

## Member and guest feedback for *Io Capitano*

A compelling watch.

*A harrowing and powerful film. I could barely watch the scenes in the Libyan 'prison'. The cruelty and corruption the beautiful boys were subjected to was heartbreaking. The film was exquisitely made and the actors were incredible. I'm very grateful to have seen this - it has brought the plight of people desperate to find new lives in Europe much closer. This is cinema at its best-moving us to face reality through Art.*

Another testing but essential film that has challenged my instinctive attitudes to this extremely complex and disturbing issue. Film making at its most powerful and relevant best. Thank you RFS for your trust in us.

*Powerful. Unpleasant. Good story. You never know who will be compassionate or brutal. What an actor, one to watch.*

What a harrowing but incredible story and thinking how these brave people are treated wherever they land in Europe.

*Yet again, a hard film to watch. Particularly the scenes of torture and the deaths of others at various points of their trek across Africa. It was a powerful story of a 16-year-old boy growing into a man on a long, difficult and terrifying journey.*

Mesmerising film with local untrained actors - the main young men, cousins who plotted to leave Senegal serving as charismatic focal points of a universal narrative of people wanting more - in this case an imagined better life in Europe as musical stars. The soundtrack was brilliant. It had political integrity - showing the nature of exploitation and greed and a conscience-less economy of supply and demand were as rooted inside the continent of Africa as any other society. But it showed moments of solidarity in the struggle for survival- tender kindness too. The Captain's honourable decision to take responsibility was compelling - I wanted his boat and his endeavour to succeed and it did. The film ended at this leaving the viewer to ponder what next?

*A harrowing story that was well told. The dream sequences detracted from the narrative drive of the plot. I can't say I enjoyed the film but I'm glad to have seen it.*

This was a great film, true story with local actors and the story was probably much worse than the film.

*What a sympathetic portrayal of our captain. Did not like the torture but it had its place. Did though stretch credibility in that he found his cousin in Tripoli. Loved the bit when the boat came across a producing oil field and their wonder at what it was – a very nice touch.*

Harrowing film to watch and no doubt reflective of lived experience. The joyful start soon slipped into the gradual realization that the boys had been tricked and were now trapped in a brutal exploitative system. Well-acted and totally absorbing. A ray of hope at the end of the film.

*This film represented a chilling indictment of the exploitation of refugees. Seydou and Moussa were excellent in their roles and Seydou demonstrated a maturity beyond his 16 years, showing empathy towards others who were less fortunate than himself, despite his own precarious*

*circumstances. Both teenagers regretted their decision to leave Senegal and the relief they showed when the boat crossing the Mediterranean arrived in Sicily may have been premature in not knowing what would await them when they landed. I was not keen on the fantasy sequences, which seemed a bit superfluous.*

Well-acted by the two principal characters. Not surprisingly, a tough film to watch.

*What a truly valuable use of the film medium *Io Capitano* was - but a very hard watch. Grittily realistic filmmaking in difficult circumstances showing human experiences on the edge well beyond the knowledge of anyone I know, with friendship and humanity shining past the extreme horrors of starvation, torture, death, birth and violence etc. I hope I'll have more understanding of and sympathy towards migrants as a result of watching this excellent film.*

Excellent acting, beautifully photographed, this reminded me of Michael Winterbottom's *In This World*, made some 20 years earlier but this film was more artful. There is no accounting for man's inhumanity to man, as well as his occasional humanity but apart from the atypical first world slumming it in third world misery, I wonder what message the director is trying to convey. A good choice.

*A film whose subject we should all know about! The content and visuals obviously so thoroughly researched and from personal experience. The film was heart-rending and sympathetic to all including the two major protagonists. Such believable young men in their friendship and psychology. (Almost unbelievable that they found each other). The 'open' ending foretells both a positive or a tragic ending and even if 'successful' for the boat people, another film about the future challenges for these people in Europe hopefully can be made'. Thank you for showing this very important film.*

This was the second time that I'd seen the film and I found it just as hard-hitting and moving as before. Gruelling to watch the hardship, exploitation and violence that the boys and their fellow travellers had to endure, all the more so as it's probably an accurate account of what many refugees experience. A really powerful, excellent film.

*The most harrowing film I've ever seen! Hopefully, it is being screened in all the countries where people think the 'rewards' of getting to Europe is worth all the risks you'd encounter on the way, including extortion, blackmail, torture of the worst kind! Amazing acting, whether professional actors or not, a big thank you to them all and the production team etc., for making this harrowingly realistic film - hopefully it'll spread the message: think very carefully before leaving your family and your country - unless your life is in danger in your own country.*

I wish to award a Good to this extraordinary film. Only sharper camerawork and tighter editing of the narrative would be required to elevate it to Excellent. It was in places a "hard watch" but given the subject matter that was justified. The acting performances by the two young male leads were exemplary. Realistic and one suspects an accurate picture of a dire situation fuelled by greed and violence. Essential viewing.

*Top marks! – Superb.*

What I think must be a very realistic and harrowing portrayal of the hazards people face in attempting to travel to Europe risking personal and financial exploitation along the way and in some cases even death. I wish though that we could have known what happened to them next

in Italy and beyond in Europe, where no doubt further hardships would have followed, or indeed whether they might have been deported back to Senegal.

*The main actor was excellent and some of the cinematography was breathtaking. I didn't need the torture scenes but luckily, they didn't last too long. I feel that the storyline is one that I've read and watched numerous times but the desert scenes were different.*

I enjoyed *lo Capitano* up to a point. I loved the colourful opening scenes in Dakar. However, I felt as if I'd seen or read the story of their journey before. The desert and the main concept of the migrant steering the boat distinguish it a little from similar tales but actually the last 20 minutes was somewhat underwhelming. I also found the final frame rather an incomplete one to end on. It made me think that the story has only just begun. Perhaps that is the point. But excellent central performances from the two non-professional actors and it did hold my attention for the 121 minutes.

*An extraordinary work of art to immerse the spectators into one of the main issues of the crude reality of our times. What a challenge for the casting, at the end fabulous. It should be shown in all the cinemas and TV Channels of Africa and the Middle East.*

Whilst harrowing, I found the storytelling compelling.

*Eye-opening and well-acted. The first three quarters was a tough watch but I thought it painted a credible picture of the drivers of migration and the range of trials that face would-be migrants. I thought the last part (the boat trip), for all its challenges, painted too rosy a picture, more likely to encourage than deter others to attempt the trip. And of course, we saw nothing of what happened to the two boys after their arrival in Sicily...*

This was a powerful and moving film fully deserving of its 2024 Oscar nomination for Best Foreign Film giving us a real picture of what it must be like to undertake these journeys. A great debut film performance from Seydou Sarr.

*A film everyone should see, a tough watch.*

Excellent film but hard to watch the chain of corruption and cruelty that was so graphically portrayed. The boy Seydou turned out to be a hero and a leader. The world needs more like him at this time.

*Excellent film which was harrowing in parts but well worth watching. Really made you think about the plight of refugees crossing Africa to get to Europe and what they are leaving behind and the uncertainty of what lay ahead.*

A brilliant film but a really difficult watch...too difficult for some members who left early I suspect but I felt it was necessary to see and understand what migrants must go through in order to reach the "promised land" of Europe. The violence, torture and total disregard for the welfare of the migrants by those taking their money was appalling...but I was pleased to see the care and support they showed for each other, even under the most dreadful of circumstances.

*Gritty and gruelling, I'm not sure I blinked during this film, I was so involved in what was happening. Use of the word "journey" has become hackneyed and its meaning diluted but this truly was a journey in all senses of the word. Seydou and Moussa optimistically left Dakar for a better life in Europe, despite warnings that they might not succeed. For Seydou it became a*

*journey of determination, hope and growing self-confidence as he survived the horrors of the physical expedition, including watching people die and being tortured himself. I don't blame the viewers who left when Seydou reached the Libyan torture prison but I felt it was the least I could do, as a "privileged" westerner, to stay and experience this and the rest of his journey in its entirety. A film all the more real and engrossing when you consider it was based on a true story and was acted by amateurs.*

The film was a devastating accrual of the bad things that can happen to those seeking a new start in Europe. For me there were mixed messages here. Not sure whether it was a true story or a compilation of true events. I recall a recent case where an immigrant was accused to be a people smuggler but was, like Seydou, strong armed into piloting a boat. At the beginning the boys appear to have a relatively happy existence in Dakar so their journey was not precipitated by war, famine or corruption. Instead, they wanted to go to Europe to... give away their signatures after they became famous. While the innocence of youth was their drive, was it reason enough to risk torture or death (and there were several warnings given them in the film). The impact on those left behind was only lightly touched upon...and before they left. Also, while regret was expressed, they went onwards just the same. Was the film intended as an encouragement for economic betterment, a catalogue of its risks, a testament to the enthusiasm of young men or to the myopia of youthful thinking. Nonetheless, whatever the inspiration, the actors for the leading characters, Seydou and Moussa, were brilliant and convincing. Last point, Seydou was told by the traffickers to step away from piloting on arrival (so to avoid what happened in the true event) but he chose to triumph his success emotionally, having saved everyone.

*Great film but very hard to watch at times.*

A really really good film. It was horrific at times with the cruelty and greed of the traffickers. They had no compassion, no moral compass - modern slavers -vile. But it wasn't all bad -the boys were wonderful especially the lead boy. There were also really good people who saved them. The filming was excellent, acting was perfect and the background music was very good. Yes, it was gruelling but I'm really glad I saw it. Thank you for showing it.

*At last, an RFS film that held my attention all the way through. I even enjoyed the magic realism which gave some relief from the refugees' horrific plight.*

Excellent!

*Excellent film, showing a pair of naive teenagers aiming for a better life in Europe with no knowledge of the physical and personal cost, hardships, rip offs, imprisonments demanded en-route by the smugglers, with no guarantee that they will be accepted anywhere in Europe when they get there. But what a wonderful performance of the main character as he faces so many horrible challenges along the way but finally becomes Capitano! The Home Office officials should watch it to learn and understand the horrors migrants face in reaching us and more of us need to become aware of the trials and tribulations of their challenging journeys.*

A tough watch at times but very powerful, with a bravura performance from the young lead.

*I am a fan of Garrone, particularly the realism and despair of Gomorrah and the naive optimism of Reality. He also likes fairy tales. This had elements of realism, optimism and even magic realism but why? Might his essential point, the evil and exploitation of the migration route, been*

*better hammered home by Moussa dying and the boat sinking? In Gomorrah there is not a single moment when the cancer of drug crime is given one iota of worth and it is a better film for it.*

One couldn't call this enjoyable but the intensity of feeling it evoked was memorable. It's a shocking story of the plight of migrants and one we should know well but to portray it visually and dramatically, certainly stunned and horrified. Excellent acting by the two leads. The somewhat enigmatic and inconclusive ending was appropriate - yes, what next?

*A harrowing story - wonderfully acted. Wish we knew what the next stage of the journey held. Seydou's euphoria would not last long in today's Italy.*

Gruelling but outstanding film. A masterpiece.

*Brutal, visceral, magnificent. So glad I didn't read the reviews first, as I might have bottled out. Needs to be seen. Only hope (against hope) the sequel tells a happier story.*

Worth a watch I suppose regarding his journey but somehow didn't empathise with the characters; except for the compassionate builder who befriended him and in essence saved his life by giving him back his freedom.

*A good and touching film with an abrupt and incomplete ending.*

Powerful film, well made which brought home the really tough journey these people make. Ripped off and abused at every stage to make a buck highlighted mankind's basic inhumanity to each other. Grim to watch but illuminating.

*Beginning with youthful dreams and humour, it's not long before the teenage cousins encounter the true horror of illegal migration to Europe. Great turns by the young non-professional stars and supporting cast. The scenes of torture were tough, but detail an ordeal not always covered by the media.*

There was something very wrong with this film. I have no issue with drawing attention to the plight of people making the journey to Europe by boat but I am more comfortable with this being done in documentary format (the BBC series when refugees recorded their journeys with smartphones was excellent). The beautiful images of the Sahara and the gruelling images inside the Libyan mafia prison were designed for cinematic impact which just didn't seem appropriate. Similarly, the basic premise of two boys wanting to escape Senegal to make their way in Europe trivialized the plight of many refugees. People make these journeys because they find themselves in desperate personal circumstances not because they just fancy moving to another country.

*The torture scenes were hard to take.*

Could have been cut a bit here and there to shorten it by ten minutes or so without losing any impact.

*Yet another very harrowing film. The second in a row with scenes of people being tortured to death.*

A compelling drama from start to finish, full of tension and spectacle. This was cinema at its most powerful.