

SOPHIA LOREN



Sophia Loren was once described as Italy's most perfect – and enigmatic – work of art since the Mona Lisa. Called "more than a movie star, a force of nature", she is a truly international artist whose career spans a remarkable five decades.

Sofia Scicolone grew up near Naples in the town of Pozzuoli. In conditions of near poverty, she, her mother and younger sister experienced the hardships of World War II and early post-war years.

A modest prize drew the teenaged Sofia to a beauty contest in Rome, where she placed second. This contest proved far more important for another reason, for it was here that movie producer and future husband Carlo Ponti first saw her. Ponti gave her a screen test and, before long, Sophia Loren (as she was by then known) was among the film world's leading stars.

She has made more than 100 films, appearing opposite the likes of Marlon Brando, Clark Gable, Marcello Mastroianni, Peter Sellers, Gregory Peck, Paul Newman, Peter O'Toole, Omar Sharif, Richard Burton, Walter Matthau and Cary Grant. In 1960, Sophia Loren became the first actor in a foreign film honored with a Best Actress Academy Award, for her portrayal of a mother in war-ravaged Italy in Vittorio De Sica's *Two Women*. She received the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences' Oscar for Lifetime Achievement in 1980.

Sophia Loren's 100th film, *Between Strangers*, was directed by her son Edoardo Ponti. Her other son, Carlo Ponti, Jr., is a highly regarded orchestra conductor.

Active in many charity causes, Sophia Loren is especially devoted to programs that improve the lives of young people.