

■ BY MOTHER MARTHA

On January 27, 2007, the genial and indefatigable *Piemontese* entrepreneur Oscar Farinetti opened his first mega food store of exclusively Italian food products, *Eataly*, in Turin; now they are in 46 locations in 15 countries. In the US they are located in Boston, Chicago, Dallas, Las Vegas, Los Angeles, New York, San Francisco, and the Silicon Valley. A decade later, 2017, he opened an Italian food theme park outside Bologna. In the fall of 2022, with Chiara Ventura and his son Francesco Farinetti, president of the “Green Pea” retail park in Turin’s Lingotto neighborhood, he founded E.ART.H, an acronym for “Eataly Art House.”

Created with the aim of making contemporary art accessible to the general public, E.ART.H. is located at Via Santa Teresa 12, in central Verona, in Eataly’s newest store.

Its building, restored, after a long period of neglect, by architect Mario Botta, most famous for his churches and museums, had been Europe’s largest cold storage in the 1930s, with more than 10,000 square meters of refrigerated cells under a reinforced concrete dome.

On display here until September 17 and not travelling afterwards, is “Photo & Food,” an exhibition of 125 photographs of food, its social role and its traditions during the past 80 years.

The works are by 29 international photographers, all members of the Agency Magnum.

Displayed in chronological and thematic order in five sections, the exhibition considers the social, economic and symbolic meanings of food, highlighting its inextricable connection to human life, both as nourishment and agriculture, as well as food’s connection to nature.

The first section, *From War to the Boom*, all works in black and white, concerns the immediate aftermath of the Second World War and the struggle to survive. Procuring enough food not to suffer from hunger was the daily preoccupation.

The second section, *The Food of Stars*, covers the 1950s and 1960s when once again food and prosperity were accessible to most people in Europe and the USA—the so-called

EAT WITH A SMILE!

years of the Economic Boom. The photographs here show conviviality and large gatherings and concentrate on photographs of the VIPS of those decades, for example, **Marilyn Monroe**, Ronald Reagan, Alfred Hitchcock, and Muhammad Ali, and their rapport with food at public events and at home.

Also on display here are Phillippe Halsman’s shots of Salvador Dali’s surreal compositions and of Andy Warhol’s pop-art Campbell’s soup cans, with food products idealized as art and when a product of nature became merchandise.

The third section, *From the Producer to the Consumer*, illustrates the food production chain from the farmer to the market, beginning with Eve Arnold’s shots of bread-making in the Chinese countryside, to Ferdinando Scianna’s of making homemade tomato sauce in Bagheria near Palermo, to Alex Majoli’s of Palermo’s most famous market, Ballarò, and ending with shots of supermarkets, the symbol of globalization.

The photos in Section Four, *Extreme Food*, cover genetically manipulated foods by Jonas Bendiksen and hydroponic cultivation by Alex Webb, the excessive use of plastic in packaging food by Cristina De Middel, and consuming junk food by Martin Parr.

A contrast is Jérôme Sessini’s series “Living the Good Life in Vrmdza” (Vrmdza is a village in southeast Serbia which is presented as a model of rural sustainable development). These photos focus on the desire to rediscover the rhythms and ways of life of the past, definitely a challenge for all of us.

The photos in Section Five, *The Sacred Table*, concern the choice of foods we eat and how we prepare them during religious celebrations, both joyous and sad.

The photos show special moments in the ritual of a number of world religions: Christianity, Islam, Judaism, Hinduism, and Buddhism. Less noteworthy is Guy Le Querrec’s documentation of the preparation of Taan beer, drunk during long funerary celebrations in Burkina Faso.

A bilingual “catalog” (20 euros) is available from Eataly Art House’s online shop (www.eatalyarthouse.it). ○



American film star Marilyn Monroe (1926-1962) at a drive-in restaurant in 1952. She was 26 (Philippe Halsman/Magnum)

From left: Oscar Farinetti, *Wikipedia*; E.ART.H., *courtesy of E.ART.H.*; an Italian child in a refugee center in Ticino, Switzerland, in 1945, just after the Second World War, *copyright Werner Bischof/Magnum Photos*; and Making Steamed Bread, China, 1979, *copyright Eve Arnold/Magnum Photos*

