

An aerial photograph of the Venetian Lagoon, showing a winding river with turquoise water, dark islands, and a mix of green and brown land. The text is overlaid on the upper half of the image.

The breath of the Venetian Lagoon. A photographic film by Paolo Spigariol

essere acqua

Essere d'Acqua is a photographic film dedicated to the Venetian Lagoon: a visual and sonic narrative that weaves together photography, music and voice to explore the lagoon as a living organism, following the rhythm of seasons, tides and the creatures that inhabit it.

TECHNICAL INFORMATION

Title: Essere d'Acqua

Running time: 65 minutes

Format: Cinemascope

Sound: 5.1 surround

Directed by: Enrico Soci, Paolo Spigariol

Photography: Paolo Spigariol

Texts: Isabella Panfido

Original music: Giuseppe Laudanna

Production © 2026:

Gialloquasiarancio & Controcampo

SYNOPSIS

The Venetian Lagoon is an amphibious universe suspended between water and land. A fragile and ever-changing landscape where nature and human presence have coexisted for centuries. Essere d'Acqua tells this world through a photographic film built from real images, natural sounds, words and original music. The narrative unfolds through the seasons of the Lagoon, following the transformations of its landscapes and the creatures that inhabit it. Guiding the viewer is also the story of Ciano Mazaneta, a crab fisherman and symbolic figure of the fragile balance between humans and the natural environment. Two narrative layers intertwine: the natural world and the human story. A visual and sonic journey that reveals the deep breathing of the Lagoon.

GIALLO
QUASI
ARANCI





THE PROJECT

Essere d'Acqua is a **65-minute photographic film in cinemascope** format dedicated to the Venetian Lagoon (a UNESCO World Heritage Site since 1987). The project originates from an archive of more than **50,000 photographs taken by Paolo Spigariol** starting in the 1980s. It is a **visual and sonic narrative that combines photography, music and voice** in a work that challenges the boundaries between cinema and visual art. It is neither a documentary nor a conventional film. Instead, it is a **poetic narrative made of authentic photographic images** edited in cinematic sequence and interwoven with music, texts and soundscapes. The story unfolds through the rhythm of seasons and tides, following the breathing of the lagoon and its creatures. **The result is a hybrid language between photography and cinema, capable of portraying the Lagoon as a living and ever-changing organism.**

THE WORLD OF THE LAGOON

The Venetian Lagoon and its fishing valleys form an **amphibious and shifting universe**. Elusive. Intimate. Often inaccessible. **A space suspended between water and land**, where boundaries are not lines but zones of transition. Where the fog does not only conceal: it protects. **The city dominates the gaze. The Lagoon remains at the margins. Silent.** "To know it and tell its story, I felt the need to come closer. To immerse myself in its liquid universe. To be rocked by the waves, to sink my steps into its muddy womb. To become amphibious myself. A crab among crabs. Essere d'Acqua was born from this gesture: not observing from outside, but inhabiting." (Paolo Spigariol)

DIRECTOR'S NOTE

Editing a photographic film means giving rhythm to what is still. Suggesting movement to images that were born as fixed moments. In Essere d'Acqua, more than one thousand photographs are interwoven with an extensive sound archive composed of voices, natural sounds and words from the lagoon's unique vocabulary. The film also employs **experimental shooting techniques**, including cameras made amphibious through custom-built housings, allowing the Lagoon to be observed from unusual perspectives: at water level, beneath the surface, or through extremely panoramic compositions. **All the images were captured live in the Venetian Lagoon.**



AUTHORS' BIOGRAPHIES

Paolo Spigariol

Naturalist photographer and multimedia author, member of Tau Visual Milano. For more than forty years he has documented the Venetian Lagoon through photographic projects, books and visual installations. He collaborated with Alinari Firenze and participated in the international tour of the exhibition ITALIAE: From the Alinari Archives to the Masters of Contemporary Photography for the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Selected for Team Italy at the World Photographic Cup 2023. Author of more than twenty books and of the photographic film Clorofilla (2020), followed by Essere d'Acqua.

Isabella Panfido

Venetian writer and poet, former radio journalist and cultural contributor to Corriere del Veneto. She has published numerous poetry collections including A pelo d'acqua, Casa di donne, Shakespeare alla veneziana and La grazia del danno (Laurentum Prize 2015). Her prose work Lagunario received both the Premio Latisana per il Nordest and the Premio Gambrinus. Excerpts from the book were translated and included in the anthology Venice Tales (Oxford University Press, 2025).

Enrico Soci

Director graduated from the Centro Sperimentale di Cinematografia in Rome. Assistant director and co-screenwriter of the films Maicol and Barnabo delle montagne by Mario Brenta (Official Selection, Cannes Film Festival). Co-founder of the production company ControCampo, he has directed documentaries and audiovisual projects awarded at numerous festivals, including Lapponia: sentieri del vento, Ulan Bator: i bambini del sottosuolo and the screenplay for Porto Marghera: gli ultimi fuochi (Special Events – Venice International Film Festival).

Giuseppe Laudanna

Musician and composer. He graduated in piano from the San Pietro a Majella Conservatory in Naples and in Jazz Music from the Nicola Sala Conservatory in Benevento. He has collaborated with several Italian artists, including Eugenio Bennato, and has participated in the Premio Tenco. He has worked for cinema as well as musical and theatrical projects. He currently collaborates with jazz trumpeter Gastone Bortoloso and poet Edoardo Gallo in the project PoeMusia.

For information about the photographic film Essere d'Acqua:

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PRESS IMAGES AVAILABLE

High-resolution images from the film
are available for press and festival use upon request.

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