

ITALIAN PHOTOGRAPHERS

Journal #8 is dedicated to Italian Photographers, a series of 19 short films shot for television from 2004 to 2006 by five directors.

This series is an ambitious project born from a desire to fill a gap. At the time, no audiovisual documentation chronicled the work of the most prominent names in Italian photography. The result of two years of work is an extraordinary collection of conversations, revealing the style, modus operandi, and foundational principles of each artist's research path, and of course, the images—countless images that we engage with on a deeper and more meaningful level, thanks to the commentary of their creators.

What sets this series apart is its ability to introduce the viewer to the photographers' personalities. Beyond the words and explanations one might find in a catalog or biography, the series offers a glimpse into the personal attitudes, ironies, reflections, and confidences each photographer reveals as they share their stories.

GABRIELE BASILICO

Marina Spada

CARLO ORSI

Simona Confalonieri

VINCENZO CASTELLA

Marina Spada

FRANCESCO RADINO

Marina Spada

NINO MIGLIORI

Renata Tardani

MARIO CRESCI

Marina Spada

MIMMO JODICE

Marina Spada

MAURIZIO GALIMBERTI

Tonino Curagi, Anna Gorio

FRANCO VACCARI

Simona Confalonieri

GIANNI BERENGO GARDIN

Tonino Curagi, Anna Gorio

MARIO DE BIASI

Marina Spada

MAURO GALLIGANI

Marina Spada

FULVIO ROITER

Marina Spada

MARIO TURSI

Marina Spada

GIAN PAOLO BARBIERI

Marina Spada

ROBERTO ORLANDI

Renata Tardani

MARIA VITTORIA BACKHAUS

Renata Tardani

FRANCO FONTANA

Simona Confalonieri

SILVIA LELLI E ROBERTO MASOTTI

Tonino Curagi, Anna Gorio

DIRECTORS NOTES

Marina Spada*

In cinema, you tell a story—an idea, a person, or an entire world—through many frames and often within a duration set by others. In photography, all of this is achieved with a single frame, and it is up to the viewer to decide how long to look. This aspect of photography has always fascinated me. When I had the chance to shoot video portraits of great Italian photographers, who have nothing to envy from the greats of other countries—in fact, many have been their masters—it felt surreal. I was about to meet some of the most significant artists and get a glimpse into the thoughts, emotions, and vision behind their images. I spent months with them because I wanted to understand them and needed them to trust me and my camera. I stayed in their studios, and we talked about everything while sharing some great laughs. I portrayed them with honesty, never imposing my perspective on theirs. It was an incredible adventure that taught me so much, and I am confident it will do the same for those who watch the series.

Renata Tardani*

Marina Spada and I have often said that we would pay to do this job just for the privilege of meeting such people of great stature—both artistically and humanly. For instance, having Nino Migliori become a part of my life is a priceless gift. Always curious, a keen observer who never stops researching, and incredibly generous. Who but Nino would go to pick up an unknown director at the station with a wooden tag displaying my name? Another fantastic experience was watching Maria Vittoria Backhaus and Roberto Orlandi at work and discovering the difference between skilled professionals and true creatives. They never stop playing with a subject, constantly generating new ideas until they find the one that twists the original input and takes their images a step further into something unprecedented, all while maintaining extreme refinement and elegance.

Simona Confalonieri*

Photographers like Franco Fontana, Carlo Orsi, and Franco Vaccari always know what to say and show because their psycho-artistic treasure chest is a kaleidoscope of creative wealth. Making documentaries about them meant gathering the gems of their creativity. Capturing their essence was a challenge in the short time I had to empathize with them on set, in their homes, and in their work. I remember Franco Fontana's verbal conciseness contrasting with the chromatic versatility of his photographic research. With Carlo Orsi, I carry within me the stories of his intense life in 1980s Milan, amidst the circle of artists and creatives that gathered at Bar Jamaica in Brera. I remember a house in Piacenza that radiated originality and taste: papyrus around the Po embankment, a kitchen floor made of Ligurian urban pavement tiles, and Silvana, his wife, lovingly roaming the rooms while he pulled out prints of his beloved Milan. In those prints, I saw my grandfather captured in a moment at the center of the Milan Stock Exchange: a shock, an emotion, as he handed me the print, as though it had always been for me—a photo now revered, hanging in my kitchen. Franco Vaccari, an artist at heart and an ideologue of the thought behind the shot, plays, amazes and bewitches us with his daring, avant-garde photos. He confidently states a great truth: those ahead in research are understood thirty years later. He is the embodiment of this truth. Watching his documentary certifies this statement.

Tonino Curagi, Anna Gorio*

The three portraits we present here pay tribute to three influential Italian photographers. Their distinctive approaches—whether it's the technical and creative use of polaroids or their social and music photography—have profoundly influenced contemporary photography. We spent several days with Maurizio Galimberti, Gianni Berengo Gardin, and Roberto Masotti/Silvia Lelli, learning their stories and witnessing their 'sets.' Our goal was not only to document the extraordinary essence of their work but also to absorb a methodology that would help us grow as documentary filmmakers.

*MARINA SPADA

A feature film director whose works have been presented at major national and international festivals, such as Toronto, Venice, and Rome. She is a directing professor at Milan's Luchino Visconti Civic School of Cinema.

*RENATA TARDANI

Producer of commercials who has collaborated with renowned directors such as Federico Fellini, Ettore Scola, Giuliano Montaldo, and Michael Bay, and has directed social documentaries.

*SIMONA CONFALONIERI

Author and director. She has worked for major Italian broadcasters, independent production companies, and museums. Specializing in art, design, and architecture, she delves into the technique of authorial portraiture by developing original subjects for artists and galleries.

*TONINO CURAGI, ANNA GORIO

Documentary filmmakers who have been creating projects on a wide range of topics for over 30 years, often focusing on Milanese life. Their work has been presented and awarded at numerous festivals and aired on major Italian television networks. They are also professors at Milan's Luchino Visconti Civic School of Cinema.