



La lunga strada di sabbia

Photographs by Paolo Di Paolo

Silvia Di Paolo

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- Paolo Di Paolo shows the changing Italy of the late 1950s in an incomparable way: personal, humorous and special
- Many photos published for the first time from the famous reportages *La lunga strada di sabbia* with Pier Paolo Pasolini
- A unique insight into a rediscovered documentary photo archive

The extraordinary picture story by Paolo Di Paolo, which documents and narrates Italians on vacation during Summer 1959, from the Tyrrhenian to the Adriatic Sea; from Ventimiglia to Trieste (from the western to the eastern border). In 1959 Paolo Di Paolo is a 34-year-old photographer collaborating with the cultural weekly magazine *Il Mondo* directed by Mario Pannunzio, and the widely distributed magazine *Tempo*. Pier Paolo Pasolini is a promising 37-year-old writer who had published *The Best of Youth*, *The Street Kids* and *A Violent Life*. He is not yet a film director. In Italy, the “economic miracle” has just begun. The newspapers tend to offer to Italian families a microcosm of mythical characters as a diversion to the dullness and fear of war, emigration, and poverty. Arturo Tofanelli, editor in chief of the monthly *Successo* and the weekly *Tempo*, entrusts the two young men, Di Paolo and Pasolini, who did not know each other, to do a report on the Italian Summer Holidays that will be published by *Successo* magazine in three issues (July, August and September 1959). The writer and the photographer set off from Ventimiglia together, with the plan of travelling through the coasts of Italy to the south and climbing up to Trieste. But they have different visions. “Pasolini was looking for a lost world of literary ghosts, an Italy that no longer existed,” recalls Di Paolo. “I was looking for an Italy that was looking to the future. I conceived the title The Long Road of Sand meaning the strenuous road traveled by Italians to reach well-being and holidays after the War.” A complex, delicate partnership is born between Pasolini and Di Paolo, they will travel together only the first stage of this journey, but this experience would later be consolidated in mutual respect and trust.

Text in English, German and Italian.

Born on May 17, 1925 in Larino (Molise), **Paolo Di Paolo** moves to Rome immediately after the war and enrolls a course of History and Philosophy at La Sapienza University. He becomes close to the Roman art scene, in particular with the Forma 1 artists, developing his interest in the figurative arts through the photographic medium. His debut as a photographer takes place as an amateur, meaning “photographing for pleasure”. In 1954 his first photo is published in the cultural weekly *Il Mondo* directed by Mario Pannunzio, in which, until the newspaper closes in 1966, Di Paolo is the most published photographer. Between 1954 and 1956 he collaborates with *La Settimana Incom Illustrata* and in the same period he begins a long-term partnership with the weekly *Tempo*, which lasts until its closure. Numerous reportages are signed with the most successful journalists of the time. As an Envoy, he travels to the Soviet Union, Iran, Japan, the United States, as well as across Europe. Thanks to the friendships established in the cinema and the art world, he creates private and exclusive photos of the greatest intellectuals, artists, actors, and directors of the time; he’s mostly focused on documenting the society and people, reporting the changes from post-war to the “economic boom”. He concludes his photographic career in tandem with Irene Brin, a well-known costume journalist, focusing on fashion assignments and jet-set reportages. With the advent of television and the paparazzi, the closure of many newspapers and the gossip-oriented press, in 1968 Paolo Di Paolo decides to stop taking photographs and to devote himself to studies, curating as historian and graphic designer editions for the Arma di Carabinieri Corps.

