

The success of Tina Modotti Day

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The **Tina Modotti Day** saw the participation of a large public, starting with its inauguration at **Bellazzoia di Povoletto**, at the premises of the Tenimenti Civa winery, where there was the official presentation of “**Tinissima**” the bottle of **Sauvignon Vigneto Bellazzoia** dedicated to Tina to commemorate her in the year that marked the 90th anniversary of the exhibition in Mexico City.



Paolo Medeossi, journalist and writer, who presented the book by **Gianfranco Ellero**, underlined the importance of initiatives such as the Modotti day, an important opportunity to learn about and appreciate Udine's most famous daughter, but also to get to know her hometown: Tina Modotti's Udine. The book “**Tina Modotti. La ragazza di Pracchiuso**” is like a map that guides you through the artist's biography,” said Medeossi, “from her life in Udine, and the history of Pracchiuso a hundred years ago, to the many small mysteries that surround her life. Because she never talked about herself, but let others do it.

Her legacy includes her internationally renowned photographs, some of which have become iconic, and are mentioned for example in photography history books such as: “**The History of Photography**” by Beaumont Newhall. Tina's great creative period as a photographer was between 1923 and 1929. Then, once she had left Mexico City to go to Europe, she photographed little or nothing. The light was not the same as that in South America which had inspired her so much.

As Gianfranco Ellero reminded us, “Tina was a woman of considerable culture, and was a fluent speaker of Italian, English and Spanish. In a questionnaire from the Comintern in Moscow, Tina stated that she also knew some German and French. She also spoke Friulan perfectly and loved to sing the local folk songs, or *villotte*.”



Tina lived at 13 (now 89) Borgo Pracchiuso; her address was discovered after scrupulous research and study by Ellero, who underlined how the San Barlolomio gate (in the third walled wall) was the most important entrance to Udine, that of the Belle Époque crowd, who we see, for example, depicted in Viale Venezia drinking beer, which was not a popular drink at the time and more expensive than wine.

Since the 1970s, when I started studying Tina Modotti,” he concluded, “I have been fascinated by the complexity of her character and hybrid style. Classics are models to be repeated, whereas hybrids are unrepeatable, in the same way that Tina Modotti is unrepeatable.”

The Modotti day continued in the afternoon in Udine with a crowded meeting at **Palazzo Mantica at the premises of the Società Filologica Friulana**, where Gianfranco Ellero and Piero Colussi talked about “**Tina Modotti the photographer**”.

Ellero recalled that he was the first biographer to give importance to Tina’s kinship with

her uncle Pietro Modotti, an illustrious photographer in Belle Époque Udine. Naturally, Tina photographed Mexico making use of Edward Weston's great lessons, Ellero said, but already as a child she certainly saw photography as a way of escaping from poverty.

Moreover, Giuseppe, her father, also opened a photographic studio in San Francisco, immediately after the earthquake of 1906.

Piero Colussi recalled Tina's involvement in the Mexican Stridentist movement of the 1920s, her relations with the great mural artists, her presence **in Diego Rivera's "murales"** and the influence that these painters exercised on Tina in her artistic growth and photographic style.

The projection of two sequences of images created by Weston and his pupil demonstrated the relationship that, while uniting them aesthetically, divided them in terms of content, especially from 1927 onwards.



Finally, **Livio Jacob** re-presented and commented, thirty years after its first screening at the Udine Railway Workers' Club, the film "The Tiger's Coat", which he discovered at the US Library of Congress. The screening was greeted with great applause by the many present.

At 6 pm Modotti Day concluded in the **Galleria Soravito di Via Pracchiuso 33** with an exhibition of twenty works inspired by the personal and artistic story of Tina Modotti, "the girl from Pracchiuso".



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