

# LIQUID VENICE

Venice and the struggle to survive climate change and mass tourism



## PRESENTATION

Four days, four seasons, four boats in the canals of Venice to discover the city in its authentic and living form. A journey to see how Venetians are facing mass tourism and climate change, threats that are putting at risk the city's very survival.

## TEASER AND VIDEOS

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BXP0MxbwUhA>

<http://www.venezialiquida.it/>

**DIRECTOR:** Giovanni Pellegrini

**PRODUCTION:** Ginko Film

**DURATION:** 52', 80'

**STATUS:** In production

**LANGUAGE:** Italian, Venetian dialect

**LOCATION:** Venice, Lagoon of Venice

**FORMAT:** 4k, COLOR

**RELEASE DATE:** end of 2020

[www.venezialiquida.it](http://www.venezialiquida.it)

[www.ginkofilm.it](http://www.ginkofilm.it)

## SYNOPSIS

Four days, four seasons seen from the boats of a shipwright, an architectural restorer, a fisherman and a biologist, on the search for a hidden and authentic Venice, an iconic city whose survival is threatened on a daily basis by climate change and overtourism.

Menaced by the rise of the oceans which are submerging it and swept aside by a constantly expanding tourist industry that is literally evicting its inhabitants, Venice is living a crucial moment in which its own survival is in jeopardy.

Navigating within the tangle of its canals, following the protagonists and their boats in their daily lives, the documentary explores a resilient city that has learned to cope with daily floods and at the same time -far from the crowds of Rialto and San Marco- shines with its authenticity and uniqueness.

Giorgio is one of the last Venetian fisherman. Each day he casts his net into the lagoon to the north of the city, in the heartland of one of Italy's most valuable ecological zones. Each season has its fruits and while fishing for crabs, eels, sea bream and shrimp, Giorgio lets us in on a lifestyle more similar to that of the lagoon's first inhabitants than those of the over 30 million tourists who visit Venice every year. Given that his work depends on his knowledge of the area and adapting to the cycle of the seasons, Giorgio helps us to understand how the city of Venice was born.

Giulio is an engineer who restores the foundations of Venice's ancient noble houses. A passionate enthusiast of the lug sail – the one used on traditional Venetian sail boats – he takes every opportunity he can to escape the old town and sail between the lagoon's islands. Following Giulio in his professional work, we find out how the city was built, the extent to which it is sinking and the constant maintenance work necessary to prevent its collapse. Passing from one worksite to another we see how Venice is quickly changing into an enormous, all-encompassing hotel, so much so that Giulio believes in a few years' time it will have no residents left.





Michele is a biologist who works at the LIPU reserve of Ca' Roman, one of the most important bird sanctuaries in the world, the migratory destination for dozens of species including flamingos, storks and marsh harriers. Michele constantly monitors the status of the lagoon's health, which he sees as a mirror for understanding his city and the

world beyond. Following him in his observations, we discover how the lagoon's biodiversity has been threatened recently by the dominance of only a few species of bird, a little like how Venice risks becoming an area entirely colonized by tourists. In order to try and safeguard the survival of the weaker species, each summer Michele takes on re-population campaigns through the installation of decoy birds made with a 3D printer.

Giulia is a young self-taught rowing teacher, a work she undertakes as if it were a holy mission. Her business is doing well, she teaches rowing all year long to many young Venetians and to some tourists, which goes to show that it is still possible to live in Venice without being ground down by the mass tourism industry. In winter the lessons slow down and Giulia puts herself to help in a shipyard on the recovering an old traditional boat, as if giving new life to this unfortunate vessel might somehow save his city. At the beginning of the summer the boat is ready to be launched and the person who will have the honor of its maiden outing will be Ada, her youngest pupil.



The protagonists' stories interweave through the four days narrated by the film, interspersed by scenes that show the impact mass tourism has had on the city: the apartments transformed into B&Bs, the traditional crafts that have given way to fast food joints, the gigantic ships and tens of thousands of people who overflow into the city's streets every day, streets so full that often the protagonists cannot even use them.



While following the four protagonists over the four seasons, we are let in on a version of Venice usually hidden away in the refuge of the city's canals, the last place that exists for its citizens alone and in which one can still make out the city's soul.

## CHARACTERS

Giorgio is one of the last Venetian fisherman. He is the last survivor of a family of fisherman, and one of the last persons doing this ancient job that can give us a glance of the lifestyle of the first human settlers of the lagoon. Nowadays the fishermen community in Venice is almost dead but Giorgio everyday throws his nets to fish.

Giulio is a restorer working on many of the city's artistic monuments. The floods of November 2019 caused lots of damages in the artistic heritage of the city and his work has increased a lot. Following his daily job in the restoration of the Ca D'oro and many other monuments of the city we have the opportunity to discover Venice's artistic heritage in a different way and understand its fragility.

Michele is a biologist working in the only birds sanctuary of the Venetian lagoon. His work give him the chance to study the population of the Venetian lagoon, one of the biggest hotspots for migrating birds of the whole Europe. By seeing his work we have the oportunity to discover the importance of Venice's lagoon, a fragile ecosystem which is menaced by climate change

Giulia is a young Venetian who studied arts and literature. Like thousands of young Italian after the university she faced the lack of jobs and she moved to Australia. There she realized that she wanted to live in her city so she had to reinvent herself with a new job. She didn't want to work with the mass tourist industry of hotels, bed and breakfast and restaurants so she had to invent a new job and she becoming a rowing teacher.



## **FILMMAKER'S INTENTIONS**

"Liquid Venice" explores the effects of climate change and mass tourism on a fragile place like Venice. The struggle to face these threats is narrated through the life of some Venetians who daily live the city's canals and lagoon with their boats. The usual Venetian wonders known so well to the world do not appear in the film. Instead there is a series of "ordinary" stories, which become "extraordinary" due to their daily contact with water.

Narrated through a high-value cinematic language, without the use of interviews or voice over, the protagonists' lives provide the audience with the emblematic value of Venice's situation, a key to understanding one of the issues of our times, with more and more countries facing climate change and going down the road of mass tourism.

In Venice the effects of climate change have shown their dramatic effects on last November when the city suffered the second highest flood of its history, a disaster whose long terms effects on its artistic and social heritage haven't been completely estimated yet.

The other threat which is menacing Venice is mass tourism. Due to the touristic industry many houses have been transformed in hotels and b&b, contributing to the loss of inhabitants, now down to 50,000 people, 100,000 less than 70 years' ago, with the consequent disappearance of many of the city's crafts and traditions.

The stories that overlap in the documentary represent both a narrative about Venice today and an analysis of the city's possible futures: the life of Giorgio, the fisherman, represents a kind of Venetian "origins"; the work of Giulio, the restorer, bears witness to the city's conversion to tourism; the reflections of the biologist, Michele, show parallels between the animal world and human society; the shipwright, Nicola, demonstrates a desire for a new start.

## **FINANCIAL STRATEGY AND PROJECT STATUS**

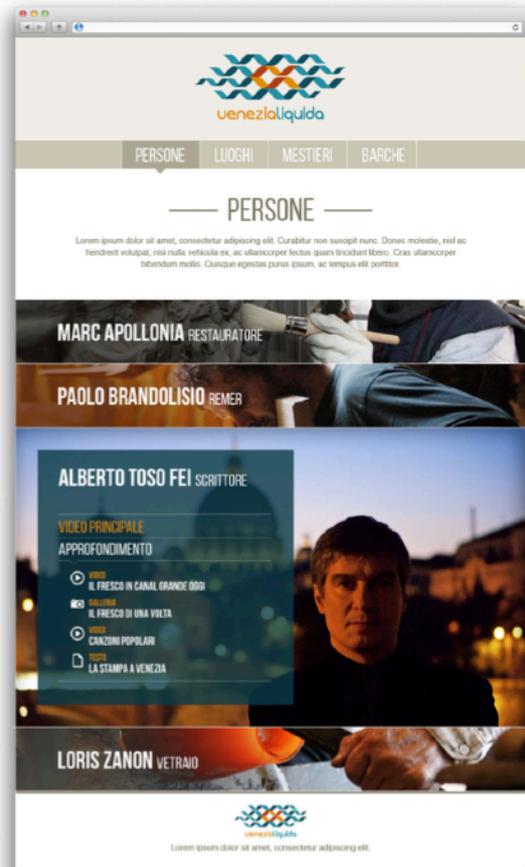
"Venezia liquida" is currently in production. Approximately 1/2 of the film has already been shot and the shooting will be finished by June 2020. The postproduction will start right after and film is expected to be complete in the September 2020.

Although the project is ambitious in terms of narrative and form, multiple factors (the production company is based in Venice and can provide the shooting materials and a production boat, the film will be shot with a small crew) guarantee to achieve a high quality result with a limited budget.

The total budget will be 80k€, with 70% of the funding already confirmed: Ginko Film's own investment (20%), Regione Veneto public funding for audiovisual production (25%) and private sponsors' support (25%).

Ginko Film is currently looking for tv pre-sales and a co-production partner willing to support the post-production phase; world rights are available.

Ginko Film strongly believes in the distribution potential of "Venezia Liquida" and plans to build a transmedia strategy around it, with the creation of an interactive online platform where the audience can explore additional content such as interviews, extra scenes and encounters with secondary characters. This platform would allow the film's audience to improve their experience (knowing more about Venice and its lagoon) and at the same time could enhance the film's distribution through educational, touristic and environmental channels. The estimated budget for the online platform is 40k€ and the initiative already raised the interest of the film's private sponsors; Ginko Film is also looking for partners (production companies, broadcasters, media companies, newspapers) to complete the funding related to the transmedia project.



| BUDGET              |                    | FINANCING PLAN            |                    |             |
|---------------------|--------------------|---------------------------|--------------------|-------------|
| artistic rights     | €20.000,00         | Ginko Film                | €20.000,00         | secured     |
| troupe              | €35.000,00         | Veneto Region cinema fund | €20.000,00         | secured     |
| transports          | €10.000,00         | Sponsors                  | €30.000,00         | secured     |
| technical equipment | €15.000,00         | italian sales             | €10.000,00         | not secured |
| post production     | €15.000,00         | foreing sales             | €20.000,00         | not secured |
| other costs         | €10.200,00         | technical sponsor         | €5.200,00          | not secured |
| <b>TOTAL</b>        | <b>€105.200,00</b> | <b>TOTAL</b>              | <b>€105.200,00</b> |             |

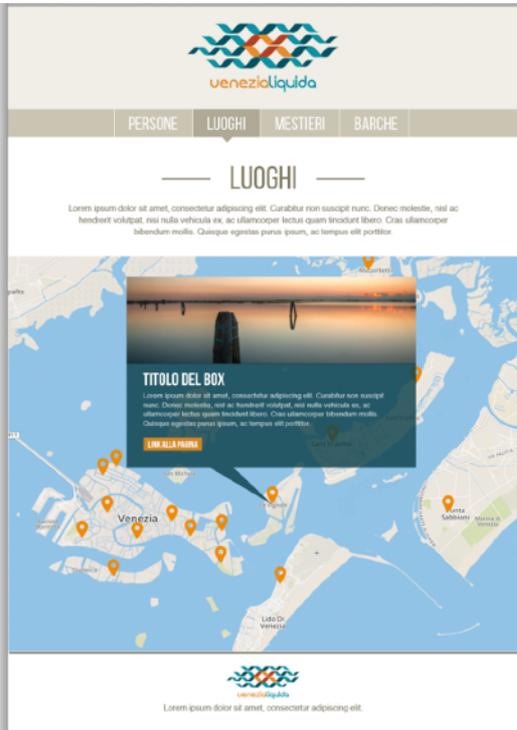
## IMAGINED AUDIENCE

The documentary deals with an important current issue –the effects of mass tourism– analysing it from the viewpoint of one of the most iconic and narrated sites in the world, Venice. The film distinguishes itself from the vast number of documentaries produced about Venice each year by being told from an unusual and “minority” point of view, that of the water and the daily lives of “native” navigators.

The lagoon city has a strong draw across the whole world, so its potential audience is extremely broad. The film's approach, however, is that of *auteur* cinema and so its

audience will be found in that of the festival circuit and art-house cinema, which is also finding increasing space within the panorama of international broadcasters and VOD platforms.

The issues dealt with by the documentary – the effects of mass tourism and climate change, the struggle against pollution – are also of great interest to a general public. Ginko Film is thus also developing a website, [www.venezialiquida.it](http://www.venezialiquida.it), which will function as an interactive archive for informative and educational video content. The spectator will be able to find out more about certain themes indicated by the film through watching interviews and material shot in the documentary's production phase.



## THE FILMMAKER

Born and raised in Venice, Giovanni Pellegrini could be among the protagonists of Venezia Liquida. Director of documentaries, short films and commercials, Giovanni graduated as a documentary film director at the Italian National Film School. His documentaries "Bring the sun home" e "Aquagranda in Crescendo" have been awarded various prizes at film festivals around the world. Great lover of boats, before dedicating himself to cinema Giovanni Pellegrini graduated in History of navigation at the University Ca' Foscari in Venice and worked as an environmental tour guide, offering guided boat tours around the Venetian lagoon. He currently lives and works in Venice where he recently opened a film production company, Ginko Film.



## FILMMAKER'S FILMOGRAPHY

### **AQUAGRANDA IN CRESCENDO**

Documentary. 2017. Produced by Kama Productions

Broadcasted: Prime time on RAI 5, 11/5/2017.

Available on RaiPlay.it

Premiere: Giornate degli Autori – Venice Days 2017

Awards: International Peloponnisos Documentary Festival 2018

Arthouse Asia Film Festival, Kolkata 2018

Arte Non Stop International Film Festival, Buenos Aires, 2019

### **ALI DI TELA (Canvas wings)**

Documentary, 2015

Festivals: Annecy Cinema Italien

Pakistan International Mountain Film Festival

Award Marcellino De Baggis

Clorofilla Film Festival

Cagliari Film Festival

### **BRING THE SUN HOME**

Documentary, 2012

Premiere: Festival del Film di Locarno 2013

Awards: San Sebastian Human Rights Film Festival

Visioni Italiane Film Festival, D.E.R. Award

Euganea Film Festival, Ethics Bank Award - New Economies

Lessinia Film Festival, Award