AUDREY HEPBURN

Style icon and humanitarian

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Introduction

On the star-studded stage of the early 1950s – a time dominated by luminaries like Monroe, Hayworth, Taylor, Kelly, Gardner, Russell and Bardot – a young Audrey Hepburn shines like the brightest star in the sky from the moment she bursts onto the scene.

With a goddess-like quality and traits that make her unique and different, she rises like Venus from the mind of the French writer Colette, scouting for a starlet to play the title role in *Gigi*, the theatrical adaptation of her novella on the cusp of making its stage debut on Broadway. Around the same time, Hepburn also auditions with director William Wyler for the film *Roman Holiday*. For Colette, seeing the young actress shooting a film in the foyer of a Monte Carlo hotel is like a sign from the universe, and it is clear that the energy she radiates is perfectly epitomised in the character conceived by the author, as she recalls in an interview with "The American Weekly" in March 1952. As for Wyler, after seeing the lightness and spontaneity with which the fresh-faced Hepburn sits on the sofa at the end of the audition, asking how it went, not realising that the camera was still rolling, he knows in that moment that he has found his perfect leading lady.

Audrey is blessed with a unique luminosity that she seems capable of firing up or toning down in any given context. She is a star who shines with her own light, foreshadowing and ushering in a new era in which the female performer no longer needs to blow up the screen with the atomic power of her body. Instead, she points out simpler and more natural pathways to women's liberation and self-determination, even going so far as to inspire new lifestyles and fashion trends. It seems as though the nine Muses really did have a hand in the birth of this great star and the gifts and qualities with which she is seemingly blessed. However, nothing has been handed to her on a silver platter: all of her achievements are the result of commitment, discipline and an iron will. Her body bears the scars of the suffering she endured during the war: hers is a different, almost androgynous type of beauty, yet her movements have a lightness and grace that seem to be enveloped in a regal aura. With the same effortlessness, she is able to switch her character from princess to Cinderella and vice versa.

In all her films, she also gives the impression of having tapped into the fountain of eternal youth: no other actress seems to have stopped time on the threshold of adolescence in the way that she has. She also brings with her a breath of neo-romanticism that seemed to have disappeared from our screens. Her big, bright eyes, the long legs of a flamingo, a smile that lights up the world around her, the strength and fragility of a body that never becomes an object of sexual desire, but captures the gazes of spectators of both sexes, and her photogenic beauty that enchants the eye of the great photographers of her time, all become engrained in the mind – and continue to nourish it to this day.

In 1988, she eagerly accepts the opportunity to devote herself to being a UNICEF ambassador, saying: "I've never forgotten what it's like to go hungry and I can't bear the fact that so many children are still starving." And in many photographs and television reports, she is pictured hugging or walking hand in hand with children in orphanages or on the streets in Venezuela, Ethiopia, Turkey, Mexico and Vietnam: in the latter country, a photo shows her smiling, dressed in traditional Vietnamese clothing, at the helm of a throng of children. For this particular trip, she received the most media attention in the organisation's history. Hepburn never gave up on her dream of achieving a better world for all. Her last appearance on the silver screen was in the role of an angel in Spielberg's "Always" (1989).

Front page:
A striking portrait of the actress, 1954.

Left:
Cover star of "Life" magazine, 18 July 1955.

Gian Piero Brunetta
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Biography of an anti-diva

by Gian Piero Brunetta*

Left:
Audrey Hepburn in a
dance pose, ca. 1955.

This page:
Visiting the medieval village of Eze,
near Monaco, 1951.

Childhood and adolescence, war, famine, dancing

After her birth on 4 May 1929, she is registered at the British Consulate in Brussels under the name Audrey Kathleen Ruston and given a British passport that she would indeed keep throughout her life. She is the daughter of Dutch baroness Ella van Heemstra and Joseph Victor Ruston, an English gentleman born in Bohemia (then under Austro-Hungarian rule). Within just a few weeks of her birth, Audrey almost dies from an acute form of whooping cough: instead of calling a doctor, her mother gives her a firm smack that miraculously brings her back to life in a matter of seconds. Audrey would always feel deeply connected to this memory of true rebirth. But the trauma destined to leave a wound that would never heal is the abandonment of her family by her father, a sympathiser of Hitler's fledgling party, when she was just six years old. She would be reunited with him many years later and support him financially right to the bitter end.

With her mother Ella van Heemstra. Holland, 1947.

Her mother, who grew up in a Victorian climate, rules the household with an iron fist, instilling in the young Audrey a strong sense of duty. To give her the chance to get back in touch with her father, she is sent to study at a boarding school in England – and this is where she first dips her toe into the world of dance. After returning to live in the Netherlands upon the outbreak of the war, Audrey's mother decides to move the family back to her childhood home in Arnhem, where Audrey's grandfather, former mayor of the town, would act as a father figure to her throughout these years. She later enrols at the Arnhem Conservatory, where she trains under ballerina Winja Marova, soon discovering her talent for the art.

During the war, she offers to become a courier for the resistance fighters, hiding the messages to be passed on in the heels of her shoes, and performs in a handful of illegal shows put on to raise money to support the resistance movement. In these years, all the family's major assets and possessions are confiscated by the Nazis. In 1944, after American troops land in Normandy, the situation becomes even more dire: in addition to hunger and bitter cold, disease and deaths from malnutrition are rampant. With the locals resorting to a diet primarily based around potatoes, tulip bulbs and flour and dog biscuits, the hunger suffered would leave visible marks on Audrey's body, but would also become a guiding element in her ethics, everyday habits and behaviour and her calling to care for others.

Career

In 1945, Audrey becomes the breadwinner of the family, resuming her dance studies and starting to work as a chorus girl in Amsterdam and later in London, where she settles in 1948. Here, she studies under renowned dancer and ballerina Marie Rambert who, while appreciating Audrey's gifts and talent, considers her height of 171 centimetres, her large feet and her underdeveloped muscles, a legacy of the malnutrition she suffered during the war years, to be an impediment to her future career.

During this period, Audrey decides to accept various job offers, becoming the face of advertising campaigns, a model and a musical theatre actress. She also joins an association of the Rank Organisation, founded as a hothouse of fresh talent in the world of cinema. In the years that follow, she takes on supporting roles in various films, including Thorold Dickinson's *The Secret People* in 1951 – a film in which she is cast as the co-star for the first time, playing the sister of Valentina Cortese, with whom she immediately forges a close friendship. This celebrated actress would go on to play an instrumental role in Audrey's career. Also in 1951, as touched on above, she happens to catch the eye of writer

Colette while filming a scene for Jean Boyer's *Monte Carlo Baby*, and is chosen to play the lead role in *Gigi*, the show that would enjoy a six-month stint on Broadway from early November to great critical and public acclaim. Meanwhile, her arrival is eagerly awaited in Rome, where she has been cast by William Wyler to star in *Roman Holiday* alongside Gregory Peck, who recognises her talents and wants Audrey's name to appear in the credits alongside his. The film is awarded an Oscar for its refreshing and authentic interpretation of Ann, the rebellious princess who challenges conventions, and for conveying the complex range of feelings and emotions that overwhelm and confuse a young person during their impulsive coming-of-age phase. Following the success and triumphant resumption of performances of *Gigi* in New York, Audrey signs a contract with Paramount to shoot a further seven films. Over the next fifteen years, the actress breathes life into a host of memorable characters, the first of these being Sabrina, the title character of the film of the same name, directed by Billy Wilder in 1954, in which she plays the role of a Cinderella caught in a love triangle with two brothers (played by Humphrey Bogart and William Holden). While working in Paris, she meets French fashion designer Hubert de Givenchy, whose clothes she would wear for the rest of her life, becoming the brand's most beloved ambassador. She then takes on the role of Natasha in *War and Peace*, directed by King Vidor in 1956, in which she stars alongside her husband Mel Ferrer, whom she married two years earlier at a quaint little chapel in the Swiss town of Ennetbürgen. In 1957, she takes the lead role of Jo in Stanley Donen's *Funny Face* – a shy sales assistant in a Greenwich Village bookshop, Jo is promoted to cover girl of a fashion magazine, ultimately falling in love with her pygmalion photographer in Paris. Although she wows in several spectacular dance sequences alongside Fred Astaire in this film, one of the most memorable scenes is the one where she dances alone, conveying a sense of joy to the viewer and really showcasing her genuine skill. After having played the part of a cellist who falls in love with a playboy much older than her in Wilder's *Love in the Afternoon* that same year, in 1959, she agrees to feature in a rather forgettable film directed by her husband (*Green Mansions*). During this time, in which she also works with directors Fred Zinnemann and John Huston, she turns down a part written specifically for her by Alfred Hitchcock. Zinnemann offers her the starring role in the 1959 film *The Nun's Story*, which would go on to be nominated for an Oscar. Here, she portrays the character of a young woman who becomes a missionary nun against the wishes of her father. Over time, she loses faith in her chosen vocation, ultimately deciding to take off her habit and return to common life. John Huston directs her in *The Unforgiven* in 1960, an American western telling the story of a young girl who is kidnapped by white settlers from an Indian tribe. In some respects, the plot of this film is reminiscent of John Ford's *The Searchers*, released a few years earlier.

In 1961, Audrey agrees to take on the challenging character of Holly Golightly, a free spirit who marches to the beat of her own drum, in a story based on a bestseller by Truman Capote, originally written for Marilyn Monroe. As well as being one of the peak highlights of Audrey's career, *Breakfast at Tiffany's*, directed by Blake Edwards,

With Valentina Cortese in a scene from *The Secret People*, 1951.

Right:
During the filming of *The Nun's Story*. Republic of the Congo, 1958.

ushers in an era in which women are shown to tap into their emotions and explore new professional horizons by asserting their independence, embracing their ability to take care of themselves in any given situation and not paying too much heed to moral and social constraints and conventions. From this moment on, Audrey shies away from the Cinderella- and Little Red Riding Hood-type roles of the past, albeit not completely. Over the next decade, she continues to evolve, refining her versatility and ability to go from starring in dramas to thrillers to comedies, and demonstrating an effortless capacity to move with the times: in the 1961 hit *The Children's Hour*, another film directed by Wyler and based on a play by Lillian Hellman, she stars alongside Shirley MacLaine in the role of a homosexual teacher, while in Donen's *Charade* in 1963, she plays the surprising protagonist of a gripping comedy-thriller featuring Cary Grant as the male lead. The 1964 film *My Fair Lady*, directed by George Cukor, is yet another rendition of the classic fairytale Cinderella, telling the story of a florist working at a London market who transforms into a refined lady of high society. *How to Steal A Million* (1966) is the third film in which she works with William Wyler: her on-screen partner this time around is Peter O'Toole and her character is the daughter of an eccentric counterfeiter, but the film is not met with the desired success. By contrast, critics hail her performance in Donen's *Two for the Road* (1967) in which she stars alongside Albert Finney. In Terence Young's claustrophobic thriller *Wait Until Dark* (1967), she plays a blind woman at the mercy of three criminals in search of a shipment of cocaine hidden in a doll in her apartment. *Robin and Marian*, directed by Richard Lester in 1976 and the final performance that is very much in her wheelhouse, is a retelling of the myth of Robin Hood. An aged and ailing Robin returns to Sherwood after the Crusades and discovers that his former love has taken vows. But the love between them had never really faded away and, when Robin is fatally wounded, Marian gives him a poison, which he in turn drinks, telling him that she loves him more than life itself. Her final film and television appearances (Terence Young's *Bloodline* in 1979, Peter Bogdanovich's *They All Laughed* in 1981, Roger Young's *Love Among Thieves* in 1987, and Steven Spielberg's *Always* in 1989) do not add a particularly new dimension to her extraordinary career.

With Albert Finney in a scene from *Two for the Road*, 1967.

Professional legacy

As previously mentioned, Audrey Hepburn enters the world of show business by the favour of the Muses, and is immediately welcomed by a chorus of enthusiastic voices likening her to Greta Garbo and her namesake, Katharine Hepburn. Hers is a fairly unique case of a blend of diva and anti-diva, reserving the right to take her fate into her own hands. In a very uncomplicated and natural way, she would assert her signature style and innate air of elegance on set and in life in general. On all the sets that she works on, Audrey always has a certain way of spreading her good cheer and joie de vivre to the crew around her. From the very first moment of her career, she is known as a model of punctuality and a stickler for preparation, with a keen eye for detail, respect for the people she works with and an absolute malleability and willingness to adapt her art to the visions of directors. Her style of acting is fairly understated, with an element of "less is more" and demonstrating her true mastery of all aspects of her self – body, gesture and voice. This style would eventually evolve into an archetype for future generations in the decades that follow, even cited as a source of inspiration for Julia Roberts in the 1990 smash hit *Pretty Woman.*

Upon receiving her first Oscar, she declares that she would not allow the award to distract her from her true ambition of becoming an outstanding actress. At no point does she ever seem to aspire to become part of society's elite, expressing that her deepest desire is to have a family and to live and mingle with ordinary people.

Throughout her career, Audrey is one of the few great performers of the 20th century to whom the acronym EGOT can be applied – in other words, people who have won an Emmy, a Grammy, an Oscar and a Tony Award. The American Film Institute ranked her third on a list of the greatest film actors of all time. But while her films will allow her dramatic talent to live on for eternity, enabling us to study her and appreciate her opulence, modernity and originality, we have barely scratched the surface when it comes to examining the role she played in the real world, as a so-called influencer of women's behaviour, fashion and costume at the turn of the 1960s – and to this very day. An impact that is still felt, yet has never actually been evaluated in terms of space and time.

Audrey and her husband, actor Mel Ferrer, with their elder son Sean, born in 1960.

Private life

Few stars in the entire history of cinema have managed to protect their privacy like Audrey did. There is a beautiful photo of her taken by Cecil Beaton in 1959 in which she clearly signals with her left hand that there is part of her world that concerns her and her alone, and that she does not wish to be encroached upon by prying eyes.

The absence of her father in her formative years would have an impact on her emotional development, causing her to spend her whole life trying to heal this wound, looking for love, giving love and believing every time that she had finally found it.

Her love life would have various points of crossover with her professional life, but as far as she could, Audrey would try to put her desire to have a family and children before anything else. From the late 1940s, the press would report the odd dalliance here and there, but her first significant romantic connection is with James Hanson, a wealthy heir to an oil fortune with a notorious playboy reputation. She would get engaged to Hanson, but would call off the wedding on the eve of the ceremony, perhaps owing to rumours of an affair with Gregory Peck, founded on the set of *Roman Holiday*. While shooting the film *Sabrina*, Audrey would fall in love with William Holden, but the two would later part ways due to Holden's inability have children following an operation.

In 1953, she meets the actor Mel Ferrer at a party in London and it is love at first sight, despite the twelve-year age difference and his three previous marriages. The couple get married in Rome in 1954, and the marriage has its ups and downs until everything finally comes to a head in 1968, ultimately doomed by Ferrer's apparent need to micromanage his wife's career. Following the birth in 1960 of her first son Sean (who would dedicate a book filled with love and fond memories to her in 2003), Audrey announces that, from that moment on, family would be the most important thing in her life, no matter what. In the last few years of her marriage to Ferrer, the rumour mill hots up with whispers of extramarital affairs on both sides.

While on a cruise, Audrey meets Roman psychiatrist Andrea Dotti, falling in love with him and planning to have more children with him. She marries Dotti in 1969 and baby Luca is born the following year. The marriage would not last on account of Dotti's many affairs, and Audrey would go on to have a few relationships before meeting Dutch actor Robert Wolders, her last great love, whom she would move to live with on Lake Geneva in the Swiss village of Tolochenaz. With Robert by her side, Audrey goes on many trips around the world with UNICEF in the years that follow, sharing her smile and gestures of love with thousands of children right up until shortly before her passing.

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The dreams of my mother

Interview with Luca Dotti*

Left:
A view of the house named
“La Paisible”. Tolochenaz,
Switzerland, 1971.

This page:
Audrey in the garden at
“La Paisible”, ca. 1990.

With Luca and rescue dog Piccirì at "La Paisible", 1975.

Luca, when did you first realise that you are the son of Audrey Hepburn?

Let me answer this question by taking you on a journey back in time. Over the years, I realised that there were many different sides to my mother – the Audrey for our family, the Audrey for the public and the Audrey for anyone she met throughout her life. Everyone has their own version of her, but to me, she was just my mum.

The conflict between these two realities unfolded on the very day of her passing on 20 January 1993: on the one hand, our family was dealing with a very private struggle, processing our grief and coming to terms with the shock of her death which, although somewhat expected given the illness she had been battling, still hit us like a ton of bricks. Meanwhile, we were also overwhelmed by the flood of press enquiries we received from reporters looking to get a scoop, particularly keen to learn how we were feeling and publish my mother's image in their magazines and newspapers.

Although my initial instinct was to put up a wall, I came to realise that, because my mother was such a highly admired public figure, the press were not just looking to invade our privacy, they also wanted to share their condolences. It was in that very moment that I realised just how loved, famous and "seen" my mother really was.

One thing that's always stood out in my mind is a sentiment once expressed to me by an editor when we were discussing the cover of a book. He said: "You know, we think of Audrey Hepburn in black and white." And it was probably on this very subject of iconography that I had to contend with my first bewilderment: my mother, by her nature, never called herself an icon and never lived as one. So for me, who, in spite of everything, took my parents at face value, since my mother had never been a star at home, it was difficult to suddenly accept her as such.

And so you really had to grapple with the two sides to her personality: the ordinary woman that was your mother and the superstar that was Audrey Hepburn?

Had she lived like some celebrities, amidst excesses and bizarre behaviour, I would've already had some sort of inkling as to her stardom, but instead... well, over the years, I've learnt two key things; the first is that Mum worked really hard to maintain this impression of normality, managing to keep her head on her shoulders (which is an achievement in itself) while still defending her day-to-day life and sense of family. The second, as I mentioned earlier, came about upon her death.

Having clarified these aspects and returning to your first question, I actually didn't truly know who Audrey Hepburn was until I reached a certain age; from the signatures on my primary school notebooks, to me, she was simply Audrey Dotti. I can still remember this one particular instance, which seemed to tickle everyone in the family: in Switzerland in 1975, a journalist once asked me a similar question: "What's it like to be the son of Audrey Hepburn?" (an odd thing to ask a five-year-old), and I responded: "I'm not, I'm the son of Audrey Dotti." This doesn't mean that I didn't know she was an actress, because I'd seen some of her films, but you have to put everything into perspective: back then, there was no internet, social media, DVDs, streaming or even videotapes. If one of her films was on television, we had to choose whether to watch it or watch something else – and more often than not, we'd watch something else. And this was actually a blessing in disguise, because it allowed me and my brother Sean to have a normal childhood.

How did you eventually grasp the immensity of your mother's success and how did she handle it?

For me, it was like a soul-searching experience, a chance to reflect on the private and public dimensions of her life... which led to conversations with people who were very close to Mum, like Hubert de Givenchy, who once took the liberty of reminding me in a letter that she was indeed a public figure. When I received that letter, it felt a bit like a slap in the face, but I eventually accepted that he was right. This journey of discovery was rather turbulent and wasn't actually all that long ago; in 2011 when, together with UNICEF and what was our Children's Fund, I was hosting an exhibition about my mother in Rome, I had to take a deep dive into her life, beyond her family background, in order to ensure that the historical information we were providing was correct. During this preparation period, I met a group of young people who had been introduced to Mum after her death through the internet, and I discovered that they didn't think of her as a marketing object or an icon – they actually saw her as an anti-icon, admired for her humanity. It was like they could see the real her. This encounter led me to do a great deal of work on myself and venture back into the past because "Mum wasn't always Audrey Hepburn" – there was a period of her life when nobody could've predicted what she would go on to become. When the Second World War broke out, she was ten years old and she didn't know if she would even make it to adulthood. I started "patching together" family photos, rediscovering her grandparents, her roots, developing an understanding of the trajectory of her life, for example, what led her to give up her career... which wasn't a spur-of-the-moment decision, but a more complex and profound one. Back then, it was essential for my mother to work and bring money into the home. In order to earn a living, she started performing in theatre and cabaret shows, slowly but surely landing a few small film roles, but everything she ever achieved can be chalked up to her sheer hard work, putting in 16/18-hour days in London. And work is one of the first values she passed on to us; she never considered herself a diva, but a woman who had been lucky enough to succeed in her chosen profession. This was no easy feat, because in those days, actors weren't paid anywhere near as well as they are now, so much so that Mum was paid a monthly salary for the first third of her career. While in the early days of her career she was part of what's known in the trade as a "collective", she was later advised by Elizabeth Taylor to get herself an agent because times had changed.

Audrey with her Dutch maternal family, the van Asbecks. Henschoten, Netherlands, summer 1938.

Reading her first interviews as a young girl allowed me to reaffirm what I already knew – that, for various reasons (some very common, others relating to the loss of her father, the war), she had always wanted a family, children, her own home – those were her biggest dreams. What's more, her career and non-stop travelling made her realise that she didn't have a stable foundation in her life. This is also what led her, at a certain point, to make the decision to move to Switzerland, because Switzerland was a neutral country, a country where, during the war, the lack of food wasn't as pronounced as it was in the invaded Netherlands, a country that would afford her discretion and privacy.

At the end of my quest to find out more about my mother, I was left with the image of a woman who, as an adult, was exactly as she had been as a child. I've seen interviews from when she was in her twenties, and that shyness, the way that she approached life, the way that she approached others, remained the same.

I imagine that she would've talked to you about her life on the silver screen, but what would she say?

To tell you the truth, she told me very little about that. It's easy to live vicariously, and

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN.

Miss Audrey Hepburn-Ruston is known to me as a British subject by birth. She has been for some time a student of ballet dancing, and is proceeding to the United Kingdom to study at the Rambert School of Ballet Dancing.

B.E.F. Gage

(B.E.F. Gage)
Counsellor.

British Embassy,
The Hague.

10th April, 1948.

BRITISH EMBASSY THE HAGUE

living vicariously is infectious, so she was always very protective of us: "I'm not a star, so you are not the children of a star"; so Mum was very wary of telling us too much about her job and what it entailed. From a young age, she made sure that we understood that she was a mere cog in a much more complex machine; her appearance on screen was the end product, but without scriptwriters, directors, technicians and the production itself, she would amount to nothing; she also told us this to explain why she approached her job the way she did. She told us that her profession, more than any other, depended on others, especially the public, who could sometimes make surprising decisions, which is why she was always ready to be fired. Her first role on Broadway started just like that, with three lay-offs in the run-up to the stage première of Gigi. And so she would always tell us that acting is a job that requires you to have a lot of humility and put in a lot of effort, because it doesn't depend entirely on us. So much so that she'd often ask herself: "What on Earth do all these people see in me?" And besides, Mum landed in Hollywood at just the right time, being fortunate enough to work with individuals who are today regarded as "the greats": the best directors, the best screenwriters, the best stars, at a time when there were two versions of Hollywood: the one with the partygoers, excesses, drinking, shiny cars and a star-studded social scene, and the other, where people would go out to dinner at 5 p.m. and be in bed by 8 p.m. – and this was the Hollywood I knew.

When you were a child, would she pick you up from school? What sort of things would you do together?

She did have a driving licence, but only drove for a very short time. And so we tended to walk or ride our bikes and, in Rome, it was very common for people to walk everywhere. The Roman shopkeepers loved to see her and be greeted by her (something that also happened in Switzerland). Walking around with Mum is actually one of my first memories; then, of course, she'd pick me up from school as Mrs Dotti and go to parents' evenings with my teachers. One time, at the start of a meeting, a teacher saw her and couldn't believe her eyes that sitting right in front of her was a Hollywood starlet who, despite all that, simply wanted to know how her son was getting on at school.

The challenge of maintaining some sense of normality had a huge impact on her. While regular people appreciated this side to her, the middle classes, certain Roman noblemen and the prigs in the parlours weren't quite so thrilled with it, because they wanted to be friends with a star with many tales to tell. She suffered a great deal because, in those years, since she had no big stories to tell, journalists would make things up, and this would sometimes give rise to some rather surreal situations. For example, we had a lady called Giovanna living with us (she was a nanny, chef, driver, friend and confidante, essentially my second mother), and she was an avid reader of these magazines. There were times when she'd believe what she was reading more than what she was seeing with her own eyes at home every day; one time, they published a black-and-white photo, taken from afar, where it looked like Mum had just been to a funeral with us children in tow; immediately, the headlines read things like: "Audrey Hepburn locks herself away at home and doesn't want to see anybody", or "Her ordeal with depression". After having seen all this, Giovanna went to my mother in a fit of rage, complaining that she'd kept such a serious thing from her. These rumours about her possible depression and her thin frame

Left:
Document issued by the British Embassy, certifying that Audrey is a British citizen by birth, 10 April 1948.

With her second husband, Andrea Dotti, on the road between Morges and Geneva. Switzerland, 1969.

that was surely synonymous with anorexia were a source of great sorrow for my mother. Particularly in Italy, she couldn't get away from being stuck with the label "beautiful and sad".

Did you ever think about becoming an actor?
Never. That's something I came to realise at a very young age – the worst moment of my childhood was when I had to stand up and recite a poem in class. Funnily enough, I later discovered that my mum dealt with the same issue. She loved to perform, but speaking in public in front of an audience gave her huge anxiety; yet wearing Givenchy's clothes, she would feel more confident, like she had a sort of protective "armour".

How did their friendship come about?
Their friendship came about by chance. In *Roman Holiday*, Mum was dressed by Paramount's multi-award-winning costume designer Edith Head (winner of an impressive eight Oscars), who boasted that she'd never done a sketch in her life. For *Sabrina*, a film also shot in Paris, the production team decided that my mother needed to be dressed with a European touch and set out in search of a dressmaker. They wanted to go with Balenciaga, but he was very busy (bearing in mind that, at that time, Mum was a nobody and hadn't yet won an Oscar), and he encouraged the production team to contact one of his protégés: Hubert de Givenchy, who was just starting out in his career and, although he had achieved some success, he was by no means a superstar. When he read Mum's name, he thought he'd be working with the great actress Katherine Hepburn, and so he enthusiastically accepted the job. Then my mother showed up and he asked himself: "Hold on, who is this?". Realising his mistake, Hubert told her that he didn't have time to work with her because he needed to finish his collections. My mother put his mind at rest by telling him that she didn't need any custom pieces, and asked him to show her what was left from his old collection that could possibly be altered. And so she tried on a dress, and when she emerged from the fitting room, Hubert had a kind of epiphany. They went to a bistro to get to know each other better and so their "chaste love affair" began.

Above:
With her younger son, Luca. Beverly Hills, California, 1985.

With Hubert de Givenchy at a fitting for one of his dresses. Paris, 1957.

What do you think you inherited from her?

Many things. For example, we both had an excellent sense of smell; we could identify the aromas of a flower or an unpleasant odour; and then you have our great shared love of gardening, dogs and just being at home. From an early age, she'd tell me that I had "green fingers". This was a beautiful gift from her because, although she didn't believe in her own talent, she would always push us children to recognise ours.
Sadly though, I didn't inherit her kindness and warmth; for her, this was written in her DNA. She believed in the religion of being a good person. Having endured evil in her life, she firmly believed that there was a constant battle between good and evil, and that everything could be made better with a smile, a willingness to understand others and a desire to pinpoint the source of human frustrations. When we were children, she explained to us that a lot of wickedness is born out of frustration, powerlessness and anger. She had precisely this ability to be extremely kind – something I mainly

On a humanitarian mission to Somalia with UNICEF, 1992. In the background is UNICEF photographer Betty Press.

became aware of through my childhood friends. The first few times I invited them to come over, they were given a bit of a pep talk by their parents: "You're going to the home of Audrey Hepburn, and she's no ordinary person, so try to be more polite than usual, play close attention, look at everything and then tell us about it", and when they told me that Mum was really normal and nice, I was baffled and wondered what else they expected.

My mother was very grateful to have survived the war, but she also felt guilty, constantly asking herself why she survived and, say, her neighbour didn't. She was very thankful for her career, but again, she couldn't help feeling guilty: "That day at the audition, why did they decide to go with me and not another girl who seemed to me to be much more talented than I am?". And so her kindness was never an affectation, but rather an expression of her gratitude for having more than others.

Do you think that the determination with which she embraced the UNICEF cause might have stemmed from this feeling of gratitude?

From my point of view, absolutely, but in one of her interviews, she said: "Not at all", giving a very clear example: "If you're driving in your car and see a child abandoned at the side of the road, you don't run through a thousand scenarios in your head, you just stop and help them", and it was precisely that impulse that drew her to UNICEF, but she waited until 1988, the year I graduated, to devote herself to it. She was a very committed, resolute person, who never did things by half. Becoming an ambassador (she spoke a lot about this as a crowning moment and huge responsibility, and she certainly told us more about UNICEF than her film career) revealed to me a side to my mother I'd never seen before. She'd always get up early – by 6:30 a.m. she'd already be hard at work. She chose her own missions, perhaps in places where UNICEF had no intention of going, like Bangladesh, or in places they had expressly vetoed, like Somalia or Sudan, because of the wars that were going on there. I remember that both my brother Sean and I begged her not to go on her last trip to Somalia, because the situation was extremely dangerous, but she went anyway.

This year (2023) marks the thirtieth anniversary of her passing and, because of this, many of her films and television interviews are resurfacing. When you see her on your screen, how do you feel?

When I watch her in her films, I feel joy. When I think about her work with UNICEF, I feel emotional and sad, partly because, when I watch the footage, I realise that I had a mother whom I was closer to than the one I lost, but also because, during her last missions, where the circumstances were more desperate, she felt a genuine empathy with the world around her... and if I had to put forward a theory about "my" Audrey, I'd postulate that the cancer she developed was caused by all the evil she saw and "absorbed" while in Africa. However, this is just my personal theory.

Do you think that your mother achieved all her dreams?

All bar one – to know her grandchildren; she would've been truly thrilled to be a grandmother. This past summer, I went to Switzerland to visit her now 92-year-old best friend, who told me over and over again how happy Mum would've been to be a grandma, but she sadly died too young at just 63 years of age.

Luca Dotti
Writer and producer, living in Rome

Interview conducted by Alessandra Dolci in collaboration with Andrea Romano.

“Together, there is nothing we cannot do”

by Carmela Pace*

Left:
Audrey holding a severely malnourished newborn baby at a centre supported by UNICEF and run by Irish NGO Concern. Baidoa, Somalia, 1992.

This page:
Along with the UNICEF representative for Somalia, Mark Stirling (foreground), Audrey is flown on a US military helicopter to aircraft carrier USS Tarawa to meet the US Marines who are part of the UN Peacekeeping Forces in Somalia, 1992.

I grew up with the idea that Audrey Hepburn was synonymous with style and elegance, an image so iconic that it seemed unreal.
It was only later, as the years went by and I started working with UNICEF, that I truly discovered that behind this unattainable image hid a woman with strong feelings and a bold determination. A real woman, resolute in her mission to make the world a better place for the most vulnerable children in society. And ever since, I have felt a closer affinity with her: for me, she finally became an icon, but an icon of altruism. A true role model. What struck me most when looking at pictures of Audrey Hepburn "in the field", working with children on behalf of UNICEF, was her sweet smile and the determined look in her eyes, telling of her desire to do more for them.

After all, Audrey Hepburn had been advocating for the weakest children in society all her life, because she herself had been in their shoes and experienced their suffering first-hand. In 1988, shortly after being named a UNICEF Goodwill Ambassador, she said:

> "I can testify to what UNICEF means to children, because I was among those who received food and medical relief after World War II. [...] I was in Holland during the war, during the German occupation, and food dwindled... The last winter was the worst of all. By then, food was scarce [...] I was very, very malnourished. After the war, an organisation, which later became UNICEF, came in with the Red Cross and brought relief for the people in the form of food, medication and clothing. All the local schools were turned into relief centres. I was one of the beneficiaries with the other children. I've known about UNICEF all my life."

An extraordinarily sensitive woman, she was the epitome of solidarity and respect, because she was able to return the support and generosity she herself received in the most effective and tangible way possible.
During her involvement with UNICEF, she completed several missions in Ethiopia, where years of drought and civil unrest had led to a terrible famine across the country. She would later visit a polio vaccine project in Turkey, training programmes for women in Venezuela, initiatives for children living and working on the street in Ecuador, projects to provide drinking water in Guatemala and Honduras, and radio literacy programmes in El Salvador. She visited schools in Bangladesh, explored services for impoverished children in Thailand, promoted nutrition initiatives in Vietnam and toured camps for displaced children in Sudan.

Having fun with a group of children. Bangladesh, 1989.

Near an aid station during her visit to Sudan, 1989.

Her commitment to UNICEF never wavered, even during her illness (although she didn't know what it was), continuing to look deep into the souls of the most helpless and defenceless children on further missions in Somalia, Kenya, the United Kingdom, Switzerland, France and the United States.

Audrey Hepburn was a woman who knew how to make a difference in the lives of children, going the extra mile to be right by their side on the ground. Her motivation was to act as a sort of megaphone, giving a voice to children all around the world, and her words and gestures were always an expression of the profound humility and humanity that characterised her.

Thirty years on from her death, Audrey Hepburn is more present than ever, because the legacy that she left behind will live on for a long time to come. Her story is inextricably linked to the history of our organisation and is a real source of pride that continues to drive us to be better and do more.

> "UNICEF has a wonderful long arm, which is trying to reach wherever it is most needed. I can personally do very little, but I can contribute to a whole chain of events, which is UNICEF, and that's a marvellous feeling. It's like a bonus to me towards the end of my life,"

she recalled, speaking about her work as Goodwill Ambassador.

Sadly, even today, millions of children still need our help. Here at UNICEF, we continue to be present in every corner of the world through our child protection and support initiatives.

The global climate in which we currently live is very complex – suffice to say that the number of conflicts being fought today has not been this high since the Second World War. It is imperative that more and more people take an interest in these issues and take action because, as Audrey taught us all, the specific measures that we take for the children of today will be the legacy that we leave behind for the adults of tomorrow. The reality in which we live can only change if we all step up and take responsibility for our own actions – because "together, there is nothing we cannot do".

Carmela Pace
President of UNICEF Italy

A blessed woman
who chose to stand by the most vulnerable section of society

by Federico Jolli*

Left:
Cradling a newborn baby outside a home.
Bangladesh, 1989.

This page:
A still from the interview on *Carta Bianca*,
filmed at the studios of RSI [Italian-language
Swiss public broadcasting organisation].
Comano, 1989.

"She brought a sense of grace, elegance and European civility to Hollywood." This is what French director Frédéric Mitterrand had to say about Audrey Hepburn.

Let me tell you a little personal memory from my childhood. Quoting Audrey Hepburn herself, my mother used to tell my two older sisters, who were both teenagers back in the 1950s, to act with "sobriety and elegance". I could not tell you which films she might have seen but, since she had dual citizenship (having been born in Glasgow), British culture was everywhere you looked in our house; even Elizabeth II. And, when I met my wife fifty years ago, we got chatting and, on the topic of films, one thing we agreed on hands down was that the most beautiful and talented actress of all time was – you guessed it – Audrey Hepburn. So even though I did not know her personally back then, you could say that she has been part of my family for a very long time.

I owe my first meeting with Audrey Hepburn to the French actress Capucine, who was a dear friend of hers from her Hollywood days. In September 1988, she was on the jury for the Festival International du Film Comédie di Vevey – now known as the Vevey International Funny Film Festival (VIFFF) –, a small event supported by the Chaplin family. I was also on the jury, along with Hungarian director Károly Makk, Swiss filmmaker Jean-François Amiguet and Argentinian film producer Alejandro Sessa.

On the evening of the award ceremony, Capucine invited Audrey to go out on stage and present the awards to the winners. At the cocktail party after the show, I plucked up the courage to ask her if she would accept my invitation to come on *Carta Bianca* and be interviewed by me. With a smile, she responded: "I might like to". *Carta Bianca*, a primetime show broadcast on the channel Radiotelevisione svizzera della lingua italiana, which was on air for around five years between 1987 and 1992, had a fairly simple format: the invited guest would choose a film of their choice and, right after screening it in the studio, we would discuss it for around fifty minutes or so.

Naturally, an actor would be asked to pick a title from their own filmography. But Audrey Hepburn did not want to choose any of the films that she starred in, instead suggesting *Salaam Bombay!*, the first feature film of Indian director Mira Nair, which was screened at the Cannes Film Festival in 1988, winning the "Caméra d'Or", and was nominated for an Oscar for Best International Feature Film the very same year. *Salaam Bombay!* chronicles the lives of children abandoned on the streets of the Indian metropolis.

Audrey's choice of film aligned perfectly with the work that she was doing in those years with UNICEF: helping children in the most severely deprived areas of our planet, devastated by wars and underdevelopment, and raising public awareness of these issues in the wealthiest regions of our world.

She asked me not to talk too much about the cinematographic aspects of the film, but instead to zero in on all the problems she had encountered when visiting countries in Latin America, Sub-Saharan Africa and South East Asia.

She had just returned from a long trip to Bangladesh, then one of the poorest countries in the world – a reality that unfortunately is not much changed today.

I was bowled over by her ability to describe the situations she had encountered and the needs of the children who urgently needed help. Health, schooling, economic and political circumstances – we covered all bases in this interview. And in her heartfelt, composed and unhesitating testimony, no detail was overlooked. She had this uncanny ability to look at, touch and embrace children with affection and love and, when looking into their eyes, she could see their great desire to live and their happiness, even though they were living – and indeed still live – in deplorable conditions on the edge of survival.

Surrounded by a group of women and a healthcare worker, Audrey Hepburn gives a child a polio vaccination at a clinic in her capacity as a UNICEF ambassador. Bangladesh, 1989.

In her five years as UNICEF ambassador, Audrey embarked upon fifty missions, visiting an array of countries in the southern hemisphere – this commitment was almost a full-time job that she only stepped down from shortly before her death. She also made a heartfelt appeal to the media to ensure that, through her work, the suffering and trauma of children ravaged by famine and war would not be forgotten, and emphasised strongly that the media should cover the plights of children in need of everything all the time, not just in times of emergency.

On more than one occasion during her appearance on *Carta Bianca*, Audrey reiterated the fact that she had been fortunate. To have grown up in a family where helping others was not purely a duty, but more than anything, it was a pleasure and an honour. She recalled that her mother, Baroness Ella van Heemstra, did a great deal to help refugees from Vietnam in California. Fortunate for having survived during the German occupation in Holland, despite having suffered immense hunger, and because she was able to leave home without running into round-ups. And she remained patient even though she could not fulfil her dream of becoming a dancer. On top of that, she felt extremely blessed in her career on the big screen, because she never thought she would have the opportunity to act alongside famous actors and be directed by great directors. She never had to choose a script – she was the one being chosen.

Shortly after the war, a writer friend of the family, who also worked as an editor, made her read a manuscript that would turn out to be *The Diary of Anne Frank*; she told this story with deep emotion, thinking of that girl, like her also a citizen of Amsterdam, who was forced into hiding and ultimately fell victim to the Nazi madness. Years later, she was offered the part of playing Anne Frank in a film, but she turned it down because she felt like it was too close to home.

Allow me to make a personal observation, without trespassing too far into the domain of film scholars. Was Audrey Hepburn a diva, a star, an icon? Sure. But more than anything, she was a woman with an extraordinary personality and a brilliant actress. How can you not be captivated by her performance as Natasha in King Vidor's *War and Peace* (1956), the most stunning dance scene in the history of cinema? An unparalleled grace and a lightness that only she could exhibit.

Towards the end of our interview on *Carta Bianca*, after having listened to her for more than an hour, I rather awkwardly ventured to ask her if she felt almost like a saint and she broke out into delightful laughter.

Let me conclude with a little anecdote. After recording the interview, I invited her to join me at a restaurant for a quick dinner before she boarded her flight to go back to Geneva. Audrey enjoyed an appetiser of exquisite salted pork and a plate of homemade taglierini made by Lucia Polloni, a chef specialising in traditional Cremonese cuisine. And she also gladly enjoyed a glass of fine wine and the house digestif.

Her son Luca Dotti, who in his beautiful book *Audrey at Home* (Mondadori, 2015) also talks about his mother as a cook who loved to experiment, will be pleased.

And Ralph Lauren, again from Luca Dotti's book, is absolutely right when he says: "The Audrey that you saw in the movies was the same Audrey that you saw in real life. She was really what you hoped she would be."

Federico Jolli
RSI journalist, now retired

Scan the QR code to see the original interview

RSI Radiotelevisione svizzera

Roman Holiday, 70 years on

by Alberto Crespi*

Left:
With Gregory Peck
on the Spanish Steps in a scene
from the film *Roman Holiday*.
Rome, 1953.

This page:
The two actors in another
scene from *Roman Holiday*.

In *Dutch Girl: Audrey Hepburn and World War II* by Robert Matzen (Piemme, 2019), an extremely interesting book that reconstructs the life of Audrey Hepburn during the Second World War, the diva asserts:

> "If I become a film star, it is in spite of my childhood, not because of it. I grew up in Holland during the Nazi occupation and that was my world from the age of 11 to the age of 16." (p. 335).

And later in the book, she emphasises:

> "I'm a very reserved person. When I starred in *Gigi* and *Roman Holiday*, I was a young woman of 24 with the mentality of a 12-year-old. I was very mature and naive, not at all worldly" (p. 337).

Also in this book, in its introduction, her son Luca Dotti states that he did not know Audrey Hepburn at all: in the sense that his mother never talked to him about her film career or Hollywood, but instead played the role of "mum", happy to be a "Roman housewife" (p. 345).

Audrey Hepburn was not a princess or an aristocrat. And it showed. She could turn into one – on the screen. But this took work: performing, perfecting the art of acting, just like when the elegant and bourgeois Anna Magnani became the ultimate embodiment of the Roman peasant. Audrey Hepburn grew up in Nazi-occupied Holland, the daughter of a British father and a Dutch mother. When she auditioned for *Roman Holiday* at London's Pinewood Studios on 18 September 1951, the casting director Thorold Dickinson (who had previously worked with her when directing the thriller *The Secret People*), not only shot a scene from the script, but also held a short interview with her because in Hollywood, at Paramount, they wanted to see her "au naturel" before casting her. Dickinson started the interview as follows (also detailed in Matzen's book, p. 339): "So, Audrey, let's talk about the war. You spent the entire war in Arnhem. Was it terrible?". The expression on the face of the stunning 22-year-old Audrey changed as if a cloud had passed across her gaze: "Yes", she managed to say, "it was truly awful".

So, in summary: *Roman Holiday* is a fairytale, complete with a princess (and a Prince Charming, albeit one who works as a reporter and rides a Vespa, not a horse, because this is a modern fairytale!); Audrey Hepburn unleashed all her acting prowess to play a naive noblewoman; and the fairytale had a happy ending, following its successful release in August and September 1953 (in Italy, after its "première" in Venice, the film was released just in time for Christmas) and the subsequent Oscars ceremony, where Audrey took home the statuette for Best Actress. And yet... and yet, *Roman Holiday* is also something else: a fascinating depiction of what life was like in Rome in the early 1950s, almost a neo-realist film! After all, it is well known that Suso Cecchi D'Amico (regular collaborator of Visconti) and Ennio Flaiano (regular collaborator of Fellini) worked together on the script to give a more authentic "Roman touch" to the pages written by Dalton Trumbo. The screenplay also won an Oscar, which was awarded to Ian McLellan Hunter who had agreed to act as a front man for Trumbo, who had been blacklisted by McCarthyism at the time. Less known, at least in Italy, is the fact that Paramount originally wanted to shoot the film at a studio in Hollywood, and it was the director William Wyler who insisted that it be shot in Rome. Wyler had become very familiar with Italy during the war, when he shot a number of memorable war propaganda films following American troops on the front line. Paramount

Audrey wins her first Best Actress Oscar for her role as Princess Ann in the film *Roman Holiday*. NBC Century Theatre, New York, US, 25 March 1954.

Scenes from *Roman Holiday* are depicted here and on the next few pages.

accepted his demand, but insisted that the film be shot in black and white, with a very tight budget. In retrospect, this was a blessing in disguise: the photography by Franz Planer and Henri Alekan (two Europeans: the former Austrian and the latter French) gave the film a quality that blended fairytale and realism; and Wyler enjoyed capturing moments that would never have happened in Hollywood, such as real Italian noblemen in reconstructions of receptions and crowds of Roman extras, often recruited right there on the spot, who give many scenes a flavour of great authenticity.

And this brings us to the point. *Roman Holiday* has two main stars. The first, of course, is Audrey Hepburn. The second is Rome. And in this regard, *Roman Holiday* is a film that is full of surprises.

The first surprise is that, errors and omissions excepted, it is probably the first film (or rather the first famous film) to ever feature the Trevi Fountain. The first Hollywood picture in which the fountain is an undisputed star; *Three Coins in the Fountain* by Jean Negulesco comes in 1954. To be graced with that famous scene from *La Dolce Vita*, we have to wait until 1960. And the equally famous scene from *Totòtruffa 62*, in which Totò tries to sell the fountain to a foolish American tourist, is released later still. It is curious that, in all of these films, scenes featuring the Trevi Fountain also feature Americans. It is as if this monument was *the place to be* in Rome for its international visitors. And this premise was undoubtedly inspired by *Roman Holiday*.

But the second surprise is glaring, and it concerns the truly dreamlike place where reporter Joe Bradley, played by Gregory Peck, lives in the film. You will recall that he lives in an enchanting apartment nestled in a picturesque setting, a sort of labyrinth of gardens, cabins and loggias: it looks like an Alpine village or a scene taken from a Disney cartoon (the Italy portrayed in Pinocchio). When we watched the film for the first time, probably on TV as children, we thought nothing of it. But many years later,

when hunting down the locations of *Roman Holiday* for a documentary on films shot in the capital, we revisited those same scenes and suspected that they might have been filmed at Cinecittà Studios: how could such a place exist in Rome? But... in the film, you definitely see Gregory Peck go through a doorway located at Via Margutta 51, the famous painters' street, where Federico Fellini would live years later. And so we went on a little trip to see what was hidden behind the main door of Via Margutta 51.

Today, unfortunately, that door is always closed. But back then, we found it open. And stepping away from the chaos of the centre of Rome, we found ourselves transported to a place where time seemed to have stood still. All the aspects of the storybook setting depicted in *Roman Holiday* were there, intact: the courtyards, the staircases, the underpasses immersed in greenery. Between Via Margutta and the slopes of the hill upon which the Spanish Steps climb (another of the film's key locations) and where Villa Medici, Casina Valadier and the gardens of Villa Borghese are found, an unspoilt village is hidden, where Wyler – perhaps somewhat implausibly, but who cares? – decided that his lucky reporter would live. It is a magical landscape, known as "La Corte di Via Margutta 51" which, even to this day, is home to the quaint studios of artisans and painters (we frankly have no idea whether anyone actually lives there today: but if they did, we would be very jealous).

There is, in fact, a third surprise – in some ways, the most remarkable of all: following in the footsteps of Ann, the princess, and reporter Joe, we arrived at the scene where Ann falls asleep on the street and Joe finds her lying on a piece of ancient Roman wall in the middle of the Roman Forum. Joe/Gregory Peck reaches her by walking along a pavement next to a road where cars pass by. Right under the Capitoline Hill within the bounds of the Forum. Yes, you read that right: in 1952, when the film was shot, cars were indeed allowed to pass through the Forum. There was a road that pretty much connected Via della Consolazione

to Via dei Fori Imperiali. So much for the ZTL (Limited Traffic Zone)! The road also features in the opening scene of *Cops and Robbers* (Steno and Mario Monicelli, 1951), in which Totò tries to sell a fake sestertius coin to an American tourist: if you look closely at the beginning of the scene, you see the tourist getting out of a car parked right in the middle of the Forum! Today, obviously, this street is no longer there, and the spot where Audrey Hepburn was lying has been absorbed by the archaeological park. It is safe to say that, in the Rome of the immediate post-war period, the city's cultural heritage was not being preserved all that well, but perhaps other things were more important...

These small details, which may seem trivial in relation to the value of the film, are actually telling us something very important: as well as being a fairytale and an impossible love story, *Roman Holiday* also serves as an invaluable record of what Rome was like at that time. Thanks to a succession of great films, starting with *Rome, Open City*, closely followed by *Shoeshine* and *Bicycle Thieves*, and all the way through to the years of the economic boom with *Big Deal on Madonna Street* and *The Easy Life*, a future archaeologist would be able to accurately reconstruct the city and map out the transformation it underwent from the end of the war to the beginning of the 1960s. *Roman Holiday* is one of these very films. And so it proves to be a film that ventures far beyond the cliché of the exotic fairytale (for Americans) and the idea of escapism (although it could be argued half-jokingly that it is indeed a kind of "escapism" we are talking about: a princess's momentary escape from her political, palatial and ceremonial engagements). Wyler's decision to set the story in a realistic, albeit not real, context gives the film an incredibly modern feel – which is further enhanced by the performances given by Audrey Hepburn and Gregory Peck, two actors so understated and good at what they do that you almost forget how beautiful they are. Peck was not keen to do the film at first, not least because – being the intelligent man that he was – he quickly understood that its true lead character was the young woman: but he would ultimately accept the role because he had dreamed of starring in a comedy for several years (some years later, he would say that all the "light-hearted" scripts he was receiving back then had Cary Grant written all over them... and he was not wrong, because even *Roman Holiday* was initially written with Grant in mind!). During filming, he expressed with great gallantry that watching the young Hepburn work was like "watching a flower bloom". In fact, Peck did something that very few other actors have done: he went to Paramount and told the producers that Audrey would surely go on to win an Oscar for the film, and so they had better put her name before his. And they did. And she won that Oscar. Peck would have to wait ten years for one of his own, winning in 1963 for *To Kill a Mockingbird* – the role of a lifetime. Princess Ann, on the other hand, had been the role of Audrey's life.

Alberto Crespi
Film critic, author, and radio and television presenter

Et Dieu crea le Chic

by Marco Tullio Giordana*

Left:
Audrey wearing evening gloves and a tiara in *Breakfast at Tiffany's*, 1961.

This page:
Elegant and refined in *Funny Face*, 1957.

Posing at the Studio de Boulogne while making *How to Steal a Million*. Paris, 1966.

It is true; God created woman, and that woman was Brigitte Bardot. Very satisfied with His creation – just like us, who lost some of our innocence for eternity – He did not consider his work to be done unless He allowed for an explosion of the senses by gracing us with even more beautiful beings. And so, strewing them all around the world, He also created Sophia, Silvana, Claudia, Marilyn, Romy, Jane and many more glittering goddesses (just take your pick). Nor did He fail to please those who found these graces too explicit and aggressive and instead preferred something a little more veiled, equally captivating but palatable – in other words, someone who would not have been so improper to introduce to the family. A maiden who, without diminishing her sex appeal – rather giving it an air of mystery – could transform it into discretion, no longer forcing us to disguise our desires and raging hormones, but allowing us to express them in (apparently) chaste admiration. A woman whose class was enhanced by dark colours and eternally youthful lines, just like the little black dress made by Hubert de Givenchy for *Breakfast at Tiffany's*. And this brings us to the point.

We are, of course, talking about Audrey Hepburn, and even at the mere mention of her name, we cannot help but jump to our feet, remembering what our mothers taught us when we were young: stand up when a lady is approaching, allow her to pass in front of you (except in public places, where you have to check for disreputable company), open the door for her, wait for her to greet you first (she may not wish to make her presence felt). Even before evoking a feeling of desire, Audrey Hepburn always brought out the good manners of others, and made flirting a delightful skirmish on the edge of allusion and irony. Whether she was holding off the advances of womaniser William Holden or the irreproachable Humphrey Bogart (*Sabrina*, 1954), torn between Henry Fonda and Mel Ferrer (*War and Peace*, 1956), or duetting with the equally exquisite Fred Astaire (*Funny Face*, 1957), Cary Grant (*Charade*, 1963), Gregory Peck (*Roman Holiday*, 1953), George Peppard (*Breakfast at Tiffany's*, 1961) or Rex Harrison (*My Fair*

Lady, 1964), not to mention Albert Finney (*Two for the Road*, 1967) and Sean Connery (*Robin and Marian*, 1976) – Audrey Hepburn won hearts without looking like your typical enchantress, almost unaware of her ability to entice. Even when there were no men to charm or beautiful worlds to conquer, but only the dawning of an altruistic call to action, such as in a role that prefigured her future work with UNICEF (*The Nun's Story*, 1959), the missionary's white habit seemed to turn from a stern uniform into a wonderful creation by Balmain, Dior or her beloved de Givenchy (her costumes were actually custom-made by Marjorie Best) and, indeed, you would be forgiven for thinking that every old garment she wore had come, wrapped in tissue, from the most sumptuous of fashion houses on Avenue Montaigne or Rue du Faubourg Saint-Honoré.

I have always had a soft spot for this actress who was just so different from the rest ever since the very first film I saw her in: *Wait Until Dark*, directed by Terence Young in 1967. It was being screened at a summer arena on the island of Elba the very year it came out (so I was 16), and I was taken there by my sister Barbara, with the unspoken task of fending off the numerous detestable suitors who would inevitably approach her, a beautiful chaste 25-year-old with big black eyes. But this job of acting as my sister's protector was immediately forgotten as soon as I laid eyes on that fragile little blind doe, forced to defend herself against thieves who had broken into her home – against whom she would have been powerless had she not thought on her feet and put the intruders in her shoes. She turns off the electricity and, with the whole place thrown into darkness, the crooks struggle to find their bearings, while Audrey "sees" and "feels" her way around, ultimately managing to overwhelm them. I was left so enchanted by her performance that, upon returning to the city, I set out in search of all her films. But this was no easy feat because, back then, we did not have a slew of television networks or platforms at our fingertips – all we had was a handful of film clubs that were suspicious of Hollywood mega productions. And so, aside from Billy Wilder's *Sabrina* and William Wyler's *Roman Holiday*, which were easy to come by and kindled a lasting love, I was slowly able to get my hands on almost all of her back catalogue, and was never disappointed by her performances.

A very strong bond was immediately established between Italy and this actress, so different from her voluptuous counterparts who, after the hardship and mourning that the country suffered during the

Posing as a model for fashion photographer Dick Avery, played by Fred Astaire, in *Funny Face*, 1957.

war, contributed to its reconstruction with their opulent bodies – a literal embodiment of the prosperity yet to come. It was no coincidence that the post-war divas looked so promising and "motherly", while Europe still had to impose rationing and restrictions with the paradox that the victors, Britain above all, had to tighten their belts like the defeated Japanese and Germans, while the Italians – who had lost the war, but felt as though they had won it thanks to the few patriots engaged in the Resistance – benefited from the aid provided by the superpower that was the United States, so that they would not end up in the clutches of the communists (who were also being bankrolled by the USSR). Against this backdrop, the slender, borderline anorexic frame of Audrey Kathleen Ruston (her real name) is rather out of the ordinary, and heralds a return to prosperity, when bridges, roads, palaces and beautiful houses will finally be rebuilt and everyone can dream of becoming rich, beautiful, slim and elegant like her. There is a film that I feel really shines the spotlight on this perspective: a true gem directed by Stanley Donen (who also directed *Charade* in 1963 and *Two for the Road* in 1967), *Funny Face* is a film in which the shy dancer – who was born in England but grew up in Belgium and Holland under barbed tyranny (her father would ultimately face the ignominious charge of collaborating with the Nazis) – plays the role of an innocent, bespectacled bookseller who is transformed into an utterly sophisticated model for a photographer. In this film, Audrey demonstrates all her singing and dancing talents alongside Fred Astaire, the most elegant man in the world, seemingly oblivious to the laws of gravity.

Rome thus welcomes Hepburn in 1953, projecting to the world the image of a rebel too well-mannered to allow herself to indulge in happiness (in *Roman Holiday*), constrained by conventions but a free spirit on the inside and, despite her thinness that would only suggest asceticism and renunciation, a young woman with a turbulent heart, ready to forsake all her privileges. It is this ambivalence that makes her immortal. The gorgeous creature gallivants around the city incognito on a Vespa, clinging to the man she was never supposed to fall in love with, the dashing Gregory Peck (who does not know that he is riding around with the princess everyone is looking for). That Vespa, which Orson Welles so hated for its stench of fuel and incessant racket, the vehicle of a miserable underdeveloped country, would instead become a vehicle of worldwide success and enshrine the emergence of an actress and a new female icon. Consecration would come the following year with Billy Wilder's *Sabrina* and, in 1956/57, with the super blockbuster co-directed by King Vidor and Mario Soldati and produced by Dino De Laurentiis, who was keen to cast her in *War and Peace*, despite the fact that she was pregnant. These heroines too are enlightened by grace and prone to impossible love, women whose hearts are broken even though Humphrey Bogart and Henry Fonda come to the rescue to console them.

Had I ever been fortunate enough to meet her, I would have liked to work with her in the theatre, probably on a performance of a work by Čechov – a playwright who would have lost his mind over her. *Three Sisters* (Три сестры), perhaps (for the other two sisters, I would have knelt at the feet of Anouk Aimée and Romy Schneider!). Why a play and not a film? Because in the world of cinema, time is of the essence, and the relationship with actors is vertical and rather intense, subject to the haste of military operations. Theatre, on the other hand, allows you to coexist, to explore everything an actor has to offer during the table read or the fascinating process of trial and error that is on-stage rehearsals, in the electrifying trauma of each performance, on the long tours that reveal the state of your country that enthrals and appals you, in the hotels of its picturesque little towns, of the audience that shares in your absolute exhilaration – in short, a continuous honeymoon, a magnificent, enduring intimacy. I would have gone to the ends of the Earth to make a film with Audrey Hepburn, but the first thing that comes to my mind when I think of her is that she would have been an extraordinary Ol'ga and I regret not having been born sooner.

Marco Tullio Giordana
Director, writer and screenwriter

Her form emerges from the smoke of a locomotive in a scene from the film *Funny Face*, 1957.

Elegance and style

by Stefania Ricci*

Left:
Audrey wearing black Capri pants and a black sweater with ballerina shoes in a promotional shot for the film *Sabrina*, 1954.

This page:
In a shot that captures her simplicity. Hollywood, 1956.

The medium of cinema is like a dream factory, an escape from reality, a world where truth and fiction converge, character consistency is by the by, and jumps in time can be used to suit the narrative. It has the ability to tug at the heartstrings of its audiences. And this resonance is one of the key reasons why this art form is so prevalent and popular. The protagonists of the stories portrayed in the cinematic universe play a crucial role in this process of transposition to the unconscious of the viewer. They become a projection of what each of us would like to be. In this immersive exercise, the clothes that an actor wears in their scenes have an important part to play, helping to express the true essence of the character. Every

screenplay therefore also becomes a story of fashion and trends, amplified by the multiple identities that the actors and actresses assume and the equally as many roles that they play, which help transform them into icons with enormous media power. Audrey Hepburn is a legend of cinema, perhaps one of the most popular of all time. She has had an impact on women of all ages for decades, engendering real syndromes. Even Maria Callas fell victim to this, imitating her haircut, her slender frame and her sense of fashion. But Hepburn transcended the screen. Away from the set, she became an ambassador of a host of internationally renowned designers, gracing the covers of magazines like "Life" and "Harper's Bazaar", and modelled for advertising campaigns for Valentino and Givenchy – appearing as the face of a perfume promotion for the latter.

Above:
Audrey dancing with William Holden in *Sabrina*, wearing a stunning dress by Hubert de Givenchy, 1954.

The cover of "Harper's Bazaar", April 1956.

And yet the actress cannot be considered a myth of the film industry in the usual sense, as this word always comes with negative connotations, a dark side. James Dean and Marilyn Monroe, for example, fascinated the public with the ambiguous nature of their personalities, their tormented sensuality and their fragile psyches. In Audrey's biography, there are no stories of alcohol, drugs, scandals or, above all, an untimely, tragic and violent end. A rather ordinary success story, albeit as ordinary as the life of a star can really be, garners little interest.

So how is it that, even to this day, Audrey Hepburn is still a familiar face to the younger generation and her films are still celebrated, while others from the same period have been forgotten?

From her debut in 1948 to the end of her career, Audrey portrayed 27 female characters. But it is not until 1953, with the release of *Roman Holiday*, that she starts to develop her signature style. The story of the rebellious princess who, for a few days, becomes an ordinary girl and relishes the opportunity to dress with the simplicity and unashamed scruffiness of a teenager, captivates the female audience. But she would not be emulated for her majestic

ball gowns – she would cause a stir instead with her plain white shirt, seemingly borrowed from a man's wardrobe, skirt cut on the bias with a high belt, flat sandals, neckerchief and, above all, her short haircut, which gives the lead character, Ann, a jaunty air. In this famous film, the actress exhibits a less rarefied version of haute couture, with a more sporty and casual edge, unveiling elements of her own style: simplicity, comfort and elegance.

Sabrina, a film in which Hepburn wears clothes designed by Givenchy for the first time, signals the beginning of a lifelong bond between the designer and the actress, representing what French critic Roland Barthes, in his book *Miti d'oggi*, defines as an "exchange of prestige, of mythical aura between the wearer and the creator of clothing".

The screen acts as a sounding board for fashions, customs and garments, establishing them as ideals of elegance. But Audrey never allowed herself to be eclipsed by fashion – on the contrary, she always lent her characters a touch of her own personal style, which she accentuated with certain recurring details and garments: the sunglasses, the hats, the ballet flats, the short, structured coats that are an early nod to the minimalist style, the masculine trench coat, the ankle-length trousers paired with a T-shirt – a typical Caprese ensemble – the black jumpsuit evocative of sportswear, and the iconic "little black dress" that she wore in Breakfast at Tiffany's, which would inspire pieces on the catwalks of a score of designers for years to come.

In all the film productions in which she played a starring role, even those set in the past, including westerns, costume designers paid heed to her preferences. They modified the lines, paring them back and giving them an air of simplicity that typified her taste and can be seen in her everyday attire – basic, with no frills. Even on those occasions when clothing is no longer important and merely serves a purpose, for example on missions in the East or in Africa with UNICEF, Audrey always looks stunning in very simple canvas trousers, a T-shirt and a pair of trainers.

Audrey Hepburn's style is not a product off a drawing board. It is the spontaneous result of a combination of elements, including physical ones, that have their roots outside the artistic context.

A slender, eternally youthful physique, combined with a tapered, ivory neck and a curiously impish face with doe eyes and an irresistible smile – all these features converge to create the image of a woman who was completely different, not only from the more curvaceous pin-up of the 1950s, but also from the Doris Day-esque, good girl next door. Her innocent mischievousness appeals to men, but is also accepted and even admired by women.

Thus far, we have talked about the external aspects of Hepburn's signature style – her clothing and accessories and her physical attributes. But what really makes the actress unique are her other qualities: her human depth, her ability to speak about philosophy and culture without affectation, and how seriously she takes her work – something that also comes across

Above:
In the famous scene where Princess Ann nervously touches the Mouth of Truth in *Roman Holiday*, 1953.

With Cary Grant, James Coburn (standing) and Jacques Marin (from behind) in *Charade*, 1963.

in her interviews. From the very first time they met her, all those who knew her and dressed her, starting with Givenchy, who was a friend of hers, and Ferragamo, who designed her shoes, sensed that there was something special about her, which went beyond her exterior, but which was driven by her innate ability to relate to others – a kind, attentive and sensitive soul who was ready to lend an ear.

Salvatore Ferragamo writes a beautiful passage about the actress in his autobiography, published in English in 1957:

> "Audrey Hepburn's long, slim foot is in perfect proportion to her height. She is a true artist and a true aristocrat... Audrey is always natural and completely unaffected, whether she is acting or buying shoes or handbags. She can talk intelligently and knowledgeably on philosophy, art, astronomy, and the theatre."

Throughout Audrey's career, the famous Italian shoemaker would design many timeless models especially for her, including a suede ballet flat with a thin strap and a special, shell-shaped sole – an exquisitely soft, elegant and comfortable low-cut shoe.

Behind the façade, Audrey's life was not always easy. The divorce of her parents when she was a child, the starvation she suffered during the war in Holland, where she had returned with her mother, and the loss of so many friends and schoolmates owing to the Holocaust. Audrey collaborated with the resistance fighters, risking her life to carry messages, which she hid in the heels of her shoes. She was always a hard worker, first doing a thousand jobs to support herself while she continued her studies as a ballet dancer, then breaking into the film industry, working tirelessly and still trying to leave room for her personal life and children. As an adult, she did not always have a perfect family, going through two divorces and several more failed relationships to boot. And she was taken from the world all too soon, passing away at just 63 years of age after battling a treacherous and incurable illness. However, nothing has ever been leaked about Audrey Hepburn's life, beyond the essential and the inevitable.

Audrey, photographed by Anthony Beauchamp, wearing a sweater by Emilio Pucci, 1955.

A model made by Ferragamo for Audrey's bespoke shoes.

This lack of gossip and rumours, despite the fact that she is one of the most talked-about actresses of all time, is due to her shy, reserved nature and her fierce protection of her privacy, her past and her children; to a personality that always disliked the fanfare and excesses usually so ingrained in celebrities and that ultimately drove her to move to Tolochenaz, a small and charming village in Switzerland, where she lived after spending such a long time in Rome at the mercy of paparazzi.

In 1988, she became a UNICEF ambassador – a role that she held until her death on 20 January 1993. Even on her last mission, she demonstrated a sincere humanitarian commitment that left no room for narcissism.

When compared with those who are always in the limelight, who are afflicted by presenteeism, Audrey Hepburn is one of a rare, almost endangered, breed, but one that is needed more and more in today's society to act as a role model. This explains the particularity of her style that never goes out of fashion – it is not tied to a dress or a signature, it is not the result of fame. It is at one with who she was as a person, with her deepest humanity.

Stefania Ricci
Director of the Salvatore Ferragamo Museum, Florence

THAT GLAMOROUS PLAYMATE
OF "BREAKFAST AT TIFFANY'S"
IN A "HEPBURN" HOLIDAY OF
FUN AND ROMANCE!

HUMPHREY
BOGART
"The African Queen" Academy Award winner

AUDREY
HEPBURN
"Roman Holiday" Academy Award winner

WILLIAM
HOLDEN
"Stalag 17" Academy Award winner

Sabrina
is drama and laughter...

Sabrina
is excitement and love!

Sabrina

Produced and Directed by
Academy Award winner
BILLY WILDER

with
WALTER HAMPDEN · JOHN WILLIAMS · MARTHA HYER · JOAN VOHS
Written for the Screen by BILLY WILDER, SAMUEL TAYLOR and ERNEST LEHMAN
From the play by SAMUEL TAYLOR · A PARAMOUNT RE-RELEASE

Cary Grant, Humphrey Bogart and Fred Astaire – co-stars and fellow trendsetters

by Gianni Canova*

Left:
The poster for the film *Sabrina*, 1954.

This page:
With Cary Grant in the romantic comedy *Charade*, 1963.

With Cary Grant in *Charade*, 1963.

"Do you know what's wrong with you?" In the only film that they starred in together (*Charade*, 1963), Audrey Hepburn looks at Cary Grant with those doe eyes, studies him with an enchanted gaze and answers her own question before he even has a chance: "Nothing!". As if to say that the character played by Cary Grant in this film – a man of a hundred faces and multiple identities – wholeheartedly embodies her idea of the perfect man: sophisticated, modest, charming, impeccable and self-assured. And – most of all – in a class of his own in terms of the way that he wears his trademark grey suit over a white shirt with an understated tie. In almost all the films that he appeared in throughout his career, the grey suit is almost like a uniform for Cary Grant, an inimitable ensemble for his on-screen personas: no wonder he "feels" it, almost like a second skin, never to be seen without it, never getting it dirty even in the most problematic and tumultuous situations. Just think of that famous scene from *North By Northwest* (1959, directed by Alfred Hitchcock), in which the character played by Cary Grant – an advertising executive, someone else forced to try to be someone he is not – is chased by an aeroplane in a cornfield: the man runs through the dust, falls between the corn crops, gets up, sweats, launches himself on the ground again, rolls around in the dirt, and after all that, he still gets up looking immaculate, in a suit that looks like it has just been picked up from the dry cleaners and a crisp white shirt. And yet this in no way undermines our "suspension of disbelief": Cary Grant cannot but be believed. You just cannot help but think of him as the quintessence of timeless, ubiquitous, enduring and untouchable elegance. In *Charade*, this elegance is amplified and emphasised by the flagrant sloppiness of the other male characters, almost always dressed in unlikely ways, with oversized trench coats, ghastly colour combinations and a blatant scruffiness. The character portrayed by Walter Matthau, for example, talks with Audrey while trying, in vain, to get a stain out of his tie, telling her: "Last time I sent out a tie, only the spot came back". And she – sublime in her red coat and leopard-print hat – looks at him in disbelief, barely managing to hide her own embarrassment. The comparison with Cary Grant is merciless – there is no contest. So much so that, in this film, the actor pushes his character to put his suit through its paces: he lets Audrey cry on his shoulder ("It's a drip-dry"), does not even bat an eyelid at her thrusting chocolate and vanilla ice cream onto the lapel of his blazer, negotiates an opponent tearing the back of his jacket during a tussle, and last but not least, in the film's big scene – smiling and amused – he showers in his clothes, celebrating the qualities of his waterproof

With Fred Astaire during filming of *Funny Face*, 1957.

suit that can even withstand the stream of water. The essential power of a garment in the construction of a character could not have been expressed better than this: and while it is true for Cary Grant, it is even more so for Audrey Hepburn, who, to bring her character Reggie to life, flaunts a parade of breathtaking Givenchy dresses, starting with a stunning ivory overcoat with matching scarf and gloves. In the words of the actress herself, "elegance is the only beauty that never fades". But, in order to make her shine, to amplify her stardom and to turn her into a familiar face, the star system is aware that it needs to cast the perfect partners alongside her. While Cary Grant (who was 25 years older than Audrey) is perhaps the most iconic of them, just think about the combined effect of Audrey Hepburn's presence on set alongside well-established and more mature stars like Humphrey Bogart (30 years her senior) and Fred Astaire (also 30 years older than her). If Cary Grant is the epitome of elegance, Humphrey Bogart is that of class and Fred Astaire of rhythm and lightness. Audrey only made one film with each of them, starring in *Sabrina* with Humphrey Bogart and *Funny Face* with Fred Astaire. In both cases, Audrey manages to make her partner do unimaginable things: alongside Bogart, who plays the character Linus, a cynical manager who cares only about the thrills of finance and making a profit (his brother, played by William Holden, describes him as "the man who doesn't burn, doesn't scorch, doesn't melt"), she not only succeeds in breaking down the icy and unsympathetic front that he usually presents to the world, but also encourages him to change his style. "Never a briefcase in Paris and never an umbrella", she tells him, adding: "We can't have you... looking like a tourist undertaker". She is sweet, naive, romantic and a tad mischievous, and he lets down his guard, gives up his business and, to run away with her to Paris, he even abandons his canonical garb, including overnight briefcase, umbrella, hat, waistcoat, bow tie and pocket square. Audrey turns down the brim of his hat and Linus hangs the umbrella from the coat belt of an unsuspecting passer-by. Even if the chronicles of the time report that there was friction between the two actors on set and that Audrey was not exactly welcomed with open arms by Bogey (who apparently would have preferred his wife Lauren Bacall to have starred alongside him as leading lady Sabrina), on screen, the chemistry between the two is pure perfection, and the mix of his seriousness and her gracefulness produces a visual and gestural output of absolute distinction.

And her relationship with Fred Astaire was not all that different: in the role of an American bookshop assistant who reluctantly agrees to model for a fashion show

With Humphrey Bogart in a scene from the film *Sabrina*, 1954.

and photo shoot for a magazine in Paris, Audrey-*Funny Face* exudes a hypnotic beauty and – as one of the songs in the musical production says – "fills the air with smiles". He, by contrast, is the photographer who, in order to "frame" her at her best, encourages her to draw inspiration from a series of literary models – from Anna Karenina to Isolde – to ignite in her the emotions that he wants his photos to exude. Here too, although he belongs to the cynical world of fashion ("we're a cold lot, artificial people, and totally lacking in sentiment", says the editor of the magazine arranging the photo shoot), she has a way of making him do anything she wants: in one scene, the photographer transforms his red-lined white trench coat into a muleta and his umbrella into a sword, pretending to be a bullfighter. Shortly afterwards, he even puts on a false moustache and beard, complete with existentialist black turtleneck, pretending to be an intellectual, to gain access to the girl he has fallen madly in love with in a Parisian cave, where she has holed up to meet a self-styled, enlightened philosopher. The common thread that runs through all these films is that the partner whom the script and the director place next to Audrey seems at first to be immune to her charms. In *Charade*, for instance, although director Stanley Donen goes to great lengths to place Cary Grant and Audrey Hepburn in intimate situations, putting them in a lift, a telephone booth or a bedroom, he resists her kisses, and seems more interested in the outcome of his mission as a spy than in his relationship with her. Similarly, in *Sabrina*, Humphrey Bogart initially approaches her only to save the family business, and in *Funny Face*, Fred Astaire was originally only interested in trying to convince her to pose for his coveted photo shoot. Almost blinded by business, success or financial interest, these grown men – convinced that they are smart and have everything figured out about life – actually show themselves to be clumsy, gauche and awkward when it comes to expressing their feelings. They are elegant, efficient and adept on a professional level, but complete novices when it comes to emotional and romantic relationships. The brilliance of an actress like Audrey Hepburn – sweet, romantic, but also non-conformist and resistant to restrictive social norms – lies in her unique ability to make not only her counterparts, but also us viewers understand the beauty and inescapability of the reasons of the heart.

Gianni Canova
Rector and Professor of Film History and Film Studies, IULM University of Milan

The actress who made the Vespa iconic

by Costantino Frontalini*

Left:
Vespa GT by Piaggio.

This page:
A scene that captured the public's imagination: Audrey and Gregory Peck on the iconic Vespa in *Roman Holiday*, 1953.

In 1946, Piaggio released a poster of a woman on a Vespa, with a hand in the air, symbolically waving goodbye to the past behind her and heading towards the future.

The company had sensed that a change was coming and, in the years that followed, it paid more and more attention to its female audience, culminating in Vespa Club d'Italia organising its first meet exclusively for women with Vespas in Stresa, on Lake Maggiore, on 25 September 1949.

This completely unprecedented event was attended by around 200 Vespa enthusiasts from all over Italy. The ten candidates who would participate in *Miss Vespa* 1950 the following year were chosen at this meet. This competition would be won by Graziella Buontempo, who would go on to become a famous art collector.

Although these events contributed to the popularity of the Vespa among women, what really skyrocketed its appeal was the release of the famous film *Roman Holiday* in 1953. At this time, Audrey Hepburn's career was only just taking off. The producers had chosen Liz Taylor as the female lead, but director William Wyler saw Hepburn's audition and awarded her the part which, as well as winning her an Oscar, would propel her to the elite ranks of world cinema. Hepburn's extraordinary performance in this film would also be acknowledged by its male lead, Gregory Peck, who wanted his co-star's name to be written in the same size as his on the poster promoting the film, despite the fact that the production company did not agree to this.

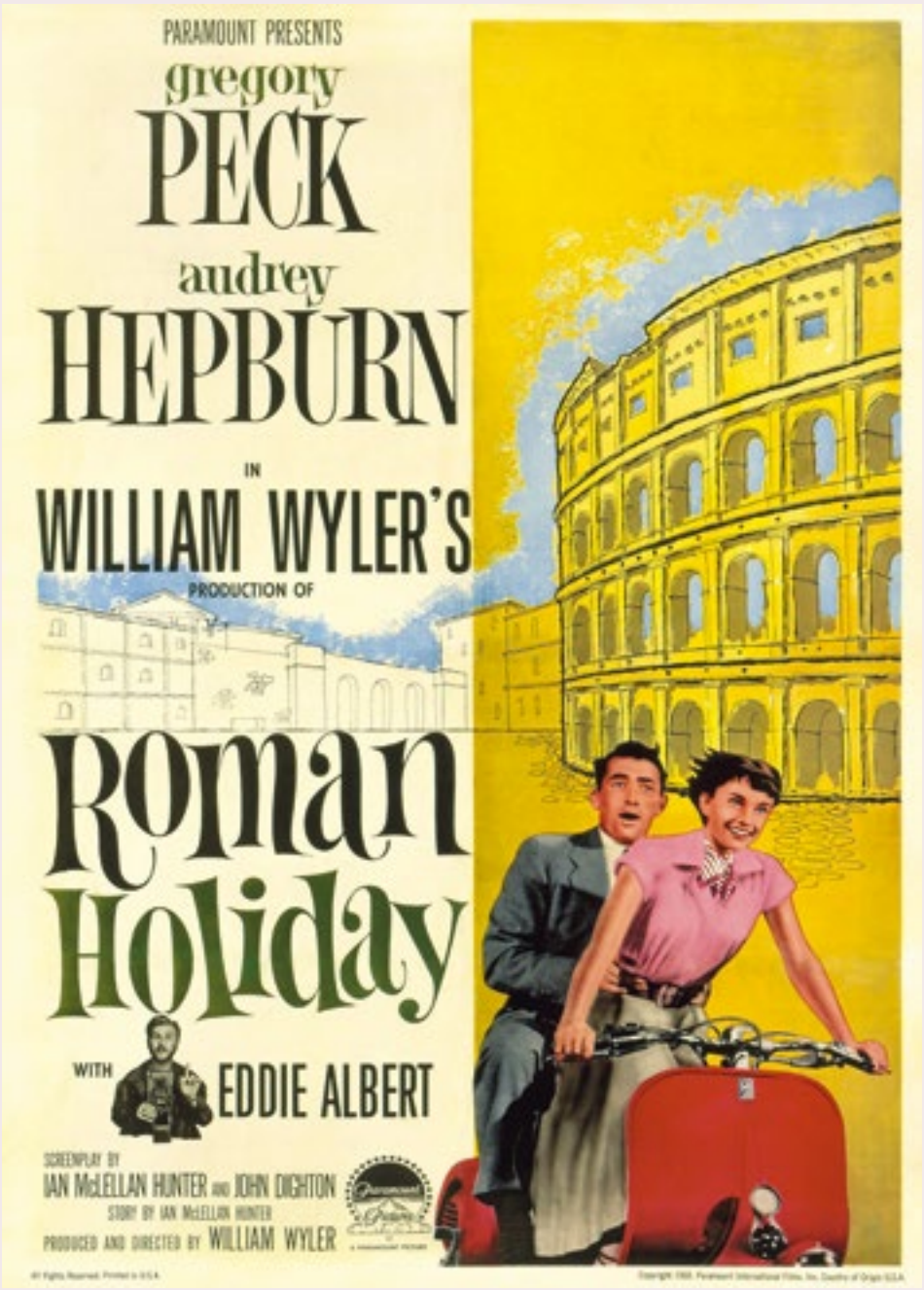
The Vespa scene flipped the stereotype that saw the man driving and the woman confined to the back seat. In Roman Holiday, the "Cinderella" rides her Vespa with a bold and carefree attitude, negotiating the hellish traffic of the Eternal City. And it is at this exact moment that Princess Ann stops being an out-and-out "Cinderella" – she sets aside her naivety and fragility and, for the first time, she shows true "character" and determination, rebelling even, in some ways, against the narrow world that had hitherto held her captive, and from which she fled. In a liberating symbolic gesture, she twists the throttle and leaves this world behind her once and for all. If there is one thing that audiences and

Above:
A Piaggio poster, 1946.

A women's meet on Lake Maggiore organised by Vespa Club d'Italia. Stresa, 1949.

critics have ever agreed on, it is that when watching Audrey's astonished, amused and amazed expression upon "being carried away" by her small, lively motorised vehicle, we knew that we were witnessing one of the most beautiful scenes in the history of cinema.

William Wyler was persuaded to use a Vespa by Enrico Piaggio. Initially, the two stars were meant to use an Ape Calessino, but once again, Piaggio was onto something. The Vespa had a greater influence on society than any other vehicle, and Wyler knew it was the right choice. From that moment on, the Vespa became a worldwide sensation. What was missing, however, was something that would lead the public to see it in a new light: no longer just a utility vehicle, but a means of living freely, out in the open air, without having to be a man or a mechanic and without having to wear travel clothes. This new vehicle was meant to represent something capable of embodying the aspirations of a community and an era, becoming a symbol of a privileged way of life, beyond mere practicalities. That "something" came from Hollywood. After all, in order to rise to iconic status, every product needs to have an air of mystique, allowing rationality to give way to



The promotional poster for *Roman Holiday*, 1953.

emotion and fantasy, thus making it more palatable and desirable. And this was the metamorphosis induced by the Vespa driven by Audrey Hepburn in *Roman Holiday*: a change that sees not only the liberation, but also the maturation of the female character, who finally realises her potential and becomes aware of her inalienable right to choose her own future. And the Vespa undergoes a transformation of its own, evolving from mere metal, nuts and bolts to a vehicle capable of giving wings to ordinary people.

This was probably not the intention of the film's director William Wyler or its screenwriters, who had deployed the Vespa purely as a dynamic prop to make the audience laugh, piloted by a young woman who rather clumsily tries to manoeuvre it through the streets of Rome. And the audience at home would surely have laughed, without imagining that this scene would change everything.

But let us go back to where it all began. The "Vespa revolution" started back in 1944 in Biella, where Enrico Piaggio had temporarily moved his production operations due to the bombing of Pontedera. Piaggio asked his engineers to design a simple, low-cost and fuel-efficient vehicle suitable for both men and women to drive – and with that, the first 98cc prototype, initially named MP5 and later rechristened "Paperino", was born.

Piaggio was not all that impressed with the end product, and so enlisted Corradino d'Ascanio to redesign the vehicle. In September 1945, the new MP6 scooter was built – an innovative vehicle with a monocoque body, gear change on the handlebars, engine mounted beside the wheel, making it a single unit, and ample space between the saddle and the handlebars.

When designing the new prototype, d'Ascanio started out by drawing a stylised picture of a stickman sitting on a chair. He then added a two-wheeled body around him, allowing the driver to maintain a comfortable position. Enrico Piaggio, noticing the wide and slender shapes of the bodywork and listening to the hum of the engine, exclaimed: "It looks like a wasp!".

This model was produced from 1946 to 1948, undergoing a series of minor modifications during this time. 1949 saw the long-awaited release of the Vespa 125, boasting a new suspension at the rear wheel to improve riding comfort. Year on year, the Vespa experienced exponential growth, becoming the "vehicle of the moment". A true gem at your fingertips.

In 1951, the Vespa 125 was modernised with a hydraulic shock absorber on both wheels and further modifications that made it even more comfortable and elegant, just in time for it to make its triumphant debut on the big screen.

Replica of the 1951 Vespa 125 model on display in the "Cinema" section of the Sidecar Museum in Cingoli (Macerata, Italy).

The '51 model is seen as the culmination of a stylistic evolution of details. Piaggio chose it as a promotional vehicle and d'Ascanio built a giant version of the celebrated model (on a 2:1 scale) that caused a sensation in Italy, France and Switzerland, contributing to the creation of a status symbol. Audrey Hepburn and *Roman Holiday* did the rest.

There once was a woman called Bertha Benz

In 1888, Bertha, the wife of Karl Benz, who invented the car, set out on the 180-kilometre journey between Mannheim and Pforzheim (in Germany). Her objective was to demonstrate the reliability of the new vehicle, but she unwittingly became the first woman in history to drive a car.

In the 1950s, it was the car, together with the scooter, that allowed women to officially step out of the role of housewives and find their own way in the world. In reality, some women had been rejecting this role, imposed on them by a conservative society, ever since the 1910s – being hailed as "pioneers" in sectors dominated by men: just think of the first female aviators, competitive motorcycle riders, scientists and mechanics, only a few of whom have gone down in history, while the rest would sink into oblivion as a consequence of a generation unwilling to celebrate their courage and initiative.

On a trip to Rome in a Fiat 600 Multipla, 1956.

We can therefore say with certainty that first the Vespa and then the car were tools for women's empowerment. Little by little, the advertisements aimed at women were no longer just for electrical appliances (high-performance washing machines or refrigerators), but also for cars.

In Italy, the *Fiat 600* became a necessity for many women seeking employment and who were asked, among other requirements, to have their own form of transport. After centuries of injustices and impositions, with women being chained to the kitchen sink, the revolution that would change all this took place in just one decade, thanks in large part to the cinematic universe, which played a decisive role in influencing society. That is why we can safely say that Audrey Hepburn and the Vespa played a key role in the consolidation of the women's liberation movement. After seeing *Roman Holiday*, millions of women finally found a point of reference, a legitimation of their right to rebel against a fixed destiny. The overwhelming power of the film and the role of its wonderful star riding a Vespa literally represented a turning point between the past and the future.

Inhibition around driving soon became a thing of the past. Driving a car meant breaking down social and gender barriers, travelling new roads and, symbolically, holding the steering wheel of your life in your own hands.

Costantino Frontalini
Director of the Sidecar Museum, Cingoli (MC)

The keeper of the secrets of “la dolce vita”

Interview with Rino Barillari*

Left:
With the paparazzo Rino Barillari.
Rome, 1959.

This page:
In Piazza di Spagna.
Rome, 1960s.

What did you make of Audrey Hepburn the first time you saw her?
I knew right away that she was a cut above because, before *La Dolce Vita*, she had starred in *Roman Holiday*, which had established her as the shining star of Rome. It was a magical moment – both for her and for the Italian film industry. It was the 1960s by this point, and she was already very famous.

What was it about her that was so special in your opinion?
Her sophisticated and elegant mannerisms; it was like she was born to be a star – you didn't need to ask her for a smile because she would just flash you one naturally; she was very friendly, knew all the photographers of the time and made sure to grace each of us with a different pose. She called her own shots, and we didn't realise that at first – it actually took us 40 years.

Other than photographing her, did you get to know her on a personal level?
No, but I did manage to win her trust thanks to my approach to photographing her, which I know she very much appreciated: I would never ask her for photos, I wouldn't hound her, which made her more inclined to "gift" me some rather memorable ones.
I remember that she'd often go to this toy shop on Via Frontino, always leaving with bundles of goodies – presents for her son Luca, whom she adored. I'd always try to avoid snapping this type of photo, preferring to take those that she wanted me to take, which were also better. Besides, I wasn't interested in making her feel uncomfortable by taking questionable shots; it's vital to be respectful, like, when she'd go to Sergio Valente's salon, located on Via Condotti at the time, I'd wait until she would emerge, perfectly primped and primed.

Where did you happen to photograph her?
In the streets of Rome, at the heart of the city... when she'd walk, she'd look like she was gracing the red carpet, because she had this unique class and beauty about her. She moved with such elegance that she looked like a ballerina. I remember there was this dustman called Nello, and when he'd see her, he'd almost freeze on the spot to admire her; and so did the shop assistants, who'd come out of their shops not only to watch her walk, but also to look at how she was dressed or smell her perfume, which they revealed to me was patchouli. She was the embodiment of a decent woman, who didn't get embroiled in scandals or frequent nightclubs.
I have a sequence of eight photos of her on Via Condotti, where there was a woman sitting on the pavement with a child in her arms, begging for alms. And like the classy woman she was, Audrey stopped, opened her bag and helped the woman.

Nowadays, are celebrities from the world of showbiz still "characters" that you can "sneak" a shot of, or is that no longer necessary?
If a celebrity (or would-be celebrity) uses social media a lot, they're only known in their small local reality. But, if they're a little more savvy (and more established), they have a publicist who reaches out to the photographer. The photographer then uses a telephoto lens to capture them in action and build a narrative that can be circulated both nationally and internationally. For those who do it themselves and capture their own image, but this alone, the star of the photo is just seen as a "publicity seeker" and won't get very far.

A shot of Audrey in Via Condotti, giving money to a woman who is holding a child and begging for alms. Rome, 1970.

A group of paparazzi in a scene from the film *La Dolce Vita* by Federico Fellini. Rome, 1960.

In a nutshell, what is the difference between a picture taken by a fashion photographer and a shot snapped by a paparazzo? In your opinion, what does each one capture?
The fashion photographer is considered the poet of the image, because they've mastered the art of portraying their subject in the best light through their lens; they specialise in harmonising colours, capturing a glance, extrapolating beauty and chronicling it on photo paper. The paparazzo, on the other hand, uses a telephoto lens to take "au naturel" photos, either covertly or officially, that will forever be etched in history. The paparazzo is a type of reporter invented by Fellini, and was therefore made in Italy, but ultimately exported all over the world. That's why I'm proud to be a paparazzo.

With smartphones and tablets, everyone thinks they can snap a shot that will cause a stir. What gives you the edge as a professional?
First of all, I think that all these amateurs, who don't even respect privacy, won't last long in this industry; a true reporter, on the other hand, takes responsibility for the images they put out and has ethics. There have been certain photos, for example, that I never published, because there's no sense in destroying someone's character with something that might just end up being fake news. However, when the news is true and there's a chance to make a scoop, for better or worse, I'm going to take it. At the end of the day, it's my job. I hope that, in two or three years' time, things will change. The key could be to make these "impromptu" photographers pay for the pictures they post – that would certainly change everything.

How do you demonstrate your ethics as a paparazzo?
By being as respectful as possible, because you have to bring home the result and, at the end of the day, the one who decides what to publish and what not is the newspaper you work for.
Photos are taken with the head – you have to understand who's in front of you, capture a fleeting expression and notice the small details. The photographer is the "heart" of news, fashion and film

***Rino Barillari**
Assault photographer

Interview conducted by Alessandra Dolci in collaboration with Andrea Romano.

A memory to last a lifetime

by Gian Paolo Barbieri*

These pages:
Audrey wearing a stunning
shawl by Valentino.
Rome, 1969.

I have the pleasure of being able to share with a new world (the banking world) one of the moments in my life that I remember most fondly.

The year was 1969, and I was in Rome, a city steeped in history and culture, where every corner has a story to tell. I was nervous, but at the same time, I just could not wait for that special moment to arrive. Audrey Hepburn, the actress who had captivated the entire world with her beauty and talent, was going to be my model for the day. We were going to work together to shoot the new collection of capes by the famous designer Valentino, and I was in his studio, primed and ready to capture the essence of Audrey through my camera lens. When she entered the studio, the first thing she said to me was that she had brought her slippers with her because she did not want to scuff the floor – a gesture that immediately showed me just how gracious she was. Her face, lit up by a radiant smile, reflected her joy at having just got married to Dr Andrea Dotti. She moved with an innate gracefulness, almost dancing in space awaiting my directions. She was simply divine. Valentino's shawls were a tool with which I enhanced her natural grace. I draped them around her head with care, as if she were a precious flower. This was my first thought when I saw her enter the studio – she was as delicate as a newly blossomed flower. I was able to capture the "graphic quality" and harmony of her face, turning each shot into a work of art. We achieved something truly spectacular that day, and Audrey really does deserve much of the credit. Her energy, vitality and ability to connect with me made everything so naturally beautiful. This experience was like a magical synergy between the model and the photographer, a meeting of two creative souls that created images that are still etched in the minds of those who behold them.

The power of the shots I had captured with my camera was evident. And photography did indeed play a central role throughout Audrey's career. Not only was she immortalised in numerous successful films, stills of her performances have been captured forever in photographs celebrating her undying grace and beauty. Photographs of Audrey helped differentiate her from the other faces of Hollywood's golden age. She had this special ability to communicate deep and authentic emotions through the photographer's lens – her enchanting gaze, infectious smile and unique expressiveness were transposed into images that touched people's hearts. Even today, these photographs are able to convey a charm and beauty that transcend fashions and trends. Thanks to photography, the actress's face has become a symbol of sophistication and good taste, a beacon of inspiration for all generations, including those of today.

The relationship between the subject being photographed and the photographer is key to creating powerful images. In my personal experience, the complicity between Audrey and me was apparent from the first few shots. I tried to provide a window to her soul and her multifaceted personality, and managed to bring out her sensuality, but also her sweetness and vulnerability, through my lens. The trust she placed in me allowed me to take some extraordinary and genuine photographs that revealed the real Audrey Hepburn hidden behind the façade of the Hollywood star.

But the world of photography has undergone a series of significant changes over the years. That creative freedom, which used to belong to the photographer, was radically different from what it is today. At one time, the photographer was like the creative "pilot", the captain of the ship directing the course of the artistic process. Interactions with other professionals, such as designers, were more direct and personal. Photographers could give their imagination free rein at every stage of the process. The day I had the opportunity to wrap Audrey Hepburn's head with Valentino shawls, I did not have to worry about complex procedures or creative limitations. It was a moment when my creativity could shine in all its splendid freedom. However, over time, the world of photography has undergone a series of significant changes. Departments started popping up everywhere and the need to involve specialist staff increased, drastically reducing a photographer's creative scope on set.

Whereas before I could oversee every aspect, from hair and make-up and set design to lighting and props, responsibilities are now divided between different professions. This change brought with it advantages in terms of efficiency, but it also limited the freedom of expression I once enjoyed.

For several generations, Audrey Hepburn was the paragon of beauty and style. Her way of dressing, innate grace and infectious smile have been an inspiration to many, and her impact on fashion and culture is still evident to this day. But Audrey Hepburn was much more than just a fashion icon – she was the picture of altruism and social commitment. She was deeply affected by all the misery in the world and embraced the UNICEF cause wholeheartedly, becoming a particularly present, active and generous UNICEF ambassador. And she did all this without any ostentation, without seeking attention or recognition. Her dedication to the most vulnerable people in society has made the world a better place and inspired many others to do the same.

In many ways, Audrey Hepburn was a princess without a fairytale, a one-of-a-kind human being who left an indelible mark on culture and humanity itself.

With a Valentino shawl wrapped around her head. Rome, 1969.

Her legacy goes beyond the worlds of film and fashion; it is a testament to her kindness, compassion and eternal beauty. Audrey Hepburn will forever remain one of the most beloved and iconic figures of the 20th century, a shining beacon for present and future generations.

With a smile that will always have a special place in my heart.

***Gian Paolo Barbieri**
Photographer

An honorary Vaudois

by Eileen Hofer*

Left:
With Andrea Dotti
on their wedding day.
Morges, 18 January 1969.

This page:
The bust dedicated to
Audrey Hepburn in the district
of Morges in Tolochenaz.

In Tolochenaz and Morges, on the shores of Lake Geneva in the canton of Vaud, Audrey Hepburn left an indelible mark with her elegance, simplicity, modesty and, above all, her kindness.

"It's incredible! To the Japanese, Audrey Hepburn is like a saint!", exclaims Josiane Jacot. In Sandro Santoro's documentary *Some Girl* (2012), co-produced by the Fondazione Bolle, Josiane, who lives in Tolochenaz, is stunned by the stream of tourist buses that still stop in front of the house named "La Paisible", where the Oscar-winning actress spent a good part of her life, or at the entrance of the cemetery where her remains were laid to rest some 30 years ago. After the release of *Roman Holiday*, every Japanese woman wanted to get her hair cut like Audrey's character Princess Ann, immortalised in black and white in a salon in the Italian capital. Subsequent generations continued to adore her, and it is rare for Japanese tourists to visit Switzerland and not go on "pilgrimage" to Tolochenaz. For Josiane Jacot, however, the actress was first and foremost a kind and considerate neighbour, not an unapproachable diva in the slightest.

The opening of the exhibition "Audrey Hepburn, une vie en bande dessinée" ("Audrey Hepburn, a life in comics") on 1 July 2023 at the Bolle Museum in Morges stirred up many memories. To this day, a former classmate of Luca Dotti, Audrey's second son, still tends her grave, making sure it is kept clean and tidy. "A lot of letters and small gifts get left there by people paying their respects. I send them to Luca in Rome."

A shining star of world cinema, Audrey Hepburn fled from the out-and-out meat grinder that was, and still is, Hollywood to go to live like a regular person in French-speaking Switzerland. In 1963, she decided to make the canton of Vaud her home, more specifically a charming country manor called "La Paisible", complete with an orchard and a vegetable garden. When she was not on the road shooting a film, she could be found there in her beloved garden. The *Breakfast at Tiffany's* (1961) actress mostly grew roses and tulips, her favourite flowers. Luca recalls the day when his mother arrived in the village of Tolochenaz:

> "The neighbours knew that a big American star was going to be moving into this house. They eagerly awaited her arrival, expecting to see her pull up in the back seat of a huge limousine; in reality, she was sitting next to the movers in their van".

The epitome of simplicity.

Audrey Hepburn married Andrea Dotti, an Italian psychiatrist nine years her senior, in 1969 at the town hall in Morges. The paparazzi flocked to the exit to capture the perfect shot. Just around the corner, the market is still held every Wednesday and Saturday on the pedestrianised Grand-Rue, where artisans and traders offer the fruits of their labour in a quiet and relaxed atmosphere: at one time, it was the perfect opportunity for the actress to blend into the crowd in jeans or a gingham dress,

The poster for the exhibition "Audrey Hepburn, une vie en bande dessinée" ("Audrey Hepburn, a life in comics"), at the Bolle Museum. Morges, July 2023.

Together with Robert Wolders, her last partner, and their beloved Jack Russell terriers at "La Paisible". Tolochenaz, 1990.

greet the neighbours with her beautiful smile, browse the stalls and then go back home with a bunch of asparagus, a chunk of Gruyère and a good bottle of Chasselas, her favourite white wine. With her wicker bag almost full to the brim, she would return home with her Jack Russells and her last love, Robert Wolders, who would stay by her side in the last years of her life, even during her trips abroad as UNICEF ambassador.

The Morges tourist office offers a tour, where you can follow in the footsteps of the actress on a seven-kilometre route, which takes three hours to complete. If one thing is for sure, it is that privacy is sacred in these parts, and is respected by and for everyone. After l'Hôtel-de-Ville (the town hall) and the market, for example, you reach the spot once occupied by the Dumas grocery shop, where the owners would let Audrey slip out through the back door to escape the Milanese paparazzi who were hounding her. Next, you come to the Bolle Museum, which pays homage to the actress every summer with exhibitions dedicated to her and her career. The route continues in the direction of Tolochenaz. The first stop here is the mural painted in 2018, where the pavilion that housed the Oscar statuette won by the actress in 1954 used to stand. You then continue on to the church where her funeral was held, and ultimately reach "La Paisible", the home she once lived in, which was re-purchased by her family in 2000. On the main square, which is named after her, you will be greeted by a bust, which was donated to the local people by her children.

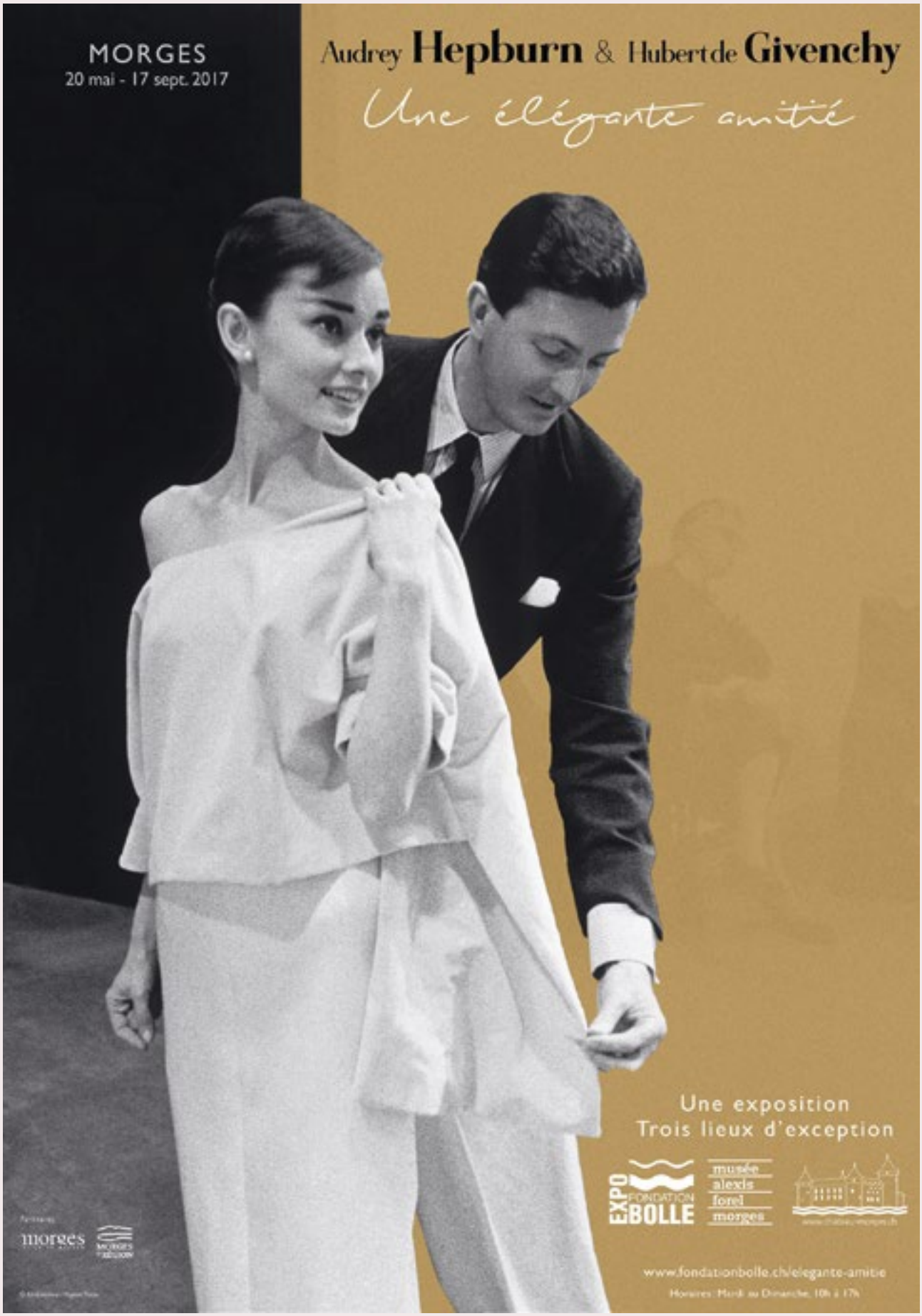
Pierluigi Orunesu, whose parents worked at "La Paisible", is the godson of Sean Ferrer, Audrey's eldest son. In *Some Girl,* he recalls the gift baskets that the actress used to put together: "We received them every year. It was her way of telling us that she loved us." Christa Roth, from the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), worked alongside the special ambassador of her organisation in the last five years of her life. At the grand opening last July, she shared a memory, smiling:

> "I had posters of her in my bedroom when I was a teenager. I never would have imaged that I would one day call her a friend, let alone sleep in her home. For my 50th birthday, Audrey insisted that I invite my friends over for lunch at her home."

A token of her generosity and friendship.

The funeral, which was held on 24 January 1993, was attended by Audrey's family, as well as Mel Ferrer, Hubert de Givenchy, Roger Moore and Alain Delon. Away from the cameras, over 700 Tolochenaz residents and anonymous admirers waited outside in the cold, with flowers in their hands and tears in their eyes. The angel who lived among them had just got her wings.

***Eileen Hofer**
Journalist, writer and filmmaker


MORGES
20 mai - 17 sept. 2017
Audrey Hepburn & Hubert de Givenchy
Une élégante amitié
Une exposition
Trois lieux d'exception
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The summer event at the Bolle Museum

How did an Italian football fan come to be the director of the Bolle Museum, the only museum in the world to hold an exhibition dedicated to Audrey Hepburn every summer?
Salvatore Gervasi, the current curator/conservator of the Bolle Museum, made a career working at a surveyors office. Audrey Hepburn, the world-famous Hollywood actress, became an ordinary citizen of Morges. So what could these two extraordinary people possibly have in common?

"It all began in 2008, when I gave a talk at the Rotary Club in Morges in front of Mr Bolle and Mr Rattaz, two representatives of the Fondazione Bolle. They had just renovated their premises and offered to let me display a collection of historical postcards from the Vaud Riviera free of charge. In those days, my wife Nicole and I opened two afternoons a week and opened up two rooms to host our friends at cocktail hour on Saturdays." In the years that followed, Salvatore and Nicole organised exhibitions that would bring in up to 500 visitors a year. And up until this point, there was nothing unusual about this. "In 2010, while my wife and I were preparing to set out on a motorcycle tour across South America, I was given 40 XXL photos of the star: original shots with the film to boot. The actress had spent the last 30 years of her life living in Tolochenaz, near Morges, and the Audrey Hepburn Pavilion, which was located there, had just closed its doors and wanted to get rid of the photos. And so I accepted them, put them in my garage, and set off on my journey." At that time, Salvatore Gervasi only knew the Oscar-winning actress from the William Wyler film *Roman Holiday*. Upon his return, with the consent of Sean Ferrer and Luca Dotti, Audrey's two sons, he exhibited some of these photos. And they were an instant hit.

Initially a volunteer, Salvatore was then recruited by the Fondazione Bolle and, from that moment on, the Bolle Museum, which had since been extended with a third room, dedicated its summer exhibition to Audrey Hepburn – an event eagerly awaited year after year by fans all over the world. Gervasi watches the films and meets the friends of the honorary Vaudois diva. Over the years, he has curated several exhibitions dedicated to the actress, including "Audrey Hepburn, à la une" ("Audrey Hepburn in the headlines") in 2014, an exhibition presenting an array of original newspaper cuttings picked up at auction; two years later, the museum presented "Audrey

The poster for the exhibition "Audrey Hepburn & Hubert de Givenchy. Une élégante amitié" ("Audrey Hepburn & Hubert de Givenchy. An elegant friendship"). Bolle Museum, Alexis Forel Museum and Morges Castle, 2017.

This page:
The staging of the "Audrey Hepburn" exhibition at the Bolle Museum. Morges, 2019.

Hepburn et la mode" ("Audrey Hepburn and fashion"), swiftly followed by "Audrey Hepburn et le cinéma" ("Audrey Hepburn and cinema"), featuring a series of original posters and playbills. "Audrey en Suisse" ("Audrey in Switzerland"), on the other hand, recounts her years in Bürgenstock, Gstaad and the canton of Vaud. Last but not least, in 2023, the museum hosted the exhibition "Audrey Hepburn, une vie en bande déssinée" ("Audrey Hepburn, a life in comics"), showcasing pieces designed by French illustrator Christopher.

Robert Wolders, Audrey's last partner, was one of the exhibition's most loyal visitors, attending the event no fewer than four times before he himself passed away in California in 2018. "I would send him an initiation to Los Angeles, where he moved after Audrey's death in 1993. He would spend three days in our region before heading back home. We would go out to dinner together, enjoying perch fillets. I have always cherished this memory of a lovely man. He left me his personal collection of photos taken during his trips with UNICEF: around 500 shots that now belong to me." To date, Salvatore Gervasi has curated a total of nine exhibitions, but one of them made a permanent mark on his life.

It is 2016, and the phone rings. "Hello, my name is Hubert de Givenchy." At first, Salvatore thinks that this must be some sort of joke, but then recalls his desire to organise an exhibition on the friendship between Hubert and Audrey. At the request of this celebrated designer, who was in his nineties at this point, Salvatore takes the first high-speed train he can. Once Salvatore arrives at the home of the *enfant terrible* of *haute couture*, de Givenchy asks him if he loves fashion: "No, I'm Italian and I love football, but I am really touched by your friendship." Bingo! "I thought that we might just exhibit a couple of dresses and a few drawings." But Salvatore has not reckoned with the demands of his host, or rather the designer, who is keen for him to display 55 garments all over Europe, including the iconic little black dress from *Breakfast at Tiffany's*. Gervasi sighs: "Oh no, I didn't want that!". But Givenchy lobbied a Spanish minister, who then called me up. And so I ultimately agreed, through gritted teeth and with a heavy heart. It cost me 150'000 Swiss francs to transport the dress from Madrid – and I hadn't even done a fundraiser. In the end, we occupied 600 square metres of space between Morges Castle, our museum and Musée Alexis Forel." The exhibition cost 1,3 million Swiss francs – four times more than expected. "Hubert paid us a visit one week before the grand opening, and he was moved to tears, telling me that Audrey would have been proud. And he asked me if I wanted to remain friends. What an honour!" In three months, "Audrey Hepburn & Hubert de Givenchy. Une élégante amitié" ("Audrey Hepburn & Hubert de Givenchy. An elegant friendship"), which chronicled a friendship spanning 40 years, attracted 25'000 visitors. At the closing of the exhibition, Salvatore Gervasi wanted to return the 85 sketches drawn by the designer. But, as he points out in amazement: "He gifted them to me!" He concludes: "In 2024, before I retire, I want to exhibit them."

Left:
Some of the sketches drawn by Hubert de Givenchy for Audrey Hepburn and displayed at the Bolle Museum. Morges, 2023.

A view of the staging of the exhibition "Audrey Hepburn & Hubert de Givenchy. Une élégante amitié". Bolle Museum, Alexis Forel Museum and Morges Castle, 2017.

Text written and produced by Eileen Hofer in collaboration with Salvatore Gervasi, Director of the Bolle Museum in Morges


AUDREY HEPBURN
FRED ASTAIRE
PRESENTED IN A REAL NEW DIMENSION
IN MOTION PICTURE ENTERTAINMENT.
FUNNY FACE
KAY THOMPSON
with MICHEL AUCLAIR
ROBERT FLEMYNG
VISTAVISION
TECHNICOLOR
A PARAMOUNT PICTURE

Filmography

Film

- *Dutch in Seven Lessons*, directed by Charles Huguenot van der Linden and Heinz Josephson (1948)
- *One Wild Oat*, directed by Charles Saunders (1951)
- *Young Wives' Tale*, directed by Henry Cass (1951)
- *Laughter in Paradise*, directed by Mario Zampi (1951)
- *The Lavender Hill Mob*, directed by Charles Crichton (1951)
- *The Secret People*, directed by Thorold Dickinson (1951)
- *Monte Carlo Baby*, directed by Jean Boyer and Lester Fuller (1951)
- *Baby Beats the Band*, remake, directed by Jean Boyer and Lester Fuller (1952)
- *Roman Holiday*, directed by William Wyler (1953)
- *Sabrina*, directed by Billy Wilder (1954)
- *War and Peace*, directed by King Vidor (1956)
- *Funny Face*, directed by Stanley Donen (1957)
- *Love in the Afternoon*, directed by Billy Wilder (1957)
- *Green Mansions*, directed by Mel Ferrer (1958)
- *The Nun's Story*, directed by Fred Zinnemann (1959)
- *The Unforgiven*, directed by John Huston (1960)
- *Breakfast at Tiffany's*, directed by Blake Edwards (1961)
- *The Children's Hour*, directed by William Wyler (1961)
- *Charade*, directed by Stanley Donen (1963)
- *Paris When It Sizzles*, directed by Richard Quine (1964)
- *My Fair Lady*, directed by George Cukor (1964)
- *How to Steal a Million*, directed by William Wyler (1966)
- *Two for the Road*, directed by Stanley Donen (1967)
- *Wait Until Dark*, directed by Terence Young (1967)
- *Robin and Marian*, directed by Richard Lester (1976)
- *Bloodline*, directed by Terence Young (1979)
- *They All Laughed*, directed by Peter Bogdanovich (1981)
- *Always*, directed by Steven Spielberg (1989)

Television

- *CBS Television Workshop* – TV series, 1 episode (1952)
- *Mayerling*, directed by Anatole Litvak – TV film (1957)
- *Love Among Thieves*, directed by Roger Young – TV film (1987)
- *Gardens of the World with Audrey Hepburn* – TV programme (1993)

Theatre

- *High Button Shoes*, stage musical (1949)
- *Sauce Tartare*, stage musical (1949)
- *Sauce Piquante*, stage musical (1950)
- *Gigi*, play (1951)
- *Ondine*, play (1954)

The poster for the film *Funny Face*, 1957.

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In a scene from *Always*, the last film in which she appeared, 1989.

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