

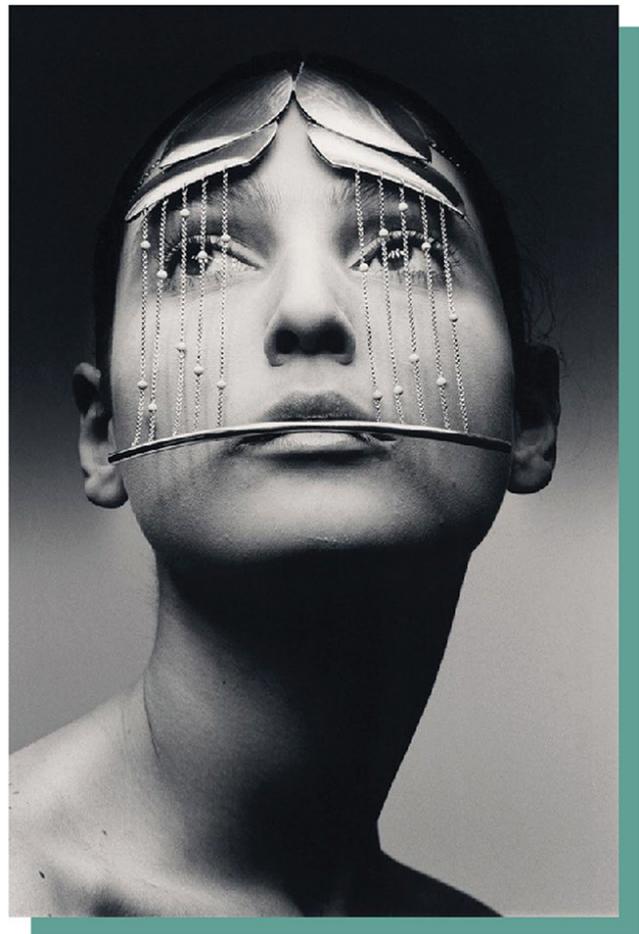
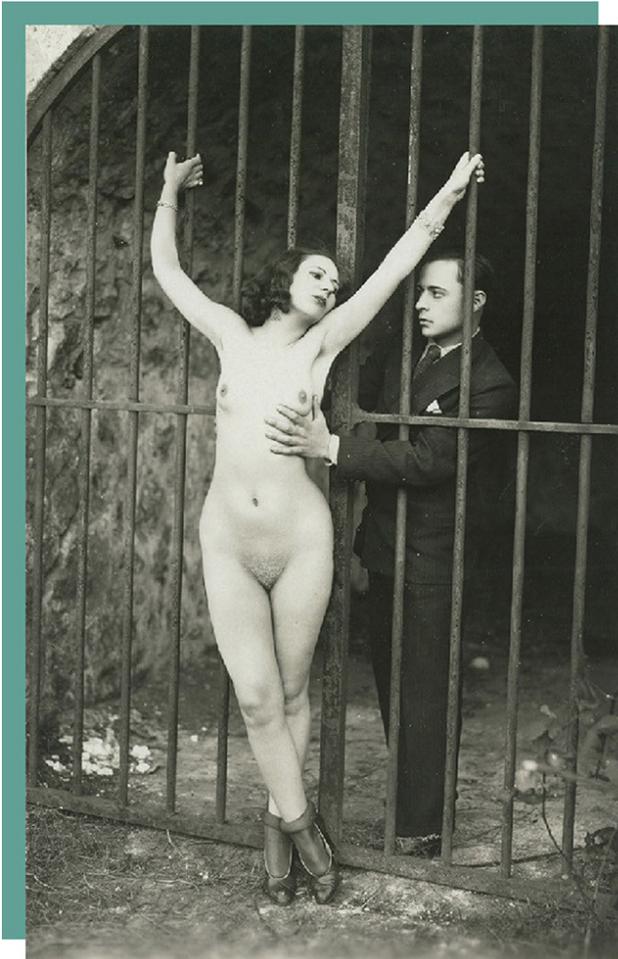
L'ŒIL DE LA PHOTOGRAPHIE

Ettore Molinaro Collection : Dialogues : Ugo Mulas and the Biederer brothers

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Ettore Molinaro

February 4, 2022



This is the tenth dialogue of the **Ettore Molinaro Collection**. A dialogue between **Ugo Mulas** and the **Biederer brothers**, but above all a dialogue between us and our cages. And leaving to the Verifications of the great Italian photographer, carried out fifty years ago, the pleasure of leading this survey, once more I wish you a «good start» and invite you to follow us in our next appointments.

We should do this verification every January, a cold, essential month, prone to reviews and new year's resolutions, and check the state of the domestic and mental cages in which we live. An accurate check of the bars, doors, hinges, then the small opening that allows us to introduce food and caress the animal's skin or fur beyond the fence, and of course better take a look at the padlock and the key that we keep hidden. Starting from the etymology of this month dedicated to Janus, a double-faced god capable of looking at the past and the future at the same time, the verification would help us understand where we are on our tiring and bumpy journey towards awareness, whether we are free or prisoners, whether we are open or closed to new ideas, whether we are in the flow or rigidly constrained, whether we are traveling or trapped. And the verb to verify, so scientific, surgical, aseptic, is not used by chance.

Fifty years ago, in 1972, Ugo Mulas conducted his famous Verifications. At the origin of an investigation, unparalleled in Italy and beyond, was «a certain discontentment with what I had done all these years» admitted the great photographer. And certainly he was not dissatisfied with the quality of the images, but with the recklessness with which he had chosen photography and had practiced it professionally since 1954. It was as if Mulas had felt the cage of habit and repetition: going into the studio, loading the film, focusing, framing, shooting, developing, enlarging, cutting. In short, he operated like a machine, and did it well, but without being aware of the reason that motivated each single operation, of the gestures, of the materials that made up the practice and photographic thought.

Maybe this extraordinary revision had begun in 1969, when Mulas portrayed the jewel of Pietro Consagra, the cage-mask that imprisons the eyes and lips of the beautiful Benedetta Barzini. It was not a real closure, more feeling and seeing just a half. Even half a kiss. Yet it was enough to notice those almost invisible bars, blurred because too close to the eyes, and the cage would open. Observing the mysterious mise en scene of the Biederer brothers, it is up to us today to decide which of the two characters is inside or outside the cage, who is the jailer, who is the prisoner, who holds the imagination in check and who sets it free. A very personal verification.

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