

## Gucci-sponsored exhibit puts lens on post-war personalities

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*Gucci is sponsoring an exhibit on Paolo di Paolo. Image credit: Gucci*

By MICKEY ALAM KHAN

Italian fashion label Gucci is taking consumers on a tour of its home country in the 1950s and '60s through the sponsorship of an exhibit on photographer Paolo di Paolo.

"Paolo di Paolo: Mondo Perduto," or "Paolo di Paolo: Lost World," showcases 250 images that show the artist's range of subjects, from movie stars and celebrities to ordinary Italians. Staged at the Spazio Extra Maxxi, the exhibit aims to show the contradiction of life in Italy in the post-war period.

### Photo diary

Born in 1925, Mr. di Paolo produced a significant number of images for the magazine *Il Mondo* during a 14-year tenure. The 573 published photos documented creatives, nobility, artists and more in Italy and the world.

After *Il Mondo* closed in 1966, Mr. di Paolo was left uninspired by photography, and gave up the art form in his early forties.

Curated by Giovanna Calvenzi, the exhibit at Maxxi showcases photographs that have mostly never been seen before.

Mr. di Paolo's daughter Silvia found an archive of about 250,000 negatives, contact sheets, prints and slides in her father's basement about 20 years ago. These unearthed images are now being given a more public debut.

A section centered on "Society/Rome" paints a picture of the juxtaposition of Italian life more than half a century ago. For instance, the technical capabilities of airplanes and the Ferrari workshop coexisted with agriculture and the use of donkeys.



*Gucci is sponsoring an exhibit of Paolo di Paolo's work. Image credit: Gucci*

Another focus of the exhibit is the archive of photographs taken of the famous. Included are intimate portraits taken of Sofia Loren, Tennessee Williams and Kim Novak.

Mr. di Paolo was known for developing a sense of trust and empathy with his subjects. This led to an exclusive first with actress Anna Magnani, who invited the photographer to be the first to capture her on camera with her son.

"In the years of the spread of humanist photography along French lines, together with the images and scoops of the Rome paparazzi, Di Paolo found an independent, different, cultured path." Ms. Calvenzi said in a statement. "He has

the capacity of entering the world of art, literature and film with a light, and at times humorous, touch.

"He possesses a natural gift for seeing an overview of the situations he frames and an ability to place people in relation to space, in a kind of circularity of vision that obliges the observer to read his photographs starting with the subject and going on to discover all those elements that render that subject central and a protagonist in a wider narrative," she said.

The exhibit opened April 17 and will be up until June 30.

Art is a common subject for Gucci. The brand previously paralleled its presence in men's style with art in an exhibit that reflects fashion's belief that its work is art.

The latest exhibit to take up space in the Gucci Garden Galleria takes a deep dive into how Gucci's fashion has impacted men's style throughout the years. Curator Maria Luisa Frisa selected a variety of pieces from the Gucci archives that support this notion for the exhibit, which opened in tandem with the unveiling of the latest wall paintings for which the label is known ([see story](#)).

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