

# FOTOGRAFIA EUROPEA 2023

## “EUROPE MATTERS: VISIONS OF A RESTLESS IDENTITY”

**Reggio Emilia**  
**28 April – 11 June 2023**

**Preview 27 April**  
**Opening events from 28 April to 1 May 2023**

Dedicated to the notion of Europe and the different peoples that inhabit it, the **18<sup>th</sup> edition** of the Reggio Emilia Festival returns to recount the nuances of the identity of this multi-ethnic community.

**Chiostri di San Pietro, Palazzo da Mosto,**  
**Chiostri di San Domenico, Palazzo dei Musei, Biblioteca Panizzi,**  
**Spazio Gerra,** and the venues of the *Circuito OFF* host shows by both **great masters** and **young talents**.

*Reggio Emilia, February 2023.* From **28 April to 11 June 2023**, **FOTOGRAFIA EUROPEA** returns to **Reggio Emilia**, the photography festival of international standing - winner of the most coveted prize in the sector: **Photo Festival of the Year** at the last Lucie Awards in Los Angeles - promoted and produced by **Fondazione Palazzo Magnani** together with the **Municipality of Reggio Emilia** and with the contribution of the **Emilia-Romagna Regional Council**. And so once again this year, a major opportunity is provided to observe a world in constant and rapid change, of which photography captures moments to help us understand its directions and dynamics.

The gaze of this eagerly awaited 18<sup>th</sup> edition of Fotografia Europea is directed towards the complexity of current events, where the very roots of our individual and social identity are constantly being questioned. ‘**Europe matters: visions of a restless identity**’ is the key theme which the projects selected by the Festival’s board of artistic directors refer to, a board made up of **Tim Clark** (editor of *1000 Words* and Photo London Discovery curator), **Walter Guadagnini** (photography historian and Director of CAMERA – Centro Italiano per la Fotografia) and **Luce Lebart** (French photography historian, author of several books, exhibition curator and researcher both for the Archive of Modern Conflict Collection and independently).

### THE THEME

Starting from a reflection on the idea of Europe and the ideals that underpin it, the exhibitions bring to the

surface questions concerning the current state of the multicultural and globalised world we live in: a world in which for some time now, Europe has no longer exercised that spiritual and material hegemony that were attributed to it for centuries. Through the medium of photography, the artists thus trace the dynamic and uncertain lines of an increasingly mobile and porous identity, with the aim of making sense of the restlessness that runs through it.

### **THE EXHIBITIONS**

As always, the halls of the monumental **Chiostri di San Pietro** will constitute the hub of the festival, hosting **ten exhibitions**. On the first floor, **Mónica De Miranda** questions standard notions of identity based on the categories of race and gender with her project **The Island** which, through a counter-narrative constructed from the biographies of men and women of African descent living in Portugal, reveals the prejudices ingrained in society. In the next room, **Güle Güle** ('goodbye' in Turkish) provides a personal representation of Istanbul and the profound changes affecting Turkish society through the eyes of **Jean-Marc Caimi & Valentina Piccinni**. Documenting marginalised communities, these shots reveal the human substratum which – according to the two photographers – represents the most sincere expression of any place, beyond the widely accepted yet superficial social 'façade'. Next, **Simon Roberts's** project, **Merrie Albion**, photographs the United Kingdom, offering food for thought on notions of identity and belonging, and what it means to be British at this crucial moment in contemporary history. Also on show is **The Brexit Lexicon**: a two-part video work featuring the most common terms used in discussions about Brexit in politics and the media. **The Archive of Public Protests** with **You will never walk alone**, on the other hand, brings together the visual traces of social activism, of all those mass initiatives opposing political decisions, violations of democratic norms and human rights. It is a collection of short films that constitutes a warning against growing populism and discrimination, with the intention of prolonging the lives of these images, which are usually linked to specific events and whose existence ends with their publication in the press. In her multimedia project **Parallel Eyes**, the Italian photographer of Apulian origins **Alessia Rollo** talks about a journey of discovery of the ancient rites of the Italian South, in the attempt to restore to the onlooker the sense of mystery, magic and ancestral forces that bind nature to humankind. Through her photographs, Rollo reconstructs the cultural identity of Southern Italy with analogue and digital manipulation techniques that introduce us into a re-encharmed, evocative and spiritual universe, drawing on a ritual heritage that is still alive and at the same time releasing it from those cultural stereotypes created decades ago by neorealism. **Samuel Gratacap** returns to Reggio Emilia with **Bilateral**, an unprecedented work on the landscape, viewed from both sides of the border and through the voices of people trying to cross it. The project also focuses on those who are struggling to make the world less violent, mobilising in the places where they live and, at the same time, on the decision-makers, those responsible for decisions that will affect everyone: invisible, interchangeable and faceless, and yet masters of their own image. The photographic project **Odesa** by the Ukrainian **Yelena Yemchuk** is a visual ode to a city that has always fascinated her in terms of the freedom it enjoyed throughout the Soviet era. First visited in 2003, she returned in 2015 to document the faces of sixteen and seventeen-year-olds from the Odesa Military Academy: the conflict on the eastern border that had begun a year earlier convinced her to expand the project by also capturing the real lives behind those faces that would soon be found on the warfront. An anthropological exploration led French-born **Geoffroy Mathieu** to follow the gatherers: people who live off

the products that nature spontaneously continues to offer on the margins of cultivated areas or in uncultivated spaces, albeit in damaged and precarious landscapes. The resulting photographic project, *L'Or des ruines*, thus tells of an alternative livelihood that in the search for fruits and medicinal plants sees a new way of living in a common world, and explores a possible economy built on sharing the Earth's spontaneous resources. In her work entitled *De la mer à la terre*, **Cédrine Scheidig** explores the personal narratives of young people in France and Martinique in the process of self-discovery, while opening up spaces for reflection on political issues such as the colonial past, cultural hybridity, modern masculinities and migration. She does so by placing two recent series in dialogue: *It is a Blessing to be the Colour of Earth* (2020), which portrays the Afro-Caribbean diaspora in the Parisian suburbs, and *Les mornes, le feu*, which she began in 2022 in Fort-de-France, Martinique, and in which the artist examines the connections between two territories and the imaginaries of their inhabitants.

This year's historical exhibition will be hosted in the frescoed halls on the ground floor of the Chiostrì di San Pietro and will be dedicated to **Sabine Weiss**, one of the most important voices of French humanist photography together with Robert Doisneau. After passing away in 2021 at the age of 97, Weiss practised this profession for all her life and in all fields of photography, immortalising the emotions and feelings of her many subjects, lingering on their gestures and on the relationship she managed to establish with them each time, and from which the genuine power of the image emerged. Through archive photos and numerous documents and magazines of the time, the exhibition *Sabine Weiss. Una vita da fotografa*, curated by Virginie Chardin, traces Weiss's entire career, from her beginnings in 1935 right up to the 1980s. The exhibition is produced by the Atelier Sabine Weiss and Photo Elysée, with the support of Jeu de Paume and Les Rencontres d'Arles, and under the patronage of the Swiss Confederation.

In the **Chiostrì di San Domenico** venue, the specially commissioned exhibition that the Festival entrusts to a different artist every year will be on display, together with the two winning projects of the Open Call.

This year, the commission has been entrusted to **Myriam Meloni**, an Italian photographer who lives and works between Barcelona and Tangier. Starting from the myth of Europa narrated by Ovid, she builds a portrait of contemporary "Europa": young women, autonomous, professional women, the happiest outcome of the 20th century and the Erasmus project, who are carrying out a gentle revolution, taking root in the communities that welcome them but continuing to embody the values from which they come. The images of *Nelle giornate chiare si vede Europa* are the restitution of a path, a constellation of possibilities, inviting us to build a new critical perspective towards cultural contamination, emphasising the dialogue woven by these young women who from the shore, in clear days, look at their Europe.

**Mattia Balsamini**, one of the two winners of the European Photography Open Call, with *Protege Noctem – If Darkness Disappeared* documents another revolutionary battle in the ecological warfare taking place in this era: that of the defence of darkness. To tell the story, his images feature the alliance that scientists and citizens have formed to mobilise against the disappearance of the night and its creatures. He immortalises the night sky that has become a tarnished mosaic, and he demonstrates how both the natural world and the human

circadian cycle are both severely compromised by the obstruction of night-time darkness due to the spectrum released by billions of artificial lights dazzling the ecosystem.

**Camilla de Maffei**, also a winner of Open Call 2023, presents *Grande Padre*: a long-term project that, starting from the particular case of Albania, invites reflection on the global relationship between the individual, society and the ruling powers. The research process, begun in 2018 and staged in collaboration with the journalist Christian Elia, provides an immersion into contemporary Albania, and aims to explore the implications and consequences of the rise and fall of a regime, highlighting the scars that the transitional process has left on society, while also documenting the strange sense of emptiness that freedom – regained after forty-five years of a capillary totalitarian regime (the reference in the title is in fact to the dictatorship of Enver Hoxha, one of the fiercest of the recent history) – brings with it.

The **Palazzo da Mosto** venue features works from the **Ars Aevi** collection celebrating **Bosnia Herzegovina** as the Guest Country in this edition of the Festival. A partial anagram of ‘Sarajevo’ (and ‘art of the time’ in Latin), **Ars Aevi** is a unique contemporary art museum project, created by the collective will and ethical cooperation of major international artists, curators and contemporary art museums who donated their works to Sarajevo during the war, to support the city gripped by siege and accompany its civil, ethical and cultural rebirth. **Ars Aevi** brings part of its sizeable collection to **Fotografia Europea 2023**, testifying to that capillary international network of friends, partners and supporters who believe in the importance and in the moral, aesthetic and developmental values that contemporary art is endowed with. The exhibition is part of the twinning of the City of Reggio Emilia with the Municipality of Sarajevo Centar.

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On the ground floor of the same venue, the Belgian artist **Ariane Loze** presents *Utopia* and *Studies and Definitions*: two of four videos made between April 2017 and October 2018 to reflect on Europe. In the first, the artist, dressed in a yellow mackintosh in a blue theatre, gives form to a four-way dialogue on founding themes such as being a community, feeling represented, the search for the common good and, finally, the imagination of a utopia. In *Studies and Definitions*, on the other hand, we witness a debate arising from the

reading of the first page of the consolidated version of the Treaty on European Union, all conceived by Ariane Loze to confront existing texts.

Embracing the festival are numerous other **partner exhibitions** gravitating around it, organised by the city's leading cultural institutions and hosted in their venues.

At **Palazzo dei Musei**, the photography section continues its reflection on the role of the image as a tool capable of revealing the complexities of reality and the present era, with the exhibition **Un piede nell'Eden. Luigi Ghirri e altri sguardi** (28 April 2023 – 25 February 2024): a rich and articulated itinerary dedicated to the natural element that, starting from Luigi Ghirri's research in the 1970s and 1980s, opens up to various gazes and readings. From the very start, Ghirri showed a strong interest in nature, of which he did not fail to grasp and highlight its numerous contradictions, and this exhibition displays some of his major works in which Ghirri invites us to reflect on the natural element and the need for its relocation within our perceptive horizon. The exhibition, curated by Ilaria Campioli, is promoted by the Municipality of Reggio Emilia (Musei Civici, Panizzi Library) in collaboration with Archivio Eredi Luigi Ghirri.

Also at **Palazzo dei Musei** we may find **Giovane Fotografia Italiana #10 | Premio Luigi Ghirri 2023**, the project of the Municipality of Reggio Emilia that valorises the talent of Italian photography under 35. Curated by Ilaria Campioli and Daniele De Luigi, the collective exhibition features seven artists, selected through an open call by an international jury: **Eleonora Agostini, Andrea Camiolo, Sofiya Chotyrbok, Davide Degano, Carlo Lombardi, Giulia Mangione and Eleonora Paciullo**, and it will revolve around the theme of **Belonging**, declined here in various nuances: from people's inclusion in a 'closed' community to the drive to join new forms of collectivity on the basis of value choices. In addition to competing for the Luigi Ghirri Prize, which will provide the winning project with the chance to present a solo exhibition at the Milan Triennale, from this year, one of the seven artists will take part in an artist's residency in Stockholm, culminating in an exhibition curated by the Institute.

The **Panizzi Photo Library** will participate in the 2023 edition with **Flashback**, a selection of photographic works from those exhibited during the 2007 Fotografia Europea festival – an edition that also focused on the theme of Europe in relation to its cities. This little 'anthology' of the 2007 edition, re-proposing the European theme more than 15 years on, may provide a new source of considerations on our recent past and stimulate updated reflections in the light of recent disruptive events.

The Panizzi Library also presents another exhibition connected to Fotografia Europea: **Alberto Franchetti e la fotografia**, which displays part of the recent donation made by the Ponsi family of the collection of photographs taken by Alberto Franchetti and highlights the musician and composer's interest in the photographic medium, viewed as the language of modernity *tout court*. Interesting is his gaze, the framing, the use of light that testifies not only to his attention but also to his sensitivity to the world around him, highlighting intimate moments and poignant landscapes.

To mark the occasion of the reissue of the volume *You Turned the Tables On Me*, one year after Roberto Masotti's death, **Spazio Gerra** presents 115 portraits of the most famous contemporary musicians from all over the world, including John Cage, Philip Glass, Brian Eno, Steve Reich, Michael Nyman, Demetrio Stratos and many others. In this series of portraits, the table takes on the value of a stage on which each of the musicians has the opportunity to display themselves, in many cases with the same spirit of experimentation that characterises their music.

In the wake of the cultural liveliness that characterises Reggio Emilia during the festival, other cultural institutions also present related projects.

**Collezione Maramotti** presents *No Home from War: Tales of Survival and Loss*, the first exhibition in Italy by the English photojournalist **Ivor Prickett**. With over fifty photographs taken in conflict scenarios from 2006 to 2022, *No Home from War* represents the most comprehensive exhibition of Prickett's work to date. The photographer began his work in Europe and the Middle East with the urgency to restore and denounce the effects of wars on the civilian population, on the lives of devastated and uprooted peoples, regardless of whether they belong to one side or the other. Initially focused on the private, domestic sphere of war's long-term social and humanitarian consequences (Croatia, Abkhazia), Prickett's gaze has shifted over the years towards places of forced migration and lands where people seek refuge (Middle East and Europe), and then to the front lines of combat zones (Iraq, Ukraine).

**CSAC – Communication Studies and Archive Centre of the University of Parma** proposes the exhibition *Antonio Sansone: Rituali d'Europa* curated by Paolo Barbaro and Margherita Zazzero. Photojournalist **Antonio Sansone** (Naples, 1929 - Farfa Sabina, 2008) was one of the most significant exponents of civil commitment photojournalism after World War II. His is a militant vision, organic to the historical Left and the New Left, in opposition to the officialdom of the large agencies and pro-government press organs. Through his shots, he renders an often unexpected portrait of Europe's second half of the 20th century, where the rigour of the anthropologist is coupled with the sensitivity and empathy of the storyteller. The vivid investigations of Naples, the faces and rituals of Italian politics often captured with salacious hints, but also the restless tale of the countries 'beyond the Iron Curtain', where the rituals of officialdom (which turn out to be not so different from those of the other West) are juxtaposed by Sansone with investigations into everyday life, and into the ferments that swept across Europe throughout the period, from Ireland to France, Hungary, Czechoslovakia and Romania.

Once again this year, **Speciale Diciottoventicinque** – the training project linked to Fotografia Europea – returns to accompany young photography lovers on a path from the conception to the implementation of an exhibition project. It will be **Elena Mazzi**, the artist who this year accompanies participants aged between 18 and 25, towards a collective project which, over ten encounters, will lead them to reflect on a subject, observe it and study it through the lens of a camera. Originally from Reggio Emilia, with her projects, Elena has already conquered a prominent position on the contemporary art scene, poetically reinterpreting the cultural and natural heritage of places, and interweaving stories, facts and fantasies handed down by local communities.

In addition to the exhibitions, the Festival is enriched by a **calendar of events** that will accompany visitors from the opening days - **28, 29, 30 April and 1 May** - until **11 June**.

On the programme are conferences with **Rosella Postorino** and **Paolo Rumiz** curated by **Loredana Lipperini** (curator, writer and radio presenter), those with **Emilio Isgrò** and **Elena Loewenthal** curated by **Luca Beatrice** (art critic and curator), and meetings with artists, book presentations (including *Dear Kairos* by **Simon Bray**, the winner of the FE+SK Book Award, a prize organised in collaboration with the independent publishing house Skinnerbook), book signings, portfolio readings and also **[PARENTESI] BOOKFAIR**, the space dedicated to independent publishers.

Fotografia Europea re-proposes the great success of its musical declination **FOTOFONIA**, curated by **Max Casacci**, producer and founder of Subsonica. On stage again this year we will discover a bit of sound Italy capable of surprising and dialoguing with the world without inferiority complexes.

We will start on Friday 28 April in Piazza Prampolini with **Whitemary**, a young singer and author of a "dance" that is as intelligent as it is enthralling; still in the sphere of music that can be danced to, the young Calabrian producer **Indian Wells**.

On Saturday 29 April, again Piazza Prampolini, Spime.im, a collective from Turin that makes the interaction between images and musical technologies its stylistic signature, and Nine Inch Nails' keyboard player **Alessandro Cortini** with his own electronic project with great ratings.

Then, on Sunday 30, in a very special location such as the Church of San Francesco, **Earthphonia Planet**, an unprecedented and hyper-technological show of sound, images and storytelling of nature with Max Casacci and Professor **Stefano Mancuso**, a renowned scholar of plant intelligence.

To illuminate the Notte OFF, on Saturday 6 May in Piazza Casotti, the delicate soundtracks of d.j. designer **Luce Clandestina**.

Thanks to the collaboration with **TIWI**, on Friday 28, from midnight, at the Polveriera, the appointment with photography will be with **Nicolas Ballario** (contemporary art expert, face of Sky Arte and voice of Radio Rai) and **Rodrigo D'Erasmo** (multi-instrumentalist, composer and member of Afterhours) with the *Lives* project, which aims to draw up a series of "musical novels" of art and, in this case, photography with a special edition on **Nan Goldin**. It's all live: pressing and direct accounts of the vicissitudes of the artists' lives and works, with a soundtrack performed on site.

Once again for this edition, **CIRCUITO OFF** – the collective and independent event that enriches the Festival with a countless series of exhibitions scattered throughout the city – presents projects by **professional photographers alongside young people** with no previous experience, enthusiasts and associations who will approach this year's theme while exhibiting their shots in shops, restaurants, studios, courtyards and private homes, historical venues and art galleries. Part of this circuit is also the **OFF@school** project involving **schools throughout the province of Reggio Emilia**. The evening of **6 May** will be the one dedicated to the Circuito

Off, and during this event the winner of the **Max Spreafico Prize** will be announced, who will be given the opportunity to produce a new exhibition and exhibit it during the next edition of Fotografia Europea, in 2024.

Special Sponsor for the 2022 edition has been confirmed as **Iren**.

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