



PRESS RELEASE

Ivrea, April 4, 2025

OLIVETTI AND THE MAGNUM PHOTOGRAPHERS

Wayne Miller - Erich Hartmann - Henri Cartier-Bresson - Sergio Larrain

April 13 – October 26, 2025

P. A. Garda Civic Museum – Ivrea

Inauguration April 13, at 9:00 PM

The P. A. Garda Civic Museum and the Olivetti Historical Archive Association, in collaboration with Magnum Photos and the Fondation Henri Cartier-Bresson, are opening a new exhibition to the public that tells the extraordinary story of the collaboration between the Olivetti company and several photographers from the Magnum agency during the last century.

The Olivetti Historical Archive Association preserves original photographs, contact sheets, slides, and unpublished correspondence between Giorgio Soavi (Olivetti's Advertising Research Office) and the agency's Paris office, particularly with Michel Chevalier, the person responsible for Europe. The intertwining of paper documents and photographs has enabled the curators to highlight many aspects of the collaboration that began in 1958 for the publication *Olivetti 1908-1958*, which continued through much of the 1960s with documents up to 1970.

The exhibition focuses on the importance of photography as a historical and visual document, showcasing photographs that are testimonies of culture, social and industrial vision, as well as technological innovation in the photographic medium.

The exhibition features works by:

Wayne Miller (1918-2013) for the Olivetti store in San Francisco.

Erich Hartmann (1922-1999) for the stores in New York and Buenos Aires, factories in Argentina and Brazil, and the Harrisburg factory.

Henri Cartier-Bresson (1908–2004) for the Olivetti factory and housing in Pozzuoli.

Sergio Larraín (1931–2012) for the Olivetti factories in Argentina and Brazil.

Four different perspectives. Each photographer chose the framing, subject, shooting methods, image composition, depth, lighting, and contrast. Artistic decisions were influenced by various factors, such as available technology and environmental factors that could not be modified, especially in outdoor shots. The “singularity” of each photographer’s perspective was also influenced by the client’s instructions or the subject’s behavior, especially when depicting humans.

The magnifying glass on the Olivetti-Magnum relationship also delves into the internal processes of the Olivetti commissioning office, including very precise instructions on the photographic services to be realized, how the prints were chosen from contact sheets, the intended purposes of these services, and payment processes. An emerging figure in the documents is, once again, Giorgio Soavi, curator of major art and publishing projects for Olivetti. At the same time, by the end of the 1950s, Magnum had developed into a major photography agency that also promoted its photographers' work commercially.

The exhibition also highlights the existence of an Olivetti photographic archive, an internal photography department, and a systematic activity of reproducing and cataloging the photographic services of all the photographers who worked for Olivetti by the Photographic Documentation Office. The study of correspondence and publications intertwines with the photographic services, analyzing vintage prints, contact sheets, negatives, and color film services.

Gaetano di Tondo, President of the Olivetti Historical Archive Association, comments on the exhibition: *“The historical film South as North by Nelo Risi and the large model of the Pozzuoli factory, recently restored, represent multidisciplinary curatorial choices: they offer the public a highly significant sample of the cultural heritage of 20th-century archives and reveal a distancing from the idea of pure photography, aesthetically exciting and highly enjoyable, but detached from its relational contexts. ‘Archives within archives’ intersect the Magnum story and add further pieces to the cultural profile of Olivetti, which also embraces photography.”*



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Matteo Chiantore, Mayor of Ivrea, states: "*This exhibition represents a key piece in illustrating the complexity and richness of Olivetti, a company that united innovation and culture. As Henri Cartier-Bresson said, 'The photographer is a witness,' and through Magnum's images, we can capture the dialogue between aesthetics and functionality characteristic of an era. Olivetti is not just a brand, but a symbol of a time when design embraced human values, transforming industry into an act of beauty. Initiatives like this urge us to reflect and keep our cultural identity alive, valuing beauty in all its forms.*"

The exhibition's curators and catalog editors are Paolo Barbaro, Claudia Cavatorta, Paola Mantovani and Marcella Turchetti.

Exhibition Details:

Title: OLIVETTI AND THE MAGNUM PHOTOGRAPHERS. Wayne Miller – Erich Hartmann – Henri Cartier-Bresson – Sergio Larrain

Dates: April 13 – October 26, 2025

Location: Piazza Ottinetti, P.A. Garda Civic Museum, Ivrea

Curators: Paolo Barbaro, Claudia Cavatorta, Paola Mantovani, and Marcella Turchetti

Opening Hours: Daily 9:00 AM – 1:00 PM | 3:00 PM – 6:00 PM, closed on Mondays

Tickets: Full price 7 euros – Reduced 5 euros. Free admission for holders of the Abbonamento Musei Piemonte card

For more information and reservations, contact the P.A. Garda Civic Museum at 0125 410512 or via email at musei@comune.ivrea.to.it



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