

FONDAZIONE
PALAZZO MAGNANI
REGGIO EMILIA

CALL FOR APPLICATIONS FOR THE ARTISTIC DIRECTORSHIP OF THE INTERNATIONAL 'FOTOGRAFIA EUROPEA' FESTIVAL (2027–29 EDITIONS)

INTRODUCTION

'Fotografia Europea' is an international cultural festival dedicated to **contemporary photography**. Founded in 2006, it is organised by **Fondazione Palazzo Magnani** and **the Municipality of Reggio Emilia**, and in 2027 it will reach its twenty-second edition.

'Fotografia Europea' is not merely a cultural undertaking: it is an event that has shaped habits, economies, expectations and relationships over time. It involves institutions, exhibition spaces, cultural operators, schools, associations, businesses, the hospitality sector as well as diverse audiences. The Festival views photography as a tool for interpreting the complexity of the contemporary era and exploring the fine line between the world and its imagery, in keeping with the teachings of **Luigi Ghirri**, a leading figure in the renewal of photography in the second half of the twentieth century, and whose archive is partly housed in the city.

The Festival takes place across **various public and private, formal and informal venues throughout the city**, while offering a core programme of exhibitions, including new works commissioned specifically for the occasion, dedicated to a **specific theme** identified each year by the organisers in consultation with the Artistic Director. The exhibitions are complemented by a rich calendar of events, conferences, screenings, workshops, portfolio reviews, live performances and site-specific installations.

The programme is further enriched by the **OFF circuit**: a series of exhibitions and events (on average more than 200), spread throughout the city and the surrounding province, promoted independently by galleries, associations, public institutions and private organisations alike.

Fotografia Europea also puts together its own **permanent collection**: ever since its first edition, it has acquired over 1,000 works, which may be viewed online and are held in the Photo Archive at Panizzi Library.

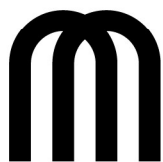
In 2022, the Festival won first prize at the **Lucie Awards** for Best Photo Festival of the Year.

FONDAZIONE
PALAZZO MAGNANI

Corso Garibaldi 29/31
42121 Reggio Emilia
Italia

T + 39 0522 444 446
info@palazzomagnani.it
www.palazzomagnani.it

CF / PI 02456050356
direzione@pec.palazzomagnani.it



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As they embark on this new phase of development, the organisers intend to preserve and build on the wealth of relationships, expertise, accolades and international credibility that Fotografia Europea has built up over more than twenty years of activity, while promoting renewal of the Festival format.

THE FESTIVAL'S CURRENT STRUCTURE AND STATISTICS

Duration: from late April to early June

Attendance in 2026: 55,000

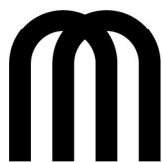
Tickets sold in 2026: 12,000 (several venues offer free entry)

Production budget (average of the last three editions): € 350,000 (including: curatorship fees, project fees, printing of works, exhibition set-up, transport, insurance).

Excluded from this budget are: venue management and opening costs, security, maintenance, management and staging of the book fair, workshops and educational programme for families and adults, promotion and communications, bookshop set-up and management, general services, street furniture, and the events programme (fees and services).

Current Festival structure:

- a) 10–11 exhibitions by living photographers, staged at various venues, both institutional and private;
- b) one exhibition by a historically significant artist (not necessarily living);
- c) at least one public commission;
- d) international Open Call (selection of up to three projects);
- e) an exhibition dedicated to the photographs of Luigi Ghirri, curated by the Civic Museums of the Municipality of Reggio Emilia;
- f) GFI (Giovane Fotografia Italiana) and the 'Luigi Ghirri' Prize, curated by the Civic Museums of the Municipality of Reggio Emilia;
- g) exhibitions curated independently by: Spazio Gerra, Biblioteca Panizzi and Collezione Maramotti;
- h) 'Special 18–25' (training course);
- i) Portfolio reviews (with around 10 invited reviewers);
- j) Book Award (publishing of the best dummy photobook);



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- k) Book Fair (for independent publishers);
- l) Off / Off School (city and provincial circuit);
- m) opening weekend: talks with individual invited photographers; speeches or keynote lectures by non-photographer guests exploring the chosen theme; live performances (primarily music, occasionally dance).

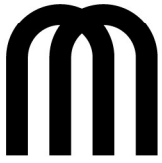
AIMS OF THIS CALL FOR APPLICATIONS AND AIMS OF THE FESTIVAL

Following several years of professional management and high-quality programming by the current curators, the organisers deem it appropriate to select a **new Artistic Director** for the next **three editions** (2027–28–29) through an international public call for applications, which will allow for the consideration of fresh perspectives and new curatorial proposals, including suggestions regarding the format of the Festival, with the possibility of evaluating innovative **formats** or **approaches**, such as a potential change in **frequency**.

Photography has now become a defining feature of the cultural heritage of the city of Reggio Emilia, from **the Panizzi Photo Library** (including the European Photography Collection and the Luigi Ghirri Collection) to **the Civic Museums** (Archive of Young Italian Photography – see Annex D). Palazzo Magnani, Palazzo da Mosto and the Chiostri di San Pietro are the three venues managed directly by the Fondazione Palazzo Magnani, which may potentially be used all year round. In particular, the **Chiostri di San Pietro** building is increasingly geared towards becoming the '**home of photography**' over time.

In this context, Fotografia Europea may evolve from a festival into a **leading European platform dedicated to shaping the contemporary gaze**, integrating exhibitions, research, pedagogy, media literacy, artificial intelligence, the ethics of imagery, the psychology of perception, digital citizenship and cultural rights. A framework in which Reggio's educational heritage (**the Reggio Approach** first and foremost) engages with the major transformations of the twenty-first century and offers tools to interpret them.

The aim is to transform Fotografia Europea **from a festival into a permanent cultural infrastructure**, capable of working with the city all year round (through meetings, conferences, residencies and commissions) and, for a certain number of weeks, of presenting the emerging moment, the most visible manifestation of a process – a rich and necessary moment, including one



of celebration – that reflects the complexity of our times, while maintaining a strong appeal to the general public and accessible communication, capable of speaking not only to professionals but also to **a broader audience** of photography and image enthusiasts.

The aims are thus as follows:

- 1) to enhance the Festival's **international standing** within the specific field of contemporary photography;
- 2) to characterise the Festival by a marked focus on **commissions, research** and **experimentation**, opening up to the cross-fertilisation of languages and techniques, whilst also taking into account the tangible and intangible heritage that the city already preserves;
- 3) to expand the Collection's **holdings** through acquisitions and/or commissions, gradually moving beyond the episodic and ephemeral nature of temporary exhibitions;
- 4) to engage actively with the various **sectors of the city** that will be involved from time to time: cultural and educational institutions, neighbourhoods, associations and diverse pressing issues.

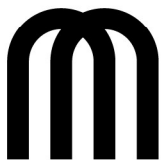
Specifically, the Artistic Director must propose concrete strategies to **increase visitor numbers** and **accessibility**, as well as providing solutions for **media partnerships** and the integration of the curatorial programme with **the Circuito OFF** – these elements constitute key criteria of evaluation.

The Promoters would like to underline that the Artistic Director will operate with creative autonomy, within the framework of the strategic guidelines defined by the Foundation and the Municipality of Reggio Emilia, ensuring consistency between the artistic outlook and institutional objectives.

1. SCOPE OF THE APPOINTMENT OF THE NEW ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

The scope of the appointment of the new Artistic Director of the Festival, comprises:

- a) contributing to the definition of the annual theme in consultation with the organisers;
- b) drafting the concept for the festival edition, while actively considering the rest of the annual photography programme;
- c) the selection of curators or photographic projects to be exhibited in each edition;
- d) the drafting of catalogue texts;
- e) the drafting of exhibition texts in collaboration with the curators and selected artists;



- f) contributing to the definition of performances and events not strictly related to photography, in collaboration with the city's other foundations and cultural institutions (Fondazione I Teatri, Fondazione Nazionale della Danza/Aterballetto and Conservatorio musicale Peri Merulo);
- g) the press presentation (the launch press conference and press preview) for each edition.

2. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Applications will be accepted from individuals or groups of individuals organised into curatorial collectives (including informal ones) who satisfy the essential requirements set out below:

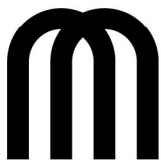
- a) not falling under any of the grounds for exclusion set out in Articles 94 and 95 of Legislative Decree 36/2023, taking into account the provisions of Articles 96 and 98 of the same decree, insofar as they apply to the nature of the candidate and the role; in the case of a collective application, this requirement must be met and declared by each member of the collective;
- b) having gained experience, acquired at least within the five years prior to the application, in artistic management, major curatorial roles or functions comparable to those laid out in the Scope of the Appointment;
- c) knowledge of English and, preferably, also of Italian.

3. PROCEDURE FOR SUBMITTING THE APPLICATION

Failure to provide the following documents will result in exclusion from the assessment; applications will only be considered valid if they include the following:

- 1) curriculum vitae (of the individual applicant or of the individual members of the participating collective);
- 2) the three-year plan (see 3.2);
- 3) the application form (annex A);
- 4) the self-declaration (annex B).

The CV and the project proposal must be written in Italian or English.



3.1 Curriculum Vitae

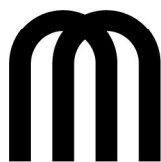
The participant's CV (or those of the individual members of the collective) must include details of their educational background, professional experience, roles held and projects carried out, with particular emphasis on the description of artistic and/or curatorial projects.

3.2 Three-year plan

The project (maximum 10 A4 pages, including images and any attachments) must be structured according to the following outline:

- a) reflections on **the current status of the Festival** in relation to other similar events;
- b) **objectives** for the Festival's **positioning** over the next three years;
- c) reflections on whether or not to modify the Festival's **current format** and any proposal for a **'new format'**.
- d) **a three-year plan**, divided into:
 - **an artistic proposal**, with particular emphasis on the ability to introduce innovative elements and on its overall sustainability (taking into account the current budget set out in the Introduction and the floor plans of the venues managed by the Foundation in Annex C);
 - **a strategic proposal**, aimed at enhancing attendance, popularity and accessibility; engaging a media partner; developing a commercial component linked to the photography sector; establishing ways to integrate the curatorial programme with the Circuito OFF; and the ability to incorporate other forms of contemporary art, including music, dance and live performances, which have always been a hallmark of the festival. On these issues, it will be essential to engage with the city's cultural ecosystem, starting with the city's other cultural foundations (theatres, dance companies, music conservatoire – see Annex D), viewed not merely as providers of ancillary cultural products but as proponents and interpreters of original, autonomous yet shared strategies to which the Festival must contribute and from which it must also receive input, including strategic guidance.

With this Call for Applications, the organisers of Fotografia Europea intend to embark on a process of redefining the identity of the event. Given the clearly tight timeframe, it is understood that the



2027 edition will constitute a first step along this path, without necessarily representing either the final identity or format that will be developed and established fully over the three-year period 2027–29.

3.3 Application Form and Self-Declaration

To avoid exclusion from the assessment process, the Application Form (Annex A) and the self-certification relating to Articles 94 and 95 of Legislative Decree 36/2023 (Annex B) must be completed and submitted. The deadlines are set out in Article 7.

Italian and European Union candidates may submit substitute declarations in accordance with Articles 46 and 47 of Presidential Decree 445/2000. For nationals of non-European Union countries, the restrictions set out in Article 3 of Presidential Decree 445/2000 apply.

4. PROCEDURES FOR THE EVALUATION OF APPLICATIONS

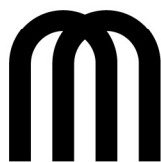
The project proposals received will be assessed by a dedicated **Evaluation Committee**, comprising experts in the field as well as representatives of the organising institutions and partner organisations: Fondazione Palazzo Magnani, Reggio Emilia City Council, the Panizzi Library Photo Archive and the Civic Museums.

An initial assessment of **the CVs** received will be carried out, awarding a maximum of 20 points out of 100, based on the number of years' specific experience in the sector and the quality and scale of the projects carried out.

The **projects** received will then be assessed and a ranking list drawn up, with a maximum of 65 points out of 100 awarded, based on the quality of the **artistic proposal**, its innovative potential and overall sustainability, as well as the proposal's alignment with the objectives regarding growth in attendance, popularity and accessibility, media partnerships, the commercial component and the other aspects set out in **the strategic proposal**.

Projects will be assessed according to the following criteria:

Artistic quality	25 points
Innovation	15 points
Financial sustainability.....	10 points



Integration between curatorial programme and OFF Circuit 10 points
Media partnerships and commercial component..... 5 points

Based on the scores awarded for CVs and project proposals, a provisional ranking list will be drawn up, and the top five applications will each receive a contribution of €1,000.00.

The creators of the five selected projects will be invited to an interview with the Assessment Committee to present their proposals in detail.

The panel will award a further 15 points following the interviews, thereby establishing a final ranking.

Summary of the assessment criteria:

Curriculum vitae / a 20 points

Project 65 points

Artistic quality..... 25 points

Innovation 15 points

Economic sustainability 10 points

Integration between the curatorial programme

and the OFF Circuit..... 10 points

Media partnerships and commercial component..... 5 points

Interview..... 15 points

Total 100 points

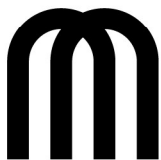
The Commission reserves the right not to select a winner should it consider that none of the applications or project proposals submitted fully meet the Festival's requirements and objectives, or do not meet an adequate standard of quality. In such case, Fondazione Palazzo Magnani reserves the right not to award the commission, without candidates being entitled to advance any claims or demands whatsoever.

5. DURATION OF THE ASSIGNMENT

The contract will run from 2 November 2026 to 31 July 2029. Any termination of the contract prior to its natural expiry date shall be governed by the contract to be entered into between the parties.

6. REMUNERATION FOR THE APPOINTMENT

The fee for the Artistic Directorship is €40,000 per year, gross of VAT where applicable, and gross of



other professional charges. In the case of joint applications, the amount stated will be divided among the members of the working group, at the discretion of the applicants.

7. TIMELINE AND PROCEDURES FOR AWARDING THE APPOINTMENT

7.1 Submission of applications

Under penalty of exclusion from the assessment process, the required documents must be uploaded to via the form accessible from the homepage of the website www.fotografiaeuropea.it no **later than 12 noon on 30 September 2026 (Italian time)**. The form will record the date and time of reception, which will be considered binding for the acceptance of applications.

7.3 Assessment and publication of the final ranking list

The Selection Committee will begin assessing the applications received from **5 October 2026** and will finalise the provisional ranking list by **16 October 2026**. Interviews will then be held, and the final ranking will be drawn up by **31 October 2026**.

7.4 Notification of the successful candidate and commencement of the assignment.

The successful candidate (or candidates acting as a collective) will commence work on the assignment from **2 November 2026**, subject to the signing of the relevant contract.

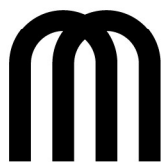
Fondazione Palazzo Magnani reserves the right to request that the winner make amendments – potentially substantial ones – to the project submitted, in order to ensure consistency with the strategic objectives and any economical, organisational or artistic requirements that may arise.

8. CLARIFICATIONS

Enquiries may be sent to: direzione@fotografiaeuropea.it by **31 August 2026**. Responses will be published on www.fotografiaeuropea.it.

9. DATA PROCESSING

In accordance with EU Regulation 2016/679 ('GDPR') and the applicable national legislation on the protection of personal data, the data provided by candidates will be processed by the Fondazione Palazzo Magnani, as the Data Controller, exclusively for purposes related to the management of this selection procedure, the verification of the declared requirements, the compilation and



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publication of the ranking list, and the possible award and management of the appointment.

10. SOLE PROCEDURE MANAGER

The Sole Procedure Manager (RUP), pursuant to Article 15 of Legislative Decree 36/2023, is Dr Annachiara Rea, Contracts Manager at Fondazione Palazzo Magnani.