

Carlo Mollino

Polaroid

opening May 27th

kaufmann repetto is happy to announce Carlo Mollino exhibition Polaroid.

Among the many interests that punctuate the life of Carlo Mollino, a connoisseur of even the most personal of hobbies, architecture and photography are the constant subjects (or, better perhaps, of “expressions”). As early as the 1900's the engineer Eugenio Mollino built a dark room in his residence and around 1912 he takes a portrait of his family in the garden in which we see his son Carlo at the center of the family, proudly holding a camera in his hands. At the age of seven the future architect embarks on what would be a laborious journey of images, culminating with the Polaroid he shot until 1973, the year of his death.

THE '30s-40s

In 1936 Mollino designs a special interior for Casa Miller that will be used exclusively as a photographic set. He needs it as background and atmosphere for “state of being” portraits which he entitles “Sogno[Dream]”, “Giovane 'Korai' esumata”[Young exhumed 'Korai']”, “Sibilla”[Sybille], “Sospensione”[Suspension], printed in black and white in large format dimensions. Gio Ponti uses an image of Casa Miller on cover of *Domus* (April 1937), implicitly recognizing the significant photographic value of the architect's work. In 1943 Casa Miller is dismantled and in the same year Mollino prepares the book “Il Messaggio dalla Camera Oscura”, presented as “Storia ed Estetica della Fotografia”, which even today remains one of the most fundamental texts published on photography.

In 1945 Ermanno Scopinich writes “Ritratti ambientati di Carlo Mollino” the fourth monographic volume of the *Occhiomagico* collection, published by Scheiwiller.

THE '50s

We find Mollino preparing another interior (Villa Scareno) for his photographic endeavor. Abandoning the large format negatives, he works with the modernity and speed enabled by the Leica and shoots a prolific number of portraits of women. Printed in the standard format 10x15 cm format, the photographs are no longer titled nor signed and remain unpublished and never exhibited, a literal “nocturnal” body of work with an entirely obscure function.

THE '60s. THE POLAROID.

The Polaroids shot between 1962 and 1973 in a villa located on the hills outside of Turin seem equally inexplicable and without clear purpose. Mollino purchases the building and transforms it into the “Teatrino della mezzanotte”[Midnight theatre] that would welcome a host models - the unknowing participants of a secret photographic project. The reconstruction of the interior, the selection of each dress, shoe, and piece of jewelry worn in the Polaroid shoots are all premeditated calculations that overlap with Mollino's reconstruction of an apartment in Turin's city center (today known as Museo di Casa Mollino). This place was also kept secret - its conception part of a cosmogony that connects the Polaroid to Casa Mollino: the realization of an ideal, something unreal, but of palpably esoteric matter. Here “the” world of Mollino is contained, built of symbolic gardens, suns, waters and all that is necessary for life, in order to perpetuate the necessity of a undeniable source: who to perpetuate her-self needs a fundamental spring: the woman. Here is revealed the real “architecture” of Mollino's world, which so cannot overlook the accurate photographic construction of a feminine unicum composed by thousands of photos that do not portrait prostitutes or madams from the high-society but are authentic visions which come from the *static abyss of dream* in his dreams, fixed on photosensitive cards. In 1985 Daniela Palazzoli wrote: “ It is the research of an encounter, at least on the paper, with the feminine side, with something different from yourself, ripped from the mirror of the copy, to come back rebuilt in resemblance of your own desires, of your own aspiration in the couple.” Surely Mollino does not quote Goethe and the “fragments of a big confession” casually: monotheme and Polaroid.