

Happy Winter: Turning a blind eye to the crisis in Mondello

by VITTORIA SCARPA

© 01/08/2017 - The documentary by Giovanni Totaro, filmed on the famous beach in Palermo, will be presented out of competition in the official selection at the 74th Venice Film Festival



Happy Winter by Giovanni Totaro

The crisis that has taken hold over the last few years, as seen from Mondello beach in Palermo, where myriad families spend their holidays, pretending that the crisis doesn't exist. This is the topic broached by **Giovanni Totaro's** feature debut, *Happy Winter*, which he both wrote and directed, and which will be world-premiered at the 74th **Venice Film Festival** (30 August–9 September 2017), out of competition in the official selection.

Totaro's documentary aims to offer an almost sociological, but simultaneously funny and light-hearted, take on the crisis that has been plaguing Europe for the last few years. Every summer on Mondello beach, hundreds of beach huts are built, ready and waiting to host the swimmers who go to spend the season there. For these people, the shacks offer the chance to take refuge behind the memory of a social status that the recent crisis has totally undermined. A family becomes mired in debt just to go on holiday by the seaside and give the impression of being well off; three women sunbathe in order to feel like they are still young; and a barman plans to earn as much money as possible to make it through the winter. They are all eagerly awaiting the night of Ferragosto on 15 August so they can be the star attractions of the summer's vanity fair and carry on pretending that there is no economic crisis.

Happy Winter is an [Indyca](#) production with [Rai Cinema](#), in co-production with Zenit Arti Audiovisive, and in conjunction with [Inthefilm](#) and Onirica. It was developed with support from the [Creative Europe MEDIA programme](#), with contributions from the [Italian Ministry of Cultural Heritage and Activities](#) and the [Piedmont Doc Film Fund](#), and it was made as part of the [Sensi Contemporanei Cinema programme](#) (Sicily Region/Sicily Region Film Commission).

The film, which won a number of awards at competitions intended for documentary projects (the IDS Award at MIA in 2015, the MISE 2016 Development Award, the Cuban Hat Award at Hot Docs Forum in 2016, and the Atelier Award at the Milano Film Network in 2016), will go on general release in the coming months, courtesy of [I Wonder Pictures](#).