing a [Gala retrospective](#) of works by non-conformist artist Anatoly Zverev, is well worth a look around, and admission is free for those going to see the movie. Take a stroll through the first and second floors to check out the striking, emotional paintings, and then go on up to the movie space. Be sure to get there early to save your seat — they aren't assigned, so you have to be quick to snag one of the prime viewing spots.

No film is shown twice, so when it comes to tickets you might do well to plan ahead and get them in advance. Whether you're in the mood for a violent psychological journey along the lines of Paolo and Vittorio Tavianis' Padre Padroni, the Shakespearean tragic romance of Zeffirelli's Romeo and Juliet, or the existentialist mystery of Michelangelo Antonioni's Blow-Up, the festival's program has something for every taste. Whatever you end up watching, one thing is certain: the film will stay with you long after you exit the museum.

The films will be shown through the fall at 8 p.m. The next screening is "Death in Venice" on Aug. 14. For a full schedule and more information, see the museum [website](#).

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