



# BLACK AFRICA



# WHITE MARBLE

A DOCUMENTARY BY CLEMENTE BICOCCHI  
PRODUCED BY TERENCE WARD & FOURLAB

***"AN AMAZING FEAT OF NONFICTION STORYTELLING...  
ONE OF THE BEST FILMS OF 2013."***

**- CLEVELAND MOVIE BLOG**

***"BRILLIANT!" - NY DAILY NEWS***



## **AWARDS**

Best Documentary, Berlin Independent Film Festival, (Germany) 2014

Audience Award Best Documentary, Cambridge Film Festival, (UK) 2013

Grand Prix du Documentaire, Festival du Cinéma d'Annecy, (France) 2012

## **FESTIVALS**

2014 Con-Vivere Carrara Festival, Carrara (Italy)

2014 Zanzibar International Film Festival – Stonetown (Tanzania)

2014 African World Documentary Festival – St. Louis, Philadelphia, Barbados, Jamaica,  
Cameroon, Nigeria, South Africa, London (USA, Caribbean, Africa, UK)

2013 African Film Festival National Traveling Series - Berkeley, Tuscaloosa, Atlanta,  
Baltimore, BAM Brooklyn (USA)

2013 Lights, Camera, AFRICA Festival - Lagos (Nigeria)

2013 Festival Terra di Cinema - Paris (France)

2013 Festival de Lasalle en Cevennes - Lasalle (France)

2013 Vicino Lontano Festival - Udine (Italy)

2012 Festival del Cinema Africano-Asia-America Latina - Milan (Italy)

2012 African Studies Association Conference - Philadelphia (USA)

2012 ViaEmiliaDocFest (Italy)

2012 Kibaka Festival - Florence (Italy)

2012 Mostra Internacional de Cinema - Sao Paulo (Brazil)

2012 NY African Film Festival, Film Society at Lincoln Center - New York (USA)



## REVIEWS

*"A riveting, powerful, beautifully made film. As history, as betrayal, as a family story with operatic twists and turns. This film has it all-and it is magical. Brilliant!"*

**- Joanna Molloy, columnist** *New York Daily News*

*"Really excellent! Trenchant and charming at the same time, a rare combination. Thoroughly enjoyed it. Wonderful film."*

**- Adam Nossiter, Africa Bureau Chief,** *New York Times*

*"An amazing feat of nonfiction storytelling by Italian filmmaker Clemente Bicchochi. Marionettes, line-drawn animation, a village griot and shadow-puppetry tell related narratives of Third-World imperialism, a century apart, on one side the heroism and possible martyrdom of European explorer Pietro Savorgnan di Brazza in the Congo. While in modern times relocating Brazza's bones to a giant, white-marble shrine in the capital city of Brazzaville reveals a snakes' nest of foreign influence, secret agendas and power plays. One is reminded of The Year of Living Dangerously more than once, and that is a compliment indeed."*

**- Charles Cassady Jr, critic,** *Cleveland Movie Blog*

*"A captivating, eclectic film - full of your lovely, mildly insane personalities. And history I was happy to learn. I loved it. Yes, it could be turned into a feature, with all of the details filled in. Brazza in his Nadar pictures looks a lot like Ralph Fiennes."*

**- Walter Murch, Academy Award-winning film editor**  
*The Godfather I-III, Apocalypse Now, The English Patient*

*"Bravo! The film is beautifully rendered. From the seamless and elegantly cinematic integration of animation/graphics/puppetry/photography/archival materials and exquisite and richly layered story, the film is a sociopolitical-cultural tour-de-force!"*

**- Stephen Dembitzer, executive producer**  
*In the Bedroom, 5 Academy Award nominations*

*"Terrific, really interesting, and now I cannot wait to read the book. The film is wonderfully made - all of it, the great music, the graphics, the story."*

**- Michael Ondaatje, author**  
*The English Patient,*  
*The Conversations: Walter Murch and the Art of Editing Film*

*"Fascinating. I was thrilled to have been able to see it. One's connection to and responsibility for the life of long-dead family members is a puzzling, strange, very absorbing subject."*

**- Wally Shawn, actor and writer**  
*My Dinner with Andre, The Princess Bride*

*"Terrific! A wonderful film."*

**- D. A. Pennebaker, director**  
*The War Room, Don't Look Back, Monterey Pop*



&

**Terence Ward**

present

# **BLACK AFRICA WHITE MARBLE**

Directed by  
**Clemente Bicchì**

Adapted from the book  
*Brazza in Congo: A Life and Legacy*  
by **Idanna Pucci**

Camera  
**Clemente Bicchì, Giancarlo Cammerini, Terence Ward**

Editing  
**Clemente Bicchì, Terence Ward**

Sound design  
**Saverio Damiani**

Animation  
**Paolo Moretti - Pentolino**

Musical improvisation  
**Nanni Canale**

**Fourlab, Rome, Italy**  
**tel: +39 333 9031146, email: [terenceward@gmail.com](mailto:terenceward@gmail.com)**

**Distributed by ICARUS FILMS in USA and Canada**  
**[livia@icarusfilms.com](mailto:livia@icarusfilms.com)**



Congo River



Idanna dancing with Makoko

## SYNOPSIS

*By Mahen Bonetti, Executive Director of the African Film Festival, New York*

A century after the mysterious death of pacifist explorer Pietro Savorgnan di Brazzà (1852-1905), Sassou Nguesso, the president of Congo-Brazzaville, starts the negotiations to transfer his remains from a small cemetery in Algiers to a megalomaniacal mausoleum of white marble in impoverished Brazzaville, the only capital in Africa that still bears the name of its European founder. Behind the politician's altruistic facade lies a fight for power over the country. Brazzà's descendant Idanna Pucci discovers the truth and then struggles with all her might to defend the ideals of her ancestor and restore the lost legitimacy of King Makoko of the Batéké, the great African spiritual leader.

This double story of friendship, respect and commitment between two generations of Europeans and Africans—the Brazzàs and the Makokos—reveals the long, complicated saga of interdependence between Africa and Europe. In its portrayal of the conflict between the cynical use of tradition and lavish celebrations and the non-negotiable defense of humanist ideals, the film illustrates two of the most visible trends in contemporary African history.

Original footage, archival images of pre-colonial times in Congo and Gabon, as well as animation and shadow puppets, compose a multivalent narrative employing different genres and voices, offering lines of thought and reflection that do not yield to simplistic conclusions. The reward of pursuing one's ideals, the great symbolic value of African rites, and their misuse throughout the years are central issues on display in this hybrid documentary, a tale of friendship and respect between human beings of allegedly opposed cultures.



Pietro di Brazza, 1882



Makoko Nguempio, 2009

## **SYNOPSIS IN BRIEF**

*Black Africa White Marble* is a gripping, real-life thriller told through an innovative blend of animation, puppetry, archive materials, graphics, and original footage. In the 1880s, there were two paths for Central Africa: Pietro di Brazza's and Henry Stanley's. Italian by birth and French by education, Brazza rejected the racism of his age, using his philosophy of non-violence to penetrate the rainforests of the Congo Basin, sowing trust along the way. Meanwhile, his rival Stanley (in the service of the Belgian King Leopold II) advanced with the roar of the cannon. More than a century later, when the current Congo president decided to transfer di Brazza's remains from his grave in Algiers to a multimillion-dollar mausoleum in Congo's impoverished capital, a descendant of Brazza, Idanna Pucci, discovered an insidious hidden agenda behind the plan--shedding harsh light on both Central Africa's colonial past and its corrupt present. And she launches a human rights battle that spans two centuries.

*Note: Filming in the Republic of Congo is tightly controlled. During the filming, the director was held in captivity and his camera was confiscated.*



## DIRECTOR - CLEMENTE BICOCCHI

Clemente Bicocchi graduated in Film History at the University of Florence. In 1995, he won a scholarship to study film at NYU. Three years later, he moved to Barcelona, where he obtained a Master in Documentary Film at the University of Pompeu Fabra, collaborating with director J.L. Guerin in his documentary *En Costruccion (Under Construction)*. He then joined the Centro Sperimentale di Cinematografia in Rome (Italy's national film school) where he graduated in film editing. In 2003, thanks to the European Union scholarship *Il reale in Cantiere (Reality in the Pipeline)*, he completed his first feature length documentary, *60 Years*, based on living memories of the battle of Monte Cassino during World War II which premiered at the Festival dei Popoli in Florence, Italy in 2006. In addition to working as a cameraman and editor, Clemente has been making documentaries and short films, both experimental and narrative, which have been shown in Italian and European festivals.



## FILMOGRAPHY

**2011** *Black Africa White Marble* (HD-77' - Doc)

**2008** *Lost in Election* (Dv-53'- Doc)

**2006** *60 Years.* (Dv – 90' - Doc)

**2004** *Qualcosa d'Insolito* (Foto35mm./Super 8/16mm. - 17')

**2004** *Parcheggio* (Dv - 13')

**2004** *Motion Control* (Dv - 4'- Experimental Film)

**2003** *Vacanza in 7 atti* (Dv - 40')

**2003** *Non è Colpa Mia* (Dv - 4')

**2000** *Placebo* (Dv/Super 8 - 15')

**1999** *K595* (Dv/Super 8 - 18')

**1998** *Rigore* (Super 8 - 2')

**1996** *My Big Apple* (Bvu - 7')



## DIRECTOR'S NOTES

This film tells two stories that occur one hundred years from one another, but both are so interwoven that they become one. The story encompasses the contradictory relationship between Europe and Africa, where facts are always accompanied by a great symbolic value. For this reason, many genres were used in the narration, from hand-designed animation to staged shadow puppets. A rich archive of unpublished documents also served to inspire historical scenes. The film attempts to reach beyond physical appearances and seize the spirit of such an extraordinary story, without betraying the truth. Three versions of the film are available, English, Italian, and French.

## MAIN CHARACTER - IDANNA PUCCI

Idanna Pucci produced and directed *Eugenia of Patagonia*, a documentary that premiered at the Festival des Femmes in Creteil, France, and received the Audience Award at the Festival CinDonne in Turin, Italy. She also co-produced *Leonardo's Legacy* for Discovery Channel on the great Renaissance master. Currently, she is producing *Archaeology of a Woman*, a feature film by award-winning director Sharon Greytak; and *Strange Times, My Dears*, a documentary by Mahtab Mansour that follows spirited Iranian women as they fulfill their aspirations in spite of the gender-apartheid system that dominates daily life in Teheran. Since leaving her Italian home in Florence, she worked in New York for her uncle, the late fashion designer Emilio Pucci, and then moved to Indonesia where she studied Balinese culture with particular emphasis on the oral tradition. She is the author of *The Epic of Life: A Balinese Journey of the Soul* (Van der Marck Editions); *The Trials of Maria Barbella* (Vintage Books); *Against All Odds: The Strange Destiny of a Balinese Prince* (Saritaksu); and *Brazza in Congo: A Life and Legacy* (Umbrage Books), a biography on her ancestor, the explorer Pietro Savorgnan di Brazza, founder of Brazzaville in Congo—which inspired the documentary *Black Africa White Marble*.





## **PRODUCER - TERENCE WARD**

Terence Ward grew up in Iran. He is a cultural consultant on the Middle East, and also a documentary producer and writer. He conceived and produced *Black Africa White Marble*, inspired by the humanist Italian explorer, Pietro Savorgnan di Brazza after whom the capital of Brazzaville in Congo is named. Currently, with his wife Idanna Pucci, he is producing *Archaeology of a Woman*, a feature film by award-winning director Sharon Greytak as well as *Strange Times, My Dears*, a documentary by Mahtab Mansour about spirited Iranian women who fulfill their aspirations in spite of the gender-apartheid system that dominates daily life in Teheran. He also collaborated in the segment of ABC's *Amazing Games* devoted to the historical games of Tuscany. He is the author of the acclaimed *Searching for Hassan: A Journey to the Heart of Iran* (Anchor Books) that he adapted into a screenplay with Mahtab Mansour. His next book, *The Guardian of Mercies*, a true story set in Naples, will be published in 2014 (Editions Intervalles, Paris).

## **ASSOCIATE PRODUCER - FOURLAB**

Fourlab is a young, dynamic production and distribution company founded in 2005 by Simone Morandi and Paolo Trombetti. In the first 5 years, Fourlab has achieved important goals in development and production activities. Thanks to the close cooperation with Studio Cau, Fourlab continues to enjoy a privileged position in viewing new entertainment developments. In 2006, Fourlab began an intense distribution activity of feature films and TV movies for the Italian pay TV platform, building a growing library of more than 80 titles.



## COMMENTS (from an African p.o.v.)

“Brazza was gifted with the capacity of sincere love in the aim of bringing closer our two civilizations. We implore our God – Nkwé Mbali - to enlighten the hearts of all political leaders in the world so that the historical alliance of our black king and his white friend may serve as a symbol for eternity.”

**- Makoko Auguste Nguempio**  
current spiritual leader of the Batéké

"For us Congolese, Pietro di Brazza—the explorer with a compassionate heart and a far-sighted mind—is one of our ancestors. Even if he was born in Rome, we believe that his soul is African. For this reason, no politician would ever dream of changing the name of our capital, Brazzaville."

**- Jean Leonard Touadi,**  
Congolese journalist, Deputy of Italian parliament

“For the Batéké, there can be no doubt that when Pietro di Brazza and Iloo I met each other for the first time. God had indeed guided their stars. The remembrance of their epic friendship has been handed down from generation to generation in Central Africa and still lives on today.”

**- Masengo ma Mongolo**  
Congolese playwright, musician, actor

## TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS

**Title:** Black Africa White Marble

**Length:** 77 minutes

**Year of Production:** 2012

**Country:** USA, Italy, Republic of Congo

**Format:** HD (16/9)

**Directed by:** Clemente Bicochi

**Produced by:** Terence Ward in association with Fourlab

**Language:** Italian and English versions; French (with subtitles)