



Città
di Locarno



Museo
Casorella

piazzanostra and Museo Casorella press release

Locarno, 27 July 2025

piazzanostra: We are the festival too!

New voices on the history of the Locarno Film Festival

Exhibition in the Museo Casorella and Stories in the Cityscape

6 August – 10 January 2026, Museo Casorella

Pre-opening for media creators

4 August 2026, 11:00 am, Museo Casorella

Please register by email: info@piazzanostra.ch

Vernissage

8 August 2026, 2:00 pm, with *Apéro* to follow, Museo Casorella

Please register by email: info@piazzanostra.ch

Exhibition and Traces in the Cityscape

From 6 August 2026 through 10 January 2027, an exhibition in Museo Casorella in Locarno focuses in on as yet untold stories of the Locarno Film Festival: in video interviews, people who worked for or lived near the festival, festival attendees and small business owners talk about their day-to-day work and share experiences and anecdotes from the history of the festival. The piazzanostra project (www.piazzanostra.ch) was launched by the historians Cyril Cordoba ([Universität Freiburg](#)) and Joséphine Métraux ([métraux&](#)).

The exhibition was created in partnership with the City of Locarno and the Locarno Film Festival. It has two parts:

1. An **exhibition in the inner courtyard of the Museo Casorella**: in the festival's projection booth, which used to stand on the Piazza Grande, the exhibition presents information about the background of the project and selected images from the archives of Cinémathèque suisse. The booth is itself a historical object: it was designed in 1990 by Patricia Boillat (co-founder of the festival's "Image & Sound" department) and the architect Rolando Ulmi, who based it on the idea of the earlier model, the projection booth created in 1971 by architects Livio Vacchini and Luigi Snozzi, who repurposed two swimming pools without further ado to serve this purpose for their project to transform the Piazza Grande into a giant cinema.

2. While the exhibition is underway, visitors can follow a **folding map** to **various locations around the city** that crop up again and again in the stories told by contemporary witnesses. There, visitors can watch excerpts from around 50 video interviews (conducted by the piazza nostra team between August 2024 and November 2025) of people who attended, worked at or lived near the festival in the past. Thus, visitors can hear their stories, memories and anecdotes right in their original settings across the cityscape around the festival. Drawing from over 100 hours of filmed material, the piazza nostra team created seven short videos that can be accessed via smartphones at these selected locations. Thus, visitors will learn how the Grand Hotel, with its enchanting park and its legendary swimming pool, came to be one of the festival's most important gathering points. Or about the work involved in transforming the Piazza Grande into a cinema.

The video recordings of the contemporary witness interviews, in full length, will be archived in the **Cinémathèque suisse** once the project comes to an end, to ensure that they remain accessible to researchers and the public. All project information as well as all the videos can be accessed from the project website.

The presentation of piazza nostra at the Museo Casorella is part of a comprehensive effort by the city of Locarno to strengthen the role of its museums as sites of memory, mediation, and the promotion of audiovisual heritage. By engaging in a dialogue with the Locarno Film Festival, PalaCinema, and local archives, and by incorporating the urban landscape, the project helps foster a shared understanding of Locarno as a city of cinema. Thus, the history of the festival is not limited to the screen; it also integrates the places, narratives, and experiences of those who made it possible. This approach aligns with Locarno's ongoing bid for the UNESCO Creative Cities Network in the field of film, with an emphasis on cultural participation, the preservation of memory, and the territorial integration of audiovisual heritage.

The piazza nostra project: background and a publication on the history of the festival

The Locarno Film Festival (LFF) was founded in 1946, making it one of the world's oldest and prestigious film festivals. Over the decades, this important cultural event has had a profound influence on the life in the region and on the cultural landscape in Switzerland as a whole. A global platform for film makers and film lovers, the festival is celebrating its 80th anniversary in 2026.

The first 40 years of the festival were accompanied by numerous scandals. The festival was seen as subversive in the very conservative-minded Switzerland of that period. Historian Cyril Cordoba, co-leader of the piazza nostra project, examines these controversies in the context of the contemporary cultural and social tensions in his recently released book *Désaccords à Locarno: une histoire politique du Festival international du film (1946–1991)*.

The 1980s did not mark the end of the festival's history, though. On the contrary, it has grown significantly since then, realigned itself and experienced many technological changes. Who and what does it take to make a film festival possible? Countless people organise, attend and observe the

LFF every year, although most of them go unmentioned in the official accounts of the festival's history.

With piazza nostra, some of these people and voices become visible and audible: the collection of voices enables visitors to discover stories not previously known, information once hidden away and unforgettable anecdotes relating to the Locarno Film Festival.

Further information

Museo Casorella: www.museocasorella.ch

Website: www.piazzanostra.ch

Instagram: [@piazzanostra](https://www.instagram.com/piazzanostra)

Museo Casorella opening times

Tuesday through Sunday and holidays 10:00 am – 4:30 pm

During the festival from August 6 to August 18, the exhibition will be open until 11 PM.

Address: Museo Casorella e Castello Visconteo, Via Bartolomeo Rusca 5, 6600 Locarno

Press images and map (PDF) available for use free of charge: <https://piazzanos-tra.ch/en/news/press-kit-2026>

Publication

The book *Désaccords à Locarno: une histoire politique du Festival international du film (1946-1991)* by Cyril Cordoba is available in the Locarno Film Festival 2026 shop, in the Museo Casa Rusca as well as via the following link: <https://www.alphil.com/livres/1520-desaccords-a-lo-carno-.html>

Persons responsible for the project

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