

METAPORTRAITS

by Denis Curti

Works 

It's the enormous investment on the project. The renunciation of the fact. The decline of the objective detail. The abolition of memory as a tool to record the present time. The recovery of ethereal forms and the harmony of an elusive feeling you can hardly photograph. I think these are the core elements of Franco Donaggio's work.

I think these are the divergent features of an operation which aims at detaching from a photographic language that seems more and more tired and isolated. In order to fully comprehend these photographs you have to enter a more visionary dimension, leaving all your possible doubts behind and forgetting any references to likelihood and photogenic rules. Then you should consider the wish for a failed process of recognition, the definition of the borders of an amazing discovery of the detail as well as the involvement in the determined abolition of the concept of luminosity in the photograph, which here becomes a pure planning quality. Finally, just like in a complex recipe of top cuisine, you'll manage to see the entire value and meaning of these images. Donaggio says: "This work was for me an important escape from banality and sometimes, even from reality. The views of urban life that always envelop the windows of my car, offer subtle atmosphere of anguish and alienation, thus stimulating me greatly to freely fall into my inner life. So it was actually the search for an inner space to give me the opportunity to join, almost virtually, the same faces portrayed". Who believes, like me, that portraits are important moments where ideas meet, he will also see how the photographer and the subject had the chance, here in these images, to experiment the excitement of transparency and to relish the audacity of a relationship of intense curiosity and reciprocal complicity. Restlessness and planning are two essential qualities of Donaggio's work. Two qualities that allow the birth of his unique creations, independently from the post-production final phase. Donaggio always says that "to express myself at my best in this visual work I have used particular techniques such as the double exposure, or some backgrounds made with charcoal drawings or geometrical back-lit paper patterns to especially stress the emotions of the subjects that had been previously portrayed". The total transformation of the figure, the deep grey of the prints, the visceral and careful attitude of the author seem to outline a visual journey into infinite depths. May be this is the result of an inner and collective drama. Today photography represents the ideal companion of this drama.