

BALLO&BALLO

Photography and Design in Milan, 1956–2005

Milan, Castello Sforzesco

14 June – 3 November 2024

Press Release

From 14 June to 3 November 2024, Castello Sforzesco presents the exhibition “**Ballo&Ballo. Photography and Design in Milan, 1956–2005**”, curated by Silvia Paoli and produced by the Municipality of Milan – Culture, Castello Sforzesco, and Silvana Editoriale; the exhibition is supported by *Strategia Fotografia 2023*, a public Call promoted by the Directorate General for Contemporary Creativity of the Ministry of Culture.

The idea for an exhibition was conceived in 2022, when **Marirosa Toscani Ballo** donated the archival materials of **Studio Ballo+Ballo**, the result of a lifetime’s work with her husband **Aldo Ballo**, to the **Civic Photographic Archive of Milan**.

In 2023, the Archive participated in *Strategia Fotografia*, a Call for Proposals promoted by the MIC, with a project to enhance the Archive, which won, thus leading to the development of the exhibition project and its catalogue.

The exhibition includes over **one hundred photographs** by Studio Ballo+Ballo, some **designer items**, on loan from the ADI Design Museum and the Castello Sforzesco’s Collections of Applied Art, and some **original pieces that belonged to the two photographers**, as well as **period magazines** with which the Ballo collaborated, and volumes featuring their images. Thanks to **Studio Azzurro’s** video installations, which interact with the photos and items on show in the Sala Viscontea, memories and everything that could not be archived – the photographic processes, the relationship with the designer items on display, the creation of setups – become accessible and tangible, allowing visitors to live a unique experience, exploring the “workshop” of Studio Ballo but also perceiving the atmosphere of a bygone era, that of **analogue photography**.

Aldo Ballo (Sciacca, 1928 – Milan, 1994) and **Marirosa Toscani** (Milan, 1931–2023) began their photography careers in the early 1950s. Marirosa attended the Liceo Artistico di Brera but since 1949 she was a *photojournalist* and worked for her father, Fedele Toscani (1909–1983), a collaborator of Vincenzo Carrese and Publifoto, then owner of the Rotofoto agency. Aldo attended the same high school, then the Polytechnic University of Milan and the Studio di Monte Olimpino, in Como, founded by Marcello Piccardo and Bruno Munari and dedicated to film experimentation. He also worked for Rotofoto, but in **1956**, together with Marirosa, he abandoned *photojournalism* and **opened what was to become the most renowned photographic studio specialising in design**, where organisation, professionalism and expertise reached the highest levels. The studio also became a training centre for many young assistants, a “workshop” and “school” where not only they learned a trade, but also a lifestyle and a way of thinking.

Studio Ballo thus **became a meeting place for artists, architects, and designers** such as **Bruno Munari, Gae Aulenti, Cini Boeri, Ettore Sottsass, Pier Giacomo** and **Achille Castiglioni, Enzo Mari, Alessandro Mendini**, to

Una mostra



SilvanaEditoriale

Con il sostegno di



name but a few. The Ballo collaborated with them and with major design companies, including Olivetti, Cassina, Danese, Zanotta, Brionvega, Alessi, Arflex, Bassetti, Barilla, Kartell, Artemide, Tecno, Triade, Borsalino, B&B Italia, Venini, and La Rinascente. Aldo and Marirosa's images were also featured in major magazines in the field of design and furniture, such as *Domus*, *Ottagono*, *Abitare*, and especially *Casa Vogue*, edited by Isa Tutino Vercelloni, who collaborated with the Ballo duo from 1968 to 1992.

Studio Ballo was actively **involved in the cultural dynamics and innovations** of the **ever-evolving Italian design**, confirming its status as an international leader, and celebrating it at the great exhibition held at MoMA, New York, in 1972, *Italy: The New Domestic Landscape* (curated by Emilio Ambasz), whose catalogue images were entrusted to Aldo Ballo.

It was a professional studio, but also a school and workshop for many young assistants, who later became photographers themselves, characterised by a unique atmosphere and environment, which offered a new way of understanding relationships, collaborations, and cultural exchanges.

But how was it possible to convey this atmosphere and materialise those intangible memories? **Studio Azzurro**, whose origins are closely linked to Studio Ballo, addressed the issue, attempting to **recreate a shared experience of what is destined to remain** only in memory.

In the Sala Viscontea, Studio Azzurro's installations interact with the original pieces on display (photographs, magazines, books) to shed light on the Ballo's relationship with publishing in the field of architecture and design and to illustrate the various facets of the photographic "process": from the proof to the positive image and the magazine page. Combined with the photos on the walls, they also highlight the evolution of Ballo's style of photography, focused on Italian design from the 1950s to the 1990s.

Large portraits of major designers, interacting with photographs of their projects, are displayed **in the Sala dei Pilastri**, along with a tribute to some works by Marirosa.

The great story of Studio Ballo is complemented by *video portraits* created over the years by Studio Azzurro, in which key figures in Italian design and art pass the baton to each other in a six-screen synchronised montage, creating a collective narrative that fully conveys what the Ballo Studio represented, leaving its mark not only on design but on culture as well.

The exhibition is accompanied by a bilingual, Italian-English catalogue with a critical apparatus, essays and images, published by Silvana Editoriale.

Exhibition Press Office

Studio ESSECI of Sergio Campagnolo

tel. 049.66.34.99 – CP. Simone Raddi simone@studioesseci.net

Silvana Editoriale Press Office

Alessandra Olivari – press@silvanaeditoriale.it

Municipality of Milan Press Office

Elena Conenna – elenamaria.conenna@comune.milano.it