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Carlo Mollino: Polaroids Hamiltons

Carlo Mollino (1905-1973) was a versatile, inspired and highly idiosyncratic individual with an innate ability to synthesise diverse influences and passions. Today, he is acknowledged as one of the most strikingly original creators of mid-century Italian architecture, design and photography. As seen in this show (1 May-14 June), his Polaroids, made from 1963 to 1970, are extremely rare, highly desirable and, being unique objects, reassuringly expensive (below, Untitled, 1963-70). Never shown publicly during his lifetime (indeed, only discovered after his death) he himself considered them intimate, personal projects. The wealthy son of Turin's most prominent architect and engineer, Mollino studied Art History before he joined his father's practice. He began the distinctly surreal interior of his home Casa Miller, in the mid-1930's and in 1938 completed the Casa

Devalle, whose baroque surrealism exceeded even his home. These domestic interiors and the Ippica equestrian complex established Mollino as a flamboyant architect, operating in an idiom entirely his own. His projects included domestic commissions, Alpine resorts, commercial developments and hotel interiors, alongside automobile race-tracks, filling stations and aircraft hangars. His background in technical engineering resulted also in practical applications, skilled automobile designs, various technical patents, and early designs for radio-gramophones. His writings covered subjects as disparate as Cubism, the art of Georg Grosz, skiing techniques and film criticism. He wrote the first history of photography published in Italy. Unique Polaroids, \$20,000 each.



by Richard Pinsent

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