

A portrait of Cecil Satariano, a man with dark hair and a serious expression, wearing a red turtleneck sweater. He is holding a large, silver Zomax telephoto lens with both hands. The background is a solid, deep purple color.

CECIL SATARIANO

1930-1996



Canon
AUTO ZOOM 814

**CECIL
SATARIANO**
A CINEMATIC RETROSPECTIVE

BIOGRAPHY

CECIL SATARIANO was born on 29 September 1930. On completing his schooling, he took up employment with the Cable & Wireless company, and worked as a correspondent for *The Sunday Times of Malta* and *The Times of Malta*. He was also a film critic and wrote commentaries on social issues. In 1972, he joined the Board of Film Censors.

In 1968, Satariano purchased his Canon Super 8 film camera. This purchase marked a new era in Maltese film history. In 1969 Satariano joined the Malta Cine Circle and began to make his own films. Using a Canon 518 Cine Camera, the self-taught filmmaker shot and edited his first

film **I'M FURIOUS – RED!**, released in 1970. The film won the 'Ten Best' award in the 1970 *Movie Maker* Amateur Film Competition. Satariano flew to London to receive the first of several awards at the National Theatre.

On the heels of this successful film debut, Satariano's second and most successful work, **GIUSEPPI** was released in 1971. By this time, Satariano had teamed up with Ronnie Demajo, who helped finance **GIUSEPPI** and the productions which followed, forming 'Satadema'.

GIUSEPPI earned more than 20 awards from around the world. In one evening at the National Theatre in

London, Satariano walked away with three major honours: a Gold Star in the 'Ten Best' UK, the Kodak Award for Best Cinematography, and the Dixon's Prize for Best Editing. His international acclaim extended further, with accolades from film festivals in Cannes, Tokyo, New York, Lisbon, Hiroshima, Nagasaki, and other countries.

Satariano directed a total of five films: **I'M FURIOUS – RED!** (1970), **GIUSEPPI** (1971), **THE BEACH** (1973), **ILONA** (1974), and **KATARIN** (1978). Between these projects, he also produced two short documentaries: **LET THEM BE** (1971) and **A TOUCH OF DUTCH** (filmed in 1973).

Satariano also tried his hand at 16mm film. With **KATARIN**, Satariano's fifth film, the filmmaker achieved an international release. Originally shot on 16mm, **KATARIN** was later released in 35mm by EMI Film Distributors (UK) and screened in cinemas in Malta and in the United Kingdom, including London's West End. **KATARIN** was the first Maltese film production to be commercially shown internationally.

Satariano suffered a severe stroke in the 1980s, and was later confined to a wheelchair and unable to pursue further filmmaking. He died at the age of 66 years on 16 December 1996.

FILMOGRAPHY

I'M FURIOUS - RED!

1970, Super 8, 33 minutes

Featuring:

Frank Pisani

I'M FURIOUS - RED! tells the story of a peeping Tom played by Frank Pisani. Pisani nimbly enters the mental state of the lead character, and his portrayal of a socially inhibited young man makes for riveting viewing. The film has a music score but no dialogue. This seeming lack only adds to the atmosphere, making it a wonderful filmmaking debut by Satariano.

I'M FURIOUS - RED! won the 'Ten Best' award in the 1970 *Movie Maker* Amateur Film Competition, making it the first Super 8 film to win this category in the early 1970s. An additional accolade was awarded at the First West of England film festival in 1971 for Best Film in the Fiction category.

In the foreword to Satariano's 1973 publication *Canon Fire!*, film critic and writer Tony Rose wrote: "It was as if Satariano had been waiting all his life to make this film and felt compelled to put all he knew into it. He knew a great deal and the result was an astonishing virtuoso performance."





GIUSEPPI

1971, Super 8, 22 minutes

Featuring:

Giuseppi Mallia, Frank Pisani

Set in Valletta, the story is inspired by a real-life incident of the lead actor in the film, Giuseppi Mallia. Poor, disabled and somewhat lonely, Giuseppi hobbles around the city with a stick to support his wooden leg. One day he finds a wallet filled with money, and here begins the chase.

Shot in the neorealist style of filmmaking, **GIUSEPPI** participated at the Golden Knight Awards in Malta in 1971. **GIUSEPPI** was screened at international film festivals and received more than 20 awards from London to Hiroshima. At the 1980 Irish Cork Film Festival, **GIUSEPPI** was among 15 films selected and ranked as the best non-commercial films ever produced.

The restoration of this
film was supported by



THE BEACH

1973, Super 8, 23 minutes

Featuring:

Mary Blackman, Ettore Calleja, Karmenu Grupetta, John Navarro

After presenting character studies in his first two films, Satariano enters new ground with **THE BEACH**, a study of various people set on a sandy beach in the middle of summer. Satariano demonstrates his command of film rhythm and editing in a light-hearted production with a good dose of humour.

The film earned Satariano high praise for his technique of Super 8 filmmaking. The May 1973 issue of *Movie Maker* magazine stated: "We commend technicians to note the work of Cecil Satariano (super) and Archie Reid (standard), arguably the two best 8mm cameramen in the world."





ILONA

1974, Super 8, 15 minutes

Featuring:

Vanessa Webber

Released in 1974, **ILONA** is Satariano's fourth film, and only art film. Starring Vanessa Webber, the actor's performance is both captivating and elusive, like the waves of the sea with which the actor engages in a dance.

In a February 1974 issue of the *Sunday Times of Malta*, film critic Eric German wrote that "**ILONA** is a very complex work which is difficult to fit into any of the usual categories. A great deal of it has all the tension and build-up of a thriller and even if one knows beforehand how it's going to end, the last scenes are definitely loaded with suspense, but again **ILONA** is far too perplexing a story for such an easy description."

The restoration of this
film was supported by



KATARIN

1978, 16mm, 42 minutes

International release on 35mm film (EMI Film Distributors, UK)

⑫ *Suitable for persons twelve years and over*

Featuring:

Anna Stafrace, Frank Pisani

A story of innocence, desire and conflict from the perspective of Katarin, a teenage girl. Katarin's curiosity unexpectedly takes her on a brief whirlwind tour of wealthy society which she finds both frightening and compelling. Drawn into a world far from her own poor and rural origins, she seeks to embrace modern life and the promise of something better with all the risks involved. Anna Stafrace brings both a freshness and depth to the character of Katarin and is well supported by Frank Pisani in the role of Kelinu.

In an interview published in the *Times of Malta*, 1978, Satariano stated that: "What Ronnie [Demajo] and I really wanted to say in the film is not so much the fact that the idle-rich are imposing on the simple and innocent life, but that the latter is being seduced by its own desire to 'change'. Katarin is more vulnerable to this seduction because of her innocence and childish curiosity."



THE CECIL SATARIANO FILM RESTORATION PROJECT

VERONICA GALEA

Director, The Cecil Satariano Film Restoration Project

THOMAS BAKELS

ALPHA-OMEGA digital GmbH

THE CECIL SATARIANO FILM RESTORATION PROJECT

The Cecil Satariano Film Restoration Project is an initiative of Veronica Galea, and forms part of a larger project entitled *Maltese Histories – one by one*. Since 2004, Ms Galea, a media professional for over 20 years, has sought out and collated a diverse range of media representing Maltese experience. The materials were digitised and restored to ensure that these resources showing the colour and vibrancy of Maltese life and thought are archived and preserved for future generations. The natural choice for their preservation was the National Archives of Malta, whose legal remit is to archive Maltese treasures.

The Cecil Satariano Restoration Project began in 2007. Fifteen years searching for the film materials produced only copies of the films. In 2022 the original film reels were discovered and the film restoration began soon after.

50 years in poor storage had taken their toll on the Super 8 and 16mm films and the original film reels had suffered so much that in some cases it was necessary to utilise the film copies to piece the films back together again.

This delicate work was carried out by Thomas Bakels and Marie Bendl at ALPHA-OMEGA digital in Munich. A sound engineer by profession, Mr Bakels set up his own company in film restoration in 1999 and is an internationally acclaimed film restorer. Since 2011 he has made a significant contribution to German film heritage by providing various institutions with knowledge of preservation techniques as well as hands-on film restoration of ten of Werner Herzog's films including *Nosferatu – Phantom der Nacht* (1979) and *Fitzcarraldo* (1982).

Using dedicated software and manual touch-ups the Satariano films were digitally

treated to reduce dust, dirt, scratches and to stabilise the film picture to render a smoother appearance. Signs of ageing also included film tears as well as fungus which developed on the film emulsion.

The film sound suffered too over the years, and here Philipp Scholz and René Kampka made their important contribution to the sound restoration. The aging process caused sound dropouts to appear. These were dealt with using digital sound processing and manual retouching of each drop-out. Technical weaknesses in the sound also had to be addressed, particularly ambient sounds.

In some cases, the audio quality was not consistent with the length of the film picture; they would vary from scene to scene. These sound differences had to be equalized, and some cuts had to be made to synchronize the timing.

Both picture and sound interventions were carried out with much care and restraint to maintain the authentic feel of the films. The careful examination of all film material to ensure the best handling of it, together with a dedicated and respectful approach to the restoration process concluded the work to bring back to life Cecil Satariano's films as he would have wished.

VERONICA GALEA

Director, The Cecil Satariano
Film Restoration Project

THOMAS BAKELS

ALPHA-OMEGA digital GmbH



CECIL SATARIANO

A CINEMATIC RETROSPECTIVE

EVENT PROGRAMME

DAY 1 | THURSDAY 23 OCTOBER 2025

19:00 | SPAZJU KREATTIV CINEMA

WELCOME

Hon. Owen Bonnici MP (*Minister for Culture, Lands and Local Government*)

INTRODUCTION

Charles J. Farrugia (*National Archivist*)

PRESENTATION

CECIL SATARIANO, LIFE AND WORK

Jean Pierre Borg

Discover Cecil Satariano, from his endeavours as a film correspondent and film critic to his activism for the reform of Censorship and his critically acclaimed filmmaking career. The presentation will trace Cecil's cinematic evolution and his quick rise as a filmmaker from humble beginnings to becoming a respected authority in foreign amateur filmmaking circles.

CONTINUES ON NEXT PAGE →

PRESENTATION

THE CECIL SATARIANO FILM RESTORATION PROJECT

Veronica Galea (*Director, The Cecil Satariano Film Restoration & Digitisation Project*)

Thomas Bakels (*Head Film Restorer at ALPHA-OMEGA Digital, Munich*)

The presentation focuses on the various challenges encountered while restoring five films by Cecil Satariano produced between 1969 and 1977. Starting with the years-long search for the films, the speakers elaborate on dealing with Super 8 and 16mm film materials in varying states of preservation, as well as the issues raised after discovering different film edits of some of the films. Using “before and after” comparative images and film extracts, the restoration team will elaborate on the restoration interventions where the team consistently endeavoured to remain true to the spirit and intentions of the filmmaker.

FILM SCREENING

GIUSEPPI (1971, Super 8, 22 minutes)

LET THEM BE (1971, Super 8, 11 minutes)

PANEL DISCUSSION

**CECIL SATARIANO REMEMBERED: CECIL THROUGH THE EYES
OF FAMILY AND THOSE WHO WORKED WITH HIM**

PANELISTS:

**Madeleine Vella Satariano, Mario Philip Azzopardi,
Marie Benoît, Jo Debono**

CHAIR:

Jean Pierre Borg

PANEL DISCUSSION

CECIL SATARIANO'S SIGNIFICANCE IN MALTA'S CINEMATIC HERITAGE

PANELISTS:

Rebecca Anastasi, Charlie Cauchi, Kenneth Scicluna

CHAIR:

Jean Pierre Borg

FILM SCREENING

I'M FURIOUS - RED! (1970, Super 8, 33 minutes)

A TOUCH OF DUTCH (filmed in 1973, Super 8, 7 minutes)

SCREENING OF ALL THE RESTORED FILMS

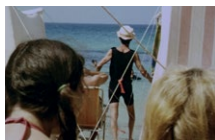
Jean Pierre Borg will present a short introduction before each film.

**I'M FURIOUS - RED!**

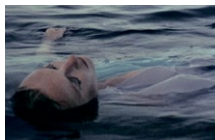
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Jo Debono

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Thomas Bakels

Marie Bendl

ALPHA-OMEGA digital GmbH

scholz+kampka audio operations

The Farsons Foundation

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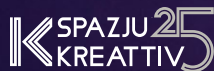
Mario A. Azzopardi



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THIS EVENT IS PART OF THE
2025 WORLD DAY FOR AUDIOVISUAL HERITAGE

IN CO-OPERATION WITH THE CO-ORDINATING COUNCIL OF AUDIOVISUAL ARCHIVES ASSOCIATIONS (CCAAA)

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