

Journal of Italian Cinema & Media Studies
Volume 11 Numbers 3 & 4

© 2023 Intellect Ltd Article. English language. https://doi.org/10.1386/jicms_00197_1
Received 24 September 2021; Accepted 5 November 2021

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Rino Lupo before Portugal, Russia and Poland: A biography for poetics under construction

ABSTRACT

In recent years, the figure of the Italian filmmaker Rino Lupo (1884–1936) has taken on alternative developments that not only keep attention on his cinematographic work, but also expand to the birth of a new poetic centred on his numerous travels. The essence of Rino Lupo's transnational and pro-European cinema is linked to an idea of the 'search for beauty' through 'the discovery of the new'. In Poland, Rino Lupo worked on some of the most important concepts that were developed in the following years in Portugal and Spain. In particular, in this article I explore his period in Russia and Poland (1916–21), when Lupo began to expand his cinematographic activity beyond directing movies to creating a journal and a film school, the first in Warsaw.

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the figure of Italian film director Rino Lupo (1884–1936) has taken on interesting contours and new trajectories that attract a lively level of attention not only to his cinematographic work but also to a new filmic geography based on his numerous movements and their consequent artistic

KEYWORDS

early cinema
transnational cinema
Invicta Film
European silent
cinema
Russian silent comedy
Polish silent cinema
Kinema journal
Warsaw Film school

1. Unless otherwise mentioned, all translations from the original in Italian, Spanish and Portuguese, are mine.

influences. Hence, it is fundamental to gather information on Rino Lupo from the 2008 biography written in Portuguese by Tiago Baptista. Should one consider his real popularization in the European sphere, however, the documentary film produced by Portuguese director Pedro Lino between 2016 and 2017, and shown in cinemas since 2019, simply cannot be overlooked. In fact, following the documentary *Lupo* (Lino 2017), articles, reviews, photographs and fundamental information have been rediscovered which enabled the reconstruction of his artistic and human path.

Baptista's biography, taking a few steps backwards from the Portuguese period, aims to fully understand the cultural baggage that Rino Lupo acquired and treasured during his time in Eastern Europe, passing through Russia and Poland before settling on the other side of the continent, first in Portugal and then in Spain. Indeed, it was in Portugal that Lupo developed his visual themes from 1921 to 1929. He correspondingly receives due recognition as one of the founders of Portuguese silent cinema. In particular, a reference is made to the movie *Os lobos* ('The wolves') (Lupo 1924) described thus by João Benard da Costa, Cinemateca Portuguesa Director from 1991 to 2009:

If there is a 'Portuguese school', as some defend, in our cinema, we find its foundations in this odd movie, with a safe place in any anthology of the unusual that one likes to organise. A 'flaming' work, as they say of the final gothic, situated between hyper-realism and surrealism, at the top of an aesthetic of the unusual that rarely, in our imaginary, has had so much strength and singularity.¹

(Benard da Costa 2020: 3)

The premise that accompanies this study stems from some reflections about both transversality as regards the moving image and transnationality with respect to Portuguese cinema. The archival and documentary material filmed by the Portuguese director Pedro Lino and his crew around several key locations in Europe interconnects with an idea of 'researching the beautiful' through 'the discovery of the new', key themes in Lupo's artistic experience.

BRIEF HISTORICAL NOTES

Cesare Vitaliano Lupo, or Cesare Augusto Lupo, the youngest of three brothers, was born in Rome on 15 February 1884 to David Lupo, a physician, and Giuseppa Paradisi. As early as 1911, sources cross-referenced between the biography written by Tiago Baptista and documents tracked down by Pedro Lino locate his presence in Paris. The 2008 volume informs us that after Paris (1912–13), he relocated to Germany (1913–15), before moving on to Denmark (1915–16) and from there to the Russia of the Tsars, before Warsaw in Poland, and Portugal and Spain, where he remained for a decade. Afterwards, there are traces of time spent between Germany and Italy through to the year of his death in Rome in 1934.

Little is known of his childhood and youth, presumably spent in Rome. In 1905, aged 21, he married Annunziata Civitenga, called Tina, with whom he had a daughter, Bianca, whom he would only meet in 1930. In 1921, having already embarked on his many itineraries around Europe, he arrived at Invicta Film in Oporto, where he began working with the French directors Pallu and Lion, who had been contracted by Portuguese impresarios to launch the art of cinema in Portugal. During this time, he married the actor Aida Monteiro

1. Esteves, aka Aida de Oliveira (1903–82) with whom he had another daughter,
 2. Ialka (1923–2002) (Cucinotta 2016: 65). The found documents duly note
 3. the construction of two distinct families, one in Italy in the 1910s and one in
 4. Portugal in the 1920s. Despite this, Cesare Lupo, who went by the name of
 5. Rino, left no traces of his life or direct heirs in Italy.

6. To provide a more detailed chronological order to the events and works
 7. of his wandering life, we may state that after residing in Rome from the year
 8. of his birth, 1884, through to 1911, he first moved to Paris and lived there
 9. between February 1912 and January 1913, working first as an actor, proceeding
 10. to become Leonce Perret's assistant and then finally a director for the produc-
 11. tion houses Pathé, Gaumont and Lux (Baptista 2008: 26), where he directed
 12. six films: *Toto controleur des wagons-lits* ('Toto the sleeping car conductor')
 13. (1912), *Le portrait vivant* ('The living portrait') (1912), *Lotage* ('The hostage')
 14. (1912), *Le testament* ('The testament') (1913), *La villa des baisers* ('The villa
 15. of kisses') (1913) and *Un fantasie de Miss Edith* ('A fantasy by Miss Edith')
 16. (1913). In May 1913, already in Berlin, Germany, he directed a single feature
 17. film with a realist trait called *Wenn Volker straiten* ('When Volker argues') for
 18. Apollo-Film, which was released in November 1914. Four months later, in
 19. March 1915, Rino Lupo moved to Copenhagen, Denmark, certainly attracted
 20. by the many Danish cameramen and actors working between Berlin and the
 21. Danish capital. There, in the service of Kinografen, he shot the now lost erotic
 22. melodrama *Slor-Danserinden* ('Slor dancer') (1915), with the famous French
 23. dancer Adorée Villany. In 1916, following a devastating war-provoked crisis,
 24. the production company closed its doors and Rino Lupo decided to move to
 25. Moscow. Between March 1916 and the end of 1918, Rino Lupo directed fifteen
 26. comic films in the employment of Biofilm, Khanzhonkov and Cia. It was at
 27. this time that Cesare Lupo became Rino, a name he invented to give life to his
 28. comic character.

29. Immediately after the declaration of the Soviet Republic towards the end
 30. of 1918, he left Russia for Poland, seeking new forms of expression in Warsaw
 31. as he was convinced that, with its Revolution, Russia had become absolutely
 32. incompatible with the art of cinema. It was from Warsaw that Lupo arrived on
 33. the other side of Europe in 1921, knocking on the doors of Invicta Filme in
 34. Oporto, Portugal after encouragement from two Portuguese diplomats he had
 35. met in a Warsaw hotel.

36. As already mentioned, he remained in Portugal for a decade during which
 37. he formed a family and directed some of the most singular works in Lusitanian
 38. silent cinema: *Mulheres da Beira*² ('Women from Beira') (1923) and *Os lobos*
 39. (1924),³ *O Diabo em Lisboa* ('The devil in Lisbon') (1928) and *O Desconhecido*
 40. ('The unknown') (1926), *As Aventuras do Tenor Romão* ('The adventures of
 41. Tenor Romão') (1927) and finally his two public successes, *Fátima Milagrosa*
 42. ('Miraculous Fatima') (1928) and *José do telhado* ('José from the roof') (1929).
 43. These Portuguese productions were also interspersed with some work in
 44. Spain, including a Galician version of *Mulheres da Beira* called *Carmiña, flor de*
 45. *Galicia* ('Carmiña, flower from Galicia') (1926), filmed in the north of Spain,
 46. and some articles published by Lupo himself in a Bilbao journal regarding his
 47. studies on the specificities of Spanish cinema.

48. The great success of his 1929 film *José do telhado*, however, coincided with
 49. the beginning of sound cinema, which is why he felt the need to travel again,
 50. as the filmmaker himself explained: to understand how this new technol-
 51. ogy worked. We then find him back in France in May 1930 and, after this,
 52. only brief appearances as an extra in films between Paris and Berlin. From

2. Six episodes. Original tale: 'A Frecha de Misarela', included in the collection 'Mulheres da Beira' (1898) by Abel Botelho. Published on DVD by Cinemateca Portuguesa in 2017.
3. Film adaptation of the original theatrical play *Os lobos* (1920) by Francisco Lage and João Correia de Oliveira. The film was published on DVD by Cinemateca Portuguesa in 2017 with *Mulheres da Beira*.

the letters preserved by his Portuguese descendants, we know he returned to meet his first wife and daughter in Rome, the city where he died of pneumonia on 3 January 1936.

BEFORE PORTUGAL: A BIOGRAPHY OF LUPO'S RUSSIA AND POLAND PERIOD

Starting from an in-depth study that approaches Cesare Lupo when still far from the successes he would achieve in Portugal, it was first in Russia and then subsequently in Poland that the filmmaker-trader deliberately began applying his talents not only in the field of cinema but also, and above all, as a true strategist capable of understanding the future tastes of the public and the consequent artistic and commercial trends of the seventh art.

In comparing Rino Lupo to the Portuguese José Leitão de Barros and the French George Pallu, two contemporary directors working in Portugal from the 1910s, René Jeanne and Charles Ford, defined him as 'more of a trader than an artist' (1994: 225), thus downplaying his talent in favour of another illustrious Frenchman of Portuguese cinema, Roger Lion, who was also working in the service of Invicta Films during the same years.

In practice, by going back to the Russian period and especially the Polish period, one can grasp how the soul of the merchant was only one of many facets of Cesare Lupo's talents. Prior to that, it was between March 1915 and February 1916 in Denmark that Lupo began to produce the first results of what he had learned in France and Germany in his first experiences as a director. As already mentioned, following the closure of one of the last Danish production companies, the Kinografen, and the beginning of a period of severe crisis for the national film industry, upon his arrival in Russia Lupo understood that his place in the new artistic landscape had to be reinvented. In those years, the great melodrama classics of Evgenii Bauer, Ptr Chardynin and Lev Kuleshov (Baptista 2008: 63) were indiscriminately producing 'psychological dramas' and 'salon dramas' in a classic pattern. A constant in the Russian cinematography of that period, these modern melodramas reigned unchallenged in movie theatres and with only a few mini comic stories as their counterparts that were completely opposite in narrative and *mise en scène*. Aware that he lacked the appropriate skills and knowledge to join his colleagues in 'classic melodrama', Lupo set out to create his own comic character. Hence Rino was born, a stage name abbreviated from Cesare or Cesarino who, as a forerunner of characters like Chaplin but clearly a creation inspired by Max Linder, wanders around the city to find himself in the midst of the most disparate situations (Cucinotta 2020: 48).

Lupo's arrival in Moscow happened in sync with an exodus of technicians, actors and directors who were forced to emigrate to continue their professions, which were hindered in Denmark by strict German laws. In the early 1910s, after confiscating assets from neighbouring foreign production companies, Germany had prohibited their reopening, 'gradually interrupting the distribution circuits between the two countries' (Baptista 2008: 59). The complete dependence of Danish production companies on Germany meant there was no clear future for those hitherto working on the artistic and commercial development of film art in Denmark. Therefore, Rino Lupo formed part of this migratory flow that sought a better fate in Russian lands. In those years, the political relationship between Denmark and Russia exactly reflected the link between the two countries and Germany: while Denmark was an ally, Russia

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1. was its enemy. Thus, while the consequences of the war were felt in the social
 2. sphere with anti-German demonstrations and strikes, cinema also prospered
 3. thanks to the same German rules disrupting distribution in the neighbouring
 4. countries: all this helped Russia fortify its national production and increase its
 5. control over the domestic market.

6. During the First World War, the percentage of foreign films shown in
 7. Russia dropped to 20 per cent. New producers multiplied and their older
 8. peers, such as Khanzhonkov, thrived. In 1916, there were 47 production
 9. companies in Russia with a total output of 499 new films in that year alone
 10. (Baptista 2008: 60). It was in Russia that the 'Lupo method' began to take
 11. shape, leading the filmmaker to collaborate firstly with the Biofilm production
 12. company and later with the renowned Khanzhonkov. Of the fifteen films that
 13. Lupo shot in Moscow for the two production companies, the titles of three
 14. are known and fragments of one called *Rino khocet zakurit* ('Rino wants to
 15. smoke') have survived down the years: all of these Russian collaborations date
 16. from 1916 and 1917. In spite of the proliferation of Russian cinema, which
 17. placed the aforementioned 'psychological drama' or 'salon drama' side by side
 18. with comedies and 'modern dramas in bourgeois settings' (Baptista 2008: 66),
 19. the latter failed to create the same impact in terms of their cultural and artistic
 20. legitimacy. Rino Lupo stood on this side of the fence, a creator and artist
 21. of comedies and comic stories. He imbibed in abundance from this nascent
 22. genre, ignoring the consequences of not seeing his artistic work recognized.

23. Until 1917, Rino Lupo was in Russia along with many of his colleagues
 24. who were to remain there until October, the month of the Bolshevik
 25. Revolution that saw producers, directors, technicians and artists emigrate to
 26. Yalta and Odessa, peripheral territories but at the time still belonging to the
 27. Russian state, which would remain plagued by warfare until 1920 with the
 28. ongoing Russian Civil War. Producer Khanzhonkov left for Yalta in 1917 taking
 29. with him many collaborators, including Rino Lupo who directed the film
 30. *Saide: doch' Kryma* ('Saide: Daughter of Crimea') (1917). While Khanzhonkov
 31. returned to Russia in 1923, after a brief period in Germany, Rino Lupo chose
 32. another path, secondary and unknown, outside of Russia and the circuits he
 33. already knew and tested. By the end of 1918, Lupo was in Warsaw, Poland.

34. According to Tiago Baptista (2008: 70), Lupo's decision to stop follow-
 35. ing the normal migratory flow (as had happened from Denmark to Russia),
 36. moving from Moscow to other Russian cities, depended greatly on the only
 37. marginal position he had acquired within the Russian film industry due mostly
 38. to his predilection, dictated by external factors, for comedy rather than psycho-
 39. logical drama. Indeed, such circumstances meant he could not fit in among
 40. the Russian exiles choosing Yalta or Odessa. On the other hand, according to
 41. Videira dos Santos, echoing an interview that Lupo gave in Portugal during
 42. the years of his greatest success, Lupo described the miseries and 'a painful
 43. series of deprivations' (Santos n.d.: 5) that he had had to cope with during
 44. the days of the Revolution. He called them 'the effects of the Revolution'
 45. (Santos n.d.: 5). In fact, many years later, at the height of his career in Portugal,
 46. Rino Lupo would give many interviews in which, among his various efforts
 47. to romanticize his wandering life, he would express his opinions about the
 48. political issues which he had witnessed. In the case of his passage from Russia
 49. to Poland and, we may presume also from Germany to Denmark and from
 50. Denmark to Russia, there is evidence of a certain conservatism towards the
 51. issues underlying the Russian revolution, little understood at the time by
 52. the Italian filmmaker and from which he evidently fled. Returning instead to

the hypothesis proposed by Baptista, Lupo's only very marginal position in Russian cinema may have nurtured a certain bitterness and disinterest in the political, economic and social issues of that country.

FOCUS ON POLAND: FILM SCHOOLS AND SPECIALIST JOURNALS

It is particularly important to delve into the connection between Rino Lupo and Poland since most of the film materials have since been lost. In his typed, undated text preserved in the library of the Cinemateca Portuguesa in Lisbon, Antonio Videira dos Santos emphasized the material discovery of some of his film achievements that took place in Poland through some information that a 'Polish citizen' left in Lisbon in 1965. The years which Rino Lupo spent in Poland were all marked by the war.

We cannot help but mourn these historical facts also considering what was expressed in 1965 by a Polish citizen in Portugal who provided Lisbon with most of the contents we disclose here and who, to our delight, committed and disinterested, was willing to undertake the necessary and possible research.

(Santos n.d.: 7)

This passage from Videira dos Santos remains very vague as to just how this citizen accessed the information he gave to Lisbon as he expressed his general condolences for the years of war suffered by Poland, which consequently led to the destruction of various artistic materials important for the historical and cultural reconstruction of that country. Videira dos Santos then lists several films in which Rino Lupo participated, not only highlighting his skills as a director but also emphasizing the founding of the first film school and the first specialist film journal.

On arrival in Poland, Rino Lupo embarked on a totally different path from that taken in Russia, leaving behind comedy and venturing into various different projects. Poland was chosen by Lupo according to criteria that would feature in his later moves: the fervour to establish something where it did not yet exist. It is exactly during this passage that some of his trader characteristics are on display (Jeanne and Ford 1994: 225) very often leading Lupo to interweave financial motivations with his artistic interests, creating strong doubts about his true artistic and cinematographic abilities. Lupo's first activity in Warsaw, before the end of 1918, was to open the Kursy sztuki kinematograficznej (Cinematographic Art Study Program) that ran between 1918 and 1923 with Lupo's direction alternating with the actress Helena Olszewska, his direct collaborator, also a member of the Russian migratory flow (Baptista 2008: 71).

We do not know the structure of these courses, learning only that they were basically intended for the training of actors who graduated in public examination sessions highly publicized by the journal *Kinema*, founded by Lupo in 1920 and in which Helena Olszewska also collaborated.

(Baptista 2008: 72)

Thus, the film programme leads us directly to the launching of the *Kinema* journal which was closely linked to the school's activities while also establishing deep roots among seventh art enthusiasts in the country. We may

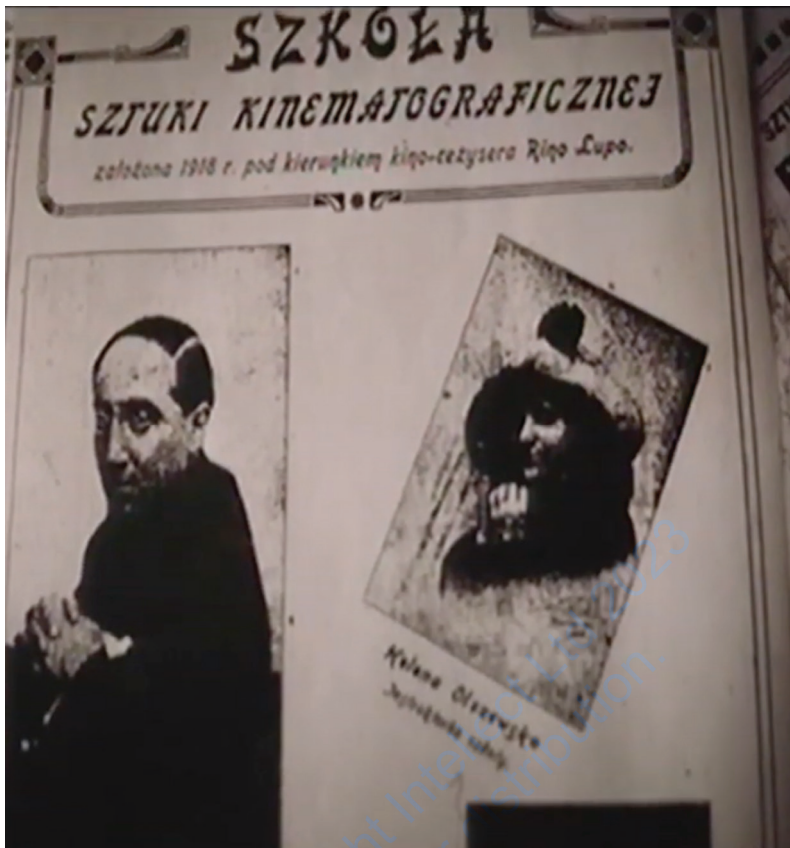


Figure 1: Lupo and Olszewska on Kinema describing Film School.

extrapolate some important information about the journal from an article by Anita Zawisza from the University of Warsaw (2019).

'Kinema' monthly was valuable and rich in theoretical film thought; the Russian director Rino Lupo and Helena Olszewska were its founders in 1920. It was a weekly at the beginning before changing its frequency from edition no. 4 in 1921, as indicated in the subtitle: 'A Monthly Cinematographic, Artistic, Illustrated, and Global journal'. 'Kinema' enjoyed popularity among other film periodicals, mostly due to fitting the expectations of a differentiated group of users. Advertisements of lower aesthetic quality were masked by higher-level articles concerning film topics, which enabled the maintenance of the journal's artistic profile. Leo Belmont, Bronisław Hermelin, Kazimierz Lubecki, Jerzy Henryk Skotnicki, Leon Trystan and Helena Olszewska were among its authors.

(Zawisza 2019: 453)

The definition of Rino Lupo as a 'Russian director' in the text also reflects the need for deeper studies into his actions and role in Poland, where his stay was among the most fruitful. The school and journal were therefore commutable,



Figure 2: Kinema cover in 1920.

both originating from Lupo's inspiration and Olszewska's active collaboration. According to the sources cited by Tiago Baptista, the journal remained active from December 1920 until May 1925 (57 issues), was directed by Lupo until May 1921 and published by the production company Kinofilm.

In 1921, the ownership passed from Rino Lupo to Jan Baumritter, who also joined Olszewska in the directing, editing and publishing roles. Similar to many journals of this period, *Kinema* also dealt with previews in Warsaw cinemas, spreading critical reviews about films, especially German productions, alongside information on the lessons ongoing at the school and the activities of its students. Erroneously published in the Videira dos Santos work, the claim alleging that the famous actress Pola Negri attended this school's programme is not backed up in the subsequent and exhaustive volume by Tiago Baptista: the dates provided in her biography do not match with the beginning of any of the courses directed by Lupo. While working and living in Poland, Lupo originated a number of gimmicks which would then be repeated over time and in other countries. Repetition of the same pattern remains a constant and will crop up later in both Portugal and Spain, placing his work as a director side by side with his work as an entrepreneur through the founding of schools and journals that functioned on the one hand as systems of self-promotion and as a means of generating income for his film productions on the other hand.

PARTICIPATION IN POLISH SILENT CINEMA (1919–21)

Making films was what really interested Lupo. Hence, in every country he spent time in he left behind many collaborations whether as a director or as

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Figure 3: Blanc et Noir.

an actor. He tried his hand at realism in Germany, erotic drama in Denmark and comedy in Russia with his first on-set collaboration in Poland taking place shortly after the founding of the Film School in 1919. He appeared as actor in three different films produced by Kinofilm: *Blanc et Noir* ('White and black'), *Lokaj* (*Slave*) and *Przez Piekło* ('Through hell'), all dated 1919, except for the last work which did not get released until 1921.

In the first two, he worked only as an actor while he directed the last film. There is a surviving screenplay for *Blanc et Noir* that provides greater details:

Count Jerzy Vilbois, a descendant of an old French family who emigrated to Poland, is a young, rich and righteous man. However, it is hereditary and in its normal state, with the striking of midnight - the spotless man goes out [...] and transforms into an apache with all the instincts of a primitive man. [...] He commits acts of sin that he knows nothing about when he returns to consciousness. On one such night trip, he murdered a street girl, Stasia, who he took care of because she was strangely similar to his fiancée, Lila Korska. A few years after their wedding, the unhappy fellow's condition worsened considerably [...] and Jerzy began to live during the day even as he used to live only at night. This drew the attention of the police agent Maks, who had had the murdered Staś as his mistress and who, in the end, proves that Count Vilbois was the apache who had murdered her.⁴

We do know that *Przez Piekło* was filmed in an electric power plant as the only remaining materials are the data sheets of the location and collaborators, including technicians and artists, which feature many of the Lupo and Olszewska school students. Unfortunately, probably due to the particular

4. Source adapted from the internet database of Polish films: <https://filmpolski.pl/fp/index.php?film=22147>, property of The Leon Schiller National Higher School of Film, Television and Theatre in Łódź. Accessed 26 October 2021.

historical and social conditions which Poland was involved in (independence movements, the declaration of the republic and the defence its territories), many of the surviving extra-filmic materials have been fragmented, thus making it impossible to view these three films in which Lupo stands out as an actor.

In 1920, Lupo was called in to inaugurate the new production company Orient-film for which he directed *Dwie Urny*, a film 'of egocentric nationalist propaganda' (Baptista 2008: 78) against Germany for which he wrote the script and cast his former student Witold Filipecki as one of the main characters. This film's production also interrelated with the plebiscite held in Upper Silesia. Funded by the Presidium of the Council of Ministers and the Ministry of Culture and Art, a combination of fiction and documentary, the poor artistic level took it off the screens. On the contrary, the April edition of the *Kinema* journal that year praised its great public success. A few months later, in July 1921, it was precisely from the pages of this journal that we may learn of Lupo's new moves as he began his journey from Poland to Portugal with planned stops in Berlin, Paris, Rome, Madrid and Lisbon, hoping to establish relationships with important film companies.

Doubts remain about the movements that Lupo announced in *Kinema* journal as, years later, when already established in Portugal, he always claimed that he had arrived in Lisbon from Poland without stopping. An article from Rome published in *Kinema* in September 1921, however, was sent by a certain Francesco Lupo, which might suggest that the filmmaker did indeed make a brief stop in Rome, his hometown, where he encountered the miserable state in which the seventh art existed, amidst uncertainties, changes of address and scarce financial means. Poland would become only a distant memory in the years to come for Lupo's career; he would never return, settling in Portugal, between Oporto and Lisbon, and making a great contribution to the development of Portuguese silent films.

TRADER OR MAN OF HIS TIME? THE POLISH EXPERIENCE

The first ten minutes of Pedro Lino's documentary *Lupo* recounts all of the events that preceded his arrival in Oporto, in Italy, France, Germany, Denmark, Russia and Poland, in summary form. For each of these countries, the filmmaker Lino leaves open the door by showing clips from the films of that time and unpublished materials such as stills, articles in specialist journals, fact sheets on the films he shot and information on his closest collaborators (actors, actresses, producers, among others). These first ten minutes encapsulate not only the first decade of Rino Lupo's personal and working history but also the Europe of the early years of silent cinema. The question under debate and from which various and as yet unconsolidated hypotheses take their cue is whether Rino Lupo really was an artist ahead of his time.

In the 2021 article 'Rino Lupo places in history of cinema', by Portuguese researcher José Bertolo of the University of Lisbon, there is a commitment to go back and reflect on the steps that Rino Lupo took during his years of work in cinema. Rino Lupo holds strategic importance not only for the history of cinematography in Portugal but also, and above all, for the emergence of transnational cinema, transversal to the standard concepts we are used to applying. From him and his works there springs a freedom of style and ideas still only poorly analysed. Bertolo disagrees with some of the

1. Portuguese press critics who, after the restoration of his two masterpieces
 2. (*Mulheres da Beira* and *Os lobos*), have in recent years labelled Rino Lupo
 3. as an innovative artist in keeping with an evolutionist concept of cinema
 4. whereby artists who have been relegated to secondary status owe this
 5. neglect to them being ahead of their respective times. Indeed, the evolu-
 6. tionary concept, which passed directly from art to cinema, would rather
 7. mention only those works that brought something new to history. In the
 8. case of Rino Lupo, taking into consideration the Portuguese period from
 9. about 1921 to 1930, Bertolo states:

11. In particular, one would say that Lupo's two films seem to be affiliated
 12. with a certain naturalist tradition of the 1910s: that of Scandinavian
 13. cinema. Nordic cinema, and Victor Sjöström's films in particular, had
 14. been 'ahead of his time' in the previous decade, notably by replacing
 15. studios with natural exteriors.

16. (2021: 3)

18. Therefore, taking up the definition of Lupo as a 'trader', we can add that this
 19. reflection sees him as 'very clearly situated in an enclave between the Nordic
 20. tradition of the 1910s and a small family of filmmakers from the 1920s that
 21. continues with this naturalistic tradition' (Bertolo 2021: 3). The period before
 22. Oporto represents a type of preparation for his Portuguese career to come as
 23. all the most successful film components are already present in his activities on
 24. the other side of Europe in the preceding years, even if in a scattered form. In
 25. particular, the Polish period conveys how being 'more of a trader than a film-
 26. maker' is not a derogation of his activity but perhaps the very driver that made
 27. him travel the length and breadth of the continent.

28. His form, tending towards the conservative, of looking at the Russian
 29. Revolution and running away from it as well as his explicit nationalism
 30. regarding the struggles of the Polish people, today appears as a methodo-
 31. logical introduction that would be applied in Portugal, insisting precisely
 32. on where the audience would be won over: scenic beauty, scenes of real
 33. life, stories of simple people. The visual emphasis found in the continuity
 34. given to the Nordic naturalistic tradition might form part of a commercial
 35. pattern underlying both films, *Mulheres da Beira* and *Os lobos*. If there is a
 36. search for beauty, this needs investigating within the context of his experi-
 37. ences prior to Portugal that reflect a kind of preview: not only the Nordic
 38. naturalism but also the launching of schools and specialist journals to
 39. form a circle from which, starting out with the exercise of a craft, vari-
 40. ous other paths linked to the same unfolding purpose. The artistic traces
 41. found in other parts of Europe that are not Portugal cannot continue to
 42. be treated as mere informative material, even as a little exotic, from the
 43. itinerant life that Rino Lupo managed. What is evident from his numerous
 44. travels is a desire to learn by watching and then transporting the cultural
 45. baggage learned outside those national borders and making his experi-
 46. ence transversal to the entire history of cinema. The hypothesis that might
 47. be followed is that, through a careful selection of naturalistic landscapes
 48. in Arouca (for *Mulheres da Beira*), one encounters the exteriors shot in a
 49. realistic style as in Germany just as by lingering on the femininity of
 50. Aninhas, one arrives at the surviving images of Danish eroticism without
 51. forgetting the comedy learned and performed in Russia also as a minor
 52. influence in *Os lobos*, for example.

The closing minutes of Pedro Lino's documentary take us back to Rome to meet the final indirect heir of the Lupo family, who accompanies the crew and the spectator to the tomb of Cesare Lupo, known as Rino. If we dwell on the first ten minutes of the film and add these final five minutes, we are transported to something that still eludes us. These minutes may summarize a story but they do not tell it: they deserve further exploration in order to search for a perhaps Italian essence that travelled in the body of Cesare Lupo, known as Rino, far and wide across Europe.

CONCLUSION

The study of Rino Lupo's life and work outside the Portuguese context leads us to reflections that begin with the Italian filmmaker himself but then extend outwards to the whole history of the early period of European cinema. The study of the various stages of Rino Lupo's life and work conveys his desire to be 'an artist of his time' (Bertolo 2021: 1) undeniably leading him to travelling. When we list all the countries where Rino Lupo worked between 1912 and 1933, we realize that transversality, in conjunction with transnationality, are concepts that require serious consideration in order to delve into the 'nomadic' roots of early silent filmmaking. From France to Germany, from assistant to director, Rino fleetingly passes through Denmark, embarking on a journey between Russia and Poland, where he created the character 'Rino', before then arriving on the opposite side of Europe, first in Portugal and then in Spain. Cesare Rino Lupo ended his career by returning to his two starting points, France and Germany, as a simple extra in films that already featured sound. He never worked in Italy.

The transversality with which Rino Lupo applies the capacities of each country he visits leads him to seek out its secrets and then explore its weak or underdeveloped points: in Poland, for example, he opens the first school of film studies, an experience he then repeats in Portugal, with exactly the same format, a few years later. Transversality opened up horizons which, in his imagination, he could only pursue through travel and displacement. The concept of 'displacement' may also be linked to the various tasks Lupo carried out within the film industry. Through the development of all kinds of genres depending on the context (from comic, to thriller, to erotic drama, among others), Lupo was also able to change his professional role, moving with absolute freedom from the role of actor to that of director, from film critic/journalist to professor and coordinator of various film schools.

The biography of his Polish period, also replete with experiences off the set, quickly leads us towards a reflection that ends with the awareness that what Rino Lupo accomplished around Europe was not a path towards personal recognition. The path Rino Lupo took started out with the personal reasoning of curiosity towards the new and led onto stages of dissemination of the same film grammar from one place to another, from one context to another, transmitting the potential of not only the art of film but also the whole sphere revolving around this art. The Warsaw Film School, together with the *Kinema* journal, definitely produced reflections on a concept of 'cinema to be filled in', which travelled and settled in various European countries, often bearing good fruit, through the figure of Lupo.

We may define Lupo's mission as 'cinema to be filled in', which moved transversally to establish itself not in specific places but rather in the canons and principles that filled in the empty spaces.

FUNDING

This research was performed with the financial support of FCT – Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia, I. P. through the postdoctoral fellowship SFRH/BPD/115835/2016. This article was published with financial support from the Institute of Contemporary History, funded by national funds through FCT – Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia, I. P., under the projects UIDB/04209/2020 and UIDP/04209/2020.

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SUGGESTED CITATION

Cucinotta, Caterina (2023), 'Rino Lupo before Portugal, Russia and Poland: A biography for poetics under construction', *Journal of Italian Cinema & Media Studies*, Special Issue: 'Intersections between Italian and Slavic Cinemas', 11:3&4, pp. 545–58, https://doi.org/10.1386/jicms_00197_1

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