



Il Direttore

Paris: Capital of Photography.

The inseparable and fruitful relationship between the “Ville Lumière” and photography is historically known. Cradle of photographic invention, Paris cultivated, for over a century and a half, the visual imagery of citizens around the world, offering himself as the perfect backdrop for the first trials of photographic views. Its architectural structures have been, since the beginning of photography, an ideal subject for shooting, both for their majestic beauty, and because they responded to the requirement, initially essential, from the immobility required by the long shutter speed.

Among the very first results of Louis Daguerre there is the photograph taken at the Boulevard du Temple Paris, a daguerreotype of 1838, also remembered as the first urban view capable of stopping on the sensitive plate a human figure - the customer of a shoeshiner - halted on the trottoir for several minutes. A few years later, William Fox Talbot, published a series of calotypes that depicting architecture and views of the Parisian boulevards (in his 'The Pencil of Nature', 1844). With a view of the French architectural heritage documentation was born, in the years Fifty of the nineteenth century, the first major photographic campaign of public customers; the Administration des Beaux-Arts-Commission des Monuments Historiques instructed Édouard Baldus, Gustave Le Gray, Hippolyte Bayard, J.L.Henri Secq and Auguste Mestral to resume on Specific agreed routes, a list of Parisian monuments to highlight the status of conservation in order of their possible restoration. But it is in the second half of the nineteenth century, with plan urban renewal of historic centers of major European cities, the capital French becomes the subject of extensive photographic surveys, carried out with the aim of preserving the Memory of the vieille ville. Soon, in fact, he changed the face of Paris would become the modern metropolis of monumental public buildings, parks and gardens, 'grands boulevards'.

With the refinement of photographic techniques and the spread of the means, the opportunity to document the cities and bring back a personal vision became, at the turn of the century, an opportunity.

Eugène Atget snapped thousands of photographs of his beloved Paris, favoring a slow approach and thoughtful, choosing as the subject historic buildings and their details. Photographed serially railings of the palaces, fountains and statues of parks and medieval churches, by producing prints that he sold to museums, libraries - including the National Library of France - and other public institutions. But also shop windows, cars in small alleys, humble vendors with carts They were privileged object of Atget's gaze. His research will become a huge archive on city, describing 'monuments and aspects', as he recited the sign outside his studio.

Paris remained, throughout the twentieth century, the subject of numerous tributes by great photographers, who they have celebrated the beauty and majesty of the architecture. Scenes often against the background of daily life. George Brassai he abandoned himself to Paris by night, spilling the acquired vision of Ville Lumière. His he departed from the real locations for getting lost in the surreal, transforming the rigor Classical architecture Paris - Place de la Concorde, Notre Dame and so on - in appearances of the city. Robert Doisneau, the city became the favorite place of intimate research affinities between the environment and man. Despite his gaze was mainly humanities, the presence of the city and its buildings, sometimes huge peripheral buildings, returned constantly in his photographs. The Kiss de the Hotel de Ville, del1950, would not be the same without the 'typically Parisian building that It acts as a backdrop. The ability of Paris, and its great architecture, to lend themselves to a linguistic development of the means of expression made it, and it still does, the European metropolis privileged by photography.

Graziano Villa there proposes a new vision, unexpected and very personal, able to unquestioned subjectivity and abstraction of a strong tension. A graphical view, modular, complex together, dreamy and destabilizing. So this is the Grandeur de Paris.

Lorenza Bravetta