**WORKS**

**REFOCUS #1**

**Open call fotografica sul territorio italiano all’epoca del lockdown**

28.04 > 10.06 2020

ARIANNA ARCARA

(MONZA, 1984)

*End of the Shift* – is made up of a series of portraits of healthcare workers at the end of their working day. Shot in various hospitals in Northern Italy, between Lombardy and Emilia, during the critical months of March and April 2020 over the most intense and exhausting phase of the healthcare emergency, Arcara’s images focus on the faces and gestures of those who had to deal with the pandemic and its unexpected virulence from inside hospitals, amidst fatigue, awareness and dedication.

LORENZO BACCI / FLAVIO MORINIELLO

(GROSSETO, 1989 / MILANO, 1986)

*Thermodynamics of an Oddity –* investigates the relationship between seeing, visibility, representation, perception and power, through an analysis of everyday pandemic life by means of thermal cameras, underlining the importance of technology in the rendering and construction of reality. These medical imaging devices and military sight tools prove coherent with a context that is both a healthcare emergency and a war zone, when used to make public spaces safer. In addition to the visible spectrum, the images produced show heat: the form of energy that differentiates all that which is action, production and movement from what is not.

FABRIZIO BELLOMO

(BARI, 1982)

*The Show Must Go On* – investigates the way in which cameramen and photo-reporters mediated their relationship with space and facts during the harshest months of the pandemic. Accustomed to making a spectacle of reality, these image professionals behaved no differently on this occasion.

Thanks to close collaboration with Christian Mantuano and starting from his photographic work, the research addresses the mechanisms of the dramatisation of imagery of the healthcare emergency through the production of a series of study images that investigate many of the tools available to the photographer before, during and after the shot is taken.

TOMASO CLAVARINO

(TORINO, 1986)

*Ballad of Woods and Wounds* – takes the form of a country ballad in which Clavarino develops a personal narrative of a particular period, one experienced in Cocconato d’Asti in Basso Monferrato, Piedmont, which involved himself, his family and his roots. “Sometimes in life, events follow on from one another, seamlessly. The news of my partner’s pregnancy; a bereavement that affected us deeply; the impossibility of receiving a hug from friends and relatives; Italy and the rest of the world in the grip of the pandemic. That’s why I needed to breathe, to return to the place where I grew up, which has always been a safe haven.”

MATTEO DE MAYDA

(TREVISO, 1984)

*Luigi Ferraris Stadium (Genoa)* – consists of a series of images dedicated to the Genoa Stadium, completely empty after the interruption of the championships – an event unheard of since the end of World War II despite floods, earthquakes and acts of terrorism. It is presented as a homage to the architect Vittorio Gregotti, who supervised the renovation work, and who died on 15 March 2020 from Covid-19. The work is at the same time a homage to football itself, starting from a well-known reflection by Pier Paolo Pasolini: “Football is the last sacred representation of our time. It is a rite at heart, even though it is evasion. While other sacred representations, even holy mass, are in decline, football is the only one left to us.”

ILARIA DI BIAGIO

(FIRENZE, 1984)

*Lathe Bios | Living apart* – fits in with the research approach of the photographer who, for almost a decade, has been photographing within a one-mile radius of her home in Florentine Chianti. The weeks of the lockdown cut down this radius to two hundred metres. This very limited perimeter proved to be as full of life as ever in her eyes, as the pandemic meant that the houses and gardens were experienced on a daily basis and neighbourly relationships were given a new lease of life. The images tell of the dichotomy between the drama of the news reports and the peace, time and serenity to be found in the countryside.

“Adopt the pace of nature: her secret is patience” (Ralph Waldo Emerson)

STEFAN GIFTTHALER

(TRENTO, 1982)

The project focuses on the window as a peculiar viewing device during the months of the pandemic. In an almost automatic and serial manner, the photographer took one image a day of the building opposite his bedroom window: the first thing he sees when he opens his eyes in the morning and the last before he falls asleep, focusing on the continuous chromatic variation of its surface during the hours of the day.

“[…] The sky announced a beautiful day; the setting moon shone pale in an immense field of azure, which, towards the east, mingled itself lightly with the rosy dawn. Near the horizon were scattered clouds of various hues and forms; it was, in fact, the sky of Lombardy, beautiful, brilliant, and calm” (Alessandro Manzoni, *The Betrothed*, chapter XVII)

FILIPPO GOBBATO

(TRIESTE, 1995)

in collaboration with Teresa Bucca

*Mandatory Self-Isolation* – tells the story of the work of the volunteers at DonK Humanitarian Medicine, who provide free medical services in three shelters in Trieste. It examines the condition of refugees during lockdown, forced to live a sort of twofold confinement. “What does it mean to be locked up in a place that is not home, with which you have no familiarity, no scope for intimacy? These people do not know what the city they are in looks like and have no idea what will happen to them in the near future. They live suspended in repurposed structures. The days pass slowly and heavily in a never-ending wait. Bodies exhausted by the journey, their gazes are lost as they stare at floors and windows.”

GIULIA IACOLUTTI

(CATTOLICA – RN, 1985)

*Inscape* – narrates the author’s personal experience of living through her pregnancy during the harshest period of the pandemic. “On 11 March 2020, Italy came to a standstill. On 11 March, I was entering my twelfth week of pregnancy: life would not stop.” The sights seen through the window during the fifty-minute drive to the clinic where she and her partner went for medical examinations overlapped with the inner landscape taking real shape in her body: “On 4 May, my belly had become the hill on which to run, and our eyes, glistening lakes of hope, not that of defending a way of life but defending life itself.”

GUIDO LETTIERI

(NAPOLI, 1984)

The project looks at various sports and recreational facilities in the province of Belluno in the days immediately following the lockdown, while waiting for the gradual reopening of activities. “One of the first things that struck me at the end of the quarantine period was the silence that lingered in the streets, the absence of children and sports activities in those places normally dedicated to play and life. I felt the need to recount these spaces from above, as if God was watching them, empty, devoid of meaning, just geometric shapes in spaces at the time they were about to be occupied again.”

STEFANO MANIERO

(PORDENONE, 1989)

*The Opposite of Truth is Another Truth* – analyses the influence that events have on our perception of reality, showing how the world takes on new meanings on the basis of experience, in this case linked to the pandemic. The photographs show places within a radius of two hundred metres from the photographer’s home, and lead viewers to question what they are looking at. This ambivalent view of the world – what is perceived in the extraordinary circumstances of the pandemic versus what would be perceived in an ordinary situation – is hinted at in the two captions, both orienting and opposing, that accompany the images.

GUIDO MONTANI

(ROMA, 1982)

*Home Stay Home* – questions the rhetoric of home as a safe place to take refuge and rediscover one’s passions, as often presented by the media during the lockdown, highlighting its contradictions also with regard to the data that point to Italy as one of the Western countries with the most acute housing emergency. Portraying some of the inhabitants in urban spaces, the photographer highlights the critical situation of some of Milan’s suburbs, among the most delicate areas from the point of view of housing policies.

DOMENICO NARDULLI

(ACQUAVIVA DELLE FONTI – BA, 1983)

F*ree Space (Milan – 15.04.2020)* – presents a series of photographs taken with a variety of camera equipment while cycling through the streets of Milan. The selected views show advertising spaces that are empty, white and silent: no image, no slogan, no presence. The photographer’s reflection intends to focus attention on active and not passive observation, as entailed by the multiplication of imagery that characterises the present. This image-absence therefore draws attention back to what surrounds us: “The lockdown naturally led us to rethink our seeing, inviting us to look and observe more carefully.”

MATTIA PALADINI

(IVREA, 1988)

*Lockdown in the Aosta Valley* – documents the visible and invisible territorial and mental borders that are generated when freedom of movement is impeded, like by the Covid-19 epidemic. The photographs are taken along the borders of the Aosta Valley, a region that for centuries has seen people and populations pass through its mountains, bringing its inhabitants into contact with various cultures. For the photographer, “the borders between Italy, France and Switzerland resemble abandoned monuments, suspended in time and space. Mont Blanc, with its sickly glaciers, is the mirror of the contemporary climatic era. The silence invites reflection on and observation of what surrounds us.”

CAMILLA PIANA

(PIACENZA, 1988)

*Via Rubens n° 9* – outlines a visual diary of the days of the lockdown, characterised by the discovery of a world hidden in an old Milan tenement block where the photographer has lived since 2017. “On the long balconies of the courtyard, there are now not only clothes hanging out in the sun with impish encumbrance, the smells of pasta sauce and fried food along the flights of stairs, the carpenter’s workshop and the baker’s kitchen, but there are also those reading, those working on their tan, the nosy voyeur, and those who – like me – simply seek a breath of fresh air in the light of the balconies. Only now do I get to know the habits of each of them, the timbres of their voices, and with more than a little shame, I now find out their names after so many years.”

BENEDETTA RISTORI

(FIESOLE – FI, 1988)

The project is a reflection on the theme of the window as an opening onto the world, a point of contact with the outside world and with others during the days of the lockdown. The confinement led everyone to discover the stories perceived in the homes of others, to intercept the looks of solidarity among neighbours. From her home, the author photographed windows, balconies and terraces that were very much alive during those days. “By observing strangers close to us, one can imagine their lives, creating stories. Often the same people can be noticed every day at the same time, and we can begin to imagine the passing of their days, their characters, their states of mind.”

JACOPO VALENTINI

(MODENA, 1990)

*Superlunar* – is presented as a reflection on the value of time and its perception in the days of isolation, and how this inevitably influenced artists’ practices as well. The oscillations between form and content that nourish artistic research, further challenged by the exceptionality of the events, are placed in relation to the phenomenon of the supermoon – the coincidence of a full moon and the moment it is closest to Earth – which occurred on the night of 7 April 2020 and in the days before and after this date, right in the middle of the lockdown period.

“Don’t think ‘what shall I put on today?’, but think ‘what shall I take away?’”

(*Guerre Fredde/Cold wars*, Coma\_Cose feat. Stabber)

COSIMO VENEZIANO

(MONCALIER I – TO, 1983)

*HAL 9000* – reflects on the concept of landscape and on the consequences of being confined to limited spaces, almost unable to interact with the outside world during lockdown period. The photographer chose to look at the Italian landscape through webcams placed in tourist spots and mountain and seaside locations. The element common to the selected landscapes is the total absence of people in normally crowded places. The images taken were superimposed onto photographs of galaxies, commonly found on various PCs and laptops, as if to underline the link with the only devices interfacing with the outside world at the time.

HUGO WEBER

(PARIGI - FRANCIA, 1993)

… – is a visual diary of the author’s anxieties and thoughts during the days of the lockdown and how this condition led him to come to terms with his sense of responsibility towards his family, as well as towards himself. “Seeing myself forced to find a place in which to isolate, I decided to go to my aunts to take care of them and, for the first time in my life, I felt a real sense of responsibility. When I developed the film rolls, I realised that through unintentional metaphor I was explicitly talking about how I felt during the lockdown: three months of boredom, anxiety, responsibility and instability coupled with a fear of death.”

ALBA ZARI

(BANGKOK – THAILANDIA, 1987)

*I am Vertical* – takes its title from Sylvia Plath’s poem of the same name and came about when, during the lockdown, the author found herself constantly looking at photographs of her favourite landscapes on her PC. “I felt a strong sense of nostalgia for those places – Trieste, where my mother lives, and Positano, where my grandmother lives – and wondered whether they were still there, just as I had left them.” Following these thoughts, she re-photographed those images with her smartphone, visually highlighting how the image changes through the pixels on the screen. “The memories of the places I grew up in will have changed when this period is over and I may not be able to go back to visit them light-heartedly.”

**REFOCUS #2**

**Open call per progetti fotografici nell’Italia del post-lockdown**

30.09 > 02.11 2020

FULVIO AMBROSIO

(NAPOLI, 1986)

*The Cure* – focuses on how at the end of the first period of lockdown and stricter social distancing, people became physically close to their loved ones again. The photographer created a visual narrative of how he returned to caring for his grandmother, focusing on the idea of reconnecting, exemplified by simple gestures such as touching and holding hands. For the occasion, the author used a special device: a small camera attached to his chest, set to take shots automatically every five seconds. In this way, his hands could remain free to interact with the woman sitting in front of him, devoting himself entirely to his relationship with her.

GIACOMO BIANCO

(MESTRE – VE, 1994)

*Being Amphibian, from the series Umanalacuna* – sums up the dichotomy created over the months of lockdown and those that followed in the photographer’s way of experiencing the Venetian lagoon, through images in which two times and two means of fruition coexist. While social distancing allowed him to maintain contact with the lagoon ecosystem only from a distance, through the underwater webcams of the CNR’s ‘Acqua Alta’ Oceanographic Platform, from the end of May 2020, with the return to a sort of pseudo-normality, the author immediately wanted to rediscover the physical relationship with his own territory and the elements of which it is made up.

ALESSANDRO CALABRESE

(TRENTO, 1983)

in collaboration with Ilaria Tariello

*Welcome Stranger* – investigates the sense of returning to reality after months of isolation. The starting point is a reflection on ‘cabin fever’ which first appeared during the gold rush in the United States. Following this notion, the author selected screenshots and phrases from Charlie Chaplin’s film *The Gold Rush* (1925) – subsequently coloured with a ‘deep-learning’ programme that automatically attributes colours to black-and-white photographs – alternating with still-life images of polyurethane agglomerates reminiscent of gold nuggets, also thanks to the way they are represented: *Welcome Stranger* is in actual fact the name of the largest gold nugget ever found.

MARA CALLEGARO

(VARESE, 1994)

*20’s Special* – is based on the creation of cityscape imagery of the post-pandemic world, a set of urban configurations, recreated with household elements. Ironically, the compositions are proposed in the form of special edition postage stamps, sealing a year of uncertainty and seclusion. Callegaro evokes a catalogue of phantasmagorical Italian cities created by assembling shaky structures and teetering architecture, emblematic of the country’s state of fragility and temporariness. “To me, proximity suggests compressed depth of vision: eyeballs wandering around fifty square metres, Grand Tours of domestic landscapes. The world in a room, as Gino Paoli might say.”

SOFIYA CHOTYRBOK

(ZOLOCHIV – UCRAINA, 1991)

*Gestures* – focuses on self-censorship with regard to physicality in everyday relationships, in the light of the pandemic containment measures. Nostalgia (the famous pain of longing to return) led the photographer to capture details of gestures of affectivity from a past reality, taken from the family photographic archive, which once decontextualised, become the symbol of the new daily dimension reshaped by the healthcare emergency. The image is enlarged until it loses all legibility, and the viewer is thus called upon to move away from it in order to grasp the overall view and recall a tactile memory of it.

DANIELE CIMAGLIA / GIUSEPPE ODORE

(ROMA, 1994 / POMPEI – NA, 1995)

*Stories of Living* – investigates the new interpersonal relationships that developed during the months of lockdown. Observing their neighbours singing and playing on their balconies during the quarantine, the authors realised that they did not know anyone. In order to create a new idea of community, Cimaglia and Odore invited the apartment dwellers to their courtyard, creating a series of family portraits with the curtains of the flats as a backdrop: a synecdoche of their own homes but also a sign of domestic intimacy in relation to the external socialisation space. By talking about themselves and expressing their thoughts first-hand, the inhabitants involved rediscovered the centrality of sharing.

ANTONIO COLAVITO

(GRAVINA IN PUGLI A – BA, 1995)

*The Visible and the Invisible* – investigates the transformations that the pandemic and the lockdown brought about in everyday life in relation to the world of industrial and craft production, especially in terms of the conception of time, space and labour. The photographer documented the reconversion of the production lines of a company in Southern Italy, which started out as a manufacturer of sponge-cutting machines and was transformed into a producer of masks, with the aim of safeguarding turnover and employment. With this reportage, Colavito wants to celebrate the pride of a working class that, despite the situation, never stopped.

GIULIA DE GREGORI

(ROMA, 1994)

*New Arcadia* – is a reflection on contemporaneity in relation to the pandemic, midway between a sense of nostalgia and one of disenchantment. The period of confinement accelerated the already rapid shift towards the digitalisation of life, even for those who are not digital natives. In the manner of painterly photographers, the author ‘painted’ the fragments of a life that is perhaps destined to disappear, characterised by interpersonal relationships, gatherings, travel, waiting, moments of pause and more frantic ones. The process re-elaborates analogue materials from her family archive, which – through a series of passages between various forms of technology –are rendered here as snapshots that transcend space-time and call on us to let our gaze settle, slowing down for a moment, and penetrate them in depth.

RICCARDO DOGANA

(CASTIGLIONE DEL LAGO – PG, 1983)

*Wallpapers* – takes the form of an ideal journey through the real estate crisis in pandemic Italy, with vacant rooms for university students and empty flats waiting for tenants. The author works on images taken from real estate sales websites, re-photographing them and replicating them in series which, like contact prints, underline their emptiness. It is a still image of the housing situation between March and September 2020, when the supply of homes for rent in Italy’s big cities increased by 14.2%, while demand fell by 13.2%: signals that foreshadowed alarmist scenarios in the rented housing market.

LUIGI GRECO

(MONCALIERI – TO, 1998)

*Missing Ring* – investigates the role that fake news played during the pandemic, thanks to the seductive power that comes from its apparent ability to provide simple answers to complex issues, through falsified reports, with information distorted and often presented out of context. The photographer tries to convey these concepts in the form of manipulated images, as an analysis and visual translation of some specific fake news stories that circulated during the pandemic. The images, of various kinds (archive materials, manipulated, 3D), aim to re-propose the dystopian imagery of a ‘conspiracy’ mentality, of which the obvious tendency to verge on the ridiculous should not lead us to underestimate its dangerousness.

CLAUDIO MAJORANA

(CATANIA, 1986)

*All the Things that Seemed so Important* – narrates the long summer days of a group of young people who, after months spent at home, decide to get together and build a secret refuge along the banks of a stream. This place immediately becomes a place for time alone and with friends, a space given over to secrets and their own thoughts, a barrier between the group and the outside world. Confined to a place that this time they themselves have chosen, they spend a few weeks together until, like any teenage hotspot, the flame of interest dies and moves on to other horizons, moments and adventures.

LUCA MARIANACCIO

(AGNONE – IS, 1986)

*The Butterfly Effect* – takes the form of a sort of personal diary of the author, who from 2019 finds himself living with his family in a new town, Grottaglie, in Apulia. Photography turned out to be Marianaccio’s privileged medium through which to master his new environment, particularly in the unique moment following the pandemic, entailing an additional reason for distance. Space and its inhabitants are analysed as units of a more complex system, in which every gesture can affect the common destiny. “Can we have an overall view without an in-depth knowledge of individual elements?”

MATTEO MONTENERO

(TORINO, 1995)

*Valba Dë Carsaj* – investigates the consequences that the pandemic had and continues to have on a particular territory such as the Susa Valley, itself a ‘closed’ and ‘transitory’ place, with particular attention paid to the younger generations. The theme of high-speed travel, which was the main cause of the rapid spread of the virus, is compared with the ambition to speed up transport that has led to the transformations taking place in the Piedmontese valley. In the photographer’s dark, nocturnal images, the valley is presented as “a macroscopic non-place with which the new generations are struggling to interface,” inhabited by unfinished public works and rubble, where the pandemic has exasperated the condition of transience and uncertainty.

CLAUDIA ORSETTI

(CHIARAVALLE – AN, 1983)

*Vanished* – is an intimate and personal investigation that the photographer undertook in the wake of the passing away of her grandmother due to Covid-19. The physical distance imposed by the virus and the containment measures made the loss almost unreal, due to the rapidity with which everything happened but above all due to the impossibility of experiencing the moment of detachment, as if the woman had simply vanished. Rummaging through her personal objects and old photographs set in familiar locations and childhood places, as well as the testimony of her mother’s grief, allowed Orsetti to put the pieces back together and, through memory, to regain possession of the figure of her grandmother and her own relationship with her.

NUNZIA PALLANTE

(POLLA – SA, 1991)

*Heracleum* – investigates the role played by the imagination during the days of the lockdown, spent observing and listening to the landscape beyond the window, and the moods of when one is able to roam the streets once again. The photographer released the creative tension accumulated during the lockdown through assemblages of photographic and natural elements, and then transformed them into images that allowed her to create parallel worlds poised between the real and the imaginary: “Driven by the playful sense of such practices, I collected flowers, plants and seeds to be placed on the photographs, so as to set up a multi-layered image to be re-photographed, in which to reshape, disrupt and recreate reality.”

NICOLÒ PANZERI

(MILANO, 1991)

*Anatomy of a Virus* – is presented as an attempt to analyse the individual and social consequences of the lockdown on the photographer and the community. “Day seven. How long can you be alone? Where does loneliness end? How many days has it been since you stepped out of your house? I open my eyes and see purple.” The images are assemblages of a wide range of domestic materials, used to elaborate an obsession with graphs and flows linked to the first wave of the pandemic, creating a parallel world inhabited by mementos in which everyday objects are endowed with a new lease of life and unexpected importance.

CLAUDIA PETRAROLI

(TERAMO, 1987)

*Art the Hieroglyphic of Power* – bears witness to how, with the advent of smart working, work has taken over the domestic environment and time. The artist condensed the results of her post-production work for a number of luxury brands into abstract images, taking portions of digital materials and transforming them into art, as if to redeem the time she sold off to work in order to create them. The sampling of surfaces, pixels and brushstrokes, parts and levels of the images necessary for the construction of objects created with perfect workmanship, become a measure of the time taken up by labour, subordinated to the diktats of capitalist productivity.

GIORGIO SALIMENI

(CATANIA, 1990)

*Redeo* – focuses on the relationship developed by the author with some guests of an experimental therapeutic community for people with low-and-medium-intensity psychiatric disorders, in a retirement home in the Tuscan Apennines, where he decided to return to work immediately after the rollback of confinement measures. Redeo – the name of this community – is an anomalous intransitive Latin verb meaning ‘to return’: a concept that in the post-lockdown era can open up to a multitude of meanings. The guests at the centre, featured in Salimeni’s reportage, are among the people who suffered the most during the pandemic, not least because of the restrictions imposed on outside visits.

CLAUDIA SINIGAGLIA

(PADOVA, 1985)

*21 Days Monochrome Series* – reflects on the processes of adapting to situations, portraying elements that have taken centre stage in post-lockdown everyday life. Some psychological theories claim that twenty-one days is the minimum amount of time needed to adapt to a change and start creating a habit. The photographs show details of masks, gloves, alcohol and disinfectant gels close up and enlarged to such an extent that they ‘disappear’ against the monochrome backgrounds. The repetition of colours in the sequence of images dialogues with the nuances of the psychological habit-forming processes triggered to limit the spread of the pandemic.

ANDREA STORNI

(FIRENZE, 1999)

*A Family Affair* – is the photographer’s homage to his father: an intimate portrait from which, during the pandemic, the realisation emerged that he had dedicated his life to his work, to the detriment of his passions and affections – a loss now hard to recover – including his relationship with his children. “I, who never shared a real bond with my father, find myself along with my brother having to assist him in his daily routine, obsessively searching for a physical problem that does not exist and which is nothing more than the mask he has created for himself to preserve his fragility. The truth is that it is too late and I am merely following his inner conflict.”