

Letizia Battaglia's photographic work, primarily known for her *passionate* dedication to Palermo, is inseparable from her life's journey. Not all artists, intellectuals, or politicians, in their career path, are influenced by private and personal events.

Letizia's photographs, on the other hand, are a poetic representation of the relationship between art and life. She herself claimed that «in a photograph, there are also the kisses you have given and received».

Between the 70s and 90s, Letizia Battaglia was the main female witness who documented Palermo. Driven by a natural instinct for socio-political activism, with a sharp and empathic eye and a camera in her hands, she portrayed the beauties and horrors of a contradictory city like Palermo without sugarcoating it, including mafia-related attacks and arrests for criminal offense, parties of artists and aristocrats, flashes of ironic simplicity on the Mondello beach. She also captured portraits of magistrates such as Giovanni Falcone and mothers of mafia victims like Felicia Bartolotta Impastato, as well as boys and girls in the streets, often in unusual contexts for their age.

Contrary to the title of this exhibition, there is no true *freedom* (a term often abused and difficult to redeem) in Letizia Battaglia's photographs. There is no *freedom* in living with the murdered on the streets, in a city where dedication to justice is repaid with death. One does not feel free at the thought of the anguished confinement of the patients at the Palermo Psychiatric Hospital with whom Letizia conducted theatre workshops, since she was also suffering a bit. There is no connection to *freedom* in witnessing the miserable degradation of the social cross-section she portrayed. The subjects depicted are not free individuals, neither the dead nor those new to life.

The concept of *freedom* does not reside, though, in Letizia's photographs but in her personality, which since 1969 has driven her to pick up a camera and start creating a human geography that could place all those actors who have given an indelible face to Palermo (from the deceased to the young girls, including the accused) on the same level, with passion and without the banality of judgment. Hers is a dense and complex professional journey that she initially undertook as a woman separated from her husband in the late 60s, needing economic and identity independence. She then became a photojournalist and director of the photographic team at *L'Ora* (the selected works in the exhibition date back to this period), a theater director, writer, publisher, politician, director of the International Center of Photography in Palermo, and more.

The *regained freedom* lies in taking control of herself and embracing all facets of an inherently restless, indomitable, and curious personality with no plans or fears.

In an attempt to convey her complexity, the exhibition includes the documentary *Amore amaro* (2012) directed by Francesco Raganato, a short film created by Letizia Battaglia and Franco Zecchin at the Palermo Psychiatric Hospital titled *Vatinne* ("Go away"), a video interview shot by her granddaughter Marta Sollima about Letizia's memories related to World War II, and a video containing a series of portraits of Letizia created by Franco Zecchin.

The aim is to introduce a person and an artist with a boundless, almost anomalous curiosity about the world.

I met Letizia Battaglia a few months before she died.

She strongly wanted her work to be preserved, to be passed down, to teach how to be free, to give strength and courage.

Even though she was already suffering, I was able to appreciate her strong personality and determination, her independence and sensitivity.

Together, we tried to find a way to carry on her project, which should not have ended, but remain powerful, as it has always been.

Marta and Matteo, her two young grandchildren, are carrying on their grandmother's work with dedication and love, and they are enhancing her work: she would be truly proud of them.

It was a privilege for me to meet her, to work with her to realise her wish.

And it is an honour for the Law Firm to be able to host her with her works, her words, and her thoughts.

Thank you, Letizia.

Maria Grazia Longoni Palmigiano

Letizia Battaglia

Born in Palermo on 5th March 1935, Letizia Battaglia is among the foremost female photo reporters in Italy. In 1969 she started to work as a journalist for the daily newspaper *L'Ora* in Palermo. It was during this time that she began taking photographs.

In 1971 she moved to Milan where she had the opportunity to photograph the cultural excitement around the Palazzina Liberty, as well as intellectual figures like Pier Paolo Pasolini and Franca Rame. She also took photos for the weekly newspaper *ABC* (at the time run by Ruggero Orlando), and the periodical *Os*, as well as the magazines *Le Ore*, *Homo*, *Duepiù* and *Vie Nuove*.

Returning to Palermo, she managed the photography department of *L'Ora* between 1974 and 1991, and founded *Informazione Fotografica* and *Laboratorio d'IF* with Franco Zecchin. During these 20 years, Letizia Battaglia was one of the main witnesses of the mafia wars and photographed some of the bloodiest episodes in the republic's history including the murders of magistrates, policemen and politicians. At the same time, she developed a photographic sensitivity towards Sicilian women, girls, and children who lived in miserable and poverty-stricken conditions.

As part of her anti-mafia activism, together with Umberto Santino, Anna Puglisi, Franco Zecchin and others, she co-founded the *Centro siciliano di documentazione Giuseppe Impastato* in 1977.

In the 1970s and 1980s she attended a course on directing at the theatrical school *Teatés*, which at the time was led by Michele Perriera. She also directed plays and theatrical workshops at Palermo's psychiatric hospital.

She was the first European woman to receive the *Eugene Smith Grant* in New York in 1985 for her social photography, *ex aequo* with Donna Ferrato.

In 1986 Letizia Battaglia felt the need to dedicate herself to politics. She ran as a city councilor in Palermo in the *Verdi* party. In 1987 she became the Council Member for Urban Livability in Leoluca Orlando's council and in 1991 she was the regional deputy with *La Rete*.

After the 1992 murders of the magistrates Giovanni Falcone and Paolo Borsellino she decided that she no longer wanted to photograph mafia crimes.

Letizia Battaglia also had experience of being an editor: in 1986 she founded a monthly cultural and political magazine – *Grandezze e bassezze della città di Palermo* – and in 1991, together with Simona Mafai and other women she co-founded *Mezzocielo*, a bi-monthly magazine created by and for women. In 1992 the publishing house *Edizioni della Battaglia* was set up.

In 1999, in San Francisco, she was awarded with the *Mother Jones Photography Lifetime Achievement Award* for documentary photography.

She received the *Dr. Erich Salomon Award dalla Deutsche Gesellschaft für Photographie* in Cologne in 2007.

In 2009 she was once again recognised in New York with the *Cornell Capa Infinity Award*.

She was recommended for the *Nobel Peace Prize* by Peace Women Across the Globe and in 2017 she was the only Italian woman included in the New York Times' list of the world's most influential women. In November of the same year, she founded in Palermo the *Centro Internazionale di Fotografia* in the Cantieri Culturali della Zisa, which she managed until the end of her life.

In 2020, Letizia Battaglia shot photographs for Lamborghini for the advertising campaign *With Italy for Italy*

Between 2020 and 2021 she told her life story to her friend, the director Roberto Andò. He made a film in two parts called *Solo per passione – Letizia Battaglia fotografa*, which was shown in Italy on Rai Uno in May 2022.

In 2021, she founded the association *Archivio Letizia Battaglia* with her grandchildren Matteo and Marta Sollima with the aim to promote and safeguard her work.

Letizia Battaglia passed away in her home in Palermo on 13th April 2022, greatly loved by her friends and family.

The *Archivio Letizia Battaglia* association was founded in 2021 by Letizia Battaglia and her grandchildren Matteo and Marta Sollima. The association's aim is to safeguard and promote Letizia Battaglia's works created during her 50 year career as a photo reporter and artist, and to keep her memory alive.

The association promotes exhibitions of Letizia Battaglia's work in Italy and abroad. They contribute to cinematographic and editorial projects based on her work, and organise and take part in events with social, informative and educational aims.

In 2023 the association held solo and collective exhibitions in various exhibition spaces in Italy and abroad including the Palazzo Ducale in Genova, the Terme de Caracalla in Rome, the Fondazione Merz in Turin, and the Istituto Italiano di Cultura in Paris and in Bruxelles.

After her passing, and following her wishes, the association holds the rights to the economic use of the photographs taken by her. Therefore, the Archive is the only subject able to grant authentication of her works, and to approve any reproduction or exhibition of Letizia Battaglia's photographs.

The association *Archivio Letizia Battaglia* is currently working on organising her artistic catalogue which will soon be available for students and researchers to consult by appointment only.

Board

Matteo Sollima, president

Marta Sollima, vice president

Maria Grazie Longoni, lawyer

Marco Meneguzzo, art historian

LCA Studio Legale

Letizia Battaglia exhibition is part of Law is Art!, LCA's project born in 2013 with the aim of promoting contemporary art in the Milanese and Italian scene, beyond the traditional circuits.

With the aim of supporting Italian artists and making contemporary art more accessible, since 2013 LCA has invited Tatiana Trouvé, Letizia Cariello, Chiara Camoni, Botto & Bruno, Franco Guerzoni, Silvia Camporesi, Silvio Wolf, R&di Martino, Alessandra Spranzi, and Marta Spagnoli to exhibit in its Milan office. Whereas at Palazzo Borromeo, always in Milan, LCA has exhibited works by Letizia Cariello, Brigitte March Niedermair, Michele Guido, Mattia Bosco, Sabrina Mezzaqui, Francesco Arena, and Stefano Arienti. Since 2022, with Massimiliano Camellini's photographic exhibition, the Genoa office has also been added to the exhibition venues.

Exhibition activities are complemented by partnerships and sponsorships of various cultural organizations, especially in support of the city of Milan.

Among these, the partnership with **miart** since 2014 through the *LCA Emergent Award*, awarded to the best emerging gallery at the fair, the sponsorship of the **Associazione Amici del Museo Poldi Pezzoli** and the **PAC- Padiglione d'Arte Contemporanea** in Milan.

LCA is an independent, full-service law firm, specialized in providing legal and tax assistance to companies and private clients, with offices in Milan, Rome, Genoa, Treviso, Brussels and Dubai. The Firm can count on a **department dedicated to art law**, which offers operators in the art world an all-encompassing consultancy on various aspects (i.e., contractual, logistical, insurance, criminal, as well as on copyright, advertising, anti-money laundering, litigation, cultural patronage, generational transition) with an interdisciplinary team of professionals who share the same passion for art.