

Dear friends, colleagues and fellow women

I am honoured to share with you the opening of this great venture by Fondazione Pescara, Fondazione Fasti and the Comune di Scanno and thank you, especially Maria Pia Silla, for the invitation. I thank Alessio De Stefano of the Piccola Biblioteca Marsicana for translating my words from English into Italian.

Your title of this show, “The Future of Memory”, encourages consideration about the nature of heritage, identity, and the multiple meanings of what a woman may wear.



Many towns and villages in Italy, and elsewhere, including Hilde and my birthplace in Monaco di Baviera celebrate the traditional outfits worn not only by women but also their male partners.

So what makes the traditions of Scanno different?

Scanno has long been exceptional: it is one of the very few places (and perhaps the only one in Italy?) where women continued to wear their traditional costumes over many centuries, and even today. As we know their origins are buried deep in time, with the skills involved in making lace, jewellery and silk possibly imported from the East.

So it was Scanno's reputation of mystery and beauty that attracted my mother Hilde (she only became Lotz some years later). She had just completed her art historian doctorate and photographic training. Her study of a family of Austrian baroque altars with their lifesize saints made her highly sensitive to dramatic *scenegiattura* and how to construct an harmonious ensemble.

Thus Hilde captured not only the costumes of Scanno but how its men, women and children played out a social drama, almost like a film, along its winding streets, carrying food, wood or simply chatting. Her images encouraging us to interpret the language, the various meanings of the **Ju cappellitte**, the special headdresses worn by women for different occasions.

The traditions associated with these clothes reflect not only female accomplishments and beauty, but also old and outdated notions about their role in society. Rich lace, fabrics and especially jewellery – an ancient form of “bling” – are of course tokens of wealth that a woman would bring to a marriage. The veils of mourning and requirement to wear black

were indeed a form of subjugation to the male which may imprison her in isolation. So there are also negative associations about the role of a woman.

But, Lotz-Bauer's images, the art of the costume transcends the notion of folk art as something primitive or unsophisticated.

And, what helped to make Scanno and other loci of *transumanza* different? Was it that women had to take charge of so much while the menfolk were away during the winter? In Hilde's images you feel a quiet power and dignified simplicity, rather than excessive adornment.

This mirrored her own approach to life in which she sought to exist as a free woman independently as a freelance, in a mutual creative relationship with her partners but not in a subservient role.

Hilde's multiple identities will feature for the first time in an exhibition being prepared right now which will open at the Museo di Roma this January. You are all warmly invited to it.

Your show will stimulate the understanding and new development of the crafts that created the Costume well into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. It will help create new possibilities for the towns and villages of Abruzzo, and beyond. The great challenge before us to make the rediscovery, treasuring and preservation of this heritage help us create a better future in our hyper-alienated world of day.

Everyone here is warmly invited to come to the Museo di Roma Trastevere Rome in January 2024 to see ***Hilde in Italy***, where you can appreciate the multiple identities of her photographic personality.

Corinna Lotz  
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[Hilde Lotz-Bauer website](#)