



La Società delle Api
14 Rue Princesse Marie de Lorraine
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Exhibition Notes
Renato Leotta and Marianna Vecellio

1. Sensitivity

Marianna Vecellio: *Sensibilità* (Sensitivity) is Renato Leotta's title for his exhibition on photographic practice at the Società delle Api's exhibition space Le Quai in Monaco. According to the artist, photography is a tool that "makes it possible to work on processes of image creation as developmental experience to manipulate, re-read and complete." It is not for describing or reproducing reality, but rather an opportunity for carrying out a series of exercises. For the artist, this practice is the site of recording experiences, of visualizing the relationship between human spirit and chemistry and of emotional manifestation. Unassuming acts alter the nature of the image, locating it in another place, another semantic space.

As he continues his experimentation, the artist spends more and more time lingering over the results traced out on the image, starting to deliberately abandon the photographic medium as an end to itself in order to locate the work in a new timeless metaphysical dimension.

Renato Leotta: *Sensitivity* is a mute human quality; it has to do with the silent,

skin measuring just a few millimetres thick, registers and records, expressing a desire and disturbance of light and shadow. In the light and dark of this emotional roller coaster of what can be the sensitive -sensitive along the time- the image exhausts itself, chemically. The relationship between feeling and form disrupts and reshapes understanding of the image. Without language. Does time have an anatomical nature that works directly on form?

MV: Language separates itself from form, which becomes pure feeling. *Sensitivity!*



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2. The sea, because the sky

MV: Leotta was born in Turin in 1982. His work is focused on investigating the

he has developed an ethereal, timeless aesthetic drawing forms and references from the industrial urban landscape and from the Mediterranean, complete with its history, archaeology and nature. His practice also draws on literature, anthropology and myth: he narrates through fragments aimed to explore the processes of vision and its connections.

RL: A consequence: *the sea, because the sky*. The Mediterranean is a constellation contingencies. The common denominator embracing all of this is the sky. Not the

surface vector (the sea) that becomes instrumental to the meridian needs of horizontality, exchange and measure¹.

The Mediterranean is therefore the sky that raises itself to the horizon over a surface of water (a blackboard for mathematical calculation). Connected to the earth by a band of light, its story is told by day like a sword made of sun², or by night like a silvery boat that conducts, like a stargate.

MV: Leotta looks for the signs and traces of a interdependent relationship between the phenomena of the visible and ancient knowledge. The sea and the Mediterranean are understood as a school of learning that ties images to feelings, processes to myths, experiments to visualizations.

The Mediterranean is a performative space, a vast basin of development: a place of connections, movement and revelation, it is made of water, salt and other organic and inorganic materials, and inhabited by plants, microorganisms and other creatures. Its chemical composition, present as a horizon in the *Multiverso* (Orizzonti) series, light in the *Lunagramma* series and the manifestation of simple bioluminescent particles in the *Plankton* series, is the starting point for producing a situated knowledge made of manifestations, gaps and metaphors or, as Giorgio de Santillana wrote, a synoptic vision, since "seeing the world in depth is seeing it in its entirety³." From the sea to the sky.

1 Franco Cassano, *Il pensiero Meridiano* (Rome: Laterza, 2005).

2 Italo Calvino, *Palomar* (Milan: Mondadori, 1994).

3 Giorgio de Santillana, Hertha von Dechend, *Sirio* (Milan: Adelphi, 2020).

RL: *I imagined the sea as a camera obscura and the moon as the lens of an illuminates us and everything around us. The light deposits itself on the surface of of the waves, recording the trace of an image that describes the surface of the water in a given period and blocks what we perceive with the naked eye as a succession of lines and reticulations running along the seabed⁴.*

MV: Sensibilità presents a collection of traces of nature made in collaboration with it. These photographic works are not photographs but *Lunagrammi*, photograms made by recording starlight or collecting moonlight in the depths of the sea; recordings

behaviors, temperaments.

4 *Intuition*, 2017. Eds. Daniela Ferretti and Axel Vervoodt, Palazzo Fortuny, Venice. "Il necessario," Davide Daninos. MER. Paper Khunsthalle, Ghent.

*Ten sea urchins draw a map of the sky.
They are stars, comets, planets, suns, people.
Fallen into the sea during the night.
They are females and males; they are purple, red, brown, yellow.
At night they are blue.
They have spikes. They move and shield themselves from light.*