



Taxiderman

A DOCUMENTARY ABOUT ITALY'S TAXIDERMIST

Alberto is Padua's only taxidermist, and perhaps the only one in Italy to specialize in pet taxidermy. His typical client grieves for a cat, a dog, a bird, from which they will not be separated even by death. Acting as a de facto animal undertaker, skilled technician, and part-time therapist, Alberto tangibly gives his clients the essence of what they lost. But now his craft is not enough, he is at an existential crossroads as he channels his love of the macabre into sculptures made of animal remains.

“Taxiderman” (30 minutes, Italian with English subtitles) explores the poignant, poetic and sometimes hilarious truths that come to light when death is both object and subject.



The Director

Rossella Laeng is an award-winning documentary filmmaker based out of Lake Como, Italy. Raised in Milan by her Italian father and American mother, she is fluently bilingual in Italian and English, and has also lived in India, Texas, Australia, and most recently NYC, where she began her career as a filmmaker. Rossella holds a BFA in film with a focus on documentary from the City College of New York, and a certificate in journalism from NYU. She is typically drawn to subject matter that is strange and obscure, human-interest stories with unlikely

protagonists: a gay / retired marionettist, an avant-garde feminist clown, the undisputed champion of Brownsville's annual Grito Contest

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Aside from the festival circuit, her documentary work has also appeared on The Guardian, The Establishment, and The Huffington Post.

[Rossella's Vimeo](#)



Director's Statement

In the spring of 2016 I interned as an editing assistant at The American Museum Of Natural History, in New York City. Most of my time there was spent watching and logging hours of footage of a scientific trip, i.e. graphic videos of various animal specimens being killed, sliced, and vialled for the noble purpose of doing science. This was my first exposure to the concept of a lifeless body being rebirthed as a vessel for knowledge and meaning. I was on break at the museum when I ran across an article about a taxidermist in Padua, and I don't think

taxidermy would have caught my eye had I not been so passively immersed in it at the time. The article described a ruggedly handsome, outgoing man who happened to stuff people's dead pets for a living. I thought, "Italy plus taxidermy sounds like a winning visual storytelling combination" and immediately contacted Alberto. I was lucky to meet him at the cusp of a turning point in his career.

My intent is not to force a stance on the subject of taxidermy or pet aftercare, but rather to shed light on the nuance and beauty which can be found in the most unexpected of places. This documentary is a portrait of a man, but also of Italy: the country that raised me. It is an invitation to defeat death through art and self-expression.

EDITOR

Rossella Laeng

ASSISTANT EDITOR & COLORIST

Marco Riva

Full Credits

Starring Alberto Michelon

Directed by Rossella Laeng

Executive Producers: Deirdré Straughan, Andrea Miller, Daniel
Maresca

A Co-production of Folium Films and Gramvideo

This film was made possible with the support of Massimo Tevarotto
and the Brondin Family

Cast: Alberto Michelon, Debora Zappaterra, Pier Giorgio Chiavegato,
Rocco Perna, Veronica Perna, Carlo Eleuteri, Luca Carrozza,
Alessandro Varotto, Gianni Mattiolo, Luca Norbiato, Elena Marini,
Graziano, Arad Turgeman, Dr. Rachel Gottesman, Pietro De Cillia

Cinematography: Rossella Laeng, Marco Riva, John Wells

Editor: Rossella Laeng

Assistant Editor & Colorist: Marco Riva

Original Soundtrack by Andrea Bernardini

Additional Music by Alberto Michelin, Edoardo Micozzi Ferri

“Break On Thru” written, performed, and recorded by Ben Aqua

Sound Mix: Dario Forlani

Title Design & Poster by Robert Vargas

Graphics & Visual Effects by Martino Spreafico

Photographs of PERVERSUS by Raffaello De Vito, Photographs
exhibited at Photoville FENCE by Luca Rotondo

Inanimus graphic novel by Giacomo Filippo Fracanzani

Special Thanks: Deirdre Fishel, Andrea Weiss, Emily Linstrom,
Federica Crespi, Spazio Biosfera, Asterisco Informazioni di Fabrizio
Stelluto, Telenuovo TG Padova, Radio 3 Scienza, Andrea Colasio,

Photoville FENCE, Land. Milk. Honey. The Israeli Pavilion at the 17th
International Architecture Exhibition, La Biennale di Venezia 2021.



Distribution

"Taxiderman" hit the festival circuit in the summer of 2021. American selections include: Flickers' Rhode Island International Film Festival, Bushwick Film Festival.

International: Semifinalist at Firenze Film Corti Festival, Best Documentary at Assurdo Film Festival.



Contact Information

[Taxiderman's Instagram](#)

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