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Collezione Ettore Molinario : Dialogues #43 : Sasha Stone / Todd Hido

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Ettore Molinario

June 3, 2025



This is the 43rd dialogue of the **Collezione Ettore Molinario**. It is a small tribute to the endless paths of life and to the force that shapes them. I am a calculator, a gambler, but also a loyal subject to the only sovereign I both respect and fear: chance. And in the company of **Sasha Stone** and **Todd Hido**, we let chance guide us into the most intimate rooms of our story.

Ettore Molinario

I never liked glass slippers, nor did I like those who wore them. Too fragile, needlessly precious, because they belong to fairy tales and their moral purity. My shoes, the ones I bow to like a vassal of fetishism, are quite different. They know asphalt, dust, the weight of a body, even the lightest, most alluring one. They are shoes that « speak » like those imagined by Sasha Stone, and perhaps once worn by his wife Cami. They were fashionable shoes in the 1930s, worn – and willingly immortalised – by Kiki de Montparnasse, Sonia Delaunay, and all the marvelous *filles de joie* that the mysterious Monsieur X loved to photograph in a *maison close* in Pigalle. A strand of pearls, sometimes a silk slip, the sex opened like a seashell and always those shoes, marking a man's desire and the lives of many women. Bare feet had no place there, too vulgar, too plain. The nudity they dreamed of was something else: it meant undressing chance itself and stepping into the intimacy of its game. It meant following that rhythm when it turned into the click of high heels on the sidewalk; then all it took was to climb the stairs, open a door, and if it was the door of a *maison close*, let the rest unfold.

To these shoes – which are, above all, a double object, an object that defines a shape while also bearing the imprint of what it holds – Sasha Stone added an extra element: another road, this time paved with signs, meant for us to walk. The road where Stone's feminine ghost strolls is paved with cards, and each card carries its own meaning. In that hand left abandoned on a table during a « reading » while the fortune teller pieces together the fragments of a vision, lie the ages of the masculine: a King of Spades and of Diamonds, a Jack of Spades, the Three of Hearts that marks the unfolding of every love story, the Six of Spades that brings sorrow, and then the Seven of Diamonds – success and money – and more hidden still, the Ace of Clubs, fortune, blossoming.

That the Ace is the most important card – the one up the sleeve – is a creation of the French Revolution, because the individual, the citizen, the singular being, with all their complexity and infinite roads ahead, is worth more than the King of any suit: hearts, spades, clubs, diamonds. The Ace sits atop the pyramid and « cuts » through any other card, just as the guillotine cut off the heads of kings, and as chance slices through any excess of calculation. « Chance is the only legitimate sovereign of the universe » Honoré de Balzac once said. And it is this sovereign, the most unpredictable, the most generous and indifferent, who also governs our intimacy, our fleeting or lasting encounters, perhaps in a Todd Hido interior, where everything exists as a suspension in colour and light. And surely, the King of Chance would never have worn the red-soled shoes of Louis XIV, but rather the worn, weary, utterly human shoes of Sasha Stone.

Ettore Molinaro

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