Immagine che contiene vestiti, testo, Viso umano, poster

Descrizione generata automaticamente

**WELCOME TO JAIL**

A film documentary by **Michele Rho**

A documentary film about the world's first restaurant opened inside a prison.

Inizio modulo

Fine modulo

Italy – 2023 – 73 minutes

a WeRock production

**Technical Cast**

***Director:*** Michele Rho

***Screenplay:*** Michele Rho

***Cinematography:*** Patrizio Saccò

***Editing:*** Walter Marocchi

***Music:*** Dario Moroldo

***Produced by:*** We Rock in collaboration with Giovanni Rho and Walter Marocchi

**Synopsis**

The theme of incarceration and the condition of prisoners is unfortunately always extremely relevant, and people often prefer not to address it or discuss it with a certain degree of rhetoric. Prison is uncomfortable and frightening. By narrating the project of "In Galera," the world's first restaurant opened inside a correctional facility, the documentary film "*Benvenuti In Galera*" takes us inside a prison, attempting to break down these fears and mistrust through the stories of those trying to reclaim their lives through work. For these individuals, work means redemption, life, and a future. But the restaurant is not just a workplace for the inmates; it is also an innovative way for the external community to engage with the prison reality in a new and different manner—a bridge between the prison and the outside world.

**Director's Notes**

“Benvenuti In Galera” is the documentary that shares the extraordinary story of "In Galera," the world's first restaurant located inside a prison, entirely managed by inmates (with various sentences) under the supervision of a tenacious woman... my mother.

This high-class restaurant (and social project) is open to everyone. The waitstaff wears uniforms, and the chef studied at Gualtiero Marchesi's school. My goal was not just to tell the story of an exceptional restaurant or, naturally, my mother's story. In my documentaries, I have always sought out places that offer stimulating themes for reflection. Thus, the restaurant itself became a special lens through which to explore the world of prison.

I believe that in these times, it is increasingly important to talk and discuss prison, to confront ourselves on an extremely current issue. I approached the project wondering how inmates perceive the outside world, how they feel, what they experience—thinking of them as human beings, beyond the guilt they have committed. All of this, always and in any case, with respect and attention to the victims of their actions.

The documentary, shot over three years due to the COVID-19 pandemic, allowed me to closely follow and get to know these individuals in their rehabilitation journeys. Some of these journeys ended positively, while others did not. But that is not the focus of my work. I am interested in the stories. The story of Davide, Said, Jonut, Chester, Domingo... men who have made mistakes and are seeking a second chance at life, many of them through work. And it is work that becomes the key to everything—to avoid prison, to be accepted again by their families, and to avoid returning to criminal activities. During this process, I encountered a great deal of humanity and realized how little I knew and understood about prison and life inside because I observed it from the outside. It's a small shift in perspective but a crucial one.

The documentary has a bittersweet tone and deliberately does not want to "play" with drama. Inmates are human beings, and lightness makes punishment more bearable. Even visually, I tried in every way to avoid the sad and squalid image of the prison that we encounter in many prison films. The prison is squalid, but it depends on the perspective from which you look at it. Here, we talk about redemption, a second chance. An elegant black and white seemed the necessary choice to give dignity to these intimate and personal stories. So, BENVENUTI IN GALERA, where the word "Benvenuti" is an invitation for all of you to get to know better and not be afraid or distrustful when you see an inmate or when you enter in a correctional facility.

**Filmmaker's Biography**

Michele Rho is a director and screenwriter. He earned a diploma in theatrical direction from the Paolo Grassi School of Dramatic Art in Milan. Later, he received a scholarship and attended the Master of Fine Arts in Directing and Screenwriting at Columbia University in New York. He works in the fields of cinema, theater, and television. We Rock is the production house with which he produces and co-produces films and documentaries. In 2002, he directed and wrote MILàN, a short documentary. In 2004, he directed and wrote POST‐IT, a short film produced by Gianluca Arcopinto, selected for N.I.C.E, New Italian Cinema Events. In 2004, he won a Special Jury Mention and the Best Editing Award at the Arcipelago Festival. In 2008, he created the short film VEGLIA. His first film, titled "CAVALLI," was produced by Rai Cinema, distributed by Lucky Red, and presented at the 68th Venice Film Festival. In 2017, his documentary "MEXICO! UN CINEMA ALLA RISCOSSA" was released in cinemas with Officine Ubu distribution.

**Inizio modulo**

**Fine modulo**