

EDIT FOR ARTISSIMA

FOOD FOR THOUGHT:
ALDO MONDINO'S POSTMODERN POETICS
IN THE INNOVATIVE SPACES OF VIA CIGNA

EDIT – EAT DRINK INNOVATE TOGETHER

EDIT is a unique and special place, that will open to the public at the end of November 2017. A multifunctional space, an innovative concept, that wants to become a point of reference for Turin's food and beverage sector, in the heart of a former industrial area in the Barriera di Milano district that has been completely redeveloped. As its headquarters, EDIT has chosen the ex-Incet factory complex, where electric cables were once made, the perfect location on what has been dubbed as the "Innovation Mile", a strategic axis that runs through the city from the Politecnico to the Dora station, and aims to transform Turin into one of Italy's cultural and business innovation hubs.

EDIT is a genuine platform for sharing culinary experience, but there is more to it than that. As well as being the third person singular of the verb *edo* which means "to eat" in Latin, EDIT is also the acronym for Eat Drink Innovate Together.

EDIT will host various proposals coordinated under a single management structure to offer customers a new and fully immersive food experience. At the heart of the project is the desire to apply the most innovative contemporary trends, co-working and

the sharing economy, to the food and beverage sector, in a format capable of offering an all-round interactive experience in a space organised on two floors covering a surface area of more than 2000 square metres

EDIT, ARTISSIMA AND FOOD FOR THOUGHT

EDIT and Artissima share the same innovative spirit and the sense of sharing, interpreted by this prestigious event as exchange in the field of Culture and Art. The partnership between the two organisations was thus a natural and logical step and for the 2017 edition will take the form of an initiative that perfectly represents the union of Art and Food. The EDIT Kitchens – which have yet to be inaugurated – will house the Food for Thought exhibition dedicated to Aldo Mondino to offer visitors a taste of his highly imaginative world. The exhibition will run from 31 October until 7 November and is by appointment only. A tribute to this genius from Turin who, with his works in chocolate and large ephemeral installations produced using different kinds of food, will fill the EDIT Kitchens to create a unique bond between space, art and food for thought.

ALDO MONDINO

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

CURATED BY::

ARCHIVIO ALDO MONDINO

31 October – 7 November 2017

Visits by appointment

every day between 3.00 pm and 7:30 pm

(giorgia.zerboni@edit-to.com)

EDIT – Via Cigna 104/A, Torino

ALDO MONDINO

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

CURATED BY: ARCHIVIO ALDO MONDINO

TEXTS: GINEVRA D'ORIA

Aldo Mondino (Torino, 1938 – 2005) was one of the most outstanding exponent of the Italian Post-Modern poetics, an eclectic talent that admits no comparisons, always balanced between ironic conceptualism and redefinition of the tools of painting and sculpture. *Food for Thought*, through some of his works, narrates this tireless research and offers viewers a taste of the vivid imagery of Mondino, where nothing is what it seems.

In his long career spanning four decades, Mondino generated extremely versatile production whose formal and conceptual quality seems to be the result of multiple artistic personalities. Through his work he reappropriated the stylistic and formal discoveries of the avant-gardes, revisiting various currents, from Surrealism to Dada, Conceptual Art to Pop influences, Arte Povera to Minimal Art, all the way to the unprecedented Orientalism that earned him an entire pavilion at the Biennale curated by Achille Bonito Oliva in 1993.

For Mondino anything could be a source of inspiration, from West to East, souks to classical art, religious to culinary traditions. Across his career he experimented with and reinvented techniques, materials and genres, passing from painting on linoleum to creating sculptures in glass or chocolate, a chandelier of Bic pens, a swimming pool of marshmallows.

Mondino reacted to the research on the use of materials connected with Arte Povera, already towards the end of the 1960s, by using everyday things that were utterly novel for the world of art, such as food and – in particular – sweets. He made surprising sculptures, installations and painting-objects, practicing everything and its opposite with an amazing ability to create works that are simultaneously playful, ironic, introspective, passionate and dramatic, transmitting an unexpected

vision to the viewer.

He was inspired by the windows of the historic cafes of Torino, full of nougats, chocolates and colorful candies; these elements are transformed in his works, becoming something they are not, as in the case of the chocolates, specially wrapped for him by Peyrano in Torino, segments of a mosaic made of precious stones. This “double-cross” where the image seen from a distance is paradoxical and deceptive is one of the most characteristic and timely features of his work.

The use and the abuse of any materials also allowed him to approach still very timely social and religious themes with his erudite lightness, often making use of word games to express meaning in a term-image relationship that disrupts the interpretation of his artworks.

His fascination with the factor of chance led him to use other foods like cereals, where the kernels become the refined pattern of the *Raccolto in Preghiera* (Gathered in Prayer) carpet-like floor installation, or the spices used in the installation *Spirale* to recreate the odors of Arabian markets, discovered during his long journeys that began in the 1980s.

The Orient, explored with his friend and colleague Alighiero Boetti, offered Mondino the inspiration for his most famous works and shaping, during the last years, a unique and sometimes solitary path of artistic research.

ALDO MONDINO
FOOD FOR THOUGHT

CURATED BY: ARCHIVIO ALDO MONDINO

TEXTS: GINEVRA D'ORIA

– **Aldo Mondino** was born in Turin in 1938, where he died in 2005. In 1959 he moved to Paris where he attended William Heyter's atelier and the Ecole du Louvre. He enrolled in the mosaic course at the Fine Arts Academy with Gino Severini. He returns to Italy in 1960 starting his professional career at Galleria L'Immagine in Turin (1961) and Galleria Alfa in Venice (1962). The important encounter with a crucial figure of Italian contemporary art scene, like Gian Enzo Sperone, at the time director of the gallery Il Punto, marks the birth of a friendship that will last his whole life. Important solo shows have been presented at Galleria Stein, Studio Marconi in Milan, Galleria La Salita in Rome, Galleria Paludetto in Turin. Important to remember in the list of his international exhibitions are the three participations at the Venice Biennial (1964, 1976, 1993) and solo

shows at Museum für Moderne Kunst – Palais Lichtenstein di Vienna (1991); at Suthanamet Museo Topkapi in Istanbul (1992, 1996); at Museo Ebraico in Bologna (1995); at Galleria Civica d'Arte Moderna in Trento (2000); at Loggetta Lombardesca in Ravenna (2003); at Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Moderna in San Marino (2007); at Palazzo del Monferrato and Palazzo Cuttica in Alessandria (2008); a sculpture exhibition in Pietrasanta (2010); at Fondazione Mudima in Milano (2013); the recent group show *ONE TORINO. Shit and Die* (Turin, 2014) and the retrospective exhibition *Aldo Mondino. Moderno, Post-Moderno, Contemporaneo* curated by Ilaria Bonacossa at Museum Villa Croce and in other museums in Genoa, (2016). His works have been extensively collected and are preserved in national and international museums.

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WORKS ON DISPLAY

— FLOOR : EDIT KITCHENS

**RACCOLTO IN PREGHIERA
(GATHERED IN PRAYER), 1986–2017**
Foodstuffs, 600 x 300 cm
Courtesy: Archivio Aldo Mondino

Raccolto in preghiera is an impermanent work from 1986, shown at the Venice Biennale in 1993, consisting of a rug aimed towards Mecca and produced with the mandala technique, applied in Hindu and Buddhist Tantrism, to design the typical central mihrab drawn with different foodstuffs like rice, fava beans, peas and chickpeas. The idea for the work came to Mondino during a trip to Tangier and sums up the main characteristics of the artist: the passion for ironic word games (“*raccolto*” as in “gathered, harvest” and “*raccoglimento*” as in “absorption”), the openness to different cultures and the fascination with oriental influences, the eclecticism and experimentation with the use of any means of making “painting,” all the way to performance. *Raccolto in Preghiera* is a ritual object that lends itself to become a public art work capable of calling attention, with a certain lightness, to social themes of particular interest. Ahead of his time, Mondino approaches the theme of globalization starting from an apparent return to exoticism, while suggesting the union between religious and everyday rituals, such as praying and preparing a meal.

TORSO TORSOLO (APPLE CORE TORSO), 1993
Painted marble, 50 x ø 44 cm
Courtesy: Archivio Aldo Mondino

Torso Torsolo is a wry take on the concept of the artwork, a subtle quip on a sculptural form – the human torso – considered part of the world of “high” art. The apple core (torsolo) which the artist ironically says has been sculpted, or more precisely “nibbled” by Rodin, is thus raised to the status of an artwork, becoming a torso, as the title says: an anatomical part that has always been a frequent presence in the history of occidental sculpture.

ORTISEI, 1989
Chocolate, 45 x 43 x 41 cm
Courtesy: Archivio Aldo Mondino

Aldo Mondino began using chocolate to imitate bronze, inspired by a shop-window of Caffè Torino

with a life-size chocolate bell, exhibited during Easter. The idea of exchanging bronze with another material came thanks to his myopia. When he attended the Academy in Paris, from a certain distance, the historic sculptures installed in front of the Louvre appeared to him like made of chocolate. This work, where Mondino carved Le portrait de Marcel Duchamp, was one of the first he made in chocolate. The artist sculpted the over 70 Kg block, supplied by Peyrano in Torino, as if it were a normal tree trunk and using a traditional technique learned in Val Gardena. For this reason it’s titled *Ortisei*, honoring the small town in Trentino-South Tyrol.

**AUTORITRATTO A WILLIAMSBURG
(SELF-PORTRAIT IN WILLIAMSBURG), 1990**
Oil on linoleum, 190 x 140 cm
Courtesy: Marco and Franca Brignone Collection

Mondino’s interest in Middle Eastern culture begins in a conceptual way in the mid-1980s in his Milan studio, when he decided to make “orientalist” paintings to break from the post-industrial world. His desire to experiment new materials and the need to express this new passion, without limiting himself in reviving an “orientalist” language, led him to paint on linoleum. It was an extraordinary linguistic renewal at a time when no contemporary artists would ever evoke the Orient.

After travelling in North Africa, he goes to Israel in search of new subjects for his orientalist painting. He rediscovers the religion of his ancestors and begins the famous series of paintings on rituals, festivities and Jewish culture, of which this work is an important testimony. In Aldo Mondino’s work, religion is mainly understood as spirituality, as a drive towards infinity and as the history of peoples. Linoleum, invented in 1860 and used for paving public spaces, became an extraordinary pictorial surface for Mondino, because it already has texture, color and depth. On this material he also depicts *Dervishes, Gnawa, sultans and Arab merchants* who became his treasure of emotions, mystery and vitality.

This important self-portrait was made from a photograph taken while the artist was walking and talking to a rabbi in Williamsburg, Brooklyn (NY) home to an important Jewish community. This is a “moving” painting, where the figures are floating to

give an impression of lightness. They are outlined quickly, as if the brush were chasing after the speed and intensity of the words to involve us in the conversation between the artist and the rabbi.

— FLOOR : LOFT

SPIRALE (SPIRAL), 1998–2016
50 burlap bags containing dried fruit, cereals and other elements
Courtesy: Archivio Aldo Mondino

Aldo Mondino is undoubtedly one of the artists who more than others was able to depict the populations and civilizations of the Mediterranean. *Spirale* is an installation made with a series of burlap bags containing dry fruit, grain and other things, installed in the form of a spiral. The colors and odors that spread in the room allow visitors to plunge into the atmosphere and aromas of the Arabian markets the artist liked so much. Images, ideas, noises, shouts are thus conveyed through all the senses. In the souk created by Mondino the merchandise is not food but other worlds, as if art were a crowded market where people seek communication and exchange. The artist guides us, through breath, to an inner wellbeing and a spiritual transformation inside the spiral, the symbol of a continuous voyage of humankind.

GRANDE SPIRALE (LARGE SPIRAL), 1998
Oil on linoleum, 240 x 190 cm
Courtesy: Marco and Franca Brignone Collection

Aldo Mondino approaches oriental matters as an occidental artist, just as happened to certain important French painters like Delacroix and Matisse. During a trip to Morocco he witnessed a Gnawa gathering at El-Fnaa, the main square of Marrakech. The Gnawa are an ethnic group known for their rituals in which they enter a trance, accompanied by hypnotic music. These mysterious and fascinating figures, halfway between wizards and exotic curiosities, feared and respected for their ability to establish contact with supernatural forces, captured Mondino's imagination, and he depicted them in the painting *Grande Spirale*. The nomadic gaze of the artist accompanies the spiral composition formed by static but at the same time light figures.

Against the background of the linoleum the focus on apparel stands out, with the distinction – also thanks to the chromatic choices and rhythm of the composition – between female and male figures. Mondino's painting manages to capture the instant, to block time in space, allowing us to take part from a privileged vantage point in this immediate, intense encounter. It is fascinating that the artist chooses a humble material, associated with public places, challenging the courtly character of art.

ORO Y PLATA (GOLD AND SILVER), 1999
Chocolates on panel, 40 x 50 cm
Courtesy: Archivio Aldo Mondino

SANGRE Y ARENA (BLOOD AND SAND), 1999
Chocolates on panel, 40 x 50 cm
Courtesy: Archivio Aldo Mondino

At the end of the 1950s Mondino studied mosaics at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in Paris, but since he felt the use of stone or enamel tiles would weaken and alter the meaning of his project, he decided to replace the classic tiles with sugar cubes or chocolates. Specially wrapped for him, by Peyrano in Torino, with an infinite range of colored papers and made with "a special mix that lasts forever," to make a long series of works with chocolates. *Oro y Plata* and *Sangre y Arena* are inspired by the taumachy and the clothes of the toreros (but also by the Hollywood cinema), a theme that has always fascinated the artist.

As in a *trompe-l'œil* Mondino changes our way of seeing things and their function, conveying his own vision of reality in which the image seen from a distance is double, paradoxical and deceptive.