

BETA CINEMA  
presents a production of ORISA PRODUZIONI and GOLDKIND FILM PRODUKTION

**LUDIVICA MARTINO** and **MARCO LEONARDI**  
in

# MY PLACE IS HERE

WRITTEN AND DIRECTED BY  
**DANIELA PORTO & CRISTIANO BORTONE**

BASED ON THE OPINOMINOUS NOVEL BY  
**DANIELA PORTO**

SUPPORTED BY

CALABRIA FILM COMMISSION - REGIONE LAZIO (AVISO PUBBLICO ATTRAZIONE  
PRODUZIONI CINEMATOGRAFICHE) - APULIA FILM COMMISSION



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## SHORT SYNOPSIS

Marta, a single mother promised to an older farmer in the aftermath of WWII, forges an unlikely friendship with Lorenzo, the village's openly gay "wedding planner." In the conservative backdrop of rural Southern Italy, Lorenzo introduces her to a hidden community of gays, sparking Marta's journey to challenge societal prejudices. Against the historical backdrop of the first year of women's suffrage in Italy, Marta navigates her evolving role as a woman, breaking barriers and finding her place in a changing world.

*Set at the time of the first feminist movement in Southern Italy, this compelling tale of women empowerment and pursuit of happiness stars Ludovica Martino ("SKAM Italia") and "Cinema Paradiso"'s Marco Leonardi.*

## DIRECTORS' NOTES

BY DANIELA PORTO & CRISTIANO BORTONE

The story of "Il mio posto è qui" takes place in the aftermath of World War II. It is a historical moment in which Europe experiences, in a relatively short period of time, enormous social, cultural and political changes. The film recalls this fundamental page of history from a unique and original point of view: that of a single mother in a remote village in the south of Italy who unexpectedly befriends the local wedding planner, a homosexual despised by the whole community. Through him, Marta will slowly gain consciousness of her right as a woman to live a fulfilling life.

Many of the changes that occurred in the immediate post-war period found the most of Italy unprepared. The country became a republic following a referendum won only by a few votes, and its society was suddenly torn between the losers and the winners, right and left, the Christian Democrats (CD) and the Communist Party (PCI): two sides that, each in its own way, had both upheld a highly moralistic view on society. In this context, the majority of the Italian population - especially in the South - remained deeply attached to its patriarchal tradition, with no instruments to imagine an alternative.

The protagonists of our story, Marta and Lorenzo, different in terms of cultural background, social role and identity, experience this moment of change on their skin. Lorenzo is older and believes to have lost forever his opportunity, but when he meets Marta, he decides to help her to have her own chance. Thanks to him, Marta becomes aware of what is missing in her life and decides to fight to seek her happiness.

Although the film is set in Calabria in the mid-40s, some of its themes remain very up to date. Almost every day we read about cases of femicide or acts of intolerance. The debate opened by the #MeToo movement has brought to light the issue once more. These topics, which by now should already be assimilated in modern society, are in fact recently even being challenged by new conservative movements making their way through Europe and around the world... With this story, we want to contribute to the reflection of these themes, through emotions and memorable characters.

The film also offers the chance to discover a world so far unseen on the big screen: the hidden community of homosexuals in the post war countryside which was made of farmers, far from the colorful and queer atmosphere that the cinema is familiar with.

We tried to avoid a romanticized and polished image of the South, with beautiful images and perfect historical costumes. By seeing the original photographs of the Italian countryside after the war, one is struck by its extreme poverty. Most of the houses were closed to stables, electricity was still rare, people were lacking basic commodities. Through set design and camera, we wanted to show up close Marta's condition of restraint in this violently archaic dimension, while allowing the spectator a glimpse into her inner world.

## **INTERVIEW WITH THE DIRECTORS**

DANIELA PORTO AND CRISTIANO BORTONE

### **For *My Place Is Here* you are diving into the world of a small village in Southern Italy in the 40s. How did that idea come about?**

**Daniela:** The original idea came from a story that I was told by my mother who comes from a small town in Calabria. It centered on the figure of the local homosexual. He was known and despised by everyone but what my mother found surprising was that, despite this, as a man, he still had a lot of freedom that was not accorded to women. Reflecting on this paradox, I created the story of Marta and her journey of growth and redemption within the patriarchal and conservative community of postwar southern Italy.

### **Marta is at the center of your film. How would you describe her character?**

**Daniela:** In writing the story, I tried to avoid any easy rhetoric. Marta is a woman of her times. At the beginning, she herself has no full awareness of her condition. She even has the same contempt and suspicion toward Lorenzo that everyone has, because she is part of the same cultural system that surrounds her. Only slowly, and thanks to Lorenzo, will she begin to become aware of her own identity and rights.

### **Lorenzo introduces Marta to Bianca, a leading feminist in the region. What can you tell us about this early feminist movement in Southern Italy, how did the women organize and what were their stepping stones and achievements?**

**Daniela:** Women in Italy were an important part of the partisan movements. During the liberation from Nazi-fascism they made a fundamental contribution on the front lines. After the war, in the context of a general ideological euphoria, there was great hope that that efforts could lead to a radical change in the role of women in society. But the country's governments and the two political blocs, center-right and left, helped stifle any radical change, effectively consolidating patriarchal and traditionalist power. One had to wait until the 1960s for the issue of women's rights to return to the forefront in the context of new social thrusts. Interestingly, feminism at that point was welded with the demands of the gay community. This is precisely why I liked to create this subtext in my story as well.

### **How would you describe the situation of single mothers in Southern Italy today?**

**Daniela:** Despite the fact that many decades have passed since the first battles for women's rights in Italy and around the world, still today unfortunately the newspapers every day are full of news of feminicides, abuse and violence that surprisingly often take place right in the victim's immediate family circle. But this is only the most apparent aspect of this issue. What is more serious is still the social, professional and cultural inequality of

which women are victims. Paradoxically, in many countries and societies right now there is the risk of big steps backward in this respect. That is why I believe there is still a need for stories like ours that keep the debate about the rights of us women alive.

**Lorenzo brings so much warmth and hope to the story, how did you get inspired for his character?**

**Daniela:** Lorenzo's character is the catalyst for the raising of Marta's awareness. With Cristiano we wondered for a long time about the appropriate way to shape this figure. Again, we wanted to avoid the stereotypes of how homosexuals are often portrayed on the big-screen, often effeminate and unnecessarily excessive. Rather, we were inspired by Mastroianni's character in *Una giornata particolare*: a profound man with great dignity, who lives his homosexuality in a private way and who, for love, has sacrificed important parts of his life. With his elegance and charm, at some point he even makes the young Marta confused: she seems to almost feel some kind of attraction or sense of protection towards him. Marco Leonardi, with his extraordinary talent, succeeded perfectly in creating this profile, at the same time charismatic and heartbreaking.

**What did you find out about the nightly gatherings of gays at the time in the countryside? What was the men's social background and who were the firsts to come out publicly?**

**Daniela:** During the Fascist regime, gays were subject of harsh persecution. Many of them ended up in concentration camps and this is a painful and little-known page of history. It is therefore understandable how, back then, homosexuals avoided as much as possible public externalization of their identity. There were groups that lived within their own borders. In the Calabrian countryside, then, the local homosexual community was not the colorful and alternative one that is often clichéd in many films but was largely made up of farmers. This unique image is the one we tried to portray in our film.

**When writing the screenplay, were you tempted to also grant Lorenzo to escape the village and to live a more liberal life in the city?**

**Daniela:** Lorenzo's character offered us the opportunity for a bittersweet ending. Surely, he too could have followed Marta on her journey of liberation to Milan to find a new life there. And that is perhaps what Marta hopes for. But, as Lorenzo explains to her, that moment has now passed for him. Somehow, he leaves to Marta the legacy of what he did not have the courage to do in the past: she, as a young woman, will be able to pursue it instead. The title of the film *My Place is Here* is symbolic of this painful choice that many Italians had to make: the inner conflict of those who left their South-Italian towns to go work in the north or even abroad, leaving behind their families, traditions and often their own identity.

**How would you describe the cinematographic language of the film?**

**Cristiano:** When adapting a novel for the big screen, the first fundamental step is to understand the style that will characterize the new work. When we started thinking about how to adapt Daniela's novel, we decided early on that we wanted to immerse the public into this archaic world, thus helping the spectator feel how it also resonates in the present. This is why we chose very realistic settings, far from the glossy and romantic vision of Southern Italy as seen in so many TV dramas. Southern Italy after the war was a destroyed, miserable, in some ways desperate place that might remind us today of some of the places from which many migrants come. In choosing the lights, we acknowledged how electricity

did not yet exist in those places. The lighting used only oil lanterns or followed the cycle of natural light. Finally, we wanted to bring the camera inside the scene, often handheld, to create as much of a sense of realism as possible.

### **Where was it shot?**

**Cristiano:** During the location scouting, we beat the length and breadth of Puglia and Calabria, whose film commissions both supported the film. Southern Italy still offers a wonderful variety of untouched locations, and we were really spoiled for choice. In the end, we decided for the small town of Gerace, in the province of Reggio Calabria, which offered us settings of different social levels at the same time, as required by the story: very poor ones appropriate for Marta's family, but also more upscale mansions for the priest and Lorenzo's lover. The interiors were mostly rebuilt in an old farmhouse in Puglia, a region where I have already shot several movies, and which now offers excellent film infrastructure.

### **Lots of actors in the film speak the local dialect, especially in Marta's family. How did you cast these and the main roles?**

**Cristiano:** Again, with the goal of making the film as realistic as possible, we chose to have the actors act in the dialect of the time. This was a big effort involving a linguistics expert, also because in Italy dialects often even change from one village to another. Most of the secondary actors were chosen from the area of filming so as to use their natural accent. Our wonderful female lead Ludovica Martino trained for months with a specialized coach, revealing in this another side of her extraordinary talent.

### **Did you realize your plans to publish the story of the film also as a novel?**

**Daniela:** Yes, my novel has been published by Sperling & Kupfer of Mondadori Group, one of Italy's leading publishers, and the promotion of the film in Italy will combine with that of the book through a tour of previews and readings. At the moment my literary agent is already receiving some requests from foreign publishers, and our hope is that this model can be replicated in other countries as well.

## **A SHORT CHRONOLGY OF WOMEN'S RIGHTS IN ITALY**

### *RIGHT TO VOTE - 1945*

In 1912 universal male suffrage recognized all men over the age of 21 as having the right to vote. The minimum age threshold for the right to vote was raised to age 30 for illiterate men.

Women would have to wait until 1945 when the Council of Ministers also recognized women's active voting rights (electing candidates) for the first time.

Their first opportunity to vote were the local elections between March and April 1946 and soon after, on June 2, 1946, the institutional referendum that asked citizens to choose between the Monarchy and the Republic.

### *BAN ON DISMISSAL FOR MARRIAGE OR PREGNANCY - 1963*

Law No. 7 of 1963 put an end to dismissals implemented "because of marriage." Fueled by the intent to prevent a company/employer to suffer from the effects and inconveniences associated with motherhood - that marriage is likely to bring - it was widespread practice to dismiss female workers on the occasion of their marriage,

### *DIVORCE LAW - 1970*

On December 1st, 1970, Law No. 898, officially allowed the dissolution of marriage. And following an attempt to repeal the law was turned down by a referendum in 1974. In May 2015, a change in divorce law, the so-called "short divorce," came into effect: the time frame was reduced to 6 months in the case of consensual separation and 12 months in personal separation.

### *FAMILY LAW REFORM - 1975*

Although full equality of rights and duties between spouses was included in the Constitutional Charter since 1948, a hierarchical model of husband being the "head" of every family was still in force on the level of ordinary legislation. The family law reform of 1975 fully harmonized ordinary legislation with constitutional norms.

Thus, the figure of the head of the family was abolished (except for registry purposes), equality between spouses was recognized, the institution of the dowry was abolished, children born within or outside of marriage were recognized as equal, and husband's betrayals became a legitimate cause for separation.

### *ABORTION LAW 194 - 1978*

In Judgment No. 27 of 1975, the Constitutional Court allowed fetal termination when the pregnancy involved serious, medically ascertained and not otherwise avoidable harm or danger to the woman's health.

But it was not until Law 194 of 1978 that women were allowed to be able to voluntarily terminate a pregnancy in a public facility. The woman, according to the law, is the sole holder of the right to terminate her pregnancy, after undergoing a medical examination and after a seven-day reflection period to assess the necessity and need to proceed with the termination.

In 2016, however, the European Committee of Social Rights condemned Italy for violating the right to abortion, recognizing the great difficulties women face to terminate pregnancy, due in part to the large number of objecting doctors in Italy.

#### *REPARATIVE MARRIAGE - 1981*

If a man had raped an unmarried, chaste woman, he could avoid a prison sentence by offering to marry her and meet all the marriage expenses. The victim usually was pressured by her own family to accept the proposal because she was no longer chaste and consequently no longer considered "marriageable."

The first to start the legislative process that led to the repeal of the law was Franca Viola, a teenager from Sicily, who in 1966 refused to marry the man who had kidnapped and raped her. Successfully, she finally saw her tormentor convicted. The story is recounted Marta Savina's drama *Primadonna (The Girl From Tomorrow)* from 2022.

With the Law 442 of September 5, 1981, the concept of "reparative marriage" was finally abolished.

#### *EQUAL OPPORTUNITY - 2010*

The Legislative Decree 5 of January 25, 2010 strengthened the right of female workers to receive equal pay with their male colleagues. The measure implements the European directive already approved in 2006.

## THE CAST

### **LUDOVICA MARTINO**

as MARTA

Ludovica Martino, age 27, is one of the most promising up-and-coming Italian actresses of the moment, with a large fan base among the young audience. She is mostly known as the protagonist of the Italian adaptation of the Norwegian high school series *Skam* and for successful romantic comedies playing on Netflix such as *Under the Riccione Sun*. She proved already to be a very talented actress in films such as *The Champion* or *Lovely Boy*. Her most recent appearance is next to Italian comedy superstar Carlo Verdone in his Paramount+ series *Vita da Carlo*.

#### Selected filmography

2023 - *Vita Da Carlo* by Carlo Verdone  
2022 - *I Migliori Giorni* by Massimiliano Bruno, Edoardo Leo  
2021 - *Under The Amalfi Sun* by Martina Pastori  
2021 - *Security* by Peter Chelsom  
2021 - *Lovely Boy* by Francesco Lettieri  
2020 - *Under the Riccione Sun* by YouNuts!  
2020 - *Carosello Carosone* by Lucio Pellegrini  
2019 - *The Champion* by Leonardo D'Agostini  
2019 - *Liberi Tutti* by Ciarrapico & Luca Vendruscolo  
2017-2019 - *Skam Italia* by Ludovico Besegato  
2018 - *The Night Passenger* by Riccardo Grandi  
2016-2017 - *Tutto Può Succedere* by Lucio Pellegrini, Alessandro Angelini, Alessandro Casale & Fabio Mollo

#### Awards

2020 - Explosive Talent Award at Giffoni Film Festival

### **MARCO LEONARDI**

as LORENZO

Marco Leonardi has been a very appreciated Italian talent for several decades. His early role as teenage Totò in the Academy Award-winning world-wide hit classic *Cinema Paradiso* (1988), helped him gain popularity in the US where he became one of Hollywood's most sought-after young foreign actors of the time. He starred as the protagonist of *Like Water for Chocolate* (1992) which became the highest-grossing foreign film of the year. In *Once Upon a Time in Mexico* (2003) by Robert Rodriguez, he played next to Antonio Banderas and Johnny Depp and next to Juliette Binoche in *Mary* (2005) by Abel Ferrara. At the same time, he continued to work with an array of Italian directors showing his versatility and talent.

#### Selected filmography

2022 - *Padre Pio* by Abel Ferrara  
2019 - *Martin Eden* by Pietro Marcello  
2017 - *All The Money In The World* by Ridley Scott



2014 - *Black Souls* by Francesco Munzi  
2007 - *Maradona* by Marco Risi  
2007 - *The Boss of the Bosses* by Alexis Sweet & Enzo Monteleone (TV)  
2004 - *Like Water For Chocolate* by Alfonso Arau  
2005 - *Mary* by Abel Ferrara  
2003 - *Once Upon A Time In Mexico* by Robert Rodriguez  
2001 - *The Knights of the Quest* by Pupi Avati  
1997 - *My Brother Jack* by Antony Caldarella  
1996 - *The Stendhal Syndrome* by Dario Argento  
1996 - *The Border* by Franco Giraldi  
1990 - *Forgetting Palermo* by Francesco Rosi  
1993 - *The Rebel* by Aurelio Grimaldi  
1988 - *Cinema Paradiso* by Giuseppe Tornatore  
1987 - *The Last Minute* by Pupi Avati

### Awards

Silver Ribbons (Italian Film Journalists Awards)  
2015 Nominated as Best Actor for *Black Souls*  
2007 Nominated as Best Actor for *Maradona*

## THE CREW

### THE DIRECTORS

#### DANIELA PORTO

Daniela Porto was born in Rome in 1979 and graduated in 2003 in Arts, Music and Performing Arts at the University of Roma Tre with a thesis on Marco Ferreri's first films in Spain. At the beginning of her career, she focused on photography working at the highly respected agency "Contrasto". In 2005 she started working at Orisa Produzioni and since then she has been supervising most of its productions. *Il Mio Posto È Qui (My Place Is Here)* is her first novel, published by Sperling & Kupfer (Mondadori), one of the most relevant Italian publishers. The film adapted from the novel, co-directed with Cristiano Bortone, her partner in life, is her debut feature.

#### CRISTIANO BORTONE

After attending USC (University of Southern California) in 1991, Bortone graduated from New York University in Film and Television with an award for special achievements. Among his films as director are *Red Like The Sky* (2005) - winner of a David di Donatello Italian Film Award and awarded at more than 25 other international festivals such as San Paolo IFF or Sydney IFF - and *Coffee* (2016), the first official co-production between Italy and China, which premiered as a Special event at the Venice Days and was nominated for the China Media Awards.

In 1998, he founded Orisa Produzioni in Italy and in 2015, Yiyi Pictures in China. As a producer, he has worked on diverse projects, from art house to more commercial films, including break-out hits like *Maria, Ihm Schmeckt's Nicht!* (2009) and *Marina* (2013). His latest production is the romcom *The Italian Recipe* (2022), co-produced with Funage Pictures in China. Bortone was nominated for the Best Producer Award in 2006 and 2017 at the Silver Ribbons and at the David di Donatello Italian Film Awards, respectively.

#### Selected filmography as director

2023 - *My Place Is Here* co-directed with Daniela Porto

2016 - *Coffee*

2012 - *10 Rules To Make Someone Fall In Love*

2011 - *The Scent Of The Land* / Feature Documentary

2008 - *Red Like The Sky*

2002 - *Forbidden Grass* / Feature Documentary

2000 - *I Am Positive*

2000 - *Robin-Hoods Of The New Millennium* / Short Documentary

1996 - *Joe D'amato* / Episode from the documentary series *Ritratti D'autore*

1994 - *Oasis*

## **THE PRODUCTION COMPANIES**

### ORISA PRODUZIONI

Orisa Produzioni is a film and television production company active since 1998. Some of its films have been commercial successes such as *Maria, Ihm Schmeckt's Nicht!* (2009, more than 12M€ in Germany) or *Marina* (2013), directed by Oscar nominee Stijn Coninx and one of the ten highest grossing films in the history of Flemish cinema. Other movies have won awards at major international festivals such as Francesco Munzi's *Saimir* (2004), winner of a Special Mention at the Venice Film Festival and the Silver Ribbon for the Best New Director. The film was also nominated at the European Film Awards and the David di Donatello Awards. Orisa Produzioni also produced Bortone's *Red Like The Sky*, winner of the David Giovani and more than 25 other international awards in festivals such as Sao Paulo, Sydney, Amsterdam, Palm Springs, etc. Orisa Produzioni is a member of ACE producers and co-founder of the association of Sino-European producers "Bridging The Dragon".

### GOLDKIND FILM

Founded in 2005, Goldkind is the film division of the historic TV production company TV60 Filmproduktion, which made its mark in German TV history. Its feature films include prestige dramas such as *Sophie Scholl* (nominated for an Oscar and winner of a Silver Bear in Berlin in 2005), *The Girl With 9 Wigs* (2013), *Zurich* (2013), but also popular comedies such as *Full Idiot* (2007) or *What A Man* (2011). For years the company has been the lead of the German Producers Association.

## **DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY**

### EMILIO M. COSTA

Emilio M. Costa, hailing from a small Italian village, was immersed in the arts from a young age, courtesy of his architect father and dancer mother. After studying photography in Florence, he pursued fine arts at the Accademia di Belle Arti in Bologna, focusing on natural light in cinematography for his thesis. This marked the beginning of his journey as a cinematographer, working on short films and commercials. In 2019, he earned his Cinematography degree from the Centro Sperimentale di Cinematografia in Rome under the mentorship of luminaries like Giuseppe Lanci and Luciano Tovoli. Now based in Rome, Costa collaborates with a new generation of emerging directors, contributing his dynamic photography to narrative contexts.

## **EDITOR**

### CLAUDIO DI MAURO

Claudio Di Mauro is an accomplished Italian editor who earned acclaim by winning the 2001 David di Donatello award for "Best Editor" for his work on *L'Ultimo Bacio*. Starting as an advertising editor in Rome in 1969, he later directed documentaries and commercials before completely focusing on editing. In the last decades he has been the editor of several Italian blockbuster directors such as Gabriele Muccino, Carlo Verdone, Ficarra and Picone,

Carlo Carlei, etc. Among his titles also *Beyond The Clouds* co-directed by Michelangelo Antonioni and Wim Wenders and *Eros* co-directed by Antonioni, Steven Soderbergh and Wong Kar-Wai. This year he was the editor of *The Tearsmith* from the novel of Erin Doom which was the most watched film on Netflix worldwide.

## CREDITS - TECHNICAL DETAILS

Drama / 2024 / Italy, Germany / 107 min

### MAIN CAST

Marta	Ludovica Martino
Lorenzo	Marco Leonardi
Signora Dora	Annamaria De Luca
Marta's mother	Bianca Maria D'Amato
Bianca	Giorgia Arena
Michele, Marta's fiancé	Francesco Arico'
Marta's sister	Adele Bilotta
Don Antonio	Saverio Malara
Marta's father	Francesco Biscione
Gino	Antonino Sgro'
Francesco	Gianvincenzo Pugliese
Amedeo	Ivan Maria Artuso
Enrico	Francesco Aiello
Michelangelo (5 years old)	Edoardo Malerba

### MAIN CREW

Written and directed by	Daniela Porto & Cristiano Bortone
Producers	Cristiano Bortone, Marcus Roth, Sven Burgemeister
Based on the novel by	Daniela Porto
Published by	Sperling & Kupfer (Mondadori group)
Director of Photography	Emilio M. Costa
Editor	Claudio Di Mauro
Composer	Santi Pulvirenti
Set Design	Alessandra Mura
Costume Design	Cristiana Ricceri
Casting	Anna Pennella & Eric Porcelluzzi
Sound	Riccardo Righini
Production Companies	Orisa Produzioni & Goldkind Filmproduktion
With the support of	Calabria Film Commission Regione Lazio - Avviso Pubblico Attrazione Produzioni Cinematografiche (POR FESR LAZIO 2014-2020)
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