

Politico

Politico is a resonant (post-)documentary photo series, offering an aerial view of Italy's coastline along the coastal seam that reconstructs the sandy landscape with the 'furnishings' of an endlessly changing material flow.

Max Weber said that politics needs to combine the ethics of conviction with the ethics of responsibility, adapting ends to available means and training the eye to look at the reality of life with moderation. I would like to start from this ethical prompt to slip into the concept of polis, returning to the Greek model of the city-state and the isonomic principle that subjected all citizens to the same rules of law, in accordance with a view that equated the natural order of the universe with the laws of the city.

Politico seems to be the converse of any kind of macho function of politics, a 'poor', marginal series, focused as it is on abandoned objects, the sadness of those silent places and the grimy presence of nature's gastric reflux. And yet true politics must return to discussion of planetary status and the concrete data of an ecological malaise that is the crux of the ethical governance of the Earth. The resurgence of healthy politics requires a resolute change in priorities, with a radical leap into new paradigms of peace and compromise and the shift of large economies onto sound and highly profitable paths. It will be very difficult, this is clear, but it must be done if we want to create a future of balances without equilibrium, a tomorrow in which the teachers of today will be the guides of the next generation.

The polis seems to have disappeared from the coastal geography of images, a distant Ithaca that urges our Homeric gaze, the chimera of a Platonic dream that vomits waste into the sacred seas and picks up the digestive dross of the sea itself when it slaps against the coasts. Politics seem far removed from these solitary beaches, as if only the echo of distant consumer chains reaches here and only the fragmentary imprint of scattered stories exists here. And yet, these dirty deserts reveal the digestive reflux of the city itself, conjuring up bad habits and poor metabolic systems. We perceive the city in its echoing ruin, crying out against an unbridled capitalism that fixes nothing, replacing everything with something new, forgetting the culture of repairing what one can, of resilient resistance, of giving new uses to things that can be restored. Every piece of beach litter speaks damaged languages, telling stories of migration and abandonment, of indifference and classist arrogance, of a future where slavery will take increasingly invisible and viral forms. Ripa's seaside constellations are Arte Povera reminiscent galaxies of a deaf,

myopic world incapable of stopping itself and changing its point of view. A world with clogged planetary hydraulics, indifferent in its media conformity, so stupid as to see only the dazzling lights, so drunk as to not notice the little sparks that are the lifeblood of the best community rituals.

Giuseppe Ripa's *Politico* returns the camera to its metaphysical essence, a civilised approach in which the term 'political' accompanies reflection on the documentary level, elevating silent marginality to an epic of composed disorder, almost as if to reveal the adaptive side of objects, their arrangement and rearrangement according to quantum models. We are struck by a broad sense of orderly equilibrium, a seam between the deserted beaches and the stable position of the objects, a mixed nature that gasps for breath between abandonment and decay. Ripa's eye patiently scans the coasts, kilometre after kilometre, following less trodden routes that reveal the theatre stage of collective repression, a kind of cemetery of broken dreams, dissipated illusions, hope without light. Here, mixed nature was and will be a refuge for someone, a nomadic landing place for survival, a secret space in the flow of human movement across the seas. A habitat of necessity, literally the last hope before the end, but also the archetype of a post-nomadic future, where houses will once again become a complement to pure democracy and no longer the financial privilege of Capital. Who knows, perhaps everything will start up again from shelter as a new civic step, a new, technological but essential hut, a dwelling that fights touristic blackmail with the invention of community tailored to real exigencies, created to rediscover ancient, primordial needs, to reactivate analogue elements in a basic dialogue with digital essence.

Partial structures of original forms, limbic fragments with abstract shapes, floating elements of a disintegration that belongs to the compositions of the object world. Ripa works in the natural setting of the coasts and desertified spaces, where land and sea define the shifting contours of the Italian peninsula and beyond. The artist's conceptual gaze falls on those zigzagging contours, finding images among the debris that the sea releases onto the mainland and that man uses protectively, in a relentless cycle of absorption and restitution, on the world's respiration breathing in and spitting out the molecular digestion of individual fragments.

Let's turn for a moment to the aesthetics of this photo series, appreciating the artist's sensibilities and feel for composition, drawing relational maps on the world's terrain. Each image discloses its harmonic orchestration, fragments

of a collective unconscious that takes shape between place and waste, almost revealing the dreamlike mappings of an ecosystem beyond old politics and dangerous ideologies. Artists like Delcy Morelos, Edoardo Tresoldi and Oscar Tuazon uncover the dynamics of a new natural architecture, created from waste and reuse with equations of watchful precariousness. Giuseppe Ripa captures their same plastic vertigo, new artisanal humanism and Arte Povera vibrations that turn into fusion without confusion, a now photographic environment that illuminates the radiant simplicity of a nascent balance between being and having.

Just one thing is certain, at least in terms of inhabitable space: people in the future will walk through fragmented and stratified landscapes, amidst multiple scraps waiting to be activated, along vast archaeological habitats that will become the stuff of rebirth beyond the world of coal. A possible new age of iron and recycled plastic, towards the models taken to the extreme in *Mad Max* but that focus our gaze on the essence before collapse, on a factual theme that accepts the end of privilege and the beginning of real, albeit harsh, eco-sustainability.

The planet has an immense capacity for aerobic recovery, as it has always shown, and perhaps it will find the resources for planning a homeostatic rehabilitation. At present, the Mediterranean coastline is somatising a deranged shift in the general consumer chain, an emergency situation that is throwing pessimists into despair and optimists into uncertainty. And yet we sense the possibility of partial recovery, new cooperation with nature to reshape ourselves within the humanitarian situations to come. Visual art will retain its status as an illuminator of the darker sides of the world, a shaping light that will reveal hidden contours while predicting moments of a plausible future. We entrust our hearts and minds to these revelatory images, their magical and shamanic potential and the mantra that underpins every photographic construction. We remember that the artist takes photographs not to document the visible but to process the real metaphysical storyline, certify the promise of dawn and sound the umpteenth possibility of a safe haven. A landing. A place of peace. A new home where the world can breathe.