

How did you embrace photography?

I think I became a photographer out of curiosity. Since I was a boy, I used to consider photography almost as a magic instrument; just thinking of pressing a button to record reality intrigued me and thrilled me at the same time. I remember that, at that time, I used some of my photographs as bookmarks; somehow, I had them before my eyes every day and had the chance of looking at them calmly. So, over the years, my technique has improved and also my way of “seeing”. I felt the need to tell stories through the sole photo image, without using any word. Therefore, the passage to professional job was a sort of natural step, even if a bit tiring. I realised that I had to move from a provincial little town to a big productive centre, namely Milan. Here, in fact, my career did begin.

How do you consider the relationship between colour and black and white? In brief, which is the actual difference, in your opinion, between photographing in colour and in black and white?

These are two very different things. Eliminating the colours from an image you consequently modify its intimate nature, uncover its graphic structure, and decompose it into a “visual truth” which lies underneath the colour.

The colour of an image involves you emotionally, it must cohabit with the graphic essence of the image and must enrich it.

The colour in fine-art photography is not an easy task. To make a comparison, you can think of black and white as a naked person, and of colour as a dressed up person. In this case, the colour is the dress. Conclusions are easily drawn.

How important is in your job the technical skill? That is: knowing the development and print techniques of black and white, does this help you to attain your goals more easily?

Of course. If you do not know the technique perfectly, well, you can't “speak”. In photography, as well as in all kinds of art, the technique supports the expressive language. I have always thought that you must acquire first the proper technique and then “forget” it. This may sound as a paradox, while instead it is the awareness that a creative process requires the top concentration and that this must prevail upon all the other mental processes. By the way, the creation takes shape thanks to the technique, which must therefore become instinctive. To reach this aim you must learn and experiment for long time.

An important place of concentration and meditation is for me the darkroom; it is right here that the expressive strength of my work originates. Obviously, the development technique plays a key role here.

So you prefer developing and printing by your own

Yes. The choice of the materials and chemicals is part of my technical expressive language. I often compare the print to good cuisine: if I am the only one to manage to cook a nice special dish, I don't see why I should ask other people to prepare it. They would probably cook it in a less palatable way using other ingredients or tools, for example.

For a professional, the choice of films and print materials is not simply a matter of fashion, but it is a precise significant selection of techniques and processes. Can you tell us which are the films and the papers you use for your work and why you have chosen them?

Regarding black and white I love the deep dramatic blacks, even because I wish to enhance the details as much as possible; therefore, I use films of great sensitivity, medium-large format and quality silver gelatin paper. In the past I used Elite by Kodak, but then it disappeared from the market; now I use Oriental paper and am very satisfied with it.

My principal wish is however that of meeting the American market's needs, meaning the best quality and the best professionalism; when a numbered and signed print is well paid, it must be of excellent quality and must last in time.

Which are your job instruments? Do you use traditional or digital cameras?

I have been using the digital very much recently; I mostly appreciate the practicality and the operating speed of this medium. I am very curious and I hardly feel nostalgia for the past; therefore, if the new technologies offer significant advantages, surely I do not turn my back on them.

With your series "Metaportraits" and "Station" you have got closer to Kertész's photography. I wonder why your evolution may take into account this old classic author.

Between past and present, the topics are often similar, in fact to change is only the way to illustrate them. I do not think that man comes up from nothing. I do believe instead in a collective experience called history whose evolution is called future.

I don't like to be compared to this or that, no matter how much I respect Kertész. Using the same techniques to define an expressive language does not mean creating the same images. Yet, I realise that the historic images lie dormant in our unconscious. Therefore, in this sense, I am a bit Kertész somehow, and a bit of many other artists too.

A professional who works for clients or a photographer who develops a personal research: which is the role that best suits you?

I prefer the role of the artist.

Is this the reason why you have been going away from commercial work to get progressively closer to the world of galleries and of fine art photography?

The quality of commercial work has fallen terribly over the last years. I refer to the liberty of action and to the chances for creativity granted to a photographer, which are limited. Besides, there is also a problem of job remuneration. Recently the commercial work does not suit me, and consequently I have decided to gradually become the client of myself in order to carry out projects and series of objects dedicated to topics which I choose by my own. A risky challenge, though beautiful.

How do you evaluate the new expressive opportunities offered by digital imaging?

Thanks to digital imaging the expressive opportunities can grow, the time to implement them gets shorter and the quality, if you use professional media, is in no way inferior to the traditional medium. On the contrary!