

XII INTERNATIONAL MONTH OF PHOTOGRAPHY IN MOSCOW

‘PHOTOBIENNALE 2018’

JOHNNY MONCADA

Zero Gravity

With the support of the Italian Institute of Culture, Moscow

Exhibition presented by the Johnny Moncada Archive

A descendant of a well-known aristocratic family, Johnny Moncada (Giovanni Luigi Moncada di Paternò) was born in Rome in 1928. Beginning his career as an advertising photographer, he switched to fashion photography in 1954 after meeting the Givenchy model Joan Whelan, who subsequently became his wife.

Johnny Moncada’s photographs provide unique documentary evidence of ‘Made in Italy’ during its golden age in the 1960s. His approach to art and fashion ideally mirrored the views of his time.

Moncada photographed the most famous models of his age: the legendary Veruschka (the first supermodel in history), Barbara Bach (wife of Beatles drummer Ringo Starr), Ali MacGraw (wife of actor Steve McQueen), Denise Sarraut, Jean Shrimpton, Isa Stoppi, Mirella Petteni, Alberta Tiburzi, Iris Bianchi, and many others. Johnny Moncada’s photos appeared in the most prestigious magazines of the time: *Linea Italiana*, *Harper’s Bazaar UK*, *The New York Times Magazine*, *The Tatler*, *Grazia*, and *Novità*. Moncada also designed highly prominent advertising campaigns for Vespa, Agip, and Alitalia.

In the 1960s, he worked in Rome in his photo studio at 54 Via Margutta, where he entertained friends, including painters Gastone Novelli and Cy Twombly, Italian fashion designers Alberto Fabiani and Simonetta Colonna, and the modistes of the Houses of Valentino, Mila Schön, Emilio Pucci, Lancetti, Galitzine, Rocco Barocco, Sorelle Fontana, and many others.

Impressed by the first human spaceflight, Johnny Moncada made a series of photographs dedicated to Yuri Gagarin in 1961. This was a joint project with the artist Gastone Novelli, who created remarkable graphic paintings whose space themes served as backgrounds for the photos. Another source of inspiration for Johnny Moncada was Italian futurist architecture, such as Pier Luigi Nervi’s Palazzo dello Sport.

From 1962 to 1969, Johnny Moncada developed the image of the ‘futurist woman’, placing his models in avant-garde cosmic interiors that matched the work of the most fashionable stylists of the day thanks to the abundance of plastic, mirrors, aluminium, Plexiglas, and artistically treated materials. He often shot models from below, which made them seem to float in the air or in a zero-gravity state.

Johnny Moncada’s innovative ideas, embodied by the models of the great designer André Courrèges, got a hold on life and became international famous thanks to Stanley Kubrick’s movie *2001: A Space Odyssey*.



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VALENTINA MONCADA



In the seventies, Moncada worked in Paris, London, and New York. After starting his own advertising agency, he closed his famous photo studio.

After Johnny Moncada's death in 2011, his archives were systematized and catalogued by the Nando Peretti Foundation and the artist's daughter Valentina Moncada.

In 2014, the exhibition *From Vera to Veruschka: The Unseen Photographs by Johnny Moncada*, dedicated to the legendary model and curated by Valentina Moncada and Antonio Monfreda, drew crowds to Somerset House in London. A book with the same title had been previously published by Rizzoli New York. In July 2014, the exhibition *Made in Italy. Una visione modernista. Johnny Moncada — Gastone Novelli — Achille Perilli* was held at the Museo Nazionale Etrusco di Villa Giulia in Rome. It was curated once again by Valentina Moncada in collaboration with Ludovico Pratesi. In November 2014, the exhibition *From Vera to Veruschka* was shown at the XIII Fotografia — International Festival of Rome at the Museo d'Arte Contemporanea di Roma.

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