

## INTERVIEW WITH FRANCO DONAGGIO

**Mariateresa Cerretelli** - Your native town is Chioggia which Carlo Goldoni, in the preface to “Baruffe chiozzotte” in 18th century, describes as a “respectable city...planted in the Lagoons...”.

Lagoon...water...sea...depth of horizons...you are born in a sea town rather than in a land town, how much can this affect an artist’s sensibility?

**Franco Donaggio** - In my case, not much really. Perhaps what actually makes me a bit different is the sense of perception which you naturally acquire living in a sea town.

**M.T.C.** How much can origins and memories account for an artist’s work?

**F.D.** I go back in time. I see people striving for a living and making ends meet in the open sea, facing risks and dangers. I feel I have inherited this genetic code and, in my own little way, I had to face the risk, in my job, of saying things which I strongly believe in. In this sense, I feel I’m really a son of Chioggia. It is actually a very positive inheritance which has given me endless strength. I have also a vivid recollection of the sounds, perfumes and plays of my childhood. And this is the greatest inheritance I got. To implement my works I have to feel emotions, I have to find some hints able to bring me back to my childhood days again, otherwise it’s no use doing what I do.

**M.T.C.** Landscapes and places are a recurrent subject in your photographic art. Why?

**F.D.** The town is for me like an ever changing sea. When I set sail I know by experience that everything may change out of the blue. In my creative way of working, on the contrary, it’s me to decide which changes should occur. I no longer regard cities as structures of bricks and cement, but as interactive spaces. Their rational aspect disappears to be replaced by a living melting of people and environment, an entity that I metabolise through my mind. Hence I create works which represent the result of a personal mental processing full of elements and emotions.

**M.T.C.** In brief, you knock down buildings through digital imaging, don’t you?

**F.D.** No, the other way round. I do reconstruct them. Today through digital imaging, yesterday through darkroom. In my opinion photography is a thought, a project for every image.

**M.T.C.** Tell me something about your works realised in Casale

**F.D.** Well, I was soon very keen on this project. A project which was actually conceived among friends. Casale, which I have never seen before, struck me because of its order, cleanness and silence. I loved it and also respected it. At the beginning I just loved it with my very heart, then I came to judge it with my mind. And the two things got along very well.

**M.T.C.** Artists’ observations are boundless, but how can they sublimate what appears in front of them in full relief?

**F.D.** My working method begins with pressing the shooting button. It starts with a series of images followed by a deep meditation. From these images new paths spring. In this project I wanted to work ad hoc on the transfigurations of things as well as on the stratification of visual meanings.

**M.T.C.** You have walked for a long time along the city streets. Which sensations did you experience?

**F.D.** The first time, there was a particular quiet and silence, and the castle looked almost suspended, as though it didn’t belong to the place. In the end, I think everything is referable to personal introspection. There’s no such thing as the extremely beautiful or the extremely awful. You can only experience the beautiful which is inside you and which is in keeping with what lies outside you. As a consequence, I consider the Casale work very interesting.