

ESPACE JORG BROCKMANN

32 RUE DES NOIRETTES

1227 CAROUGE-GENEVA-SWITZERLAND

Marco Delogu

La Natura della notte

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Marco Delogu (*1961)

Photographer, filmmaker, publisher and editor, is the founder of the publishing house punctum, the fotografia - international festival of rome , and the photo solstice on the asinara island in sardinia.

His reseach focuses on portraits of group of people with common experiences and languages (cardinals retired, jockeys of tha palio di siena, inmates, classical music contemporary composers, farmers, sardinian shepards, writers); in recent years his projects have been more focused on nature.

He has published more than twenty books, and exhibited in italy and abroad in many galleries and museums, including: centre georges pompidou, paris; french academy, villa medici, rome; macro, rome; warburg institute, london; henry moore foundation, leeds; musée de l'elysee, lausanne; photomuseum, moscow;

He is now the director of the italian cultural institute of london

Ten Comments on the Night and Photography

Photographing the night means freeing ourselves from two prejudices. First and foremost, we must realize that the night does not act as an intermittent blinding program capable of taking away everyone's sight, but instead has its own luminosity. If this were not the case, it would not be possible to achieve that process that gives its name to photography: writing with light. Secondly, to photograph the night, it is always necessary to shoot something else, whether it be a building, some sort of object, or a fragment of nature, always shrouded in it until dawn. In more general terms, this means that the subject of

the photograph does not necessarily correspond to its content, and so the photographer can always decide whether to focus on what is inside the frame, outside it or on both sides.

The blurred outlines of the objects framed in these pictures indicate the photographer's movement after the opening of the shutter. Midway between a window and a mirror, here the camera simultaneously records what happens in front of and behind the lens. A sliver of reality appears together with the action performed to record it: it's gestural photography.

Increasing the exposure time of a photograph taken by a handheld camera also increases the chances of it being blurred. Leaving aside considerations regarding the light sensitivity of films and sensors, this is due to the photographer's inability to stay perfectly still.

It is this unstoppable tremor that testifies to both man's vitality and his fragility. It's his biology. We can see it in Marco Delogu's photographs and in Francis Bacon's paintings. Everything moves because we move non-stop.

Taking his photographs at night, Delogu captures the intensity not only of his own presence, but also that of the objects around him, which give the impression of emanating a surreal glow in the surrounding space. The result is a sort of godless pantheism (recalling Bruno and Spinoza): it is as though this world could do without the sun, shining with its own light.

Blurring does not only alter the form of the objects depicted, which appear captured on the brink of irreversible decay, partially deformed and liquefied, but it transforms their substance too. Earth, bricks, concrete, water, air: here everything seems to be made of the same light, impalpable, substance.

There is an analogy between photography and the night: both radically change the appearance of the objects that they seize, despite leaving them substantially unchanged. A couple of red onions on a wooden table, for example, remain exactly that, despite tracing a colored pattern in the dark that looks like the northern lights.

While photography generally means controlling what appears in the frame, the exact opposite seems to occur in these pictures. Delogu cannot know exactly what the camera will manage to record in the dim nocturnal light, nor can he still his tiniest movements. The result is a work about surrendering (his own supremacy over the surrounding reality) and accepting (the surrounding reality and his own limits).

As in a huge theatre, Delogu's nights are crowded with shadows. However, whereas in the first instance they swallow up everything on the stage, dragging it towards the darkness, here they accentuate the phenomenon of the light that strikes the moon, tracing them on the surface of both reality and his photographs.

The purpose of Delogu's work is not to show the things that are hard to see by the naked eye at night. It has nothing to do with converting the invisible to visible. There is nothing sensational in his photographs, nothing that mere daybreak cannot reveal. If anything, this work confirms our inability to escape images, even at night, even in a dark room. Indeed, we continue to see when we close our eyes.

Francesco Zanot