

“LA GRANDEUR DI PARIGI” by Graziano Villa

A selection of prints by Graziano Villa, of the greatest architectural achievements in Paris, which have been artistically altered to showcase their “graphic soul”.

Palazzo Graziani
Via Piazzale Lo Stradone 13
47890
Republic of San Marino
From July 31st to September 30th.

Graziano Villa narrates: *“In this particular moment in history, when Paris has been wounded by new vandals, my tribute is an homage to the city of liberty, of culture and art, where photography was born.”*

Naturally, our thoughts instinctively carry us to Daguerre and Nadar, or Atget, the one who more than any other, was able to capture that magical, almost surreal ambience, that reigns in Paris.

Through this exhibition, Graziano Villa presents us with his new perspective, an entirely personal one of the *Ville Lumière*. The monuments are not unknown to us, for we have witnessed them in person or seen them printed on postcards: the *Eiffel Tower*, the *Pyramide du Louvre*, the *Beaubourg*, *Notre-Dame*, the *Invalides*, the *Hotel de Ville*, the *Grande Arche* and the skyscrapers of *La Défense*... but what is most important is the interpretation, or reflection which the artist invites us to pursue, so that we may witness all this through a different perspective, from a different angle. He facilitates our discovery of the poetry and the inspirational geometrical forms that soar like the verses of a sonnet. Graziano Villa’s images evoke the formal environment of the Russian avant-garde, Constructivism, Suprematism and their pure plastic sensitivity and his *Tours Eiffel* reminisce the cubic-futuristic ones of Delaunay, a bit of obliqueness, and colorfulness.

Through a research of stylistic peculiarities and by pursuing an ideal of mathematical harmony, the artist has sought, through an explicit view, what usually presents itself as homogeneous architecture. We are witnessing the “dismantlement” of the mechanism which used to hold the masterpiece intact, in other words, the eulogy to fragmentation. The parts of some of the architectonic structures have been isolated, singled out of the picture and projected in another dimension where outside of their context they no longer represent their former congruity and inevitably, they generate different messages, in this case, of explosive beauty. A new order of signs is born of it, which entertains the spectator in a new visual adventure. This refreshing method of forcing these architectural organisms to be “dismantled” is evidently a device and it is exactly this “firework” that is proposed by the photographer.

A device, discovered by him “artistically”, to achieve an effect that can certainly be defined as “pictorial”. The term “Pictorialism” was widely used in the world of photography by Europeans and Americans at the end of the 19th century to indicate a conservative tendency that was based on elaborate procedures of development. Therefore, Graziano Villa’s lens has become an extraordinary tool in service of rational architecture.

If we consider the three ancient, core traits of the art of painting: Invention, Design and Coloring, we are able to unmistakably affirm that Graziano Villa is without a doubt, a colorist who knows how to obtain the best possible expressivity from colors, particularly on the background of many images where the architectonic contour lines reach unusual and poetic peaks. In the artist’s “optic”, light’s vibrations change according to the transparency of the object’s dimensions and its impact cannot be but different when its shapes are altered, bent or closed, which cause his images to always present before us something unforeseen. The thin rapport between color and lighting that characterizes Graziano Villa’s profession, has indulged me into thinking of a project consisting of a “polychromatic” city of Vasarely, who happily invades the urbanistic field.

Ultimately, I would like to state that these photographic elaborations are birthed from fantasy, which in turn become graphics, then scriptures, icons, scenery and theatrics, because we all know well, that architecture always treasures, within herself, a bit of theatricality.

Bertrand MARRET *

* **Mr. Bertrand Marret** is a nephew to Henri Cartier-Bresson, the cofounder, along with Robert Capa, of the “MAGNUM” Agency in Paris.

In addition, Mr. B. Marret an Art Historian, author of the “Cartier-Bresson Foundation” and a colleague of Prof. Antonio Paolucci, Director of the Vatican Museums.