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Gina Lollobrigida, Italian movie star

Elisa Leonelli · Wednesday, February 7th, 2018

I had the pleasure of interviewing [Gina Lollobrigida](#), the beautiful Italian movie star famous in the 1950s and 60s, when [she traveled to Los Angeles](#) to receive a star on Hollywood's Walk of Fame (February 1).

 She acted in Italian, French and American movies by respected directors, opposite famous costars: with Vittorio De Sica in *Pane, amore e fantasia* (1953), directed by Luigi Comencini; with Gabriele Ferzetti in *La Provinciale* (1953) by Mario Soldati; with Humphrey Bogart in *Beat the Devil* (1953) by John Huston; with Vittorio Gassman in *La donna più bella del mondo* (1955); with Tony Curtis and Burt Lancaster in *Trapeze* (1956) by Carol Reed; with Ives Montand and Marcello Mastroianni in *La Loi* (1959) by Jules Dassin; with Yul Brynner in *Solomon and Sheba* (1959) by King Vidor; with Rock Hudson in *Come September* (1961) by Robert Mulligan; with Sean Connery in *Woman of Straw* (1964).

The Italian Cultural Institute paid tribute to the movie icon with the showing of two movies, selected by artistic director Claudio Masenza: one Italian, *La morte ha fatto l'uovo* (1968), the other British, *Woman of Straw* (1964). Honored at the same event, "Filming on Italy," was Monica Bellucci with the US premiere of *On the Milky Road* (2016) by Emir Kusturica and the screening of *Malena* (2000) by Giuseppe Tornatore.

 Gina Lollobrigida (c) Armando Gallo-HFPA 2018

At the age of 90 "la Lollo," as she is nicknamed in Italy, is still full of life and funny, and she's not only an actress, but also a photo-journalist, a sculptor and a painter. She says, "Movies are magic, they are not like the other arts. It's unbelievable that I'm here, after so many years. I'm moved, I didn't expect all this love." She claims there was never any rivalry with Sophia Loren. The difference is that she did not need the help of a lover turned husband like Carlo Ponti to build her career; she did it alone. Howard Hughes courted her for 12 years—he wanted to marry her and was very persistent. John Huston was a great director. Vittorio De Sica was a dream. Working with Sean Connery was very good. She was friends with Marilyn Monroe, and says that Marilyn's downfall was that she always needed a man to love her, but men are often jealous if a woman is more famous than they are. She knows this from personal experience. For a few years, Gina had a younger lover, Javier, a Spaniard, who she now hopes will go to prison for all the harm that he did to her. Since 2010, she has had another young man around, "my good friend Andrea," but confesses she never found true love. She has a son, Milko, and a grandson, Dimitri. "If I am still working, I'm alive. If you work, you don't become old, you become younger, because the brain is okay." She hopes there is life after death, and would like to come back as an animal, a tiger or an

eagle.



Vittorio Gassman (c) Elisa Leonelli 1984

I was born and raised in Italy and have been a film lover since childhood, so there are many other Italian actresses that I remember from that era, the 1950s, 60s and 70s: [Anna Magnani](#), [Silvana Mangano](#), [Sophia Loren](#), [Virna Lisi](#), [Monica Vitti](#), [Claudia Cardinale](#), [Mariangela Melato](#), [Stefania Sandrelli](#), etc. And many actors: [Marcello Mastroianni](#), [Alberto Sordi](#), [Ugo Tognazzi](#), [Nino Manfredi](#), [Vittorio De Sica](#), [Totò](#), [Giancarlo Giannini](#), [Gian Maria Volontè](#), [Vittorio Gassman](#), etc. As a photo-journalist I have had the privilege of interviewing and/or photographing some of them.

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