



BEAUTIFUL CLICHÉ

VENEZIA

RENATO D'AGOSTIN

Book presentation

Preface by *Renata Codello*

Superintendent for the Cultural Heritage and Landscape of Venice and the Lagoon

Text by *Chiara Casarin*

Curator, Fondazione Bevilacqua La Masa, Venezia

Text by *Italo Zannier*

Curator



TITLE : VENEZIA BEAUTIFUL CLICHÉ by Renato D'Agostin

CURATOR: Chiara Casarin, Fondazione Bevilacqua la Masa, Venice

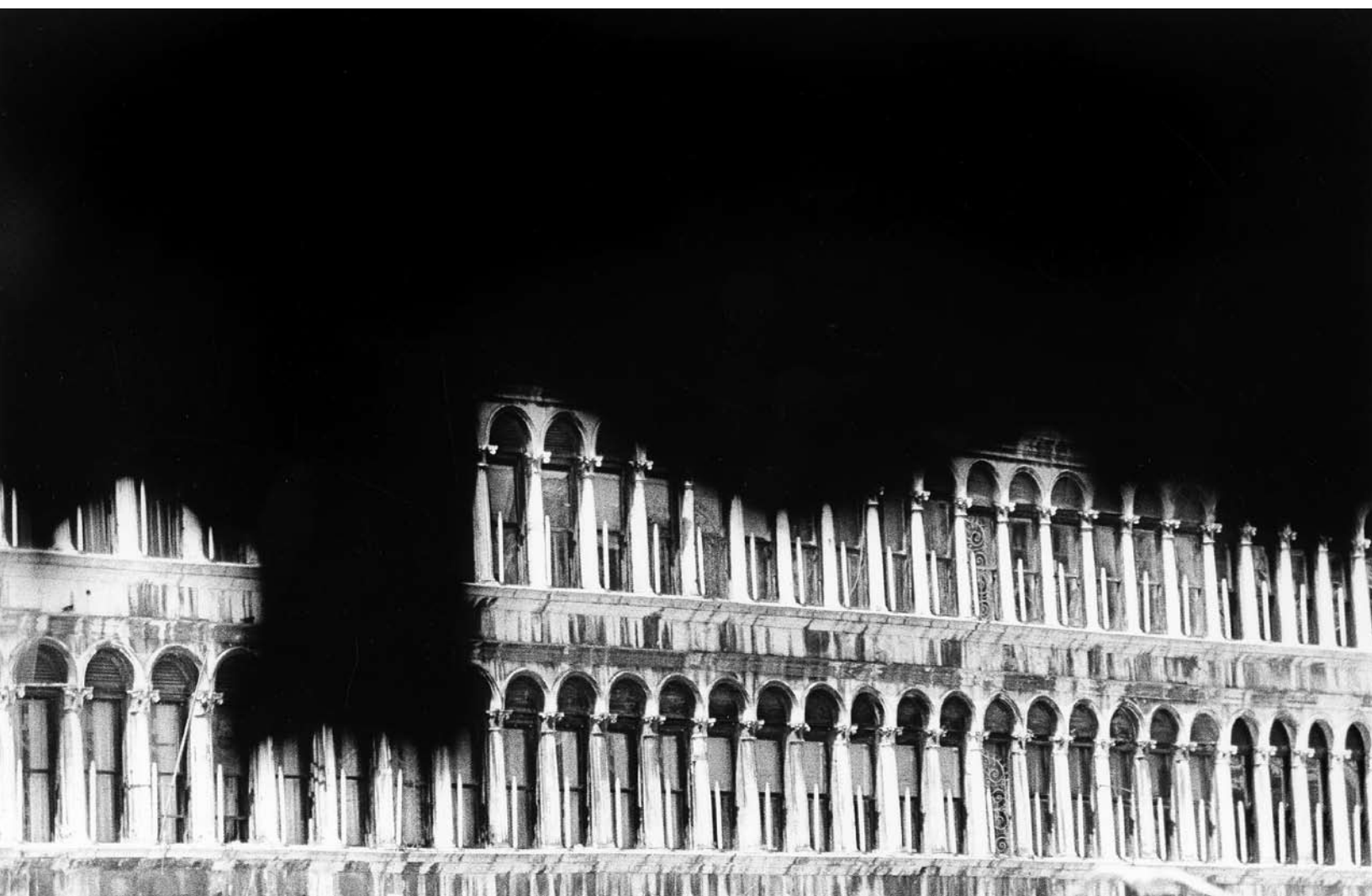
VENEZIA BEAUTIFUL CLICHÉ is the last series of photographs taken by Renato D'Agostin, born 1983, young hope of international photography who was born in San Donà di Piave, Venice, and who has been living for years in New York City. The works of Renato D'Agostin have been presented internationally over the last years and exhibited in prestigious photography venues, including the Leica Gallery, New York; Galerie Photo4, Paris, Leica Gallery Tokyo, FORMA Centro Internazionale di Fotografia Milan, and other galleries and institutions in Morocco, Turkey, Greece, Russia, Germany, Mexico and Japan.

To date his work has been published in three books, also linked to specific projects:

Metropolis (Zeropuntozerozero, 2007), a series of images shot in different cities and which defined the first outlines of what would become D'Agostin's style and approach.

A Day with Lucia (Zeropuntozerozero, 2007), the delicate and profound story in images (with text by Olivia Fincato) of Lucia Servadio Bedarida, the first female Jewish doctor, who fled persecution and emigrated to Tangiers, where she worked as a doctor. She died in New York at age 106, one month after they met. D'Agostin's and Fincato's story marks the last images as well as the memories of an intense life: its joys, fears and courage.

In *Tokyo Untitled* (MC2 Editions, 2009), on the other hand, D'Agostin isolates himself in the geometries of the Japanese city. Taking the subjects outside their realities, D'Agostin describes the perception of the space around him, the relationship between the architecture of the city and its people, and their interference. The volume is enriched with articles by two masters of world photography, Ralph Gibson (Los Angeles, 1939) and Eikoh Hosoe (Yamagata, 1933).





Renata Codello

Superintendent for the Cultural Heritage and Landscape of Venice and the Lagoon.

The very exaltation and praise of its beauty is perhaps one of the most universally recognized traits of the city of Venice. Equally popular are those “postcard” snapshots—stereotyped images that seek to reproduce grand sites of extraordinary and inimitable singularity, which are then disseminated by way of the very same endlessly repeated images.

It would seem, therefore, that little or nothing should or could possibly be discovered about the lagoon city so strongly influenced by its own myth. Renato D’Agostin’s work revolves around other possibilities: he unveils the best-known architectural spaces, such as Piazza San Marco, subjecting them to a surprising elemental analysis in which the contours of the structural masses soften without losing their weight; the interpretation of the spaces is unfinished yet represents the vision of the author; the details of the buildings inevitably refer to the entire construction; the horizon of the Lagoon is traced by the ideal contours of the islands and points of the navigational mooring posts, but not affected by them. It is not, then, a book of photographs, but a collection of possible “visions” of the city. The images are not completed or defined by their outlines, but rather compel us to think about the places from which they originate, suggesting a perception of the city as a whole, irrespective of its photographic representation of detail.

It is not easy to extract from such a complex city specific places to be converted into “photographic sites,” capable of arousing emotions, enchantments, surprise. Perhaps it is possible to say that the author has put himself into a receptive state of “listening to places,” and from this heightened perspective has distilled certain essential qualities.

We capture a sense of the future that transcends the photographic medium and aspires to discern horizons and pathways not yet explicit. It is by way of this approach that we may grasp the full vitality and potent force of these places, perceived by millions of visitors, and yet, understood—or not—by each person in continually diverse and new ways.





Chiara Casarin
Fondazione Bevilacqua la Masa

Venice as place of origin of a passion and, at the same time, as the goal of a long and intense journey, almost a return to a mother city that embraces among its streets and palaces the glances of a person, like Renato, and investigates the visible with almost analytical passion. This city, in the excited flow of glances, sensations, noises and voices, rapid transitions, boats and feasts, stops for an instant.

D'Agostin's immediate future includes this ambitious project: Venice as a 'savage' to be observed and studied, and whose arcane secrets should be investigated. Venice as the most beautiful city in the world and at the same time the most difficult to photograph, an inscrutable lagoon site like a remote landscape to be conquered by focusing on what we simply do not see.





Renato D'Agostin's work forces itself on critical attention for its ongoing search which shines through his photos. Over the years, the tangible transformation of his photography is an evolution toward perfecting a personal and original language. The training and experience of the great photographers he worked with early in his career established solid bases which have been enlivened for some time with flights of complete subjectivity. A type of hermeneutic detachment of the visual fact, the creation of a personal language which asserts itself step by step and becomes increasingly defined. In his more recent works, D'Agostin loosens the intricate connection between vision and representation of reality, which escapes the objectivity of the lens, the aseptic yield of the shot subject, and instead investigates the elements which enhance it as if were something else.

The substantial difference existing between particular and detail becomes a concept readily observable from his works. While the detail is a decorative element of a finished whole, the particular is a moment in the creation of the image itself, a moment which can be isolated and which, for that reason, is capable of becoming autonomous and functioning by itself, becoming a complete subject which emerges from the context in which it was inserted.





The photo is for all intents and purposes a 'fixed image' in an undefined flow, and photography deriving from it is the momentary stabilization of this perpetual motion. But while an aseptic and representative reproduction of reality would constrain the photographic language to pure recording, the Barthesian punctum in D'Agostin's photos triggers a profound investigative device.

The composition frequently realized in black and white is the ongoing synthesis of a constantly active view aimed at the search for the eloquent detail.

Straight lines of shadows barely recognizable as such, indefinite halos that create an enveloping atmosphere and frame unconscious subjects, blades of natural or artificial light that dissect the photographed space as in a linguistic processing of the visual fact, the transparencies, the views in the faces of the passersby – everything becomes malleable to the lens which intelligently investigates the visible to return a profound reflection on what is not visible.

Rather than a screen of available subjects, his is an attitude of opening, an expectation that the unexpected emerges and surprises for its evocative and iconic effectiveness.



The details become graphemes, minimum elements in an alphabet aimed at the construction of a discourse on the immortalized moment which induces the observer to turn his mind to a more intimate, more hidden, almost banned direction of his soul and that of others, and it is in the parallel of this metaphorical digging that the works of D'Agostin can be defined in genuine light sculptures. On the poetic level, his photographs are not automatic light writing, but rather it is the use of the hands, in the manipulation of the negatives that come to life in the camera oscura, which lead to concessions and privations alternating with moments of illumination.

The refusal to use the digital process, the absence of pixels and technical reproducibility of his photographs, make D'Agostin's photos unique by definition and, as such, they become objects subject to further enhancement. In terms of the visual, however, he always proceeds by removing, digging, purifying what will be the subject of the photo from the superfluous which includes it. Blades or flakes of light cut into black backgrounds, emerge from the depths of that darkness, which, as in a cyclical return, is the very place of photographic creation, of the camera oscura as the fertile belly of finally realized photographs.

And Venice will be the center of this procession by degrees, of a new way of going to the window which from the subjectivity of the photographic eye breaks into a never-before-seen lagoon.





The project VENEZIA BEAUTIFUL CLICHÉ consists on:

- a book, published by SilvanaEditoriale, Milan, printed by Amilcare Pizzi, Milan.

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Text by *Chiara Casarin*, curator at Fondazione Bevilacqua la Masa, Venice.

Text by *Italo Zannier*, curator.

Text in italian, english, french, japanese.

Design: Heartfelt Milan

Print run: 2000 copies

Hardcover

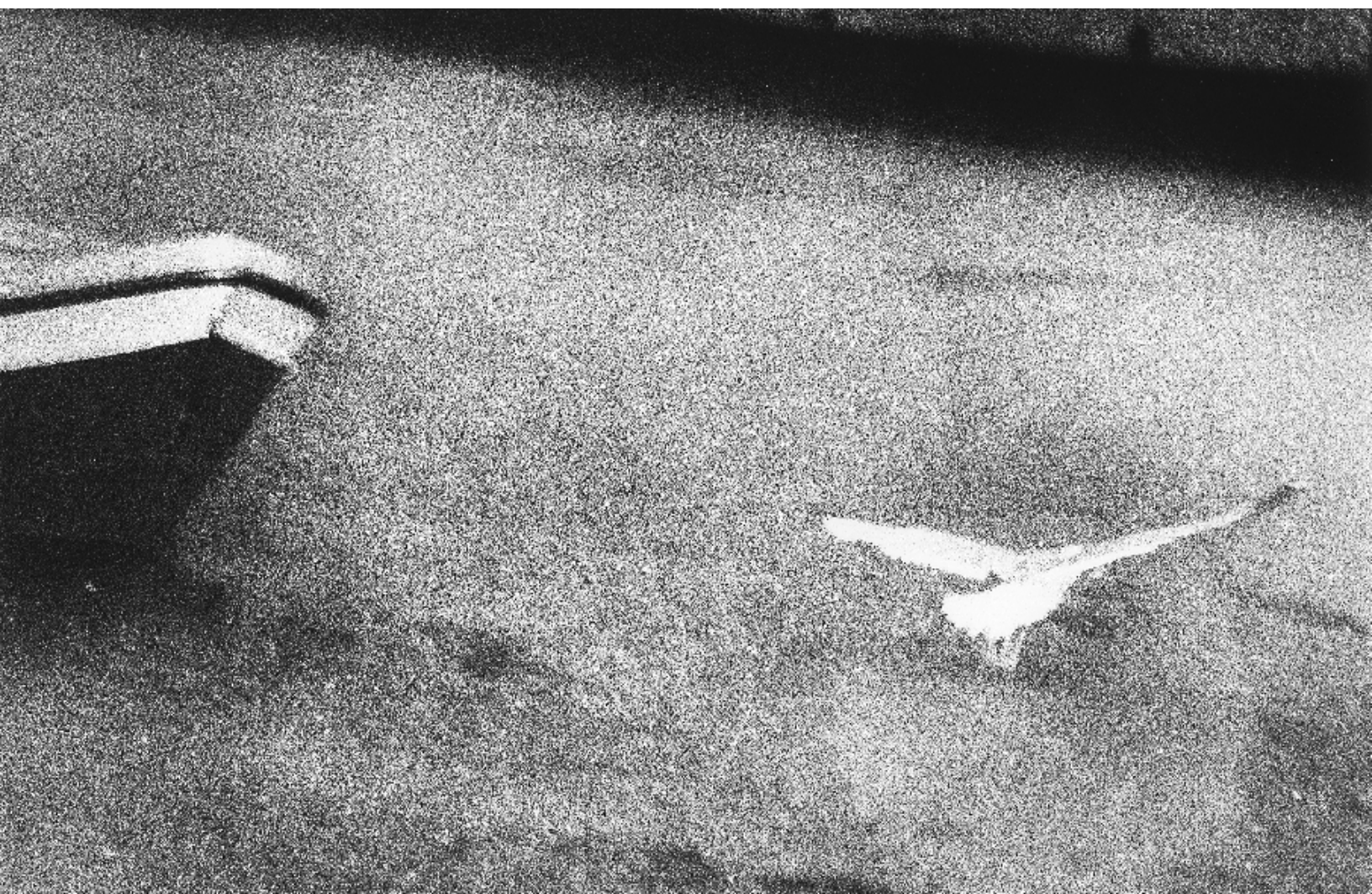
88 pages

23.8 x 33 cm

- a traveling photography exhibition consisting on 30 Silver Gelatin Prints in three different sizes (12x16 in / 16x20 in / 26x40 in).

* *The photographs have been made with a Leica M7 and Nikon F100 using Tri-X developed in Rodinal.*

The prints have been made by the artist on Ilford Multi-Grade Fiber Based paper, developed, fixed and processed to the highest archival standards.



BOOK - EXHIBITION LAUNCH 2011-2012

PARIS, Galerie Photo 4, 2011

NEW YORK CITY, Bonni Benrubi Gallery, 2012

MILAN, MC2 Gallery, 2012

GENOA, Vision Quest Gallery, 2012

VENICE, Palazzo Ducale, 2012

_OTHERS TO BE CONFIRMED



RENATO D'AGOSTIN

1983, San Dona' di Piave, Venezia

International Center of Photography, New York City
Assistant to Ralph Gibson

Istituto Italiano di Fotografia, Milan
Assistant to Alfredo Sabbatini

Exhibitions

2010

Tokyo Untitled, presented by mc2 gallery, Montecarlo
Tokyo Untitled, Randall Scott Gallery, New York
IT - Italian Art Today, Group Exhibition, Italian Cultural Institute, San Francisco
One, Group Exhibition, Randall Scott Gallery, New York
Tokyo Untitled, FORMA presented by mc2 gallery, Milan
Un giorno con Lucia, Italian Cultural Institute, Washington DC

2009

Tokyo Untitled, Leica Gallery, New York
Tokyo Untitled, Leica Ginza Salon, Tokyo
Tokyo Untitled, Galerie Photo 4, Paris
Step09, Group Exhibition, EastEnd studios and mc2 gallery, Milan
Metropolis, Public Library, Rostov-on-Don, Russia
Giovani Maestri, Group Exhibition, mc2 gallery, Milan
Un giorno con Lucia, Palais des Institutions Italiennes, Tangier, Morocco
Interessi Personali, Group Exhibition, Romberg Artecontemporanea Gallery, Rome
Italidea, Group Exhibition, Mandato Antiguo Colegio de San Ildefonso, Mexico
Un giorno con Lucia, Palazzo Roberti, Bassano del Grappa, Italy
Metropolis, Vision Quest Contemporary Photography Gallery, Genova, Italy
Oeuvres Choiesies, Group Exhibition, Galerie Photo 4, Paris

2008

Italidea, Group Exhibition, Instituto Cultural Cabañas, Guadalajara, Mexico
Color Photography, Group Exhibition, Photo 4, Paris
Un giorno con Lucia, Pinacoteca di Ancona, Italy
Metropolis, PhotoFestival, Yaroslavl, Russia
Metropolis, Leica Gallery, Istanbul
SiFest, Group show, Savignano sul Rubicone, Italy
Un giorno con Lucia, Sala Margana, Rome
Photo Biennial 2008, Alessandria, Italy
Metropolis, Italian Cultural Institute, Washington DC
Metropolis, Leica Gallery, Solms, Germany
Echoes From the Street, Group Exhibition, Domeischel Gallery, New York
Oeuvres Choiesies, Group Exhibition, Galerie Photo 4, Paris

2007

Un giorno con Lucia, Italian Cultural Institute, New York
Oeuvres Récentes, Group exhibition, Photo 4, Paris
The (sub)Urban Landscape, Group exhibition, Ross Art Museum, Ohio
Green Interpretation, Group exhibition, The Wild Project, New York
Postcards from Paris, Group exhibition, Leica Gallery, New York
Metropolis, Leica Gallery, New York
Blanche et noir est la rue, Group exhibition, Galerie Photo 4, Paris

2006

Mythos. Group exhibition, Byzantine and Christian Museum, Athens

Publications

Beautiful Cliché, Silvana Editoriale, 2011

Tokyo Untitled, mc2 gallery Edizioni, 2009

0.00 Night Moleskine, Zeropuntozerozero and Moleskine, 2008

Un giorno con Lucia, Zeropuntozerozero, 2007

Metropolis, Zeropuntozerozero, 2007

Italia 2006 Campioni del Mondo, Stamp, Republic of San Marino, 2006

Awards

2010 Art Directors Club Annual Award, New York





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