

Document Citation

Title	La donna scimmia
Author(s)	Gaetano Strazzulla
Source	<i>International Film Guide</i>
Date	
Type	review
Language	English
Pagination	99-101
No. of Pages	2
Subjects	
Film Subjects	La donna scimmia (The ape woman), Ferreri, Marco, 1963

reviews

LA DONNA SCIMMIA
(The Ape Woman)

by Gaetano Strazzulla

Script: Rafael Azcona and Marco Ferreri; Direction: Marco Ferreri; Photography: Aldo Tonti; Music: Teo Usuelli; Editing: Mario Serandrei; Players: Ugo Tognazzi, Annie Girardot, Achille Majeroni, Filippo Pompa Marcelli. For Carlo Ponti/Champion/Les Films Marceau-Cocinor.

DRAWING inspiration from the story of Monica Pastrana (one of Great Barnum's most sensational attractions), director Marco Ferreri with his inseparable screenwriter, Rafael Azcona, has confirmed the talents brilliantly displayed in *El cochecito* and *Ape regina* in producing the grotesque *Donna Scimmia*, with its outstanding blend of cruelty and pity, fierceness and satire. The story of a layabout, who, after discovering a freakish girl with a thick forest of hair all over



Annie Girardot and Ugo Tognazzi in Marco Ferreri's LA DONNA SCIMMIA

her body, exploits her abnormality, serving her up to the public's morbid curiosity, supplies Ferreri with ample opportunity for a merciless indictment of the materialistic, mercenary mind of certain profiteers with little or no scruples. According to Ferreri, whose taste for excess and paradox has been rightly compared with Bunuel's, the real freak in the story is not Maria (Annie Girardot), the ape-woman, but Antonio Focaccia (Ugo Tognazzi), the man who buys her and marries her to make profit out of her physical degradation. Apart from some slips and boring moments in its last section, this film runs quickly and smoothly to its climax in the hallucinating, heart-rending wedding scene. It is an admirable picture because of Ferreri's courage in telling an imaginary story, which is nevertheless very true, very human, and full of honesty and compassion.