



# Rebels and Spies

The Graphic Novels of Vittorio Giardino



BIOGRAFILM  
FESTIVAL 2018

Rebels and Spies. The Graphic Novels of Vittorio Giardino a Ladoc production in co-production with Colibri Film and Isola Film and Films Nòmades with the support of Regione Emilia-Romagna and Regione Campania and in collaboration with Film Commission Regione Campania in association with Archivio Audiovisivo del Movimento Operaio e Democratico with the patronage of Ajuntament de Barcelona and Memorial Democràtic written by Lorenzo Cioffi and Vittorio Giardino directed by Lorenzo Cioffi director of photography Roberto Beani sound Francesco Amodeo editor Matteo Parisini video graphics Andrea Cioffi color correction Simona Infante archival research Armando Andria music Giorgio Giampà and Alessandro Ponti dubbing studio Florian Cinetiv international sales Aquatic Films | 2018





presents

# Rebels and Spies

## The Graphic Novels of Vittorio Giardino

A documentary by Lorenzo Cioffi



**Length** 52'

**Year** 2018

**Produced by** Ladoc

**In co-production with** Colibrì Film, Isola Film, Filmsnòmades

**In association with** Aamod – Archivio audiovisivo del movimento operaio e democratico

**Supported by** Regione Emilia-Romagna, Regione Campania

**Original title** Le circostanze. I romanzi disegnati di Vittorio Giardino

**International distribution** Aquatic Films

**Directed by** Lorenzo Cioffi

**Written by** Lorenzo Cioffi and Vittorio Giardino

**Director of photography** Roberto Beani

**Editing** Matteo Parisini

**Sound** Francesco Amodeo

**Video graphics** Andrea Cioffi

**Color correction** Simona Infante

**Archival research and production assistant** Armando Andria

**Music** Giorgio Giampà and Alessandro Ponti

**Cover design** Vittorio Giardino

**Trailer** <https://vimeo.com/263118295>

Having shadowed the creation of Vittorio Giardino's latest book for over a year, *Rebels and Spies. The Graphic Novels of Vittorio Giardino* has composed a full portrait of this master of the European graphic novel: his books, his approach to work and his poetica which is so intrinsically linked to the history of the 20th century. The documentary's strength lies in its exclusive access to Giardino's work, bringing the original storyboards of his comic books to the screen for the first time. The texts have been specifically adapted for this film by the author himself.



## The film

From his studio in the hills around Bologna where he lives and works, Vittorio Giardino recounts the adventures of two of the main characters of his stories, Max Fridman and Jonas Fink.

The former is a spy who travels across Europe in the 1930's and 40's until the outbreak of the Second World War, in particular, the Spanish Civil War, eluding espionage, love intrigues and debts towards friends. Jonas Fink, on the other hand, is a young Jewish man in Soviet Czechoslovakia, living a tormented childhood and adolescence, behind the Iron Curtain and moving into adulthood at the Fall of the Berlin Wall.

From Giardino's studio, images from the historic archive break in. The Spanish Civil War: bombing, marching soldiers and rubble. Prague 1968: tanks and crowds of demonstrators.

From the footage to the original drawings, brought back to life on the screen. The dialogues, especially adapted for the film by Giardino himself, are interpreted by actors and given voices. Thus these imaginary people are written into history.

The film then follows Giardino in his rediscovery of the times and places that formed the bones of his stories: we visit the settings of his stories, from Barcelona, backdrop to the Civil War, to Prague which has now forgotten about the Wall, and back to Bologna, his birth place.

Alongside historians and experts in the graphic novel who are interviewed in contexts reminiscent of the settings in Giardino's book, key elements of Giardino's work are investigated: the "ligne claire" style, his building of intrigue, his methods, and historical documentation and iconographic precision.

Giardino's approach consists of narrative fiction of a sophisticated structure supported by incredibly realistic, well-researched historical content and detail.

This particular artistic approach offers us the opportunity to reflect on the 20th century, breathing the history and the customs that form the background to our European identity. From the Spanish Civil War to the Prague Spring, Giardino would appear to be scrutinising the confines of individual liberty within European history, and just what it is that determines the paths our lives take.

Meanwhile, in Bologna, in the privacy of his studio, Giardino is putting the final touches to his latest work, the final of the Jonas Fink saga, published by Rizzoli-Lizard in Italy and Casterman in France.

*Rebels and Spies* presents the art of Vittorio Giardino, one of the international masters of the graphic novel, through his experience of 30 years of production whilst 20th century unfolded, starting in the present, with the artist's work on the storyboards that will comprise his final work.



## Vittorio Giardino

Vittorio Giardino, born in Bologna in 1946, is an acclaimed master of the contemporary comic d'auteur, both in Italy and in Europe. His works have been translated into 16 languages and published in Europe, China, Japan, Brazil, Argentina and the USA.

He has spent over 30 years producing top quality comics, regardless of the passing fashions, with his expressive, linear drawing style, complex and mature storylines and meticulously researched settings, which are inspired by both literature and Hollywood filmographic iconicity.

2008 He was awarded the "Gran Maestro del Fumetto" at the Lucca Festival.

2012 He won the prestigious Prix Angoulême for the adventures of Jonas Fink.

2013 His first personal exhibition in Italy, at Museo Civico Archeologico, Bologna.

2018 The author finished his long expected third volume, thus concluding the Fink trilogy: *Jonas Fink. Il libraio di Praga* (Jonas Fink, the bookseller of Prague), set in 1968. Giardino also works in illustration (Vogue, Je bouquine, Mosquito, Viaggi...) and affiche/posters. He creates lithographs and etchings.

## The cities

*Rebels and Spies* was shot in Bologna, Prague and Barcelona. We travel with Giardino to the places that are most dear to him, which have become the settings for the events recounted in his books, and a source of inspiration for his imagination.

Bologna is Vittorio Giardino's native city, where he still lives and works, where relationships, both personal and professional, are intertwined with figures from Bolognese culture such as the singer-songwriter Francesco Guccini, one of those interviewed in the documentary.

Prague is the city of Jonas Fink, whose personal history and that of his city are woven into one.

Barcelona is the city where the spy Max Fridman's final adventures take place, in the midst of the Spanish Civil War.





## Max Fridman

Max Fridman is an ex French secret agent who has retired to Geneva with his daughter Esther, but who he continues to be involved in adventures around Europe of the 1930's.. He is attractive, intelligent and cultured, and works undercover, discretely and efficiently, in the role of wealthy tobacco merchant. Fridman strikes an elegant figure with his a neatly trimmed beard and he smokes a pipe. The last three volumes are set entirely during the Spanish Civil War, with Fridman on the tracks of a missing friend.







## Jonas Fink

The series of the same name follows the life of the Czechoslovakian Jew, Jonas Fink, from his birth in communist Prague, at the end of the Second World War to his entering adulthood at the Fall of the Berlin Wall. Jonas was little more than a child when his father was arrested by the communist police and, together with his mother had to deal with the oppression and discrimination of Stalin's regime. The book won the Prix Angoulême in 1995 and the Harvey Award in San Diego in 1999. With his latest book, *The Bookseller of Prague*, published in early 2018 by Lizzard-Rizzoli in Italy and by Casterman in France, the Jonas Fink trilogy comes to a close. We find Jonas, a young adult during the reknowned Prague Summer of 1968.





## The audiovisual archives

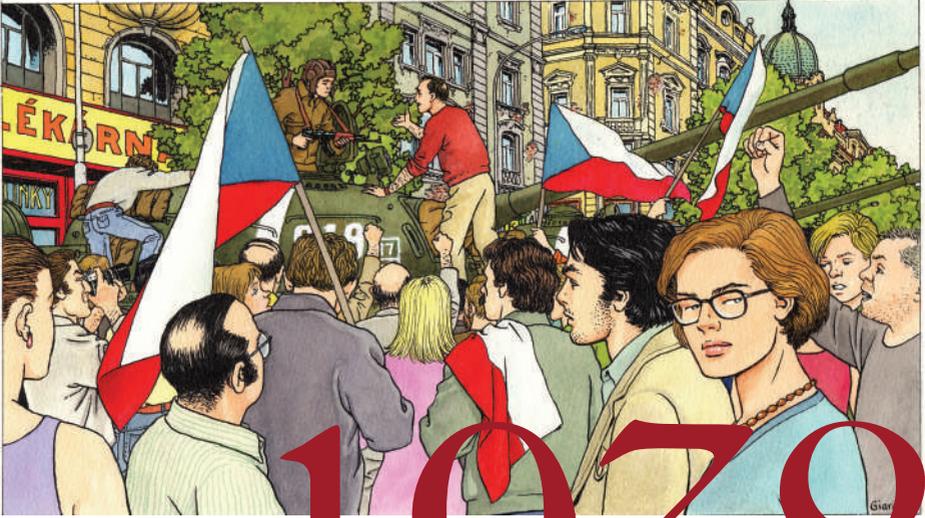
*Rebels and Spies* makes use of the Aamod (Archivo audiovisivo del movimiento operaio e democratico), the archive which stores the stories and collective memory of the social movement and its champions. This is where we acquired audiovisual footage of the 1938 Spanish bombing of Barcelona, one of the most famous audiovisual pieces from the Spanish Civil War.

Colour images of tanks lumbering across Venceslau Square in Prague during the soviet invasion in 1968 are seen on screen for the first time. They were kindly lent by Plàcid Garcia-Planas from his personal archive, and were filmed by Maria Garcia-Planas Vilarrubia.

## The animated panels

Vittorio Giardino has adapted the texts that accompany the panels in his graphic novels especially for *Rebels and Spies*. The storyboards have been animated, sound has been added and interpreted, to allow the viewer to enter into the atmosphere of the stories whilst maintaining the spirit of author's original work.





The bombing of Barcelona

1938

Invasion of Prague

1968

2018



VITTORIO GIARDINO  
**JONAS FINK**  
 UNA VITA SOSPESA

**L'INFANZIA**  
 UNO DEI PIÙ GRANDI CRIMINALI A PRAGA GI  
 ARRIVÒ IN CITTÀ PER UNO DEI PIÙ GRANDI  
 IN UNO DEI PIÙ GRANDI CRIMINALI A PRAGA GI  
 ARRIVÒ IN CITTÀ PER UNO DEI PIÙ GRANDI

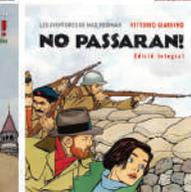
**L'ADOLESCENZA**  
 FEBBRAIO 1952. NEVEN È UNO DEI PIÙ  
 GRANDI CRIMINALI A PRAGA GI ARRIVÒ IN  
 CITTÀ PER UNO DEI PIÙ GRANDI CRIMINALI  
 A PRAGA GI ARRIVÒ IN CITTÀ PER UNO DEI  
 PIÙ GRANDI CRIMINALI A PRAGA GI

**IL LIBRAIO**



VITTORIO GIARDINO  
 Max Fridman:  
 La guerre d'Espagne

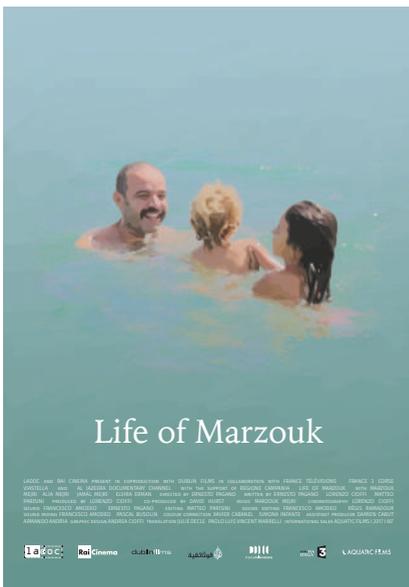
**No pasarán**



**Lorenzo Cioffi**, born in 1979, Naples, graduated in History of Cinema at the University of Rome Tre. He furthered his studies in documentary cinema at the Drop Out school in Milan and proceeded to spend two years in Paris working as productions assistant. In 2007 he returned to Italy as an author and filmmaker, specialising in documentaries. *Hector's Journey* (Cinecittà Luce – Torino Film Festival 2013) *Napoli24, L'ultima Chance*. In 2011 he set up Ladoc productions and has since produced (*Napolislam, La Natura delle Cose*) and directed (*Rustam Casanova, Il Viaggio di Ettore*) documentaries for cinema and television. In 2016 he was selected for Eurodoc and in 2017 took part in Berlinale Talents.

**Ladoc** productions specialises in cinema and television documentaries. We favour creative documentaries, exploring new perspectives on themes, stories or figures of current social importance where differing cultural viewpoints might cross. We are looking for peculiar, surprising viewpoints: a unique vision which we can then render universal. We like to mix styles and genres, conscious of the power of narrative as a means of understanding man.

TRACK RECORD



## **LIFE OF MARZOUK**

2017 | 52'

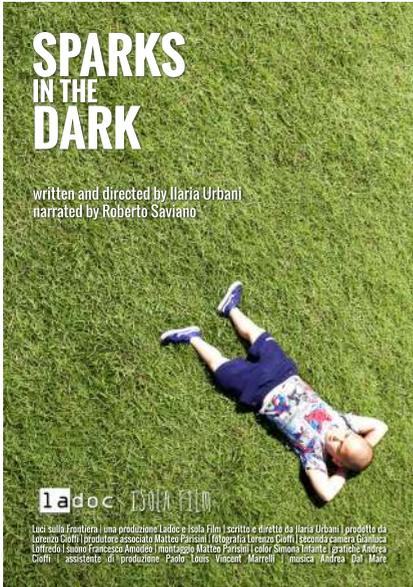
**in co-production with** Rai Cinema, Dublin Films, France Télévisions, Al Jazeera Documentary Channel

**directed by** Ernesto Pagano

**categories** society; human interest

**broadcasted** France3, Al Jazeera Documentary Channel

A Tunisian musician, his Italian wife, and their marriage crisis. A trip to his bilad, his home town, for the first time with his children instinctively in search of his homeland and of his identity. *Life of Marzouk* is an intimate portrait of an attempt at integration which finds in love its only possible solution.



## SPARKS IN THE DARK

2017 | 52'

in co-production with Isola Film

directed by Ilaria Urbani

narrated by Roberto Saviano

categories society; human interest

broadcasted RSI; TV2000

After Gomorrah, the shocking insider account of organised crime, *Sparks in the Dark* offers a new perspective on Naples and celebrates its unknown heroes. In districts brought to the brink by poverty and unemployment, tough and dedicated street priests try to keep communities alive. This film tells their stories, narrated by the peerless contemporary writer Roberto Saviano.



## ALMOST TOMORROW

2017 | 52'

in co-production with Colibri Film

directed by Gianluca Loffredo

categories society; current affairs

The lives of some migrants intertwine with villagers' in a small village in Calabria, Italy. Five stories reveal mutual hopes and fears, and paint a contradictory portrait of today's Italy.





## THE NATURE OF THINGS

2016 | 70'

directed by Laura Viezzoli

categories human interest; point of view

broadcasted RSI

An emotional and philosophical immersion in that precious period of one's life which is the end of life, through one year of meetings and conversations between the author and the protagonist, a man terminally ill with ALS. A journey into the human soul where present merges with past and future becoming a landscape background for a dialogue about love, pain and the need for freedom.



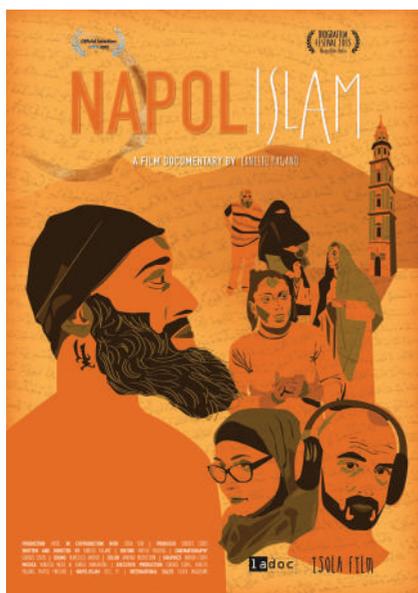
Festival del film Locarno  
Official selection



WINNER  
CINEMA  
INTERNATIONAL  
FILM FESTIVAL  
OF LOCARNO  
2016



WINNER  
TRIESTE FILM  
FESTIVAL  
2017



## NAPOLISLAM

2015 | 52'

in co-production with Isola Film

directed by Ernesto Pagano

categories society; current affairs

broadcasted Sky Arte; Sky Cielo; France3; Al Jazeera Balkans; Al Arabiya; RSI

One fine day Naples wakes up and finds out it has become Islamic. A camera goes through the city and enters into the lives of ten people who have converted to Islam. The result is *Napolislam*: a documentary with a comic twist that explains why the message of Allah is slowly conquering Europe.



Official Selection  
IFFIC 2015

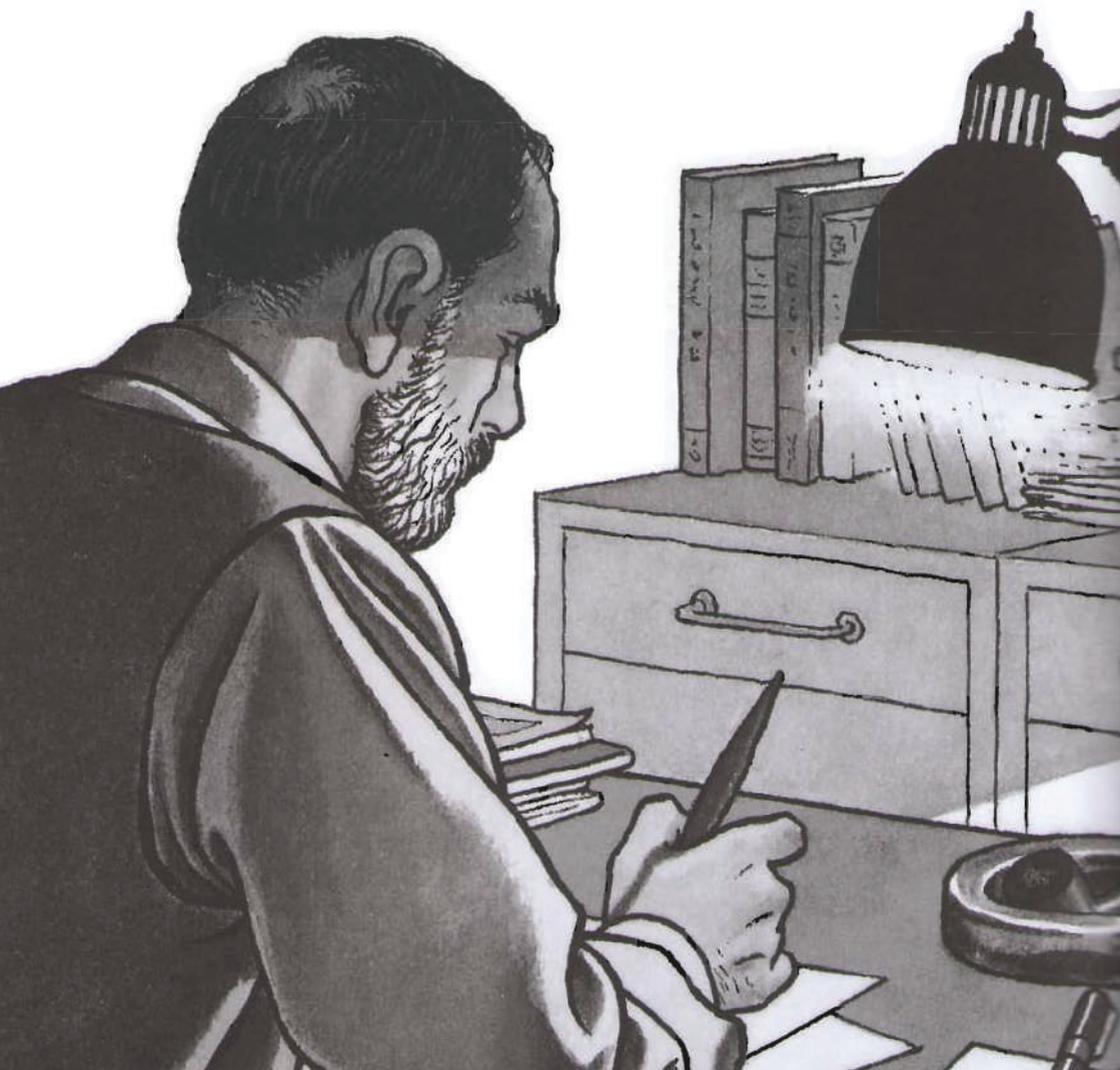
BIOGRAFILM  
FESTIVAL 2015  
Biografilm Italia

WINNER  
PrImEd  
2016

JCC  
2016

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