

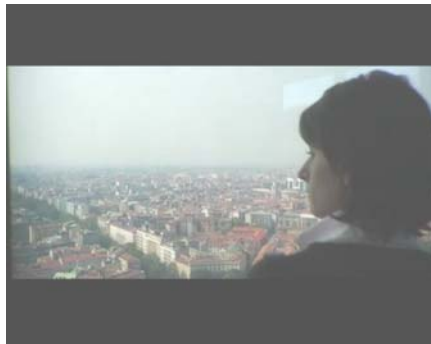


## **Come l'Ombra (As The Shadow)**

**a film by  
Marina Spada**

*As the shadow from the body wants to part,  
As the flesh from the soul wants to separate,  
So I want now -- to be forgotten..*

*(Anna Achmatova, A molti, 1922)*



**63rd Venice Film Festival**



**Venice Days**



## Synopsis

*The story centers around the lives of two women: a 30yr old woman named Claudia and a Ukranian woman named Olga, who is a few years younger.*

*Claudia works in a travel agency and takes classes at night to learn Russian.*

*She leads a quiet routine life and then by her small compulsive fixations.*

*One evening during her Russian class, she is introduced to a new teacher who is from the Ukraine: Boris, a handsome and apparently smart 40yr.old man. An attraction soon develops between Boris and Claudia.*

*School ends, and with Summer approaching, Claudia plans a vacation to Greece with her friend Sonia and Sonia's boyfriend. One evening at the end of July, Boris shows up at her house although unexpectedly, he has a precise motive on his mind : he needs to find a place to live for his "cousin" who has left the Ukraine in search of a better life. Claudia is hesitant but in the end agrees to put her up for a few days, since she will soon leave for Greece. A friendship quickly develops between the two women after an initial sense of mistrust, Claudia feels encouraged by the way Olga handles things in such a simple manner. A few days before her departure, on returning home Claudia will find Olga missing. She waits anxiously, but even the next day Olga never shows up. In search of some type of clue, Claudia rummages through Olga's belongings and finds a passport and a picture of Olga and Boris in an embrace : it was just as she had thought. When she finally calls Boris, he is cold and distant. Claudia will find herself having to accept Olga's disappearance and face things on her own.*

*At this point, the only thing left for her to do is cancel her vacation and begin looking for Olga in the deserted month of August in Milan. Finally losing all hope of finding her on her own, Claudia goes to the police to report Olga as missing .*

*At the beginning of September Claudia will make one last attempt: she will track down Boris's home address by going to the school's registration office, but when she goes to the address , there are other people living there and no sign of Boris. The phone call from the police will erase all doubt and lead to a series of decisions and actions that will fill the emptiness of her anxious existence.*

## The idea of a look

*The idea for telling this story is strictly linked to the concept of "a look at the world".*

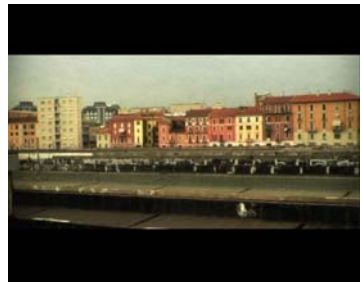
*In every day life, each one of us appears invisible to many others, and even when those who are near to us, such as relatives, friends and neighbours seem to "look", we often feel as if they really don't see us.*

*We want to tell a story by using visual segments, images projected on screen and others which will necessarily be left out.*

*A "sideways look" which will help us understand what the actor on the screen can see behind us, and what we as the spectator with our eyes turned to the screen are unable to see. It is as if the characters on the screen were looking at us, and can see what surrounds us, each moment taking us back to the present and forcing us to leave the protective shell of the dark theatre.*

*In a world where an immediate image is made to exist and then quickly burned, forgotten and abandoned to make room for others which call daily on the perception of our senses, a world where our capability to "re-imagine" things has been taken away, what we felt was essential to show the spectator was the chance for us to regain our will to recreate.*

Marina Spada



## INTERVIEW WITH MARINA SPADA - Director

When and why did you decide to become a director?

*I was 9 years old when I saw *The Bicycle Thieves* and literally fell in love with Vittorio De Sica, because he resembled my father. Since then I knew I wanted to become a director and in 1979 after winning a competition to work for RAI in Milan, I began working as an assistant director.*

What aspects of reality are you most interested in showing in your films?

*I am interested in telling stories that in movies are often overlooked and not documented. Take for example, my video portraits on great Italian photographers: professional men of exceptional value that only an elite group of people were acquainted with, and which I felt should be made known to everyone. On the whole I choose stories that in some way will make the spectator reflect on the purpose of his own life and maybe encourage him to make a change..*

What persuaded you to make **Come l'ombra**?

*First of all Daniele Maggioni wrote this screenplay with the intention that I would direct it. He knows me well and perfectly demonstrated this by writing about a subject that fit me perfectly. It is infact the story of someone who leads a very normal life, but which infact disguises a great loneliness- a condition- which seems to condemn today's society more and more. Hope is something that happens in order to change the course of our existence. We live our entire lives playing the roles of protagonists or witnesses, waiting for someone or something which will never arrive. And when something unlikely happens, it will bring about inevitable changes.*

The reason for this title?

*I am a great poetry lover and the title is taken from the poem's last verse. "A molti" ("To The Many") by Russian poet Anna Achmatova written in 1922. Achmatova is one of the few Russian writers like Pasternak, who never left the country because of the Revolution, but remained close to her people; she was one of my points of reference which is why I included the Russian element. I chose this title because the film shows people living alone and who seem invisible. The city when deserted is a perfect example of this: where do these people hide? Why can't we see them? Is the city empty or is this the way they see it?*

In a strange manner, the visual element is the protagonist of this film. In terms of photography, you chose to work with the great photographer Gabriele Basilico. What was it like to work with him?

*I was already familiar with Gabriele Basilico's work for some time, and wanting to get to know him , decided to make a video on him. He immediately agreed to collaborate with me on **Come l'ombra** because he loved the way I had interpreted Milan in my first film **Forza cani**: we share the same outlook on this city. Certainly for a photographer like himself, who has been used to working alone, it was unusual but also fun to work on a set surrounded by at least twenty people.*

In regards to Milan which happens to be your city, and also Basilico's, how would you describe your relationship with this metropolis?

*Milan is a city of great contradictions, a concentration of industry power and wealth which today no longer exists. My roots are in Milan and I never thought of leaving, because it is where I can acknowledge my own identity. Basilico says that Milan is "a looking exercise, someone to observe with compassion" and I completely agree with this vision. Besides, Milan's poetic image on film, with the exception of Soldini's first films, has not been represented since Luchino Visconti.*

Most of the film can be interpreted by the long silences, from things that aren't said and therefore from subtraction. This is certainly an expression of your artistic sense but is it also an incentive aimed at the spectator?

*In filming the long silences, I have used the subtraction method in order to construct the story; I like to leave things unsaid and unspoken so the spectator is left to rearrange his own mental perspective and reach his own conclusions. This is a very precise choice made in opposition to "the informational deluge" which surrounds us and wants to influence our choices, our thoughts and our imagination so as to make everything seem lifeless.*

You teach at the Milan Film School . What would you like to tell your young students who want to take on a career as directors?

*My advice is to make movies using the means at their disposal and try to fully understand what is important to say for ourselves. I find it essential to have a personal outlook on reality and to look even when we ourselves find it uncomfortable..*

You have defined your way of making movies as "traditional". What do you mean by this?

*At a time when the Italian movie industry wants to renew itself as a proper "industry", we thought that the best was to follow tradition and to go back to the film as craftwork. By looking at the entire history of Italian cinematography, I feel that this is how the best movies were made.*

What do **Forza cani** and **Come l'ombra** have in common?

*They both represent a reminiscent world, which on the other hand belongs to me as an individual and director: stories not witnessed, invisible persons, unexpected events which change one's existence as well as the poetical and physical attributes of a city like Milan.*

**Marina Spada**  
**Director**

Her professional work began in 1979 as assistant director for Rai on the film starring Benigni and Troisi "Non ci resta che piangere". In the 1980's she worked in collaboration with the main advertising agencies and directed numerous television programs and documentaries. In the 1990's she alternates between working at the Milan Film School and as a director.

She has made video portraits on: Arnaldo Pomodoro, Fernanda Pivano, Francesco Leonetti, Gabriele Basilico, Mimmo Jodice, Mario De Biasi, the short L'astice winner of national and International awards and the feature motion picture Forza Cani One of the first independent digital productions made in Italy.

Filmography

Documentaries

Fernanda Pivano, Once Upon a Time in America, 1994, beta, 30'

Arnaldo Pomodoro, racconto dell'artista, 1995, beta, 30'

Festival de l'art Montreal 1997

Festival de l'art Paris Beaubourg 1997

Francesco Leonetti, lo scrittore a sette code, 1997, beta, 30'

Dada Maino, l'arte va sempre fatta con le mani, 1999, beta, 15'

In the series the Great Italian Photographers:

Guido Harari, Gabriele Basilico, Mario De Biasi, Mimmo Jodice, Mario Cresci, Fulvio Roiter, Giampaolo Barbieri, Mauro Galligani, Mario Tursi.

(part of these films are kept in the Maison de la photographie archives – Paris)

Works on video dance

Amerò solo un dio che danza, 1994, 16mm, 5'

Dove si guarda c'è quello che siamo 1998, beta, 9'

Riccione Film Festival 1999 segnalazione della giuria

Shorts

Un giorno dopo l'altro, 1989, 16mm, 5'

Women in Film Festival Los Angeles 1991 Jury mention

L'astice, 1995, 35mm, 4'

Torino Film Festival 1996 2° prize Spazio Italia

Le festival du Méditerranée Bastia, 1996 1° prize

Cittadella del corto Trevignano 1996 1° prize

Feature Films

Forza cani, 2002, digital, 90'

Festival di Bellaria, 2003

**Daniele Maggioni**  
**Scriptwriter**

He has been working in movies for over twenty years.

As a producer he has made several motion pictures such as :Bread and Tulips (by Silvio Soldini, David di Donatello award 2000, Quinzaine des realisateurs Cannes Film Festival), Un'anima divisa in due (by Silvio Soldini, Coppa Volpi Venice Film Festival 1994), L'aria serena dell'ovest (by Silvio Soldini,1990), Il mnemonista (by Paolo Rosa- Studio Azzurro) La precisione del caso (by Cesare Cicardini) and Forza Cani (by Marina Spada) besides numerous other shorts and documentaries.

He published a monograph on Ioris Jvens (con. S. Cavatorta 1982) and the Professione Filmmaker manual (Mondadori,1998). He was co-founder of Doc/it (association of Italian documentary artists) and API (Authors and independent Producers).

Presently he is the director of the Film School of Milan.

He is on the teaching staff of the Politecnico di Milano and University IULM.

**Gabriele Basilico**  
**Photographer**

Gabriele Basilico from Milan, after graduating with a degree in Architecture (1973) dedicated himself to historical and contemporary architecture photography.

He was responsible for realizing photography campaigns in collaboration with public institutions on urban landscapes and changes in city planning.

In the last 30 years he has produced numerous publications which included architectural monographs, catalogues, and books. To cite the most recent : The interrupted City, 1996; Cityscapes, 1999; Berlin, 2001; Beirut 1991 (2003), "Scattered city" (2005).

He has been responsible for organizing personal exhibits and has participated in major collections.

Over the years he has received numerous awards: in 1990, for the exhibit "Porti di Mare", he received the "Prix Mois de la Photo" in Paris.

At the VI edition of the Venice Biennial in 1996 he received the Osella d'oro award for contemporary architectural photography. In 1997 for the exhibit "Beirut" he received the Kwangju Biennial award in Korea.

In June 2002, his book "Berlin" receives the award from PhotoEspaña for Best Photography book of the year. His works are part of major private and public collections, as well as International museum collections.





**Carlotta Cristiani**  
**Film Editor**

From 1990 she works as assistant film editor for Jacopo Quadri and Claudio Cormio on films by Mario Martone, Silvio Soldini, Bruno Bigoni, Antonio Rezza and Flavia Mastrella...

From 1995 as assistant film editor she is involved in making shorts, documentaries and feature films.

Editor of art installations presented at the Venice Biennial, San Paolo, Kassel.

She was the editor of a showcase of works on video by photographer Armin Linke presented at the Pompidou museum in November 2005.

Filmography

2000 Bread and Tulips

2001 Pesi Leggeri

2001 Brucio nel Vento

2002 La forza del passato

2004 Tu la conosci Claudia

## **CAST**

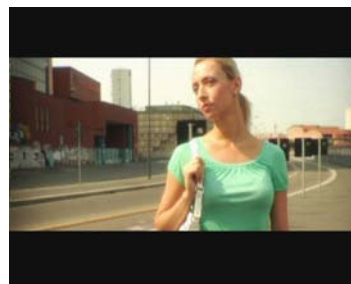
*Claudia*

*Anita Kravos*



*Olga*

*Karolina Dafne Porcari*



*Boris*

*Paolo Pierobon*



## CREDITS

<i>Director</i>	MARINA SPADA
<i>Screenplay</i>	DANIELE MAGGIONI GABRIELE BASILICO
<i>Photography</i>	SABINA BOLOGNA GIORGIO CARELLA
<i>Film Editor</i>	CARLOTTA CRISTIANI
<i>Music</i>	TOMMASO LEDDI ( <i>stormy six</i> )
<i>Sound</i>	PAOLO BENVENUTI
<i>Mix</i>	STEFANO "MASTERMAIND" BREDI
<i>Executive Producer</i>	FEDERICA MASIN
<i>Produced by</i>	DANIELE MAGGIONI Associazione culturale OMBRE FRANCESCO PAMPILI
<i>In association with</i>	Film Kairós
<i>Associate Producers</i>	Enza Labella, Enrico Tupone, Marella Pessina, Tommaso Lingeri Serena Groppelli e Fondazione SCM Milano

*Length 87' Filmed in digital P+S technique*

## CONTACTS



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