

## PERSONAL BIOGRAPHY

### LELLA COSTA

Lella (Gabriella) Costa lives in Milano, Italy, is married and has three daughters.

While pursuing her university studies in humanities, she fell in love with theater and obtained a diploma, with golden medal, from the “Accademia dei Filodrammatici”, a famous Italian theatrical academy.

Her first performance was “Repertorio, cioè l’orfana e il reggicalze” (“Inventory, that is the orphan girl and the suspender belt”), a monologue by Stella Leonetti, in 1980.

This was the beginning of her career as an actress, which soon included radio broadcasts and cabaret shows.

In 1987, she debuted as an author, with “Adlib”, and one year later, with “Coincidences”.

The success, unexpected but of course very welcome, brought along some TV (“The girls’ TV”, “Play your game”, “Eightynomoreighty”, “The nine’s game”, the famous “Maurizio Costanzo Show”), and even some cinema (“Thieves of soap cakes” by Maurizio Nichetti, “Private visions” by Francesco Calogero).

In 1990, she returned to the theater with her third monologue, “Thin illness”, a sort of ironic-poetic reflection on her cherished theme of memories.

In 1992, she performed in “Two”, her first and - until now - only play not based on a monologue. After that, she went on a long tour, first with “Lumps in the throat”, and then with “The sword in the loden overcoat”. In 1996 and 1997 she presented “Tired of war”, written together with Alessandro Baricco. In 1998 “Another story”, in addition to a daily morning talk at the radio. After several TV and radio performances, she presented a new play “Precise words”, from “Othello”, in 2000, and one year later she participated in “The vagina monologues” by Eve Ensler.

In 2002, a new play “Traviata” (“Mised”), with over 250 performances, also broadcasted on TV.

In 2005, she presented her last work “Alice, a country wonder”, directed by Giorgio Gallione.

Summing up, Lella Costa and her theater are a long, enduring, extraordinary adventure of looks and words, in an uninterrupted monologue/dialogue before/with the public.

Her texts have been published in three books, “The sword in the loden overcoat” (1992), “Which face to show” (1998), and “On tour” (2002), all by Feltrinelli. Currently, she has a regular column in the magazine “Anna”.

Apart from her writings and her theater, radio and TV performances, she is actively engaged in humanitarian initiatives, above all in support of the medical interventions of “Emergency” ([www.emergency.it](http://www.emergency.it)) in war-ravaged countries.

As a woman and mother of three daughters, she is keenly aware of the osteoporosis problem, and has participated in several initiatives by the Lega Italiana Osteoporosi.



## FACT SHEET – ITALY

### LELLA COSTA

#### The Facts

- Osteoporosis is not considered a healthcare priority in Italy
- Evidence based guidelines and consensus only exist at the local or regional level and are defined by local scientific societies
- Recommendations and guidelines for general practitioners have been prepared by the largest association of GPs (FIMMG), Lega Italian Osteoporosis (LIOS), a union of hospital doctors (ANAAO) and Tribunale per i Diritti del Malato (TDM) and published in 2001.
- In the public health system, DXAs are reimbursed only in the presence of risk factors, and the rules are different from in each of the 21 regions of Italy. In most regions, age 65 and over is not considered a risk factor. In the absence of risk factors, DXAs are paid for by the patient.
- In the public health system, tests, X-rays and specialist visits are fully reimbursed only for those over 65 years. For those under 65, there is a partial reimbursement
- There is currently no dedicated government budget available to help fight osteoporosis.
- In the absence of vertebral or hip fractures, therapy for the primary prevention of osteoporosis (even if diagnosed according to WHO criteria) must be paid in full by the patient. Before the first fracture, drug therapy for osteoporosis is reimbursed only for post-menopausal women and men on long-term corticosteroid therapy.

Progress has been made since the First Women Leader's Roundtable as follows:

- In 2003 LIOS participated in the "Inquiry on Osteoporosis" promoted by the "12<sup>th</sup> Hygiene and Health Commission" of the Italian Senate, aimed at evaluating the status of osteoporosis prevention, diagnosis and therapy in Italy.
- In 2003 LIOS delegates are appointed by Minister's decree as members of the Ministry of Health's "Working Group on Osteoporosis" to define new criteria for access to the diagnosis of osteoporosis. The aim is to achieve homogeneous criteria across the whole of Italy, rather than differing criteria from region to region.
- 2003 LIOS organizes her "First Italian Women's Round Table Against Osteoporosis", with the participation of several women from the political world, show business, the press and industry. The famous fashion creator Anna Molinari is appointed "First Ambassador" of the LIOS.
- In 2004, in collaboration with the "Società Italiana dell'Osteoporosi, del Metabolismo Minerale e delle Malattie dello Scheletro" (Italian Society for Osteoporosis, Mineral Metabolism and Skeletal Diseases, SIOMMMS) and the Institute of Psychology of the University of Milan, the LIOS launches a national project to evaluate the impact of osteoporosis on quality of life.

- In 2005 the LIOS, in collaboration with the Italian Senate, organizes a meeting of international experts and managers of the Italian regional Health Councils, on "Developing an intervention plan on osteoporosis in Italy costs and benefits" - in Rome, during the "Fifth European Congress on Clinical and Economic Aspects of Osteoporosis and Osteoarthritis"
- In 2005 the LIOS offers 10 "travel grants" to 10 young foreign researchers who sent abstracts to the "3rd International Conference on Children's Bone Health" (Sorrento, May 11-14, 2005), and participates in the conference with an information stand.
- In 2005, LIOS, in collaboration with the association NPSitalia, organizes a workshop "Affirming patients rights and organizing self-help for osteoporosis-affected citizens"

Although progress has been made, the situation in Italy remains patchy and further policy changes are required:

- Obtaining the official recognition of osteoporosis as a "chronic disease".
- Facilitating access to therapies by gaining reimbursement of drug treatment for those diagnosed with proven osteoporosis according to the WHO criteria regardless of age and sex and in the absence of previous fractures, including where osteoporosis is a secondary condition to chronic diseases.
- Implementing the proposals of the "Working Group on Osteoporosis" of the Health Ministry to achieve homogeneous access to diagnostic equipment for osteoporosis across all regions: they have been approved as a principle, but not yet implemented in practice. Currently provision is uneven. Readily available in Northern and Central Italy but much less so in the South and Islands.
- Continuing medical education programmes for GPs covering osteoporosis.
- Establishment of an official medical specialty in metabolic bone diseases for example a post-doctoral university degree recognised by the Ministry of Health.
- Government funding for information and prevention campaigns in collaboration with patient associations and scientific societies especially targeted at the young.

## **PERSONAL STATEMENT**

### **FINDING A WAY**

**LELLA COSTA**

I agreed-and I'm very proud of it-to participate in the Women Leaders' Roundtable because I do believe it's important to discuss the subject of osteoporosis not only on scientific premises ,but also as a subject that concerns the life and heart of women, all over the world.

My interest in Osteoporosis comes from an involvement in the Italian Osteoporosis Foundation (LIOS), mostly due to the passion and determination of Maria Luisa Bianchi. She asked me to be a testimonial for LIOS a few years ago, which allowed me to learn things I honestly ignored. I'm the lucky mother of three daughters- whom I've been breast feeding for over six months each!- and I want to share my awareness with them, and with every woman I get in touch with - it's our future we're talking about...

Even if I haven't personally witnessed any particular suffering from osteoporosis in relatives and friends of mine- my mother is eighty, and thanks to Maria Luisa's advice she started to take care of the problem a few years ago - I know what it means and brings to each person - I don't want to see twisted female bodies anymore...that's why I'm here

I am an actress, a comedian, and maybe something more. I write my scripts, go to TV talk-shows, collaborate with magazines - and I never forget the women's point of view, whatever subject it may concern. And this is my way of bringing women's problems to general attention, wherever whenever-in theaters or meetings, on radio or television shows, talking to hundreds of people or to my daughters' friends and mothers...

Of course I couldn't imagine a whole comedy, or drama, based on osteoporosis...but I can share my awareness, and advice about lifestyle and habits that can improve our health.

We often ignore what's really going on inside us- body and mind, blood and soul. We sort of need to take out what is hidden, or simply unknown. Those things we're afraid of - sometimes just words can do the miracle of turning a problem into a solution, a nightmare into a project.

That's why I'm here to-day. And that is the story I want to tell the women I'll meet in Toronto. Because telling stories is my job, my passion-and the only thing in the world I really can do!