

Peggy Guggenheim COLLECTION

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Press release

IMMAGINI ITALIANE

September 1 – November 1, 1993

On August 31, 1993 the Peggy Guggenheim Collection will open *Immagini Italiane*, featuring contemporary Italian photography. The show testifies to the Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation's recent commitment to give prominence to photography in its collection and exhibition programs. As the first exhibition at the Guggenheim Foundation's Venetian branch to be dedicated to photography, it is appropriate that it should highlight the Italian scene.

Immagini Italiane, with approximately 120 black-and-white and colour images by 34 photographers, provides a photographic Grand Tour of the Italian experience of the last forty years, depicted in a wide variety of styles and moods by men and women of exceptional talent.

The exhibition showcases the seductive dualism inherent in 'Italian-ness' – the sensual and spiritual fervor, the emotional savagery and intellectual cool, the vitality and morbidity, the tears and the laughter. The work of the documentary master Gianni Berengo Gardin, of the urbane portraitist Ugo Mulas and of that elegant chronicler of poignant human drama Mario Giacomelli – as well as the most audacious images of the *paparazzi* – reveals Italian photography's post-war roots in neo-realism. Olivo Barbieri's exquisitely colourful, surreal architectural panoramas, Francesco Clemente's journey from painting into the realm of photography, Paolo Gioli's post-modern tableaux, and Luigi Ghirri's phantasmagoric play with illusion and reality – all these reflect the new wave of artistic innovation, of cutting edge aesthetics. The unique and mysterious character of the South is revealed through Mimmo Jodice's luminous landscapes, and through startling scenes of religious ritual and Mafia violence by Letizia Battaglia, Marialba Russo, Ferdinando Scianna and Franco Zecchin.

Immagini Italiane celebrates an Italy at once visceral and lyrical, as it presents a select group of these and other outstanding photographers.

Immagini Italiane is an exhibition of The Aperture Foundation, New York and is curated by Melissa Harris, editor of the acclaimed American magazine *Aperture*. Founded in 1952 by Ansel Adams, Beaumont and Nancy Newhall, Dorothea Lange, and Minor White among others, *Aperture* has become the most prominent ongoing resource for criticism, review and research of photography. In addition to its quarterly periodical, *Aperture* also collaborates with major cultural institutions of photography. *Aperture's* Publisher and Executive Director, Michael E. Hoffman, has been involved since 1965.

Immagini Italiane is prompted by The Murray and Isabella Rayburn Foundation, New York. Official carrier for the exhibition is Alitalia. Melissa Harris has commented: "this exhibition is of particular importance as it is the first time that American organisations – in this case Aperture and the Peggy Guggenheim Collection – have focused on Italian photography."

The cultural activity of the Peggy Guggenheim is supported by Intrapresae Collezione Guggenheim: Aermec, Arclinea, Bisazza Mosaico, Cartiere Miliani Fabriano, Gruppo 3M Italia, Impresa Gadola, Reggiani Illuminazione, and Swatch.

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The show will travel to the Museo Villa Pignatelli, Naples, organised by Incontri Internazionali d'Arte, and in January 1994 it will open at The Murray and Isabella Rayburn Foundation, New York.

To accompany the exhibition, The Aperture Foundation has created a special issue of its magazine dedicated to Italian photography. In addition to cataloguing the works representative of the artists and subject matter in the show, the book will feature essays by art historian Carlo Bertelli, by film director Lina Wertmuller, and on the playwright Dario Fo. Other articles cover art, landscape and architectural photography, the *paparazzi* aesthetic, AIDS, southernness, and the Mafia. The Italian edition is published, in association with *Aperture*, by Casa Editrice Charta which specialises in the field of photography.

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