



IL MORO

Written and Directed by Daphne Di Cinto

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GREENLIGHT PROJECT FILMS  
in collaboration with ONDA FILM  
Present

IL MORO 

WRITTEN AND DIRECTED BY  
DAPHNE DI CINTO

STARRING  
ALBERTO BOUBAKAR MALANCHINO  
PAOLO SASSANELLI  
ANDREA MELIS  
BALKISSA MAIGA  
LORENZO TRONCONI  
MOUHAMED FAYE  
with the voice of  
LORETTA GRACE

Producers DAPHNE DI CINTO, TAYLOR RE LYNN, FRANKLIN EUGENE  
Executive Producers NICHE ON DEMAND, LORENZO CALLEGARI, ZENA TUITT,  
SABRINA CLARKE-OKWUBANEGO Associate Producers L.A. BURGESS, JENNIFER R.  
MCZIER, THE POST CONTEMPORARY Co-Producer YASMINE HOLNESS-DOVE  
Director of Photography FRANCESCO DI PIERRO 1AD VALENTINA VINCENZINI  
2AD TOMMASO VITALI Costumes and Production Design MADDALENA ORIANI  
Make-up Artist RENATA DI LEONE Hairstylist CYNTHIA NWOSU Sound Operator  
CELESTE FRONTINO Composer THE NIRO Film Editor FILIPPO MONTEMURRO

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# INTRODUCTION

Duke Alessandro de' Medici belongs to one of the most well known Italian aristocratic historical families, yet his role, influence and heritage have been cast in a corner and willingly forgotten both by his successors and by history, making him a Black European Duke who may sound fictional, but is *very much real*, born from an enslaved woman of African descent and Pope Clement VII.

Despite the historical attempts to obscure or discredit his rule, traces of his life persist, representing an unexplored facet of Italian and European culture that deserves greater attention. Placing Alessandro in the middle, *Il Moro-The Moor* provides inspiration, legitimisation and representation to the Afro-Italian and Afro-European communities and to members of the African diaspora around the world, as well as to a wider public who shares history with this remarkable character.

In an age where historical memory is paramount, especially given the systemic failures that have shaped the educational system, *Il Moro - The Moor* isn't just a visually stunning film: it's a vital reappropriation of history and a celebration of the diversity within it.

While unveiling a true story from the past, *Il Moro - The Moor* invites us to question the narratives we've been taught and encourages us to embrace a wider perspective, reshaping our understanding of the past and at the same time creating a more equitable future.



## Director's Statement

### IL MORO - THE MOOR

Daphne Di Cinto

'When I researched the story of Alessandro de' Medici, I found a striking parallel with the experience of Black-Europeans today. Alessandro had to deal with other people's perception of his "low birth". Today, more than 500 years later, we continue to struggle with other people's perception of our backgrounds and skin colour. In Italy, Black-face and the N-word are still allowed on TV and people who were born and raised in Italy to two immigrant parents, are still denied the right to citizenship. Why do we still have to debate the legitimacy of our existence? Alessandro's story seeks to shine a light on both our continued presence in the continent throughout history and to the still-existing consequences of colonialism today.'



“Il Moro aims to be an ode to self-love for Black-Italians, Afropeans and the African diaspora, a reminder that we are an integral part of European history beyond the way it has portrayed us up until now. This isn’t just black history, it’s an intersection, the prelude to a diverse society that should have been honored generations ago. Part of Greenlight Project’s mission is to spotlight characters that have been painted out of the picture and restore a positive and inspiring perception of black identity today.”

Daphne Di Cinto, *Il Moro – The Moor: a Real Black Duke, Beyond Fiction*.  
The Los Angeles Tribune, April 19, 2022.



**YASMINE HOLNESS-DOVE Co-Producer**  
**IL MORO-THE MOOR**

*“Il Moro-The Moor isn’t a film about race and being black, it’s about belonging, self-identity and stepping up into leadership. It’s about taking ownership of your circumstances regardless of how uncomfortable or ugly things get. These are universal themes that most of us can relate to and, I’m sure, real issues the first Duke of Florence would have had to contend with.”*

## LOGLINE

The illegitimate son of an enslaved African woman and Pope Clement VII becomes the head of the Medici dynasty. However, taking on that role doesn't mean that his family is going to accept him.

## SHORT SYNOPSIS

Alessandro de' Medici is legitimised into one of the most prestigious Italian families, but is haunted by the stigma of his low birth, inherited from a mother he only barely remembers. When he unexpectedly becomes the first Duke of Florence, Alessandro must come to terms with his roots and is forced to face his real father's inability to accept him, while fending off his cousin's power hungry attacks.

Based on true events.



## LONG SYNOPSIS

The Medici family has just ended a long exile and is ready to go back to Florence victorious. Pope Clement VII, Alessandro de' Medici and Ippolito de' Medici are the only three men left who belong to the main line of the family and who can assure the continuation of the Medici name. All three men were also born illegitimately. Their fathers a Medici, their mothers a (not so well kept) secret. A little less of a secret is that Alessandro's mother was a Moor, enslaved in the Medici household. After the last legitimate heir to the main line of the family died unexpectedly, Pope Clement (at the time just a cardinal) decided to keep Alessandro, and send his mother away. Yet they surely couldn't send away her genes, which made Alessandro stand out from the rest of his family.

When we meet him, Pope Clement VII has just recovered from an ugly illness that almost killed him. To assure the family's influence in the Vatican he had made Ippolito de' Medici a cardinal. After his legitimisation in the family, Ippolito had always been considered the designated heir of Florence, thus placing Alessandro in second place, the spare piece they hopefully would never have to use. Ippolito's secular ambitions contrast with his robe and now that the Pope is well again, he is hoping he can resume his previous role in Florence.

When the Pope calls his nephews to discuss their return to Florence and their positions in the city, the two young men aren't ready for the news. Alessandro, is somber because of some rumours he heard while in exile, in regards to who is his real father. Questions about his identity and his belonging cloud his mind. Ippolito is completely taken by his own calculations to redeem his image and his name as the new Signore in Florence.

Pope Clement VII finally announces it: Florence will become a dukedom and Alessandro will be the first Duke of the city. The news sparks turbulence. Ippolito insists he should be allowed to abandon the Church and take his rightful place in his hometown. Alessandro feels the ground tremble beneath him asking himself if the Pope is showing him favour because it is true he is his real father.



When Alessandro is left alone with Clement VII, he can't keep his emotions at bay and finally he confronts him: how can the people accept the rule of a man that is renegaded by his own father? Taken off guard, Clement VII can't deny it any longer: he is Alessandro's father. The two men clumsily try to mend a tear that gets hopelessly larger and larger. Alessandro's very first memory of his mother unsettles Clement. Clement's answers to Alessandro's questions are less than satisfactory. Hurt and disappointed, Alessandro refuses the dukedom and decides to leave that next day.

The three men can't find peace. Clement VII is deep in prayer, Ippolito deep in thought and Alessandro feels restless. While he wanders around the castle's rooms confronting himself with paintings of ancestors that don't reflect him, he is attacked and almost killed. He recognises that dagger. Ippolito's. Angry, he storms into his cousin's room. While he doesn't find it in himself to hurt him, Alessandro demands that his cousin admits they both belong to Florence in the same way. In response, Ippolito starts a fight. Unable to physically beat Alessandro, he drags in one of his two young slaves. The boys look like Alessandro more than anybody in his family does. Ippolito reminds his cousin that the line between him and them is very thin and that he has the power to decide of that slave's fate, just as he has the power to decide of Alessandro's. He proves that point by stabbing the young boy in cold blood.

The noise wakes up the Pope. Disappointed and tired of his own family's divide, of them not understanding the heights they could achieve together, Clement VII finally gives up trying to convince them. That's when Alessandro steps up, feeling a responsibility towards himself and towards his home. He will accept Florence. Just as Ippolito will have to accept his position in it.

Before leaving the room, Alessandro takes the other young boy that is in Ippolito's service, reminding his cousin that "nothing always stays the same, not even the son of a slave".

The external passage of the castle, is long, symmetrical, illuminated with fires. Alessandro encourages the young boy to walk next to him. A woman enters the courtyard beneath. It's Alessandro's mother. She sees him and calls out his name. Alessandro stops in his tracks.



# CHARACTERS

## Alessandro de' Medici

Alessandro de' Medici was born in 1510, son of an enslaved Moorish woman named Simonetta da Collevocchio and of Pope Clement VII. Carrying the most illustrious surname around bestows numerous privileges: wealth, a worldly education, luxurious comforts, and a cultivated appreciation for the arts. Yet, these advantages only stretch so far when Alessandro is persistently confronted with a disheartening reality – he remains, in the eyes of his family, a contingency plan, a spare part rarely to be resorted to, for the only reason that his mother was a slave.

Recollections of his mother's existence are mere fragments, barely more than a blur in his memory. There's a faint image of a woman crying and calling him and a name, Alem, that occasionally intrudes upon his thoughts.

His cousin Ippolito de' Medici, akin to a brother, has consistently occupied the favored position. The Pope, whom Alessandro regards as his uncle, dispenses affection through exacting expectations and the challenge of meeting them, leaving Alessandro with the ceaseless aspiration to earn his approval. Unbeknownst to him, the Pope is not his uncle but his father, shrouded in the veil of his own shame.





## Pope Clement VII (Giulio de' Medici)

Pope Clemente VII (aka Giulio de' Medici) was born illegitimately in 1478, a month after his father suffered a brutal murder during Easter mass, in a ruthless attempt to erase the Medici name from the annals of history. Fortuitously, his uncle Lorenzo the Magnificent evaded the same tragic fate and following his mother's passing, welcomed him into his home, raising him alongside his own sons. The memories of Lorenzo and his father, and the legacy they left behind, occupy the most important place in his heart. He regards their achievements in elevating the Medici to the zenith of worldly influence with profound veneration.

However, fate has dealt him an uneven hand. Against all odds, he ascended to the position of Pope, a feat unheard of for illegitimate individuals within the Church. Despite holding the dominion over both Rome and Florence, his reign isn't easy: from the Protestants' heavy accusations, to the sack of Rome by the Spaniards and his family's exile from Florence, just to name a few.

Adding to his tribulations is his nephew, Ippolito de' Medici, who is slated to inherit Florence but squanders his potential recklessly. He also nurtured another "nephew", Alessandro. Times were too unstable to have only one heir. The fact that his mother was a slave, suddenly became secondary. The hidden truth is that Alessandro is his own son, but despite his Catholic guilt, the Pope managed very well to keep that information from the rest of the world. Or so he thought.

## Ippolito de' Medici

Ippolito de' Medici is synonym of entitlement, charm, and need to be liked. Raised with the knowledge that he would one day lead House Medici, he readily embraced the role when the people prematurely nicknamed him "The New Magnificent." As the grandchild of the celebrated Lorenzo the Magnificent, Ippolito's birthright is his claim to respect and influence.

Traditional lessons of leadership and discretion hold little sway over Ippolito, as he naturally embodies the Renaissance ideal: eloquent, well-read, charismatic, and the life of every gathering. He thrives on attention and dismisses his uncle's concerns as mere anxieties of an aging man.

Alessandro de' Medici, is like a brother to him. They shared the trials of an orphaned childhood, of being marked as illegitimates, their bond is deep... just as long as Alessandro recognises his leadership.



## Sonera

Sonera, better known as Simonetta da Collevocchio, was a woman of African descent who served House Medici at a time when Pope Clement VII held the much lower status of a knight.

Her powerful presence, piercing eyes, proud gait must have caught his attention early on. The next thing she knew was that she was holding a tiny mixed race baby in her arms. A baby that she adored. A few years later, her son was taken from her.

“The name comes from the father, but the social status comes from the mother”. That's the reason the Medici “freed” her, and took her boy. They needed him to be “free”, so they could use him as they wished. She was forced to marry a footman, and sent far away.

She had two sons from the footman, but which mother can really ever forget her firstborn?





# CAST



**ALBERTO BOUBAKAR MALANCHINO**  
ALESSANDRO de' MEDICI

Alberto starred in various Netflix and Rai TV shows (*Summertime*, *Astrological Guide for Broken Hearts*, *DOC-Nelle tue mani*). His performance in the movie *Easy Living* by the Miyakawa Brothers found both audience and critical acclaim. Alberto is the protagonist of the play *Sid-Fin Qui Tutto Bene*, where he presents to the audience the psyche of a multifaceted character to love and hate at the same time through a breathtaking one man + music band performance.



**PAOLO SASSANELLI**  
POPE CLEMENT VII

One of the most well known faces of Italian TV, cinema and theatre, his performances are well loved and memorable. Beyond his role on TV shows such as *Un Medico in Famiglia*, *L'ispettore Coliandro* and *The First Team*, he won a Nastro d'Argento as Best Supporting Actor for the film *Song'e Napule* by Manetti Bros.



**ANDREA MELIS**  
IPPOLITO de' MEDICI

Newcomer Andrea Melis is co-protagonist of the film *Fràaria*, premiering at Torino Film Festival 2023 and he has acted in *Anna*, presented at the 80th Venice Film Festival, and in *You Shouldn't Have Let Me In* for Tubi USA. Andrea works as an actor at Teatro Massimo in Cagliari, Sardegna Teatro.

# CAST



**BALKISSA MAIGA**  
SIMONETTA da COLLEVECCHIO

Balkissa Maiga has worked extensively in Italian film and theatre with directors such as Alessandro Gassman and Nanni Moretti. She is mostly known for her roles in the films *Acab - All Cops Are Bastards* by Stefano Sollima, *7 minutes* by Michele Placido and *L'Estate Più Calda* by Matteo Pilati.



**LORENZO TRONCONI**  
JACOPO DA CESANO

Lorenzo Tronconi was one of the finalists of Italy's Got Talent 2019, being the youngest participant to open the show. He has recently released his first single *Vuoti a Perdere*, distributed by Universal Music. His role in *Il Moro* is his first as an actor.

Lorenzo and Daphne wrote the closing song of *Il Moro* together. It is performed by Lorenzo and Loretta Grace.



**LORETTA GRACE**  
VOICE

Loretta Grace is the voice of young Sonera and sings the score of the film. Loretta is a singer, actor and content creator, with a background in musical theatre. She is known for her work on *Sister Act*, which garnered her praise from Whoopi Goldberg.



# PRODUCTION TEAM



## **DAPHNE DI CINTO** DIRECTOR, SCREENWRITER, PRODUCER

Daphne Di Cinto is a Black Italian screenwriter, director and actor. She began her film and theatre studies in Rome, where she focused on acting at Scuola di Cinema, while getting her degree in Communication Science at Roma Tre University. She attended the faculty of cinema at Sorbonne University in Paris before moving to New York for her Master in Fine Arts at the Actors Studio Drama School. At the moment she lives in London. As a screenwriter, she has developed both features and series within various genres, from comedy to sci-fi, despite having a soft spot for history. She is interested in topics such as historical memory, identity, migrations and the female gaze.

While developing a series based on the life of Alessandro de' Medici, Daphne has written, directed and produced the short film *Il Moro-The Moor*, her directorial debut, which has garnered success both in the festival circuit and in prestigious academic institutions, winning among others the Oscar Qualifying Reel Sisters Film Festival.

Following a petition submitted by Di Cinto, the Council of Florence has voted in favour of recognising Alessandro de' Medici's presence in Florence's Cappelle Medicee, by placing his name in front of his tomb, where it previously had been omitted.

Daphne has received the Cultured Focus Visionary in Film Award during the 79th Venice Film Festival and the Leader of Change in Creativity Award at the 2023 Black Carpet Awards.

Daphne played Sarah Basset, the Duchess of Hastings in the Netflix series *Bridgerton*.

# PRODUCTION TEAM



## **TAYLOR RE LYNN** PRODUCER

Taylor Re Lynn is a producer, actress and philanthropist. She holds a degree from the New York Film Academy and has delved into both theater and film projects in New York and internationally. She has produced independent short films, documentaries and feature films. Most notable features include *Love, Gilda* which had the honor of being the opening night film for Tribeca Film Festival 2018, *Little Wing* which premiered at the 2016 Toronto International Film Festival (TIFF) and the 2016 Golden Globe nominated film *The Fencer*.

As a philanthropist, Taylor has supported numerous international charities, including those that foster breast cancer awareness and those providing support services for women and children in underprivileged communities. Taylor is passionate about helping others and using her global platform to inspire and make a difference in the lives of others, which led to the creation of Cultured Focus Magazine. Since its creation in 2016, the magazine has provided a global platform to showcase the best talent from around the world, from A-list celebrities to business leaders and others making a positive impact.

Cultured Focus has collaborated with global organizations as a media partner, including the Women in Cinema Awards (WICA) in Italy, France Modest Fashion Week, Diversity in Cannes Short Film Showcase, Miami Modest Fashion, Bronx World Film Festival, and New York's Quad Cinema. Through the magazine, Taylor hopes to continue to inspire and uplift the global community.

# PRODUCTION TEAM



**FRANKLIN EUGENE**  
PRODUCER

Franklin Eugene is an American businessman, internationally awarded fashion designer, multiple award-winning film producer, activist, Global Patron of the Arts, and humanitarian. Notable among his producer credits is *Love, Gilda*, an outstanding documentary film about comedy superstar Gilda Radner's life which opened at Tribeca International Film Festival in 2018. He also served as an executive producer on *The Shephard* (2019), *Eight* (2018), *Little Wing* (2016), and *Almost Strangers* (2015). He was a producer on *Wolves* (2022), and *Haunting Trophies* (post-production).

He founded a global design company, Franklin Eugene International LLC – a global lifestyle platform – that creates men's alta moda (bespoke/haute couture), men's luxury and ready-to-wear, men's and women's Italian leather accessories, a select offering of high street clothing and pursues global humanitarian endeavors. Franklin Eugene International LLC was honored with the Best Luxury Fashion Designer Award as part of the Global Excellence Awards presented by Lux Life Magazine, a tribute to their role in today's growing times when men's fashion is now just as significant as women's fashion.

As a philanthropist, Franklin Eugene gave a percentage of the proceeds from The Tribute Collection to chosen charities to help societal challenges in the Middle East, North Africa, and India as part of its corporate social responsibility (CSR).

# PRODUCTION TEAM



## **YASMINE HOLNESS-DOVE** CO-PRODUCER

Yasmine Holness-Dove is an award nominated actor, model, singer and producer. She has experience in theatre, TV and film as well as presenting, voice over, voice acting and corporate training film. She is known for *Invasion* (2021) and *Trying* (2020).



## **FRANCESCO DI PIERRO** DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY

Francesco Di Pierro is a cinematographer whose body of works include feature films, short films, commercials, documentaries, music videos and video art all around the world. Some of his notable works have garnered significant recognition and accolades: *Bismillah* won the prestigious David di Donatello Award in 2018 and *Moby Dick* was honored with the Nastro D'Argento Award in 2017. He most recently worked on *Corpo Libero* for Amazon Prime.



## **THE NIRO** COMPOSER

Davide Combusti, in art The Niro, is a singer-songwriter and composer from Rome. The Niro's talent caught the attention of international artists, and he shared the stage with luminaries such as Tom Hingley and Lou Barlow. He is known for composing the soundtrack of the films *Mr. America* (2013), *Disoccupato in affitto* (2010) and *Incanto* (2010).

# PRODUCTION TEAM



**FILIPPO MONTEMURRO**  
FILM EDITOR

Francesco Montemurro is a film edit known among others for *Curon* (2020), *Dog Years* (2022) and *Nata per te* (2023).



**VALENTINA VINCENZINI**  
1ST ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

Valentina Vincenzini is a Creative Producer and Assistant Director. With a Ph.D. in Film Studies she has worked on notable films and TV series among which *Skam Italia 2* and *3*, *Red Notice* and *Il Ritorno di Casanova*.



**TOMMASO VITALI**  
2ND ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

Tommaso Vitali is an assistant director, filmmaker and producer. He serves as the Creative Producer at Fabrique Entertainment Srl, where he collaborates with different teams to conceptualize, produce, and bring to life a wide range of creative content, which may include feature films, documentaries or shorts.

# PRODUCTION TEAM



**MADDALENA ORIANI**  
SET AND COSTUME DESIGNER

Maddalena Oriani is a set and costume designer whose work ranges from commercials to features. In 2019 she worked as a set designer for Biennale College Musica and in 2020 for Biennale Teatro di Venezia.



**RENATA DI LEONE**  
MAKE-UP ARTIST

Renata Di Leone is a makeup artist based in Rome. She worked as a Key Make-Up Artist for various films, among which *Lucania* directed by Gigi Roccati and *The Beautiful Game* directed by Thea Sharrock. She also work on hits such as *Suburra 2*, *Zoolander 2* and *Ben Hur* (2016).



**CYNTHIA NWOSU**  
HAIR STYLIST

Cynthia Nwosu is an award winning hair stylist based in Italy where she teaches, sharing her knowledge on how to take care of natural hair. She has worked for high end fashion brands such as Prada, Valentino, Dior. She won the Best Hairstyle Award at the UK Fashion Film Festival 2021 working with the brand Moncler (*A Night at the Museum Project*). In 2020 she founded her own hair brand *Isioma*.

**LIST OF AWARDS AND OFFICIAL SELECTION OF IL MORO -THE MOOR:**

**BEST SHORT FILM** at

Reel Sisters Film Festival 2022 - *Oscar Qualifying*

Italian Black Movie Awards 2022

Madrid Film Awards 2022

IFF Bergamo 2022

Afrobrix Film Festival 2022

Fabrique du Cinema Awards 2021

**BEST DIRECTOR** of a Foreign Language Short Film at

Madrid International Film Festival 2022

**BEST ACTING ENSEMBLE** at Venezia Shorts 2022

**OFFICIAL SELECTIONS** at

Urbanworld Film Festival 2022

Pan African Film Festival 2022

London Lift Off Film Festival 2022

Toronto Black Film Festival 2022

Festival International du Film Panafricain de Cannes 2022

Afrika Film Festival Köln 2022

Marcello Film Festival 2022

Lift Off Sessions 2023

Firenze Archeofilm 2023

Part of **Women in Italian Cinema** 2022

(project sponsored by the Ministry of Culture, Italy)

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THE POST CONTEMPORARY

CO-PRODUCER  
YASMINE HOLNESS-DOVE

DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY  
FRANCESCO DI PIERRO

COSTUME AND PRODUCTION DESIGN  
MADDALENA ORIANI

1ST AD  
VALENTINA VINCENZINI

2ND AD  
TOMMASO VITALI

MAKE-UP ARTIST  
RENATA DI LEONE

HAIRSTYLIST  
CYNTHIA NWOSU

1ST AC  
LUCA ONOFRI

2ND AC  
ALBERTO MANTOVANI

GRIP  
MARCO GIUSSANI

GAFFER  
MASSIMILIANO AGOSTINI

BEST BOY  
MATTIA DE MARCO

PROP MASTER  
MARCO GARUTI

SOUND OPERATOR  
CELESTE FRONTINO

EDITOR  
FILIPPO MONTEMURRO

COLOR CORRECTION  
FRANCESCO DI PERRO  
ANDREA NORDI

COMPOSER  
THE NIRO

ORIGINAL SONG  
FIGLI DI RE E REGINE  
Written by LORENZO TRONCONI, DAPHNE DI CINTO,  
MODER /BRUTTURE MODERNE EDIZIONI,  
performed by LORENZO TRONCONI and LORETTA GRACE





PAOLO  
SASSANELLI

ALBERTO  
BOUBAKAR  
MALANCHINO

ANDREA  
MELIS



IL MORO

UN FILM DI DAPHNE DI CINTO

A central banner featuring the film's title 'IL MORO' in large, white, serif capital letters. The letter 'O' is stylized with a red and white pattern. Below the title, it says 'UN FILM DI DAPHNE DI CINTO'. The banner is surrounded by numerous laurel wreath awards and festival selections from various international film festivals, including Fabrique Du Cinéma Awards, IFF, MADFA, Italian Black Movie Awards, The Moor, Venezia Shorts, Afrobrix Film Festival, Madrid International Film Festival, 30th Anniversary Pan African Film Festival, Toronto Black Film Festival, Afrika Film Festival Köln, Lift-Off Global Network, urbanworld, Marcello, and Festival International du Film Panafricain de Cannes.

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