

**STRAND
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presents

MARX CAN WAIT

A FILM BY
MARCO BELLOCCHIO

PRESS NOTES

OFFICIAL SELECTION
Cannes Film Festival – Honorary Palme D’Or 2021
New York Film Festival

Country of Origin: Italy
Format: DCP/1.85/Color
Sound: 5.1 Surround
Running Time: 95 minutes
Genre: Documentary
Not Rated
In Italian with English Subtitles

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SYNOPSIS

1968 was the year Camillo died. Nearly 50 years after the death of his twin brother at the age of 29, Marco Bellocchio gathers his family to reconstruct Camillo’s disappearance. Combining intimate conversations with the Bellocchio family and those who knew Camillo best with archival material, family movies and his own oeuvre, Marco attempts to manifest a ghost he has been dealing with his entire life. What begins as a family conversation morphs into an investigation of grief, guilt and responsibility, compassion, empathy and love.

LONG SYNOPSIS

In his most achingly personal film to date, legendary Italian filmmaker Marco Bellocchio uses the occasion of a family reunion in his hometown of Piacenza to excavate and discuss a traumatic event: the death his twin brother Camillo, who committed suicide in the late '60s at age 29. Through detailed conversations with his siblings, archival footage providing context about 20th-century Italian leftist politics, and occasional clips from his films, many of which were in some way imbued with this defining family tragedy, Bellocchio conducts a personal and historical exorcism. Reckoning with the push-pull the director has long felt between the twin poles of family and politics, *Marx Can Wait* is an attempt at reconciliation and understanding from a filmmaker in his eighties whose work has never shied away from the challenging or the provocative.

DIRECTOR BIO – MARCO BELLOCCHIO

Bellocchio was born in Piacenza in 1939. In 1959 he abandoned philosophy studies at the Catholic University of Milan and enrolled at the Centro Sperimentale di Cinematografia in Rome. Between 1961 and 1962 he made the short films *Abbasso lo zio*, *La colpa e la pena*, and *Ginepro fatto uomo*. He then moved to London, where he attended the Slade School of Fine Arts. His debut feature film, *I pugni in tasca* (*Fists in the Pocket*), won an award at Locarno in 1965 and garnered him international recognition. In 2011 he received the Golden Lion for Lifetime Achievement at the Venice International Film Festival. His work has been the subject of dozens of retrospectives around the world, including at MoMA (New York) in 2014 to commemorate his then fifty years of filmmaking, at the 43rd Festival International du Film de la Rochelle, and in 2018 at the British Film Institute (London).

In 2016 *Fai bei sogni* (*Sweet Dreams*) was the opening film of the Director's Fortnight at the Cannes Festival. In 2019 *Il Traditore* (*The Traitor*) was In Competition at Cannes; it won seven Silver Ribbons and six Donatellos.

Bellocchio has been president of the Cineteca di Bologna since 2014.

Finally, I would like to mention the music of Ezio Bosso, which enriches the film tremendously. It is our great misfortune to have lost him, an enormous loss for music and for Italian art in general. Yet we are fortunate to be able to use his music, and so I would like to express my gratitude to those who gave permission. But first and foremost to the one who suggested it.

FILMOGRAPHY

2021: *Marx Can Wait / Marx Può Aspettare*
2019: *The Traitor / Il Traditore*
2016: *Sweet Dreams / Fai Bei Sogni*
2015: *Blood of My Blood / Sangue del Mio Sangue*
2012: *Dormat Beauty / Bella Addormentata*
2010: *Sorelle Mai*
2009: *Vincere*
2006: *The Wedding Director / Il Regista Di Matrimoni*
2003: *Good Morning, Night*

2002: *My Mother's Smile / L'Ora Di Reigione*
1999: *The Nanny / La Balia*
1997: *The Prince of Homburg / Il Principe Di Homburg Di Heinrich von Kleist*
1994: *The Butterfly's Dream / Il Sogno Della Farfalla*
1991: *The Conviction / La Condanna*
1988: *The Witches' Sabbath / La Visione Del Sabba*
1986: *Devil in the Flesh / Diavolo In Corpo*
1984: *Henri IV / Enrico IV*
1982: *The Eyes, The Mouth / Gli Occhi, La Bocca*
1980: *A Leap in the Dark / Salto Nel Vuoto*
1977: *Il Gabbiano / Il Gabbiano*
1976: *Victory March / Marcia Trionfale*
1972: *Slap the Monster on Page One / Sbatti Il Mostro In Prima Pagina*
1971: *In the Name of the Father / Nel Nome Del Padre*
1967: *China Is Near / La Cine É Vicina*
1965: *Fists in the Pocket / Pugni In Tasca*

DIRECTOR'S NOTE

This film began five years ago as an attempt to commemorate the birthdays of the surviving Bellocchio siblings. With the exception of me, all of us had reached and surpassed the age of 80 (as I have now too). Along with our wives, children, and grandchildren, we celebrated at the Circolo dell'Unione, which my father had helped to found.

But I immediately realized (on that very day, December 16, 2016) that this nostalgic memorialization of the past was not a source of joy to me or to my brothers and sisters, and that it didn't interest me anymore.

It was Camillo, talking about Camillo, that interested me. I had already talked about him in my 1981 film *The Eyes, the Mouth*, changing his name to Pippo. But that film was really about myself, the surviving twin. And since I was completely under the spell of Fagioli, I wanted to give the film and myself a positive conclusion, an ultimate "wholesomeness." Redemption. To put it simply, the movie had to have a happy ending.

Indeed, the film's surviving twin, insensitive and self-centered, falls in love with Pippo's fiancée (after initially despising her). He even protects the child growing in her womb, Pippo's child, thus taking his place in life.

That movie was born under the sign of non-freedom, of fear (of working in fear, which leads to failure in art), including the fear of displeasing my mother who was still alive, my brothers, of not adhering to Fagioli's principles – all ghosts that I myself was conjuring since no one stopped me from doing anything.

In contrast, *Marx Can Wait* came together bit by bit over a span of five years, shot, conceived, and assembled during spare time between one film and another (I'm talking about normal films made with crews of 50 people). I didn't have any definite commitments, in part because it didn't cost very much. I chased down the surviving witnesses (many had died in the meantime, their precious memories gone forever) and concentrated in particular on interviews with relatives, sisters, brothers, in-laws, children, grandchildren. It is their recollections that give the film its sense of tragic and – typical for us Bellocchios – sublimely ironic intimacy.

Interviews carefully combined with photographs, short Super-8 films of Camillo that miraculously turned up, paintings, and clips from a few of my movies that highlight, albeit only metaphorically, an almost obvious truth: creativity begins with our own lives, with how we have lived, in a melodramatic register that is more Chekhovian than Shakespearean – even if it's not easy to find melodrama in Chekhov (perhaps in a hysterical, grotesque key).

The psychiatrist and the priest are also important, representing the two constant themes of my life after the meteor of politics fizzled out: madness and the Catholic Church, my Catholic upbringing, many traces of which still remain in me (despite constant attempts to free myself from them). The double blasphemy of *L'ora di religione* (*My Mother's Smile*) is the stamp of this condition of mine.

MAIN CREW

Written and directed by	Marco Bellocchio
Producers	Simone Gattoni, Beppe Caschetto
Co-producers	Malcom Pagani, Moreno Zani
Executive Producers	Michel Merkt, Alessio Lazzareschi
Costumes by	Daria Calvelli
Production design by	Andrea Castorina
Edited by	Francesca Calvelli
Music by	Ezio Bosso
Cinematography by	Michele Cherchi Palmieri, Paolo Ferrari

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