

PALAZZO LOMBARDIA, SPAZIO ISOLASET
piazza Città di Lombardia, 1 - Milan

Max Mandel. Sguardi di Luce

curated by Giovanni Gazzaneo

2 – 21 July 2025
Opening Tuesday 1 July, 6 pm

press release, 24.6.25

Palazzo Lombardia in Milan, within the **Spazio IsolaSET**, will host from July 2 to 21 the extensive exhibition dedicated to **photographer Max Mandel**, curated by Giovanni Gazzaneo and titled "*Max Mandel. Sguardi di luce*". A project by **Fondazione Crocevia** in collaboration with **Fondazione La Rocca** and carried out with the support of **Regione Lombardia**, the exhibition features **one hundred and twenty photographs** retracing forty years of work, from 1985 to 2025. **The images, both artistic and documentary, tell the story of journeys through Europe, the Middle East, and Asia, capturing experiences, artworks, and urban, architectural, and landscape contexts.**

Divided into **six sections** *Sguardi di luce, Istanti, Incontri, Lo spazio dentro, Forme senza tempo, L'altra metà del lavoro*, the exhibition invites visitors to rediscover, through Mandel's lens, the hidden beauty of the everyday, the intensity of small gestures, and the evocative power of light. In the first section, *Sguardi di luce*, Mandel captures even the smallest details and translates them into nearly abstract images: plays of light and shadow on a wall, flowers in a basin, paper airplanes flying through the Galleria Vittorio Emanuele in Milan, images collected across Europe, the Middle East, and Asia. *Istanti* brings together a series of photographs taken between 2016 and 2018 with a mobile phone, while *Incontri* focuses on people.

In the section *Lo spazio dentro*, the photographer's eye lingers on the lines and volumes of buildings; *Forme senza tempo* focuses on sculpture. Lastly, *L'altra metà del lavoro* gathers Mandel's research on women's work: a series of intense black and white portraits. His gaze avoids rhetoric, and the subject engages in dialogue with the photographer, offering objects or symbols linked to their profession.

At the heart of his shots lies reality itself, however fragile, radiant, or imperfect a quality **Henri Cartier-Bresson** summed up by saying: "Max Mandel is an eye: he knows how to see. It is the discovery of a new world, and an absolute work of art, which is also a genuine fragment of our daily life."

"Mandel's gaze," writes curator **Giovanni Gazzaneo**, "is driven by a passion for the beauty of the everyday. Able to combine knowledge and vision, he seeks to show us not the surface of reality, which, however dazzling, is still only a shell, but its essence, its most intimate poetry." A poetry that, as **Stefano Zuffi** notes, seems to transform into an image capable of evoking the same atmosphere as a Japanese haiku or "the Impressionist shimmer of Monet's rippled water." The intensity of Mandel's images is an act of deep attention, a silent listening, as **Arnoldo Mosca Mondadori** observes an art that "flows like water full of clarity," capable of vanishing a moment before the shot, as a gesture of generosity but also as a poetic choice to leave space for the world. From this attitude arises a balance in Mandel's works, in which the images seem to reveal something hidden, adding a meditative quality to his style open to the complexity of reality and all its facets. **Santo Versace** describes the sensation that emerges when admiring his work as "a

love for the people he meets, for the places he sees, for the everyday things he embraces as they are.” In portraits, urban views, or architectural details, Mandel’s approach is always the same: a discreet gaze that does not impose, but becomes a guest. **Laura Leonelli** describes it as a passage more than a vision an acceptance of the substance of the world as it is.

The exhibition is accompanied by a **catalogue** published by Corsiero editore and Fondazione Crocevia, curated by Giovanni Gazzaneo, with texts by Henri Cartier-Bresson, Giovanni Gazzaneo, Ottorino La Rocca, Laura Leonelli, Edoardo Milesi, Arnoldo Mosca Mondadori, Guido Oldani, Marco Roncalli, Davide Rondoni, Zingonia Zingone, Santo Versace, Stefano Zuffi.

Biographical notes. Max Mandel was born in Milan on October 3, 1959. A photographer and iconographic researcher, he has undertaken numerous journeys across Europe, Asia, and the Americas. From 1988 to 2005, he was responsible for the photographic documentation of the excavation campaigns in Jordan by the Studium Biblicum Franciscanum of Jerusalem, directed by Father Michele Piccirillo. Since 1989, he has been a contributor to the monthly magazine *Luoghi dell’Infinito*. Committed to promoting the history of photography, he focuses in particular on its origins and early developments in the 19th century. His research follows multiple paths, which have come together in the collections: *Appunti di viaggio*, *Sguardi di luce*, *L’altra metà del lavoro*, *Incontri*, *Forme senza tempo*, *Lo spazio dentro*, *Istanti*, *Il Tigri e l’Eufrate*, *Viaggio in Italia*, *Ritagli di tempo*, *Decoupage*, *Cartoline da Street View*. His photographs have been published in numerous books and publications by both Italian and international publishers.

Exhibitions include: 1986: Museum of Modern Art, Konya (Turkey); 1996: Consulate General of the United States of America, Milan; 2001: Art Library of Castello Sforzesco, Milan; Zoom International Photographic Exhibition, Tokyo and Atami, Japan; 2005: National Museum of Photography, Brescia; 2008: Seljuk University, Konya; Mevlana Museum, Konya; Sala del Podestà, Rimini; Embassy of Italy, Kabul, Afghanistan; 2014: Art Gallery of the Chamber of Commerce, Chieti; 2024: Cultural Center Le Clarisse and Archaeological Museum, Grosseto.

Exhibition details

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Curated by Giovanni Gazzaneo

Venue Spazio IsolaSET, Palazzo Lombardia, piazza Città di Lombardia, 1 - Milan

Dates 2 - 21 July 2025

Opening Tuesday, 1 July, 6 pm

Hours Monday to Friday, 10 am - 7 pm

Free entry

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