

On the Mondello beach. (Sulla spiaggia di Mondello.) Palermo, 1982.

This black and white photograph of a busy beach is in landscape format. It's a warm, sunny day and, from the shadows, it appears to be mid-afternoon. In the centre of the image, and close up, almost within touching distance, a man and woman are kissing, their noses squashed together, arms wrapped around each other, as if they've just turned inwards for the kiss. Both have dark curly hair and suntanned skin. He has a moustache and is wearing a pair of tiny drawstring swimming trunks. His arms enclose the woman, his hands comfortably resting on her shoulder, and he looks sidelong at the photographer with a smile. The woman's wearing a striped t-shirt over the top of a patterned swimming costume, one arm wrapped around the man's waist, a slight smile on her face as she leans into the kiss, as if she too is aware she is being observed.

The other people in the background seem very close behind. A young woman sitting on the sand looks up at the couple. To the left, a woman dressed in t-shirt and long skirt stands holding bags, squinting toward the camera, a child's bike lying on the sand beside her. To the right, a tanned girl in a bikini is standing, with her head turned away from us.

A few metres back, three patterned and fringed parasols shade a crowd of people sitting on folding chairs around low tables. Beyond them, there are more people on the beach, a few looking to the camera. There are striped sun tents and a distant sign for a restaurant, "Ristorante La Medusa" in capital letters, raised above the level of the beach. People – adults and children – are in the waves, and a dozen small boats bob on the sea.