

European Photography Festival 2025 – “Being Twenty”

The 2025 edition of *Fotografia Europea* came to a close yesterday in Reggio Emilia, celebrating twenty years of one of Europe's most dynamic and influential photography festivals. Running from April 24 to June 8, this special anniversary edition centered on the theme “Being Twenty”, offering a rich and thought-provoking exploration of the personal, social, and political dimensions of early adulthood.

The theme resonated strongly with the current generation of young adults, as well as with those reflecting on what it meant to be twenty in different decades and contexts.

Organized by the **Fondazione Palazzo Magnani** and the **Municipality of Reggio Emilia**, with support from the **Emilia-Romagna Region**, the festival was once again guided by a curatorial trio of international stature: **Tim Clark**, editor of *1000 Words*; **Walter Guadagnini**, director of CAMERA in Turin; and **Luce Lebart**, historian and curator with Archive of Modern Conflict. Together, they orchestrated a multidisciplinary journey through identity, transformation, belonging, and rebellion.

Exhibitions were staged in multiple historic and contemporary venues throughout Reggio Emilia. The **Chiostri di San Pietro** served as the main hub, hosting numerous shows that captured the spirit and complexity of youth. Among the festival's most acclaimed exhibitions was the Italian debut of **Daido Moriyama – A Retrospective**, curated by Thyago

Nogueira. The show traced the influential Japanese photographer's decades-long career, reflecting on post-war transformation, urban energy, and individual alienation through his iconic black-and-white aesthetic.

Other key exhibitions featured works by artists such as **Vinca Petersen**, who chronicled her nomadic youth among ravers and travelers in 1990s Europe; **Andy Sewell**, exploring the tension between nature and digital intrusion; and **Ghazal Golshiri & Marie Sumalla**, whose work examined protest culture and generational memory. The festival also presented newly

commissioned projects, including **Federica Sasso's "Intangibile"** and **Francesco Colombelli's "Fluorescent Adolescent"**. Winners of the international Open Call, such as **TerraProject** and **Matylda Nizegorodcew**, contributed fresh and diverse perspectives.

In addition to exhibitions, *Fotografia Europea 2025* offered a vibrant public program of events. The opening weekend included portfolio reviews, artist talks, lectures, and evening performances. Highlights included a roundtable titled **"Writing at Twenty and Twenty Years Later"**, featuring authors such as Silvia Ballestra, Andrea Canobbio, and Loredana Lipperini, and a series of DJ sets and night performances that brought new life to urban spaces. A photography book fair and workshops for young photographers further enriched the program.

What made this 20th edition particularly memorable was its ability to connect different generations through a universal experience—being twenty. Whether through intimate self-

portraits, collective memory, or geopolitical narratives, the festival explored how photography continues to serve as a mirror of human development and a platform for social inquiry.

With its mix of emerging and established voices, historic retrospectives and contemporary experiments, *Fotografia Europea 2025* reaffirmed Reggio Emilia's role as a European

capital of visual culture. The festival ended on a high note, having once again turned the city into a living gallery, where past and present converged to illuminate the challenges and dreams of youth.

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