

ALDO ROSSI



Aldo Rossi photographed with the *La conica* coffee maker, designed for Alessi - MAXXI Architettura Collection. Aldo Rossi Archive.

The Journal #6 presents *Aldo Rossi Design*, a film directed by Francesca Molteni and Mattia Colombo.

Twenty-five years after his death, the documentary reconsiders Aldo Rossi's legacy in the history of design; the link between design, the object and architecture, the relationship with industry, technicians and design factories. An unprecedented and, at times, intimate choral tale that flows between rare archive videos, family albums and the precious testimonies of Morris Adjmi, Alberto Alessi, Ludovica Barassi, Alberto Ferlenga, Antonia Jannone, Daniel Libeskind, Bruno Longoni, Giorgio Pogliani, Paolo Portoghesi, Fausto Rossi and Chiara Spangaro.

Perhaps observing things was my most important formal education.

Aldo Rossi

Aldo Rossi, *Autobiografia scientifica*, il Saggiatore, Milano 2009, p. 42.

BEHIND THE SCENES WITH...

Chiara Spangaro, art historian and independent curator, scientific director of the Aldo Rossi Foundation.

The exhibition "Aldo Rossi. Design 1960-1997" at the Museo del Novecento in Milan was the perfect opportunity to collaborate with Francesca Molteni and Mattia Colombo on the documentary on Rossi's design.

The idea had been in the air for some time and the Aldo Rossi Foundation contributed to the historical "skeleton" of research on furniture and objects - based on the study done for the exhibition and for the catalog raisonné.

Francesca and Mattia then worked on the story with freedom, finding historical footage and selecting the testimonies of collaborators, colleagues, and friends, also with the collaboration of Vera and Fausto Rossi, Aldo's children.

It turns out to be a personal and, at the same time, scientific, ironic, and lyrical narrative, which inhabits the past and reaches the present when it intersects with everyone's private memories and the images of the assembly of the exhibition at the Museo del Novecento. Not having known Rossi personally, I always notice how his poetic sense and charisma emerge from the films portraying him and other people's stories. Here, in tackling a new subject, or at least not as in-depth as Aldo's design is, his enjoyment and the architect's great curiosity towards practical facts - from materials to their technical characteristics - are also evident.

In his dialogue with producers, technical offices, and artisans, the desire to give shape to particular, playful, functional, and utopian furniture and objects often combines with his literary and cultural pleasure and his excellent intellectual preparation. The artisanal and industrial artifacts are linked to the broader discourse of his architectural design, memory, and the vernacular and derive from the empathetic and amused exchange with the different interlocutors of his "city of objects."



ALDO ROSSI DESIGN

Francesca Molteni, Mattia Colombo
Italy, 2022, 41'

IN CONVERSATION WITH THE DIRECTOR

How did this documentary come about?

Francesca Molteni*: The documentary was born in my head many years ago. As a young girl, I attended the evening celebrating the awarding of the Pritzker Prize to Aldo Rossi at Palazzo Grassi, Venice. I remember the enthusiasm and pride for the first Italian architect to win such a significant prize.

Rossi worked with the family company, Molteni&C, with his friend Luca Meda. He was a poet and an artist of great charisma.

Years later, as a director and producer, I told myself: 'Sooner or later, I will make a film about Aldo Rossi.' The opportunity came with the exhibition 'Aldo Rossi Design. 1960-1997', at the Museo del '900 in Milan in 2022. Here, I said to myself, the time has come. And I asked Mattia Colombo, a director I greatly respect, to give me a hand. I started at the MAXXI Archives in Rome. I remembered a video recording of the Venetian ceremony. I was in a frame, wearing a green velvet dress, entering Palazzo Grassi next to my father and Luca Meda. What a surprise!

A moment in the making that struck you

FM: I tenderly remember meeting Fausto Rossi, Aldo's son, who lives in his architecture, the Tecnoparco, on Lake Maggiore. Fausto is very reserved and does not like to talk about his father, but he told us beautiful and moving things, the moments we spent together, and the yearning for the void he left behind. Then, Vera, his daughter, wanted to avoid being interviewed but provided the family album of the Polaroids found in a drawer. The affection of Daniel Libeskind, Antonia Jannone, and Alberto Alessi also struck me.

The stories about the birth and development of coffee makers are perfect; they are literary pages that restore the sense of Italian design.

The hardest thing, the highest obstacle to overcome

FM: The obstacle was my memories of Aldo Rossi, like when he 'baptized' me to study philosophy instead of a career as an architect, to which I was somehow destined. It was finding the distance to recount his relationship with design and the link with architecture without entering the more complex sphere of his work as an architect. To portray his melancholy without becoming cloying, I did not want a sad film, the balance between the intimate and the public sphere.

Returning the melancholy without becoming cloying, I did not want a sad film, the balance between the intimate and the public sphere.

A scene you would have liked to shoot and couldn't

FM: I would have wanted to shoot some 'fiction' scenes with his grandson Olmo, a very talented young artist, returning to the places his grandfather loved - the house in Ghiffa on Lake Maggiore, the San Carlone in Arona, the streets of Milan, the canals of Venice.

Olmo did not want to; he was timid. These scenes would have given something new and unexpected to the film.

The documentary you would have liked to have made

FM: I would have liked to make "My Architect" about the life of the American architect Louis Kahn, retraced by his natural son Nathaniel.

There is everything in this film: it is a spiritual journey.

Your documentary in the drawer

FM: I want architecture as a public and social art to be better communicated to a wider audience. I hope to tell this story in my next documentary, in an apocalyptic version that closely relates to today's events.

*FRANCESCA MOLTENI

Director

She graduated in Philosophy from the University of Milan and studied film production at New York University. Since 2002, she has been producing and directing documentaries, TV formats, and videos and curating design exhibitions. In 2009, she founded the production company Muse Factory of Projects in Milan. In 2012, she received the Premio per l'Innovazione del Presidente della Repubblica Italiana, an honorable mention of the Compasso d'Oro and the Cathay Pacific Award for women entrepreneurs. She teaches at the Politecnico di Milano and collaborates with La Repubblica, D, and Door; she is the author of the book *Oggetti d'impresa*, Carocci (2016), and a member of the scientific committee of Symbola - Fondazione per le qualità italiane, and of the steering committee of MuseoCity. She documented the 2016 US elections for "The White House," broadcast on Rai3. Among her most recent films: *SuperDesign. Italian Radical Design 1965-75*, *The Power of the Archive*, *Renzo Piano Building Workshop*, *Aldo Rossi Design*, and *Green Over Gray*. *Emilio Ambasz*.