

PAOLA AGOSTI is a self-taught photographer who in 1968 photographed the strength of female humanity, photographing women workers in the rice fields, the women of the Italian Resistance and the comrades of the feminist movement in the book *Riprendiamoci la vita* (1976), devoted to Italian feminism; she also publishes *La donna e la macchina* (1983) about the first female workers in the factories of Northern Italy. With her camera she has documented marginal phenomena destined to disappear, like farming society and immigration to and from Italy: *Immagine del "mondo dei vinti"* (1979); *Dal Piemonte al Rio de la Plata* (1988) about the emigration from Piedmont to Argentina; *El Paraíso: entrada provisoria* (2011). With Giovanna Borgese she photographed 106 of the most important European writers, poets and intellectuals of the 20th century for the book *Il volto delle parole* (2007). Since 2000 she has been conducting archive research on private family albums, creating books and exhibitions out of the personal stories in dialogue with history. *She was born in Turin in 1947, where she lives and works.

LETIZIA BATTAGLIA was one of the first women photojournalists in Italy. From 1974 to 1991 she directed the photography team of the Communist afternoon newspaper "L'ORA" in Palermo and founded the agency "Informazione Fotografica". Her images depict with the passion of an activist the bloody years of the Sicilian Mafia Wars. In black and white and dense with contrasts, the pictures in her archive are heart-breaking in the perfection of their composition. In addition to the bodies of judges and nameless victims, she continues to tell the stories of her favourite subjects through her lens, girls and young women depicted as the expression of a possible future. Not only a photographer, she is also a film director, environmentalist, city and regional councillor during the "Palermitan Spring", a period of political change in Palermo, and publisher of Edizioni della Battaglia. In 1985 she was the first European woman to be awarded the "Eugene Smith Grant for Humanistic Photography", followed by the "Erich Salomon Award" (2007) and the "Cornell Capa Infinity Award" (2009). *She was born in 1935, she lives and works in Palermo.

LILIANA BARCHIESI has been an independent photojournalist since the early 70s; she focuses on exploring themes linked to the world of women. As an activist she has documented the street protests in support of divorce legislation and against illegal abortions, and for the labour movement and feminist groups, the role of women in the household. She has done photo features for newspaper and magazines both activist and mainstream, such as "Noi donne", "Effe", "Amica", "Il quotidiano dei Lavoratori", "l'Espresso". As a photographer and audiovisual artist, she has taken part in numerous group and solo exhibitions including *Donne-immagini 1974/1979* (2008), *La casa, i riti* (1980) and *Una Nessuna Centomila*. Her work continues today, through photography and documentaries, to denounce and fight gender stereotypes, for example in *Legge 194 Cosa vogliono le donne* (2013) she highlights the similarities and diversity of contemporary female reality, with particular attention to migrant women in Italy. *She was born in Milan, where she lives and works.

LISSETTA CARMI began taking pictures in the 60s. Photography would become a tool of political activism and existential exploration for her. Her photo stories intensely penetrate the life of the subjects she meets, as in the feature on the port of Genoa (1964). Her photos brought a fresh outlook on themes considered a taboo at the time, as in the book *I travestiti* (1972), or in the childbirth sequence photographed in the Galliera hospital. She has travelled extensively in Italy and abroad – Latin America, Israel, Palestine, Afghanistan and India. In 1966, she received the "Niepce Prize" for her portraits of Ezra Pound. Her book *Acque di Sicilia*, with texts by Leonardo Sciascia, won the "World Book Award" at Leipzig. This was her final work before leaving photography to dedicate herself to spirituality. * She was born in 1924 in Genoa and lives in Apulia where she founded an Ashram.

MARCELLA CAMPAGNANO is the author of *L'invenzione del femminile*, among the most notable testimonies of the Italian feminist movement, which is made up of the series *Ruoli* (1974-1980) and *Regalità* (1985-1989). The *Ruoli* project was developed through the spontaneous participation of friends and comrades in posing for portraits using make-up, clothes, hairstyles and postures of the social models imposed on women, such as the bride, the prostitute, or the housewife. In *Regalità* she explores the relationship between image, representation and the construction of subjectivity in a visual vocabulary in which each woman is portrayed while interpreting regal figures, in homage to the great Western pictorial tradition, with apparently rich clothes, but in reality made with poor materials, in collaboration with her companions. Both series were realised as sequences of black and white images taken in domestic sets. *She was born in Milan in 1941, she lives and works in Como.

COLLETTIVO DONNE FOTOREPORTER The Collettivo Donne Fotoreporter (Women Photojournalist Collective) of Milan was formed in 1976, by Giovanna Calvenzi, Kitti Bolognesi, Chiara Visconti, Laura Rizzi, Liliana Barchiesi, Livia Sismondi, Marzia Malli, all the members, women and photographers, share the same interest in the theme of the female condition.

GRUPPO DEL MERCOLEDÌ (THE WEDNESDAY GROUP) was formed in 1974 by Diane Bond, Bundi Alberti, Mercedes Cuman, Paola Mattioli, Adriana Monti, Esperanza Núñez and Silvia Truppi, who chose photography as the medium with which to explore the connections between the body and female identity, making this a tool for expressing deep criticism of the models of representation of the time. The artists met on Wednesday evenings to discuss their work: thus, one would participate in the work of another, giving life to a personal and professional exchange. The experience is recounted in the photo book *Ci vediamo mercoledì. Gli altri giorni ci immaginiamo*, published by Mazzotta in 1978. The book contains a selection of the artists' works – individual and as a group – that deals with the theme of the body, subjectivity, masks, the double, sisterhood, the gender inequality and the desire not to conform to the aesthetic stereotypes of the dominant culture. *The Gruppo del Mercoledì disbanded in 1978.

NICOLE GRAVIER, in Italy from 1976, actively participates in the post-conceptual research on the language of photography and the use of new media as a medium for representation. She develops works linked to Narrative Art, concentrating on the analysis and criticism of stereotypes of female identity imposed by the dominant culture. She did the series *Mythes et Clichés* (1976-1980), in which she used the expressive code and typical frames of weekly magazines, advertising and photo stories, deconstructing the language into portraits and sets with alienating atmospheres. She has participated in group shows such as *Typish Frau* (1981); *Mannerism. A Theory of Culture* (1982); *Beyond the Photographic* (1999); *Altra misura. Arte, fotografia e femminismo in Italia negli anni Settanta* (2016). *She was born in Arles in 1949, she lives and works in Milan.

ALLEGRA MARTIN places the portrait and the transformation of contemporary landscapes at the centre of her work, developing the idea that the identity of a place coincides with the perception that one receives of it. She has re-elaborated the lessons of documentary photography and photojournalism with a personal style, experimenting with new modes of representation in a process of deconstructing the real. She uses medium format cameras and film, always carrying with her a small compact automatic camera and expired rolls of film or disposable cameras, in order to obtain photos where there is room for error. Among her photo series are *Double*

bind (2005), *A Sud di Nessun Nord* (2014), *Cartoline dalla Brianza* (2013). Since 2013 she has been an editor at "Exposed". *She was born in 1980 in Vittorio Veneto, she lives and works in Milan.

GABRIELLA MERCADINI chose photography for social and anthropological investigation and to express her political conscience. An activist photojournalist, she began to work as a freelancer in 1968, collaborating with "l'Unità", "il manifesto", "Noi donne", "Corriere della Sera", "l'Espresso". She remained loyal to black and white film her entire life, photographing the struggles of workers' and students' movements, and the activism of women. She developed a parallel research on art and on museum spaces. She did not stop working even to the very end, realising investigations on the poisons in the Seveso, bearing witness to the marginalisation in the ghetto camps, to the hopes and efforts of the workers struggling in factories and to immigrant women. *She grew up in Venice, she passed away in Rome in 2012.

CRISTINA OMENETTO has been using her camera as a tool for social investigation and a medium for landscape exploration since the mid-80s. She examines in long projects the problems faced by women and migrant children, with images published in the monographs *Donne migranti Eritree a Milano* (1986), *Donne Filippine in Italia* (1993), *Donne Arabe in Italia* (1993), *Bambine e bambini di qui e d'altrove* (1998). She has conducted an experimental exploration of landscape, with shooting techniques that add up and superimpose fragments of space, creating dynamic representations. She realises projects commissioned by the Communication and Image Archive for the Ethnography and Social History of the Lombardy Region, about the world of young people, border workers, on the jobs that are disappearing, as in *La gente e il paese*. Among the monographs she has published is *In&Out*, colour photographs on the USA, with an unpublished text by Wim Wenders. *She was born in Milan in 1942, where she lives and works.

MICHELA PALERMO realises photo features with an authorial vision. She carries out long-term projects that show the destiny of wounded places and existences like the areas hit by the earthquake in Irpinia in 1980 or the area of Castel Volturno – marked by the strong presence of the mafia – which today has the highest concentration of foreign citizens in Southern Italy. In her work her degree in political science from the University of Bologna converges with her study of photography at the International Center of Photography in New York. She specialises in self-publishing. As a freelancer she writes editorials for Italian and foreign magazines. She teaches courses in photography, creation and self-publishing of the photographic books at the Mimar Sinan Güzel Sanatlar Üniversitesi in Istanbul. Her images are collected in self-published fanzines. *She was born in Bagnoli Irpino in 1980 (six months before the earthquake), and lives between Naples and Palermo.

ALESSANDRA SPRANZI uses ready-made photography, through a process of rediscovery of existing images. She collects manuals, books, advertising catalogues, scientific texts and magazines from which she cuts out images that she re-photographs, enlarges and prints, with various techniques. An act of appropriation that reveals the invisible potential of minor iconography, capable of surprising us with things we have already seen. Her works include *Io?* (1992-1993); *Tornando a casa* (1997), a cycle of images on volutes of fire inside domestic spaces; *Obsoleto* (2013), photomontages that bring together pages on different topics with Polaroids of small compositions of objects found by the artist on the street. In *Dizionario Moderno* (2014), a manual found in a flea market, the artist intervenes with words, definitions, and excerpts from other dictionaries. *She was born in 1962 in Milan, where she lives and works.

LORI SAMMARTINO, a writer and a photojournalist. She earned her law degree and began her career in journalism as a political commentator and music critic. In the 50s and 60s she worked for "Il Mondo" under the direction of Ennio Flaiano. She worked in the United States, Morocco, Germany, Denmark and the Netherlands. With biting irony, Sammartino creates scenes of life of the Italian people, conjugated in numerous variants. The time she describes appears as a "suspended time", freed time rather than free time; one hears the echo and the joy of the end of the war. She offers valuable documentation for the understanding of the Italian society of the period. *She was born in Rome in 1924, she passed away in 1971 in Rome.

FRANCESCA VOLPI works with the most important international publications on social themes and on-going conflicts, travelling from the borders of the Balkans to the east of China, Cambodia, Vietnam. She is the youngest freelancer to follow the war of the annexation of Crimea from the first revolutionary movements in Kiev in 2014. She approached photography after graduating in journalism at the London College of Communication. Among her recent photo-investigations, she captured images in 2015 of the rebellion of the inhabitants of Tixtla against the narcos, following the story of 43 students desaparecidos; in Honduras in 2016 she told the story of the farming conflict on the Atlantic coast of the country. Chosen by the "International Women's Media Foundation" in 2016, she realised two photo essays in the Democratic Republic of the Congo: one on a juvenile prison in the city of Goma; another on women in Congolese society. *She was born in 1985 in Brescia, she lives and works in Paris and Rome.