

Le Stanze
della Fotografia

Ugo Mulas
L'operazione fotografica
29.3–6.8.23
Le Stanze della Fotografia

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[The Photography Rooms]

The joint initiative by Marsilio Arte and Fondazione Giorgio Cini

Opening to the public from 29 March 2023 with the exhibitions

“Ugo Mulas. L'operazione fotografica”
[*“Ugo Mulas. The photographic operation”*]

“Venezia alter Mundus”
[*Venice alter Mundus*]

Preview

Tuesday 28 March, 12 noon

On Wednesday 29 March 2023 “Le Stanze della Fotografia”, the new exhibition and research centre, will open to the public inside the Fondazione Giorgio Cini, in the Sale del Convitto, on the island of San Giorgio Maggiore in Venice, with an extensive and exhaustive retrospective devoted to Ugo Mulas, presenting an important selection of vintage images never exhibited before now, and with Alessandra Chemollo's photographs for the exhibition “Venezia alter mundus”.

“Le Stanze della Fotografia” is a joint initiative by Marsilio Arte and Fondazione Giorgio Cini intended to move further along the path begun in 2012 at La Casa dei Tre Oci in Venice – a historic Neo-Gothic building located on the island of Giudecca recently acquired from the Berggruen Institute – in the conviction that photography, among the most interesting modern and contemporary artistic languages, must continue to have its own specific “home” in Venice. **To complement the exhibition activities**, a dedicated Foundation will support research projects thanks to the contribution of the strategic partners **Fondazione di Venezia** and **San Marco Group**.

Over the last ten years **Marsilio Arte** has managed all the exhibitions and activities of La Casa dei Tre Oci, offering thirty exhibitions that have told the story of the work of the greatest photographers, including Elliott Erwitt, Sebastião Salgado, Gianni Berengo Gardin, Helmut Newton, David LaChapelle, Letizia Battaglia, Ferdinando Scianna and Mario De Biasi, in parallel with significant research activities conducted through exhibitions to rediscover authors such as René Burri, Willy Ronis, Henri Lartigue and Sabine Weiss, welcoming over 500,000 visitors in all.

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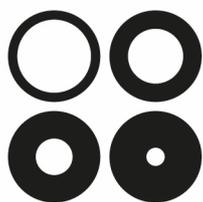
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The association between photography and the island of San Giorgio is a natural one, as the **Fondazione Giorgio Cini** hosts one of the most important photographic collections in Europe. This is a precious collection that over time has been enhanced with a photographic stock that is unique within the sphere of historical artistic research: a huge documentary heritage consisting of the photographic collections that have come into the possession of the Institute of the History of Art over time, belonging to important art historians, among whom Berenson, Bettini, Fiocco, Pallucchini, to journalists and writers, such as Ojetti, together with a conspicuous number of photographs produced from exchanges with other cultural institutions, from the relations existing over a number of decades between Vittorio Cini, the Fondazione Giorgio Cini and the Alinari company. Until 1970, this association contributed to the creation of the Photo Library, which today has almost a million photographs in its possession, freely consultable in the spaces of the Nuova Manica Lunga by scholars, researchers and enthusiasts, by appointment; and online, thanks to the major commitment made by the Fondazione Cini since the early 2000s to digitise its stock.

Conceived as a genuine **international centre for research and the appreciation of photography and the culture of the image**, alongside the exhibitions in Venice and in the other Italian and foreign cities, **the Stanze will offer laboratories, meetings, workshop, seminars with national and international photographers and master's degrees**, in continuity with the cultural design motivated the Casa dei Tre Oci to date, but with a drive and a vision that are even more international. With a view to this, various partnerships will be developed with the most important players in the world of photography, such as the Magnum Photos agency, the Parisian Jeu de Paume centre, the Médiathèque du patrimoine et de la photographie and the Musée de l'Elysée in Lausanne, to mention just a few.

The centre can rely on the creation of a **dedicated Foundation**, which will enable the research projects to be financed and supported, where strategic partners can meet, such as the **Fondazione di Venezia**, committed to the appreciation of photographic language ever since the purchase of the Casa dei Tre Oci in the 2000s, and which intends to promote the creation of an annual prize for photography aimed at young photographers, and the **San Marco Group**, leader in Italy in the sector of paints and varnishes for professional construction, which confirms its solid bond with the experience of the Tre Oci.

The artistic directorship of Le Stanze della Fotografia is entrusted to **Denis Curti**, who has fulfilled this role for the Tre Oci since 2012 and boasts vast experience in the world of photography. He has been director and founder, in 2014, of the galleria STILL in Milan, he is artistic director of the "Festival of Photography" in Capri and for five years he managed the "SI FEST" in Savignano sul Rubicone. He is executive director of the periodical *Black Camera* and Course Leader of the Master's in Photography at Raffles Milano. He has been curator of various exhibitions and author of various publications devoted to the great

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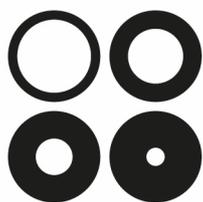
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Italian and international photographers and of two photography essays for Marsilio Editori: *Capire la Fotografia contemporanea* and *Il Mosaico del mondo. La mia vita messa a fuoco*, devoted to the biography of Maurizio Galimberti. In the 1990s he directed the photography section at the European Institute of Design in Turin and the Italian Foundation for Photography. For over 15 years a journalist and photography critic for the pages di *Vivimilano* and *Corriere della Sera*, from 2005 to 2014 he was also director of *Contrasto* and vice-president of the Fondazione Forma in Milan.

Research and exhibition activities are coordinated by the technical-scientific committee chaired by **Luca Massimo Barbero**, director of the Institute of History of Art of the Fondazione Giorgio Cini, and composed of **Emanuela Bassetti**, president of Marsilio Arte, **Chiara Casarin**, head of cultural development and communication for the Fondazione Giorgio Cini, artistic director **Denis Curti** and **Luca De Michellis**, managing director of Marsilio Arte.

The technical sponsors include **Distilleria Nardini**, the first distillery in Italy with over 240 years of history and tradition, **Grafica Veneta**, leader company in the publishing and printing of books and volumes, **iGuzzini**, international leader group in the sector of the architectural lighting, **NeoTech**, an I.T. services company specialising in the creation and development of audiovisual design layouts.

«When we inaugurated the exhibition by Sabine Weiss a year ago» – comments **Emanuela Bassetti**, president of Marsilio Arte –, «an event that concluded our experience at the Casa dei Tre Oci, we said that this would not mean the end of Marsilio's "photography in Venice" road, which went well beyond a building. A year later, with the exhibition by Ugo Mulas, we are delighted to inaugurate our new "home" on the island of San Giorgio, launching an ambitious international cultural project of research and memory in partnership with the Fondazione Giorgio Cini».

«Major attention has always been devoted by the Fondazione Giorgio Cini to photography, both as an art form and as historical artistic documentation, creating, at the instigation of Vittorio Cini himself, what today is one of the most extensive photo libraries in Italy and Europe», explains Giovanni Bazoli, president of the Fondazione Giorgio Cini. «The opening of the Le Stanze della Fotografia here on the island of San Giorgio Maggiore is therefore a new component enriching what is already an extensive and diverse cultural offer by the Fondazione Cini».

The building of the former boarding school that will host Le Stanze della Fotografia, which consists of around 1850 square metres structured over two levels, has been the subject of significant refurbishing and restoration work in order to enlarge and optimise the spaces; the work was carried out by the Studio of **Architects Pedron / La Tegola** with the special participation of the **Teatro La Fenice in Venice**, which has allowed the installation of light,

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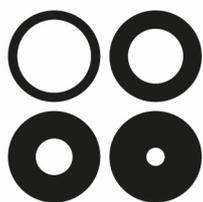
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movable walls, which, like **theatre scenes**, will be **re-adjustable to suit the various exhibition layouts**, with a view to the **sustainability of the cultural enterprise**. The bookshop, with a layout design created by the **Paolo Lucchetta Retail Design** studio, has been conceived as a bookshop proper and a fundamental space of welcome and encounter, and will offer an extensive range of its own publications, with specialist journals, magazine, essays, design articles and iconic objects.

Originally used for the warehouses of the customs service, the site took on its current form in around 1870. In 1952, with the birth of the Fondazione Giorgio Cini, the building became a boarding school and in 2007 was restored and turned into an exhibition centre. It is located in the north-east zone of the island of San Giorgio: on one long side it overlooks the adjacent foundations of the Darsena Grande; on one short side it looks out over the lagoon, which is visible from the interior thanks to two large, spectacular windows.

“Ugo Mulas. The Photographic Operation”

The exhibition **Ugo Mulas. The Photographic Operation**, which will be presented on the occasion of the inauguration of the new centre and will be visitable from 29 March to 6 August 2023, has been realised in collaboration with the Archivio Mulas and curated by Denis Curti and Alberto Salvadori, director of the archive. The project coincides with the 50th anniversary of the death of the author on 2 March 1973.

More than **300 images**, including **30 photographs never displayed before now**, **documents, books, publications and films**, offer a summary capable of offering an interpretation that opens up to the different experiences faced by Ugo Mulas (Pozzolengo, 1928 – Milan, 1973), a photographer transversal to all the pre-established genres and capable of investigating different themes, always seeking the depth of the “human quantity”.

Among the most important figures in post-WWII international photography, as a self-taught Mulas soon understood that being a photographer means providing a critical testimony of society, and it was precisely this awareness that guided his first photo reportage between 1953 and 1954: the Milanese periphery and the artistic and cultural environment of the famous Bar Jamaica in the early 1950s. Mulas quickly established himself in the various spheres of photography, from fashion to advertising, publishing in numerous magazines such as “Settimo Giorno”, “Rivista Pirelli”, “Domus” and “Vogue”. In those years the photographer developed an important artistic collaboration with Giorgio Strehler, thanks to which he would publish the photo reports “L'opera da tre soldi” [The Threepenny Opera] (1961) and “Schweyck nella seconda guerra mondiale” [Schweyck in the Second World War] (1962).

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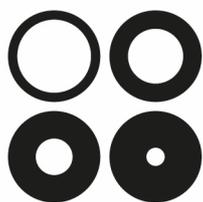


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Devoting attention to the world of art and artistic production became one of the Mulas' main interests; he photographed the editions of the Venice Biennale from 1954 to 1972. In 1962 he documented the exhibition "Sculture nella città" [Sculptures in the City] in Spoleto, where he associated himself above all with U.S. sculptors David Smith and Alexander Calder. From this period there is also the series devoted to *Ossi di Seppia* by Eugenio Montale (1962-1965). The summer of 1964 was significant for Mulas. U.S. Pop Art was introduced to the European public at the Venice Biennale; the photographer obtained the collaboration of critic Alan Solomon and the support of art dealer Leo Castelli, who introduced him into the U.S. artistic panorama during his first trip to the United States. He was thus able to portray important painters at work, including Frank Stella, Lichtenstein, Johns and Rauschenberg, and important figures such as Andy Warhol and John Cage. The collaboration with the Americans was to continue in 1965 and subsequently in 1967, the year in which Mulas presented his analysis of work with the artists, publishing the famous volume "New York: arte e persone" [New York: Art and People].

Also fundamental, among others, was his collaboration with Marcel Duchamp, which revealed something deeper and more general in Mulas' conception of the portraits of the artist. «Duchamp's photographs» – specified Mulas – «are intended to be something more than a series of more or less successful portraits; rather, they are the attempt to render visually Duchamp's mental attitude towards his own work, an attitude that took shape in years of silence, in a refusal to do, which is a new way of doing, of continuing a discourse».

Le Verifiche [The Verifications] (1968-1972), a series of thirteen photographic works through which Mulas discusses photography itself, are devoted to the formal and conceptual analysis of the photograph.

The title of the Venetian exhibition "Ugo Mulas. L'operazione fotografica" [Ugo Mulas. The Photographic Operation] draws inspiration precisely from one of the *Verifiche* and condenses the photographer's extraordinary reflections.

The exhibition itinerary winds its way through 14 sections, examining all Mulas' fields of interest. From theatre to fashion, with portraits of friends and personalities from literature, cinema and architecture photographed as "posing models", from landscapes and cities to his experience with the Venice Biennale and with the artists of Pop Art. One section, naturally, is devoted to Milan and the famous Bar Jamaica, which the great Luciano Bianciardi describes in his book "La vita agra" as "the bar of the Antilles".

«The Jamaica» – **observes Denis Curti** – «is the place for meetings, for close friendships, those with Mario Dondero, Piero Manzoni, Alfa Castalfi, Pietro Consagra, Carlo Bavagnoli and Antonia Bongiorno, who would become his wife. This section is followed by a chapter devoted to industrial projects and the more interesting experiences with Olivetti and Pirelli. To close the itinerary, the most significant "series" for Mulas himself, those devoted to

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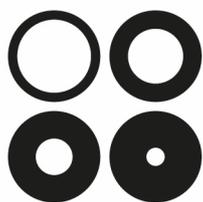
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Calder, to Duchamp and the fundamental “verifications”, which are certainly to be considered one of the most interesting “experiments in critical thought” on photography».

«The photographic work of Ugo Mulas» – comments **Alberto Salvadori** – «offers an indispensable perspective on the status of the work of art itself, which prompts us to reflect on the relationship, every time new and particular, between the artist and his workspace, inspiration and the context that expresses it. The wide-ranging retrospective that inaugurates Le Stanze della Fotografia accounts for this ever present «actuality» of Mulas' gaze, also showing less known aspects of it through snapshots, archive documents and videos never exhibited before now and providing us with the well-rounded portrait of an artist, of his vision of 20th-century art and culture».

The exhibition is accompanied by the catalogue published by **Marsilio Arte**.

Archivio Mulas thanks Galleria Lia Rumma for the collaboration.

“Venezia alter mundus”

Based on the eponymous volume published by Marsilio Arte, the new exhibition "**Venezia alter mundus**" presents **65 photographs by Alessandra Chemollo**, displayed on the first floor of Le Stanze della Fotografia, offering a peculiar vision of the most photographed city in the world, suspended between past and future.

Venice has been the favourite subject of Chemollo's lens for over twenty years, transformed into an *alter mundus*, visited and narrated over the centuries by famous travellers. Another world, in which it is necessary to move cautiously, avoiding being captured by an image that seems familiar to us only because we secretly hope it will help us sustain the power of this city. Images in a tight narrative sequence, which do not want to be commented on, which do not seek explanations, but connect to other worlds. As **Franco Rella** observes in the book of the same name, «the images that Alessandra Chemollo has traced and put into a plot, into a story, arise from a genuine attempt to go in search of another world, *alter mundus*. In order to do this, she has not only followed the profiles of the magnificent buildings, monuments and houses she presents to us; she has not only chased the water in which the columns sink or are reflected, but she has tried to empty Venice of everything that constitutes it today, but that above all masks it. His Venice has no pigeons, no seagulls, no tourists. We cannot consider as such the tiny figures that move – almost an ornamental decoration – in a photograph of the square in front of the Procuratie Nuove».

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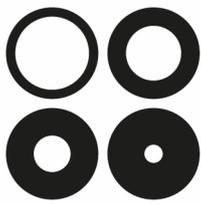
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The exhibition programme

Paolo Pellegrin, autumn 2023

In autumn 2023 Le Stanze della Fotografia will host an exhibition devoted to Paolo Pellegrin (Rome, 1964), among the most important contemporary international photojournalists, who has documented many of the world's major disasters and conflicts. The project, constructed as a full-blown anthological exhibition, also considers the theme of climate change and the relationship between humankind and nature. The exhibition is curated by Denis Curti and Annalisa D'Angelo and realized in collaboration with Magnum Photos.

The exhibition, in many ways unprecedented, offers all the main themes that have defined the path of Paolo Pellegrin, who over the decades has interwoven his reporter's vision with the visual intensity of the artist, through sketches, notebooks and notes, photographs illustrating the complexity of the author's creative process. The exhibition route tells a story of infinite humanity in the present age thanks to installations, enlargements and previously unpublished photos, with a corpus of images from his most **recent reporting in Ukraine**, which the photographer visited in the months following the outbreak of the war.

Helmut Newton, spring 2024

In spring 2024 it will be the turn of the retrospective "HELMUT NEWTON. LEGACY", curated by Matthias Harder, Director of the Helmut Newton Foundation in Berlin, and Denis Curti, on the occasion of the hundredth anniversary of the artist's birth (Berlin, 1920 – Los Angeles, 2004).

Through 250 photographs, magazines, documents and videos, the exhibition will look back over the entire career of one of the best loved and widely discussed photographers of all time. Alongside the more iconic images, a corpus of previously unpublished photographs, presented for the first time in Italy, will reveal many less known aspects of Newton's work, with a **specific focus on the more unconventional fashion shoots**. Polaroids and contact sheets will also provide information on the creative process surrounding some of the iconic motifs present, while special publications, archive materials and statements by the photographer will contribute to enabling visitors to gain an understanding of the context in which the inspiration for this extraordinary artist came about.

With a view to expanding and consolidating relations with institutions and cultural bodies also outside of the city of Venice, **the exhibition will be on display exclusively in Italy from spring 2023 until summer 2024 with a tour of other prestigious sites: in Milan, at Palazzo Reale, from 24 March to 25 June 2023; in Rome, at the Museo dell'Ara Pacis, where it will arrive in the autumn of 2023; finally, in Venice in the spring of 2024.**

Venice, February 15th 2023

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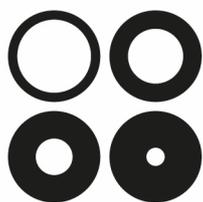


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Press kit:

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TECHNICAL DATASHEET

Ugo Mulas. The Photographic Operation
Le Stanze della Fotografia
Venice, Island of San Giorgio Maggiore
29 March – 6 August 2023

Opening hours

Open every day from 11am to 7pm. Closed on Wednesdays
Extraordinary opening days: Wednesday 26 April, Wednesday 3 and 31 May

Information

www.lestanzedellafotografia.it
lestanzedellafotografia@gmail.com

Vaporetto

San Giorgio stop, line 2

Tickets

€14.00 full price

€12.00 reduced price for students under 26 years of age, over 65s, holders of special discount agreements

€10.00 special reduced price

€9.00 special reduced price for holders of CartaEffe *laFeltrinelli* and IBS (every Thursday); holders of entrance tickets to the events of the exhibition centres of Gallerie d'Italia

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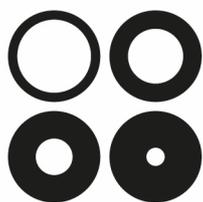
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