



FLIPPED STUDIO “SUCCESSFUL INNOVATOR” - NOVA

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Lorenzo and his path to become the most important Sicilian documentary maker



Lorenzo Mercurio, Italy

Sector: Audio Visual arts

Position: Self-employed.

About me

I was born in Palermo, Sicily, in November 1978. My father was an engineer employed at the State Railways, my mother graduated in journalism.

I graduated as a surveyor, looking to follow in the footsteps of my father, but I soon realised that it was not a path suitable for my talents.



At university, at first, I chose the Faculty of Geology, in order to become a palaeontologist. After two years, failing to pass the mathematics subjects, I gave up on my studies, starting in the civil service as a conscientious objector and refusing the military service, which was still compulsory at the time.

Later, the thirst for knowledge returned to something that really fascinated me, I wanted to study to become an archaeologist. Since it would have been impossible to move to another city, given that the headquarters of the Degree Course was then in Agrigento, I decided to enrol in a course of study in my city that had a similar programme: the three-year degree in Demo-ethno-anthropological heritage which, together with a master degree in Cultural Anthropology and Ethnology, it would have made me an anthropologist.

Graduated with honors, eager to stay and live in Sicily, I tried to exploit my creativity and my studies together, starting on my own to study Puclite graphics, meaning it as a series of visual constructions designed to communicate messages (communication is one of the basic elements of anthropological studies). But I was still not satisfied: the graphics failed to give me the expressive freedom I was looking for. So, I started writing novels and managed to publish one with a small publishing house in my city, while continuing the path of what became momentarily, slowly, my profession in all respects: the advertising graphic.

My way to the CCS and main achievements before the Pandemic

Thanks to work experience with a cooperative for the distribution of “Km 0 agri-food” products, therefore closely linked to the Sicilian territory, I began to shoot small corporate videos for farms, and I began to understand how the creation of audio-visual products implied the use of graphic solutions, fiction, poetry and also of ethno-anthropology, since behind those companies there were people with knowledge to pass on.

As I was already very attached to Sicily, as it was the subject of my studies, I decided to start telling it, implementing my ethno-anthropological studies, my experiences as a graphic designer and my attitude towards narrative writing.



Photo: Lorenzo Mercurio

I started my own business in January 2020, and since then, despite the start of the terrible pandemic period, I have signed two employment contracts as a video maker and graphic designer that have only rarely allowed me to use the potential of my profession on my own, and I affirm this with a positive meaning on the one hand, because I have finally found a professional path in which I have established myself;



but also negative, because I relegate my true interests to the sphere of hobbies, when I would like them to become my primary goal; which is to become a full-time video-documentary maker, whose object is the cultural (tangible and intangible) and environmental heritage of Sicily.

What surprised me most, in starting my latest creative path as a video-teller, is the possibility of being able to fully exploit my academic studies (including the notions I treasured during my short experience at the Faculty of Geology), my professional experiences in the graphic field and my narrative aptitudes.

A very important result obtained before the pandemic started, was the one that saw me as a video maker for a project funded by the European Union, thanks to which I travelled in Summer 2019 for all the municipalities of the province of Palermo, in order to make short videos for the tourist promotion of Sicily. This is certainly the experience that has impacted on me most in recent years.

The challenges faced during the Pandemic and innovation solutions to overcome them.

Working also as a video maker in a European organisation, my work as an employee has not suffered any damage following the onset of the pandemic. Working from home was a fully satisfactory solution both for me, saving on fuel, public transport subscriptions or lunches outside, and for the organisation I work for, moving from home only on those occasions when it would have been necessary, especially to shoot any type of events.

Regarding my work as a documentary maker on my own, although conducted marginally and, at the moment, non-profit, in order to continue to cultivate it during the pandemic, I started to think differently and find innovative ideas to do it. So, for my videos I focused on places that are located near my home so that I do not need to move to other places and risk to get infected. The result of my work was a documentary that was recently selected for the finals of the RAM - Rovereto International Archaeological Film Festival, one of the most important sector reviews in the world.

For my personal business, I have learned that it is good to acquire as much video material as possible during the months in which the intensity of the pandemic seems to give respite, so as to be able to make, at a fixed location, the final products, before the risk of a greater spread of the virus becomes high again.

“Defeats are always around the corner, at every level of professionalism achieved, but it is up to us to give meaning to any defeat as a lesson to grow even more, and not as an excuse to give up.”



Photo- Lorenzo Mercurio

My future plans and aspirations for developing my career in CCS

My project is to become the most important Sicilian documentary maker, and to create a large online video library, freely usable, which constitutes a mosaic in which Sicily, in its cultural and environmental heritage, is told with a narrative method that includes contributions of other people, literature, poetry, music.

My suggestion for those who wish to work in CCS

The advice that I believe I can give to those who intend to start a path in the creative and cultural field is, very simply as in any field, to study and firmly believe in their goals, despite everything and all. Defeats are always around the corner, at every level of professionalism achieved, but it is up to us to give meaning to any defeat as a lesson to grow even more, and not as an excuse to give up. But this is possible only if one becomes fully aware of one's vocation, considered as an essential path that leads to the realisation of one's life. And here the profession itself, as a mere source of earning money, paradoxically, has only a marginal role.



Self-reflection questions

1. What have I learned from this story?
2. What I have learnt on how to overcome problems caused by unexpected situations, such as COVID-19 pandemic?
3. How will I use what I have learned in the future?

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