

Poetry, you give yourself
Only to those who search within,
eyes brimming with tears.
Make me anew, worthy of you,
Poetry, you see me

Antonia Pozzi

POETRY, YOU SEE ME

a film by Marina Spada





Renata Tardani

presents

Poetry, you see me

A film by Marina Spada

Length: 50 Minutes

The film was supported by Provincia di Milano

CONTACTS

Production and sales

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Press-Industry Screening
Wednesday 9 September, 4.00 pm, sala Pasinetti

Public screening
Friday 11 September, 12.15 pm, sala Perla 2



Synopsis

Taking as its point of departure the figure of Antonia Pozzi, a unique, mature and passionate poet in 20th-century Italy who committed suicide in 1938 at the tender age of 26, *Poetry, You See Me* is also a reflection on the role of the artist and the poet in that era and today. The film, building off of the poems and issues that recent criticism has found to be central in Pozzi's work, gives voice to her poetry and her tortured existential search, to her problems with her social class, the upper-middle class Milan that kept her from living sincerely and passionately, and with a male-dominated world that dismissed her poetic talent as emotional disorder.

Talking about Pozzi also means reflecting on what it means to be a woman in our society, on female creativity, and the relationship between art and life.

The film shows the 8mm footage taken by Antonia and occasionally by her father for the first time. These are images that, along with the many photographs she took, depict her family, friends, nature – especially her “mother mountains” – and the periphery of Milan, which Pozzi often visited and loved for its authenticity.

The film's driving force and its narrator is Maria, a filmmaker who, fascinated by Antonia, reads everything she's ever written, studies her world and the people in it. A crucial part of Maria's search is her encounter with a group of university students, the H5N1, that anonymously post their poetry on the walls of the city, with the conviction that we have a tremendous and ever-increasing need for poetry in our lives. Maria's hope is that Antonia Pozzi's poetry, through this group of students, will be reborn as an experience that is no longer solitary and private, but rather shared. This act would be a sort of redemption for Antonia, giving her the recognition and visibility she lacked during her lifetime.



Director's statement

"Poetry, You See Me" is a reflection on poetry and its necessity. I love poetry and poets because they have the courage to give voice to what is usually kept silent. Antonia Pozzi, in particular, struck me because her poetry is so free, sensuous, sincere. I was fascinated by this young woman who was forced to conceal, behind a bourgeois façade, an intense passion that she could never quite reconcile with the constraints and conventions of the time. Antonia Pozzi, a solitary figure too ahead of her time to be understood, was able to fearlessly examine the beauty and suffering in the world and herself. She died a suicide, a not uncommon fate for women poets, and she was born and lived in Milan, like me.

Antonia Pozzi's biography

She was born in Milan on February 13, 1912. Since the Eighties, Antonia Pozzi has been progressively – and today overwhelmingly – rediscovered by the critics and by a large audience, both in Italy and abroad. But she didn't publish a single line in her life: too ahead of the times, she wasn't understood within her cultural circle in Milan, which was constituted by the most brilliant students of Antonio Banfi, a renowned professor of Aesthetics at the University of Milan. Their rigorous rationalism, which produced some of the finest intellectuals in Italy's post-war period, also made them adverse to Pozzi's poetry. They respected Antonia as an intellectual, but they considered her passion "emotional disorder" and advised her to "write as little as possible." After Eugenio Montale wrote the preface to the first collection of her poems in 1943, people began to take interest in her work, but for years



Photo by Antonia Pozzi

the part that was published and admired was the least original, more descriptive and related to her love of nature. Only in the last few years have new critics undertaken more rigorous and archival historical and philological studies using unpublished material – especially the original versions of her poems, which had been modified by her father, and the letters and diaries which had escaped his censorship – that emphasize the extraordinary power and great contemporary relevance of her work.

Antonia's solitude as a poet was accompanied by her existential suffering over being forced, by her upper-class family, to hold back her enormous human richness within the confines of a merely external emancipation. A major contribution to her depressive tendencies was the end of her relationship with Antonio Maria Cervi, her classics teacher in high school. Her parents, incapable of accepting a mere teacher for their daughter who was eighteen years her senior, tried to keep them apart in every possible way. Aside from in her poetry and in nature (especially the solitary, austere nature of the surrounding mountains), Antonia managed to find a few moments of peace. Her need cling to life and simple things as authentically and naturally as possible also led her, in the later years of her life, to do volunteer work in the marginalized, working-class neighborhoods on the border between Milan and the countryside. After her degree in literature, which she completed with a thesis on Flaubert's literary apprenticeship, Antonia Pozzi obtained a teaching position at the Schiapparelli Institute in Milan.

On December 2, 1938, Antonia Pozzi left the classroom where she was teaching, saying she didn't feel well, rode her bicycle to Chiaravalle on the outskirts of Milan, took some barbiturates, and lay down on a field of snow.

She died the next day in her own bed, at home.



Elena Ghiaurov

Marco Colombo Bolla-Chiara Chiurazzi-Carlo Bassetti

Cast

Maria

Nicola

Manuela

Stefano

Elena Ghiaurov

Carlo Bassetti

Enrica Chiurazzi

Marco Colombo Bolla

Credits

Director

Screenplay

Collaboration to texts

Philological and historical advice

Editor

Director of photography

Original music

Sound engineer

Sound supervising editor

Set designer

Costume designer

Casting

Colorist

Produced with the support of

Marina Spada

Marella Pessina

Simona Confalonieri

Marina Spada

Ombretta De Biase

Graziella Bernabò

Onorina Dino

Carlotta Cristiani

Sabina Bologna

Tommaso Leddi

Paolo Benvenuti

Giovanni Nuccio (Effeto Note)

Andrea Rizzardo (Effeto Note)

Fabrizio Longo

Marella Berzini

Valentina Materiale

Riccardo Annoni (Start)

Comune di Milano

Max Brun

Provincia di Lecco



Marina Spada

Director /screenplay

She was born in Milan on November 15, 1957. With a degree in Music History and a graduate of the Piccolo Teatro School, she has worked in advertising and television, and has directed several documentaries and videoportraits. Since 1993 she has divided her time between teaching at the Milan Film School and her activity as a director and executive producer. Following her debut with *Forza Cani*, she shot her second full-length film, *Come l'ombra*, presented at the "Giornate degli Autori" at the 2006 Venice Film Festival. With this film she has participated in major international festivals and won numerous awards.

Filmography

DOCUMENTARIES:

Fernanda Pivano, *C'era una volta l'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'

For the series "The best Italian Photographers", video portraits of Giampaolo Barbieri, Gabriele Basilico, Mario Cresci, Mario De Biasi, Mauro Galligani, Guido Harari, Mimmo Jodice, Fulvio Roiter, Mario Tursi (all movies are included in the Maison de la photographie Archive – Paris)

VIDEODANCE WORKS:

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

Dove si guarda c'è quello che siamo, 1998, beta, 9', Riccione Film Festival 1999 – Jury Special Note

SHORTS:

Un giorno dopo l'altro, 1989, 16mm, 5', Women in Film Festival Los Angeles 1991 Jury Special Note

L'astice, 1995, 35mm, 4', Torino Film Festival 1996 Spazio Italia 2nd Award; Le festival du Mediterranée Bastia, 1996; 1st Award, Cittadella del corto 1996; Trevignano 1996 1st Award

FEATURE FILMS:

Forza cani, 2002, digitale, 90', Bellaria Film Festival, 2003

Come l'ombra presented at the "Giornate degli Autori" - 2006 Venice Film Festival. This movie has been shortlisted in several International Film Festivals (Toronto, London, Montevideo, Goteborg, Paris, Linz, etc.) and won many awards including the Critics' Award at Montpellier Film Festival and at Tolosa Film Festival, Best Actress at Italian Film Festival in Mons (Belgium), at Nouvelle Air Film Festival in France and Best Director at Mar del Plata Film Festival (Argentina).



Elena Ghiaurov

Actress

After a graduate at the "Paolo Grassi" Civic School in Milan, she starts playing important roles directed by the most important theatre Italian directors: by Giancarlo Cobelli in *Troilus and Cressida* by Shakespeare, by Massimo Castri in *Madame de Sade* by Yukio Mishima, by Luca Ronconi in *Itaca* by Botho Strauss and in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* by Shakespeare.

In 2008 she won the Ubu Award as the best non leading actress.

In 1998 she was one of the main actors in the Taviani Brothers's film *Tu ridi*.