

## LETIZIA BATTAGLIA. Just for passion

MAXXI is dedicating an anthological exhibition to the great Sicilian artist with over 250 photographs testifying to 40 years of Italian life and society

**24 November 2016 – 17 April 2017**

**#LetiziaBattaglia | #PerPuraPassione**

[www.fondazionemaxxi.it](http://www.fondazionemaxxi.it)

Born in Palermo in 1935 and known throughout the world for her photos of the mafia, **Letizia Battaglia** has provided and continues to provide one of the most extraordinary and acute visual testimonies to Italian life and society, in particular that of Sicily. Recognised as one of the most important figures in contemporary photography for the civic and ethical value of her work, **Letizia Battaglia** is not only the “photographer of the mafia” but also, through her artistic work and as a photo reporter for the daily newspaper *L’Ora*, the first woman and in 1985 in New York she became the first European photographer to receive the prestigious international *W. Eugene Smith Award*, the international prize commemorating the *Lifephotographer*.

Shortly after the celebrations for her 80<sup>th</sup> birthday, MAXXI is organizing **LETIZIA BATTAGLIA. Just for passion**, a major exhibition curated by **Paolo Falcone**, **Margherita Guccione** and **Bartolomeo Pietromarchi**, that from **24 November 2016 through to 17 April 2017** brings to MAXXI **over 250 photographs, contact sheets and previously unseen vintage prints** from the archive of this great artist, along with **magazines, publications, films and interviews**.

Visual testimony to the bloodiest mafia atrocities and and social and political reality of Italy, a number of her shots are firmly embedded in the collective consciousness: **Giovanni Falcone** at the funeral of the General **Dalla Chiesa**; **Piersanti Mattarella** assassinated in the arms of his brother Sergio; the **widow of Vito Schifano**; the boss **Leoluca Bagarella** following his arrest; **Giulio Andreotti** with **Nino Salvo**.

“I am particularly happy with this exhibition”, says Giovanna Melandri, president of Fondazione MAXXI, “with which we celebrate not only the extraordinary work of the photographer Letizia Battaglia, but also her social commitment, her militant passion that has seen her incessantly on the front line for diverse causes: legality, women’s issues, environmental problems, prisoners’ rights. A commitment that has brought her numerous prizes and awards around the world.”

### THE EXHIBITION

Organized in two macro areas, the exhibitions intends to provide a 360° overview of multi-faceted, courageous and indefatigable personalità of Letizia Battaglia and represent the complexity of her interests in photography, publishing, experimental theatre and politics.

These aspects are explored in the documentary section that opens the exhibition and recounts her intensive and varied work of a social nature. There are examples of her work as a photo-reporter in **Palermo** and **Milan**, such as her first photo spread depicting the prostitute **Enza Montoro**, dated 1969 and published in the daily newspaper *L’Ora*, for which she worked for over twenty years, photographs of occupations, of protests in the piazzas, of political rallies in the Seventies in Milan, those of the new creative scene in Milan that led her to meet and portray **Pier Paolo Pasolini** and **Franca Rame** and which are leaving **her archives for the first time for this occasion**.

**Another previously unseen series exhibited at MAXXI for the first time** is the one created in 1983 in the **psychiatric hospital in Via Pindemonte** in Palermo: Battaglia collaborated extensively with the “Real Casa dei Matti”, organizing theatre workshops and activities that would converge into the films *Festa d’agosto* and *Vatinni*, presented here for the first time after thirty years. This nucleus of works will be acquired by MAXXI for its permanent collection.

Then there is the story of the photographer’s extensive publishing career with magazines such as *GRANDEVU*, *Edizioni della battaglia*, *Mezzocielo* and her work as a director.

A table at the centre of the room displays further previously unseen material from Letizia Battaglia's archive: contact sheets and files, notes, historic pages from *L'Ora*.

Hung in Gallery 1, the exhibition also features the film, produced by the Municipality of Palermo and previewed at MAXXI, ***La mia Battaglia. Franco Maresco incontra Letizia Battaglia***, an intense story of Palermo, the city that the artist has made known to the world.

In the exhibition there is also the major **installation ANTHOLOGIA, composed of 120 suspended large format images** (66x100) in black and white portraying the places and victims of Mafia assassinations, but also the lives and faces of Palermo society. Images of pain, poverty, death, wealth, hope and rebellion sketch out a multi-voiced narrative illustrating a historic period spanning more than forty years.

In the photos on **Mafia investigations**, Battaglia portrayed judges, police officers and men from institutions at the front line in the battle against Cosa Nostra: from **Giorgio Boris Giuliano to Ninni Cassarà**, the judge **Cesare Terranova**, the President of the Region of Sicily **Piersanti Mattarella**, General **Carlo Alberto Dalla Chiesa** and **Giovanni Falcone**.

Numerous photos from the **Politici e mafia** series are on display, including those of **Salvo Lima and Vito Ciancimino**, leading figures in the events involving the entwinement of politics and the Mafia. The photograph of **Giulio Andreotti with the Mafioso Nino Salvo** is emblematic: found by the Anti-Mafia Pool in Battaglia's archives, it became central to one of the main charges in the trial against the Christian Democrat leader. Among the main Mafia members portrayed by Battaglia, we find little-known figures as well as men such as **Leoluca Bagarella**, shown while being arrested. This picture became an icon in the struggle against Mafia crimes.

The Eighties were especially prolific for Battaglia. In addition to news photos, she portrayed **society in general, moments of everyday life, women and children in the city's lower-class districts**. Alongside them, she also captured the **bourgeoisie and nobility of Palermo**, which played a leading role in parties and receptions, as well as **processions, funerals and religious celebrations**. Her experimentation continued in the Nineties, with re-elaborations, in which the female figure is overlaid on violent historic pictures.

Many of the photographs in the exhibition are among the 240 published in the extensive book **ANTHOLOGY** published by Drago (2016). On the occasion of the exhibition at MAXXI, the book is accompanied by a second volume relating to the exposition **LETIZIA BATTAGLIA. Just for passion**.

**The press kit and images of the exhibition** can be downloaded from the Reserved Area of the Fondazione MAXXI's website at <http://www.fondazionemaxxi.it/area-riservata/> by typing in the password **areariservatamaxxi**

#### **MAXXI – National Museum of XXI Century Arts**

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Admittance free for students of art architecture from Tuesday to Friday

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