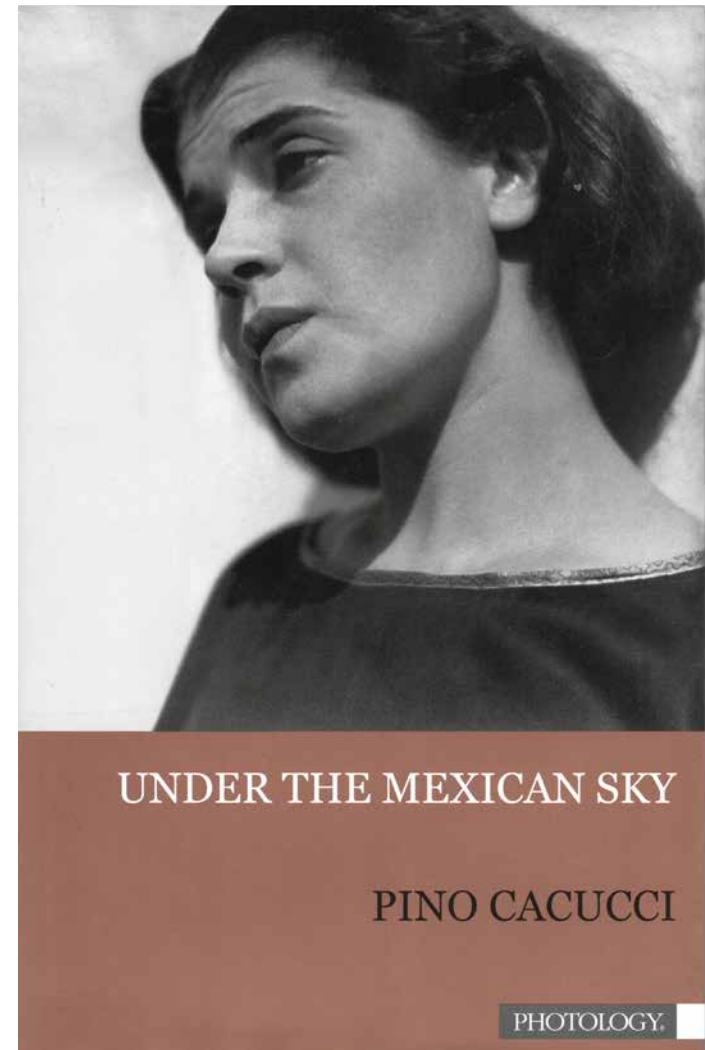


**TINA MODOTTI
PINO CACUCCI
UNDER THE MEXICAN SKY**

**3 JUNE - 1 SEPTEMBER 2024
PHOTOLOGY® ONLINE GALLERY
PRESS RELEASE**

**TINA MODOTTI
PINO CACUCCI
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“Photology is particularly proud of merging the popular photographic work of Tina Modotti to the discreet and rarely seen images of her time life biographer Pino Cacucci. Under the Mexican sky, the title for our online exhibition, is inspired by the most recent book by Pino Cacucci on Tina Modotti which was published by Photology in 2009. Pino’s passionate link with Tina Modotti is going back in time, since his very first trip to Mexico City in 1982 when he discovered her greatness as a revolutionary woman and artist, one of the most important Italian figures active abroad at the beginning of the Twentieth Century. It’s not a case if two major events are currently bringing her works back to popular attention. Tina Modotti retrospective at the Jeu de Paume in Paris is breaking records for a photo exhibition and her inclusion in “Foreigners Everywhere” at the Venice Biennale, is giving voice to her most radical works specifically selected by Brazilian curator Adriano Pedrosa. Pino Cacucci, on the other hand, has kept investigating Mexican culture with a series of biographical books beyond Tina Modotti, about Nahui, Frida Kahlo, and just recently Pancho Villa. As he is still using photography as a recording tool of places, things and people, his creativity has melted reality with imagination bringing to life one of a kind surrealistic works of art. The Photology Online Exhibition “Under the Mexican Sky” is highlighting both artists in separated halls, creating a bridge of 100 years from Modotti’s first Portfolio of 15 photographs to the intense anthropological pictures of Mexico by Cacucci.”



Pino Cacucci, *Under the Mexican Sky*, Photology © 2009

Tina Modotti, 1924, Photograph by Edward Weston
Collection Center for Creative Photography © 1981, Arizona
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ON PHOTOGRAPHY BY TINA MODOTTI

Always, when the words “art” and “artistic” are applied to my photographic work, I am disagreeably affected. This is due, surely, to the bad use and abuse made of these terms. I consider myself a photographer, nothing more. If my photographs differ from that which is usually done in this field, it is precisely because I try to produce not art but honest photographs, without distortions or manipulations. The majority of photographers still seek “artistic” effects, imitating other mediums of graphic expression. The result is a hybrid product that does not succeed in giving their work the most valuable characteristic it should have, photographic quality.

Whether or not photography may or may not be a work of art comparable to other plastic creation has been much discussed in last years. Naturally, opinions differ. There are those who do accept photography as a medium of expression on a par with any other and there are others who continue to look myopically at the twentieth century with eighteenth century eyes, incapable of accepting the manifestations of our mechanical civilization. But, for us who use the camera as a tool just as the painter does his brushes, adverse opinions do not matter. We have the approbation of those who recognize the merits of photography in its multiple aspects and accept it as the most eloquent, the most direct means for fixing, for registering the present epoch.

To know whether photography is or is not an art matters little. What is important is to distinguish between good and bad photography. By good is meant that photography which accepts all the limitations inherent in photographic technique and takes advantage of the possibilities and characteristics the medium offers. By bad photography is meant that which is done, one may say, with a kind of inferiority complex, with no appreciation of what photography itself offers; but on the contrary, recurring to all sorts of imitations. Such work gives the impression that the photographer is almost ashamed of making photographs and tries to hide what there is of photography in his work, superimposing effects and falsifications that can only please those of perverted taste.

Photography, precisely because it can only be produced in the present and because it is based on what exists objectively before the camera, takes its place as the most satisfactory medium for registering objective life in all its aspects, and from this comes its documental value. If to this is added sensibility and understanding and, above all, a clear orientation as to the place it should have in the field of historical development, I believe that the result is something worthy of a place in social production, to which we should all contribute.



Pino Cacucci, *Tomb of Tina*, Mexico City 2015

TINA MODOTTI, A CHRONOLOGY

1896 - On 17 August the third daughter of Giuseppe Modotti and Assunta Mondini was born in Udine. On January 27, 1897, she was baptized Assunta Adelaide Luigia, and everyone called her Tina from an early age. His father does several jobs, including the mechanic and the mason, his wife Assunta sews clothes, while his uncle Pietro is the photographer of the village.

1897-1912 - The Modotti family emigrates to Klagenfurt, Austria, where Giuseppe works as a mechanic; in Udine he has been unemployed as a result of the workers' movements that have blocked the textile industry: registered for socialist ideas, he is forced to emigrate. In 1905 the Modotti returned to Udine. Joseph has a brother who emigrated to Pennsylvania, and in 1907 he decides to join him in the United States, then move to San Francisco. Tina attends elementary school: she learns Italian, already speaking German and Slovenian. As an adult, she will speak and write fluently in English and Spanish.

1913-1921 - Tina reaches her father in San Francisco, makes the long journey alone, by train to Mestre, Milan and finally Genoa, where she embarks for New York. Find a job at a textile factory. She is interested in the theater, in the working-class district they organize performances for amateurs, and she demonstrates considerable talent on the stage. In 1915 he visited the Panama-Pacific International Exhibition, in one of the pavilions there are also photographs of Edward Weston. Here Tina meets Roubaix de l'Abrie Richey, known as Robo, poet and painter: they fall in love, get married, and go to live in his big house in Los Angeles, a meeting place for artists and intellectuals, including Weston. In 1920, Tina received offers from Hollywood, and shot her first film, *The Tiger's Coat*, and from her directors and producers want only parts from the Latin woman fatal and exotic, in the silent period in which Rodolfo Valentino predominates. He plays in other films, but soon gets tired of the roles that point only to his beauty and not to the skill on the scene.

1921-1924 - Poses for several photos of Edward Weston, and between them begins a troubled love: he has wife and children, she does not want to hurt Robo, although the relationship is now simple cohabitation. Among the friends who attend there are some Mexicans, such as the archaeologist Ricardo Gómez Robelo, who soon will become director of the prestigious Instituto de Bellas Artes in Mexico City, and the young muralist painter Xavier Guerrero. Mexico has an irresistible attraction:

in 1922 Robo decides to go there, Tina promises to reach it, with a precise purpose: to bring to Mexico City photographs of various authors - especially Weston - for a collective exhibition organized by Gómez Robelo. She receives news of Robo's serious condition for alleged smallpox from a telegram that is delivered to her by train. Robo dies when she arrives in Mexico. After the funeral, Tina remains in the capital for the preparation of the exhibition and the inauguration. He met several muralists, including Diego Rivera. In March he returned to San Francisco. He collects Robo's unfinished poems and writings in a book, writing a brief biographical introduction imbued with regret and tenderness. In 1923, Tina returned to Mexico with Weston, where she frequented artists and revolutionary intellectuals, including Diego Rivera and Jean Charlot, who took many photos and kept mostly paid portraits. Tina uses a Korona camera, given to her by Edward, he has the Graflex large format, which occasionally lends to Tina. She learns quickly, technique and development, soon "the student" shows his own poetics in the photographic art.

1924-1926 - Tina exhibits her photos in a group exhibition in the Palacio de Minerías, obtaining flattering attention from critics and the public. He came into contact with the exponents of the artistic movement Estridentista, who greatly appreciated some of his photos and published them in their magazines. In 1925 Weston returned to California: left alone to manage the house and studio, Tina made extraordinary portraits, including those of the actress Dolores del Río. Pose for Diego Rivera in some murals. He participated in the organization of an exhibition in Guadalajara, where he exhibited several photos of Weston, who in August returned to Mexico. In December, Tina left: her mother got sick. In San Francisco, in 1926, she worked hard using Dorothea Lange's studio. He sells Korona to buy a used Graflex. He returned to Mexico City with Weston in March, and in June they set out on a journey through the central and southern parts of Mexico, in order to take photos for Anita Brenner's book *Idols Behind Altars*. In November Edward gives the final farewell to Mexico.

1927-1929 - He begins his relationship with Xavier Guerrero, and political militancy takes over every other aspect of his life. He joined the Mexican Communist Party, translated articles for the newspaper *El Machete*, published photos in various magazines, anticipating what will be called "social reportage": no more studies of objects and forms, but the reality

captured in the street, the injustice of misery, The dignity of the workers, the pride of the Indians.

Xavier Guerrero is called to Moscow, to the cadre school of the party. In 1928 Tina met the Cuban revolutionary Julio Antonio Mella: a passionate love was born, which ended tragically on January 10, 1929 when Mella was shot to death while walking arm in arm with her. The Mexican police arrest Tina, suspected of knowing the murderer; she is released for lack of evidence, and despite everything, this is the year of greater satisfaction for her work: she publishes photos in magazines of various countries, In December the first exhibition entirely dedicated to her is held, the muralist painter Siqueiros defines his work "revolutionary photography".

1930-1942 - In 1930 Tina was arrested again for complicity in an alleged attack on President Pascual Ortiz Rubio. Deported, the United States, where she asks to disembark, denies her visa despite being a US citizen. He arrives in Europe, he lives for some time in Berlin, where he takes a series of images of landscapes for the Unionfoto agency, with a Leica: he misses the "sky of Mexico", its light, and the political climate, The consensus for Nazism is growing and the situation for her is untenable. He leaves for Moscow. The darkest period of her life began: all her passions were extinguished and she dedicated herself silently to the work of militant, obedient and inert. In 1931 he wrote the last letter to Edward Weston. Since 1932 he has worked for the Red Rescue, carrying out clandestine missions in various European countries. In 1936 she left for the Spanish War, where she worked as a nurse alongside Canadian doctor Norman Bethune, the first to carry out transfusions in field hospitals. Tina risked her life under the Franco bombing. After the defeat of the Spanish Republic, he managed to return to Mexico in 1939, along with thousands of veterans welcomed by the Mexican government. Here he works on a photographic book project traveling for a few months in the states of Oaxaca and Chiapas, making photographs of indigenous women: the book will never see the light because the author, Constanca de la Mora, perishes in a plane crash.

On the night of January 5, Tina dies aboard a taxi in Mexico City: some newspapers speak of "poisoning", because of the report that says "generalized visceral congestion", others argue that it was a heart attack. She is buried in the vast cemetery of the capital, the Panteón de Dolores: her grave is still there, engraved with the poem that Pablo Neruda wrote in his memory, although unfortunately ruined by time.



Tina Modotti,
Campesinos Reading
"El Machete", 1929



Tina Modotti,
Roses, 1924



Tina Modotti,
Hand Resting on Tool, 1927

MY PHOTOGRAPHY BY PINO CACUCCI

Como México no hay dos, say with a mixture of pride and melancholy, because while they say that Mexico is unique, they think that this is bivalent: for better or for worse. And someone adds: *Si no eres mexicano no puedes entender*, without any arrogance or vainglory in declaring it, if anything, a sense of fatalism, being only a finding, because Mexico, as well as inimitable, remains sometimes incomprehensible to those Mexican is not. And if there is one thing that Mexico has taught me, it is precisely this: the reality is not unique and interpretable according to preconceived patterns, but multiform, multidimensional, changing and ephemeral - so similar to evanescent superimposed images... - sometimes elusive, and when we "Westerners" do not understand a reality, we exclaim the word "magic". Moreover, André Breton said: Mexico is instinctively surrealist.

Learning, along the way, not to pretend to explain what I saw, meanwhile... I took pictures, wandering far and wide for over forty years. Thousands of fragments of a kaleidoscope of memory, also to grasp the aspects less understandable, occasionally funny or even grotesque but only because, decontextualizing them once back "home", they were alienating, symbolic of that reality that, To me, it took years before you accepted the surrender: Mexico demands precisely this, an unconditional surrender that leads you to admit that you will never understand the country and the Mexicans. Photos taken as a souvenir, to stop the moment in a certain emotional situation. For example: one night in the mid-80s I was in Veracruz, in a period of great indecision about what to do with life, I put the old Canon on a pier wall and left the diaphragm open for a few seconds, and meanwhile I only saw the lights of the city in total darkness. Then, when I had that film of a slide developed in Mexico City, the face of a giggling devil appeared in the black sky. My demon mocking what I thought were insurmountable problems...

In those days of 1985 I finally found the tomb of Tina in the huge main cemetery of Mexico City, the Panteón de Dolores, vast as a city of seven hundred thousand inhabitants, how many are her tombstones: I was the first to do so after her death in 1942. No one remembered that she was buried there. It was not easy to find her coordinates on the dust-covered logs over forty years old. The headstone was covered with weeds, which I tore for hours. I photographed her "before and after" the brief cleaning. Thirty years later, I returned there, and the tomb had been restored, but irretrievably ruined by time: its profile engraved in worn-out stone, the words of Neruda's poetry barely guessed. And I took some pictures in the rain.

Memories, appearances, ghosts... Basically, the meaning, the essence, the reasons why I always took photographs of the Mexican reality, so... to *unreality*.



Pino Cacucci, *Diavoleto*, Veracruz 1985 ca.
@Pino Cacucci

PINO CACUCCI, A CHRONOLOGY

1955 - Born in Alessandria, then spent his childhood and adolescence in Liguria, Chiavari and Genoa, where he attended the last two years of high school. Passionate about drawing and painting, he creates oil paintings exposing some of them in groups of young people of fine artistic hopes.

1975 - He moved to Bologna to attend university, DAMS faculty, Disciplines of Music and Performing Arts. He follows the courses of Umberto Eco, but among the teachers he prefers is Gianni Celati, who in 1977 became his point of reference as a writer. He begins to write stories, which Celati, with commendable patience, reads and gives him valuable advice. Meanwhile, continues to cultivate drawing, looking for creative streets in the cartoon.

1979 - He met Luigi Bernardi, comic book editor and founder of the publishing house "The island found", to whom he submitted a comic book story written and drawn: after careful evaluation, Bernardi, having appreciated more the plot and the dialogues than the drawings, tells him laconic: «Start writing stories, that you are better at this». Advice accepted, in fact that comic book story will become the novel Escape points. Later in the 1990s, Bernardi offered him the editorial direction of the monthly magazine Nova Express.

1982 - After several periods spent in Barcelona and Paris, the first trip to Mexico. In Paris he had met two students who were about to return home, and they had invited him to visit them. In just one month of wandering, he feels he has found ideal places for his interests and inspirations. She returns shortly after, and in the mid-1980s she decides to stop and live in Mexico City. Here she begins to follow the traces of a "magnificent ghost", Tina Modotti: she finds her grave in a state of total abandonment, interviewing people who knew her when she was young, intellectuals and writers - including Octavio Paz, before he received the Nobel, and Elena Poniatowska - delve into the thousand meanders of an eventful existence and many mysteries. In the Mexican capital he knows and frequents the writer Paco Ignacio Taibo II, of which he will translate into Italy various books, friendship that lasts even now.

1988 - His first book, Outland Rock, a collection of noir short stories, is published and is much appreciated by Federico Fellini, so much so

as to release an interview in which he says: «Cacucci is a craftsman of the word, a builder of plots, atmospheres and characters». A friendship is born between the writer and the master of cinema, made up of long chats about Mexico, while together they design a subject for a film noir that will never be made. The relationship with Fellini lasted, even at a distance, until the director's death. In this year he returned to Italy, to Bologna, while continuing to travel to Mexico both at the invitation of book fairs or literary festivals and to continue to draw inspiration for his books. And he won't stop shooting slides... In the same year he published I fuochi le ombre il silenzio, his first book on Tina Modotti, the result of years of research in Mexico City: this will be followed by Tina, a narrative biography, a sort of "endless" book because the author adds data and testimonies to each new edition. In addition to writing, he has worked as a translator of Latin American and Spanish literature: to date there are about 120 titles translated, which have earned him various awards including the Instituto Cervantes Prize in Rome.

1990 - Puerto Escondido is released, the novel from which the director Gabriele Salvatores (Oscar for Mediterranean) will draw the eponymous film (blockbuster in 1992). From here on, "writing" is transformed from a hidden passion into a "craft" with which to maintain oneself.

1991-2000 - He writes and publishes several books, including La polvere del Messico, which becomes a sort of "narrative travel guide" and exceeds twenty reprints. In any case no remorse, Demasiado corazón, Caminando, Ribelli! and San Isidro Fútbol, which becomes the film Viva San Isidro, all books translated into various languages. He continues to return incessantly to Mexico - also at the invitation of the Ministry of Tourism, which gave him in 1992 and then in 1997 the prestigious Pluma de Plata, recognition for his reports - and to shoot hundreds of slides, essentially as memories of travel, some of which are published in travel magazines. In the early '90s he met in Gijón, Asturias, the Chilean writer Luis Sepúlveda: he would return several times to his large house called La Cruz del Sur, on the Cantabrian sea, in endless days and nights of chatting, grilling, good wine.

2001 - As part of the Celebrations of Verdi, the town of Parma organizes an exhibition of his photos on Mexico that make up a travel diary with texts that accompany the images. The book-catalogue, Gracias México,

was published by Feltrinelli. For the cases of life, Sebastião Salgado participates in the opening of the exhibition, in Parma to make a report at the invitation of the Solares Foundation. In 2003 his photos accompany the illustrated book Restaurante México published by the graphic studio Lizart, on Mexican cuisine. In 2006 he left the slides and "converted" to digital photography, especially because often his articles, published in the main Italian travel magazines, are accompanied with photos taken by the author.

2010 - Viva la vida comes out! , on Frida Kahlo, monologue staged first by Assemblea Teatro di Torino directed by Renzo Sicco and the interpretation of Annapaola Bardelloni, and then by Pamela Villoresi directed by Gigi Di Luca, in Naples, Palermo, Catania etc. To these is added an infinity of "minor" performances staged in various Italian cities.

2012 - During the presentation of his book in Milan he met Stefano Delli Veneri, illustrator and professor at the Brera Academy and at NABA, and then the only Italian member of the prestigious Society of Illustrators in New York. A fraternal friendship was established that often led them to travel together in Mexico, a land of inspiration for both, and they started a series of projects for illustrated books and graphic novels. From this four-handed work, books like Pan del Alma, by various authors and authors, were born, combining photography, plastic arts, prose and poetry texts, with the subject of the peculiar conception of death in Mexico; in 2018 they publish together the graphic novel Mujeres, on the extraordinary lives of Mexican women in the 1920s and 1930s (including Tina Modotti). In June, Stefano Delli Veneri died prematurely after a short illness. Many projects of work to be carried out together died with him. The hard blow leads the author to stop writing - and even traveling to Mexico - for at least four years.

2022-2024 - Publishes what he considers "the book of a lifetime", the historical novel and adventures The Elban wanderer, almost a thousand pages of years of research to reconstruct "the other side of the Renaissance", and finally Dieguito and the Centaur of the North, around the figure of the Mexican revolutionary Pancho Villa. Among the many literary awards, we remember the first, in 1988 to the Mystfest delivered by Fernanda Pivano president of the jury, and the last in 2022, the Alessandro Manzoni Prize for the historical novel.



Pino Cacucci,
Untitled II, 2024
@Pino Cacucci

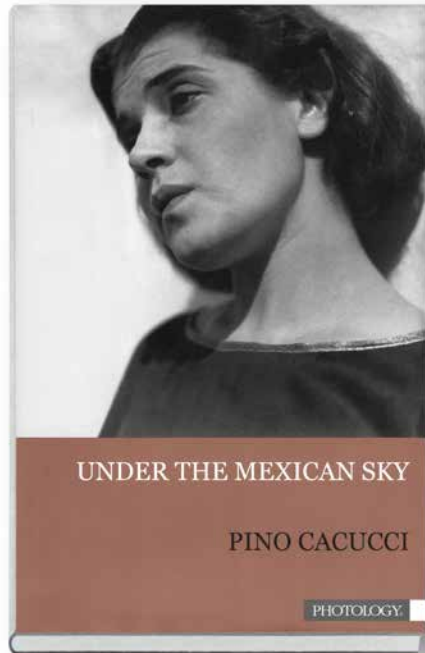


Pino Cacucci,
Untitled IV, 2024
@Pino Cacucci



Pino Cacucci,
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@Pino Cacucci

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Under the Mexican Sky

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Sotto il cielo del Messico

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PHOTOLOGY ONLINE GALLERY

One trait which may characterize Photology in its 31 years of activity is the ability to evolve and keep up with the times. An adaptability allowing the Photology organization to open more than 350 photo-art exhibitions worldwide, collaborating with international artists, archives, foundations, galleries, curators, collectors, Museums and Universities. The Photology logo towered over various self owned galleries worldwide: Milan Via Moscova (1992- 2015); Cortina Corso Italia (1992-1995); London Covent Garden (1997-2000); Bologna Villa Impero (2000-2003); Paris Hotel de Ville (2007); Pueblo Garzón, Uruguay (2015-2020); Noto Tenuta Busulmone (2013-ON). With the creation of Photology® Online Gallery, we have now chosen a new exhibiting concept, actualizing the traditional physical gallery space to a 3D virtual experience. Since September 2020 commercial exhibitions produced by Photology are entirely and uniquely visible on-line. Therefore allowing a broader range of international viewers to enter our exhibition space h24 and to have the opportunity to purchase photographic works directly through our website www.photology.com. This 3D platform has been developed with an innovative system permitting users to navigate within a virtual space which is totally realistic. Extensive textual references are highlighted in our exhibition context, which also includes videos, catalogues and other useful information. In case of sale, works will be delivered worldwide in close collaboration with our logistic partner Art Defender Bologna. Private viewings for clients of actual works may be organized upon request.

INFOS

Photology Online Gallery

3 JUNE - 1 SEPTEMBER 2024

<https://www.photology.com/modotti-cacucci/>

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Pino Cacucci, *Under the Mexican Sky III, V, VI*, 2024

@Pino Cacucci

COLOPHON

Exhibition

3 JUNE - 1 SEPTEMBER 2024

Photology

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