

PRESS RELEASE

ALFA CASTALDI

opening Saturday 16th February 2013
from **3.00 pm to 8.00 pm**

cocktails

on show from 17th February to 30th March 2013
Tuesday, Friday, Saturday, Sunday, 10.30 am – 7.30 pm
Wednesday and Thursday 10.30 am – 9.00 pm
Monday, 3.30 pm – 7.30 pm

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ALFA CASTALDI

The Galleria Carla Sozzani will present an extensive retrospective of the photographer Alfa Castaldi from 16th February to 30th March

Brilliant and Milanese, Alfa Castaldi was always seen as the sophisticated intellectual, the observer, the outsider when he sat with Ugo Mulas and Carlo Bavagnoli and the other artists and writers in the hot bed of intellectualism that burned at Bar Jamaica in the '50's, where his first photographs were taken.

Many of his early photos show a natural objectivity, an attitude he cultivated while a student of Roberto Longhi, who revolutionized art criticism in Italy during this time of rebirth of Italian culture. It was an intellectual approach of searching honesty; with beauty coming from reality, but artifice being necessary to capture it, that would be an idea he would explore in his work his entire life.

Clearly destined for a career in the arts, he abandoned the traditional mediums to begin a lifelong exploration of photography. Taking his critical eye to Paris, London, Algeria and around Italy, he devoted himself to reportage. However, when he returned to Milan, he met Anna Piaggi, a feature writer for Vogue. Anna encouraged him to use the vehicle of the fashion photograph as another means to explore his aesthetic vision. They were married in 1962 and their partnership would endure until Castaldi's death in 1995.

His work in fashion became legendary. In 1968 he was the first to travel to the Eastern Europe for a fashion shoot, placing the clothes of Walter Albini, Ken Scott, Krizia and Jean-Baptiste Caumont on the streets of Prague. "Reporting" through pictures on the newest trends. In the 80's his shots for "Compagnia di Stile Popolare" convey both the fashion and analysis of the history of fashion for Uomo Vogue in an almost academic style unseen until Castaldi.

His curiosity and need to understand the causes, as much as the results of things, has Castaldi going for "behind the scenes" reportage. From the inside, he is as likely to shoot the designers as the dresses, and his body of work, and more importantly his friendships, are reflected in the intimate portraits of Karl Lagerfeld, Ottavio and Rosita Missoni, Giorgio Armani, Laura Biagiotti, Andrea Branzi, Michele De Lucchi, the Fendi sisters, Gianfranco Ferré, Ettore Sottsass and many others.

But his most enduring friendship was the one he shared with Anna Piaggi. The trust and fierce support they gave to each other is seen in this series of unknown, intimate photographs Castaldi took of Piaggi .

Giuliana Scimé

BIOGRAPHY

- 1926 Born in Milan.
- 1940's Graduates Berchet High School.
- Attends University of Milan and studies architecture.
Moves to Florence.
Studies literature and philosophy with Roberto Longhi.
- 1950's Begins reporting for major Italian magazines *L'Illustrazione Italiana*, *Settimo Giorno* and *Annabella* on Milanese cultural life and cinema.
Travels to Paris, London, Algeria and Italy doing reportage work.
- Becomes a regular at the Bar Jamaica, the artistic hub of Milan.
- 1958 Meets Anna Piaggi.
- 1960's Collaborates on stories with the magazines *Arianna*, *Linea Italiana* and *Novita*, that would become *Italian Vogue* in 1966.
- Breaks ground taking a fashion shoot to the streets of Prague.
- Expands collaboration with Italian Vogue doing column called "Box".
- With Piaggi, "D.P." – double pages – collages of paper, textiles and Castaldi's photos appears in *Vogue*.
- Opens Milan studio.
- 1970's Photo of Krizia hot pants goes global.
Becomes the cover shot for *Krizia, A History* (1995).
- Shoots for major publications in Italy – *Amica*, *L'Espresso*, *Panorama* and the Conde Nast publications, *L'Uomo Vogue*, *Vanity*, *Vogue Bambini* and *Vogue Sposa*
- Publishes *Fatti e Personaggi dell' Italian Look* (1979) Text by Adriana Muassano, forward by Anna Piaggi.
- 1980's Studio becomes an atelier of distinction.
- Publishes *L'Italia della moda* (1984) Text by Silvia Giacomoni.
Exhibits works in *Vogue's 20 Years of Vogue Italy 1964-1984*.
- 1994 Awarded the Research prize by the Association of Italian Professional Photographers. The dedication in the book "*Per la fotografia di ricerca: Premio AFIP/DCL 1996*" in his honor says it best.
"Through a long photographic journey, Alfa Castaldi became a key figure in Italian photography in the sixties, seventies and eighties, remaining at the same time a conscious outsider".
- 1995 Dies in Milan.