

It is a great pleasure for me to be here with you today, on such an important occasion.

This is the first structural cooperation in the cultural field between the Embassy of Italy, the Embassy of Switzerland and a prestigious institution of Singapore such as NTU. I'm very glad for it and let me also thank the Fellini Foundation and Mr. Grandesso for their firm effort to carry out this agreement with NTU that we celebrate today.

This framework agreement is hopefully just the first step of a path of discovery, or re-discovery of the genius of Federico Fellini. The great movie director is no stranger to Singaporeans. A few years ago, a collaboration between the Italian Cultural Centre and the National Museum brought to Singapore a number of movies for Fellini retrospective, which was met with great success from the public and the media.

More recently, the new restored version of *La Dolce Vita* was showcased in Singapore allowing the audience to live again the emotions of one of the classical movies of the history of cinema.

*La Dolce Vita* has become more than just the title of a movie, although it is a masterpiece. It now symbolizes a way of life, the so called Italian way of life: good taste, creativity and a certain way of living with joy our daily lives. It has become a sort of parameter for sense of aesthetics and definitely a brand for made in Italy in sectors like fashion, furniture or even food and beverage. Even nowadays one has not to underestimate the economic impact of such concepts for the sectors of high-end consumer goods, in which Italy is synonymous of refined quality.

But this is only one of the various lenses through which the works of the Maestro can be analysed, possibly the most popular and commercial one.

A lot more could be said about the art of Fellini, the meanings of his masterworks, the creativity and the genius behind the thousands so called “faces of Fellini”, the originality of his movies and the joyful humanity which distinguished his way of working and relating to the people and movie fans.

Books have been written about it, I won't dare to try a resume here. Let me just express my deepest admiration for the Maestro: I am sure that this collaboration between NTU and the Fellini Foundation will allow us to enjoy more and more of the world of Federico Fellini and effectively enhance the level of knowledge of the artist, his role in the contemporary environment, his influence on the later generations of movie directors.

I therefore look forward to the concrete implementation of this framework agreement: exhibitions, seminars, studies on one of the most relevant figures of last Century's cinema will be very much welcome, and I am sure that the Singaporean audience and the Italian community will be happy to participate and appreciate more and more on Federico Fellini, his works, his world.