

A person is seen from the side, holding a large, dark, textured object that resembles a tree trunk or a large log. They are standing in a forest of tall, thin, bare trees. The ground is covered in fallen leaves, and the sky is a clear, bright blue. In the background, a hillside with a railing and a street lamp is visible.

THE WALKING FOREST

a documentary by Maria Giménez Cavallo

Once upon a time in the heart of Basilicata,
there was a town where men transformed themselves into trees.



In the ancient Carneval tradition, the figure of a tree walked anonymously and alone.

This so called "romita", or hermit, would bring good fortune in exchange for something to eat.



In 2012, filmmaker Michelangelo Frammartino came here to film *Alberi*, a cine-installation projected at the MOMA in NY.

Taking a cue from this ancient tradition, Frammartino staged a hundred men dressed as trees, creating a walking forest in the middle of the town square.

Following the film, the townspeople decided to expand this solitary ritual.

This festival is no longer about a few hermits, but the whole community together.

A single tree has now become a forest.



A forest of men, women, and children, all transformed into trees. They dance and celebrate community, life, and nature.

This carnival is their prayer, a hope for a future world in harmony with nature and in peace with the Earth.



Director's statement:

With the help of a Bolex camera and 3 rolls of 16mm, I journeyed down to the depths of Basilicata to film the magical walking forest in Satriano di Lucania.

Inspired by Michelangelo Frammartino's *Alberi* (2013), I wanted to experience the magic of a hundred tree-men emerging from the woods to dance in the town square.

This documentary explores the evolution of this ancestral tradition and celebrates the union of humans and the natural world.

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