

REFLECTIONS

by Fausto Raschiatore

I meet Donaggio in Chioggia, his native town in the province of Venice, where he frequently returns coming from Milan, where he has been living and working for many years. It's a beautiful day, the atmosphere is pleasant and a light breeze mitigates the heat which is however tangible. We've been talking about photography in all its aspects for over one hour, sitting at a bar of Piazza Vigo, near the bridge with the same name on the Vena canal, looking at a photo book on the table, while admiring the beauties of the place, observing the atmosphere of the lagoon and listening to the silences and voices of the sea, in the distance. I look at Franco and think about how he watches the spaces and people of the daily life in Chioggia. He seems ravished, concentrated, almost distracted. Then, without a word, he opens the container of images with the photos in black and white and, turning over the pages he tells me how and why this work was born. "Reflections was born because of an inner need to reflect upon my origins, my father, my mother, my land. Besides, I wished to rely on remembrances in order to plan a possible future. Over the years, just like a wanderer on an impassable mountain path, I have decided to sit down a while and rest and eventually think about my story. I still have a vivid recollection of the smells and plays of my childhood, when I used to jump over the stones emerging from the sand banks. I remember the foam perfumed with saltiness behind the helm of my small sailing boat, while the bell towers of my Chioggia were getting farther and farther. These and others – after my parents' love - are the most important inheritances I have received and that I am proud to remember and honour. I have collected the memories of my places and of my juvenile experiences and have summed them up conceptually into the idea of a place made up of many places which are recognisable and yet free from any idealisations except for those concerning the soul". It's a real pleasure listening to him while leafing through the photos of his portfolio. In this long, poetic and deeply sentimental reflection we find the synthesis of the "love affair" between Donaggio and the places of his early years. A profound tie which the author describes using the language of photography with candid authenticity. A survey made with his heart, a private journal full of recollections, projects, hopes, emotions. Franco Donaggio lives the lagoon like a place of cult suspended between the earth and the sky. Plunged in his own reflections, he observes the cradle of his origins. He thinks about his father, his mother, his story, about a future strangled by the magic of a present which he would like to be endless...