

THE FASCINATION OF SUPERHEROES:

What are they, and how are they created?

Locarno Film Festival's artistic director Giona A. Nazzaro, a massive fan of comics and superheroes, meets Gabriele Mainetti, the director who brought superpowers to Italian cinema with his films *Lo chiamavano Jeeg Robot* and *Freaks Out*.

What drew Gabriele to the world of cinema? An Italian teacher once explained to him that comics are a form of literature too. So he brought together this passion and his love for Japanese animated series, and began to create his own movies about superheroes.

How did he do it? The first step was to face his fears, even the ones he was most embarrassed to admit to, and imagine costumes as masks behind which he could hide those fears or, on the contrary, that he could use to express them and, by doing that, overcome them.

Seeing is believing!



This video-clip launches the latest edition of Locarno Kids HomeMade Movies: a superhero-themed educational program designed and developed by the Locarno Film Festival with children and their creativity as the main focus. Each participant, either independently or working together with friends, classmates, teachers, or family members, will create a short film with the starting point being their initial thoughts on the fragilities and weaknesses that we as individuals can transform into superpowers.

The heart of this educational journey is the process. It involves a series of video lessons and a second practical phase where each participant is encouraged to give their creativity free rein and make a film about their own personal transformation into superheroes. The individual phases of this process are more important than the final movie clip, and include listening to expert advice, analyzing the personal characteristics used for inspiration to create the superhero, coming up with the mask and superpowers, and finally, creating the story. The journey itself leads each participant to explore their distinctive characteristics and uniqueness and learn to value them through their relationships with others.

It's time to roll up your sleeves and get to work!

The first task, as suggested by Giona and Gabriele, who appear in the first lesson, is to understand how a superhero is born. They suggest finding a superhero you like and using their story as inspiration. For example, when Gabriele was a child, he was obsessed with the adventures of *Jeeg Robot*.

Another very important step is to ask yourself: what is a hero? And when does a hero become "super"? Again, you can use the video to guide you. Gabriele tells us that a superhero is someone that cares about the well-being of others and who uses their powers to help those in difficult situations. Giona adds, very importantly, that people transform into superheroes when they have the courage to believe in their dreams and not give in to their fears.

Once you choose your superhero, the next task could be to ask yourself: what are my fears and weaknesses? What are my dreams? What parts of myself would I like to show others? How can I be better for the people around me?

These are difficult questions to answer but we know that with your superpowers, you can do it!

Good luck!

