

Alessandro Trapezio and Italo Zuffi to me are not just two artists, but also two dear friends. I have literally grown up with them over the last twenty years, humanly and professionally. Alessandro photographed many of my exhibitions and most of the important moments of my profession as critic and curator: he is probably my historical memory, not only photographic, for a good part of what I have done. With him, I set up the earliest exhibitions and often we went together by car to retrieve works in absurd places all around Italy when I could not afford professional transport. When I met Italo, he already was a successful and recognized artist, while I was taking my first steps. I owe to him almost everything I learned about setting up an exhibition and about the religious respect we must bring to every work of art.

All three of us share a great love for the Italian province, especially for the foothills areas of our Apennines, so beautiful and so underrated. We were born and raised in these places, and even if we have left, we still feel a strong attachment. Only there you can breathe the real essence of the Italian province, far from the large cities and from the coasts, without the archaic exoticism of southern Italy, still lacking the heroic and sublime appeal of the mountains. And above all we love the streams: we love to frequent them, especially in summer when it is possible to bathe. The province for us is an attitude, a point of view that is impossible to ignore and that we apply also to art. It is a slanted look that allows you to never follow the flow too much, to never be accommodating, even if this can lead to consequences.

And it was around one of these streams that we had to find all three of us working together.

The *Moraduccio* project was born in 2014, but only in 2020 took concrete form with the publication of a multiple signed and numbered by the two artists in 100 copies. It is in fact in February 2014 that everything begins, when Alessandro Trapezio and Italo Zuffi heading by car between Castel del Rio and Moraduccio, between the provinces of Bologna and Florence, following the course of the Santerno river. They seek inspiration to produce a series of portraits of Italo, a native of those places. Along the route they make some stops, Italo moves inside the landscape, Alessandro shoots.

But the work unavoidably slips into a deeper direction. Italo's shape begins to move assuming significant poses. I recognize in these shots the hardness and radical rigidity, albeit always fragile and precarious, that can be found in many of his works. His body begins to dialogue and mix with the landscape, especially with the geology of that stream bed, angular, stratified in millennia as if it were made of colossal stone books collapsed so long ago from a shelf. And around the rocks, the water moves impetuously, unstable, full of energy, and the chestnut trees grow twisted, cared for and governed by the farmers. The shots have a tense atmosphere, full of anxiety, as if something threatening is about to happen at any moment. The light is cold but clear and clean. The subject - a body posing near a river, rocks and surrounded by nature - is one of the most beloved by Alessandro, already explored in many of his past works. The Apennines are as well one of his main

subjects, always linked to a dimension of photography related to memory, time, the beginning of a narrative, the use of photos as a way to talk about oneself, of discovering yourself through the other and the landscape.

Today, in 2024, 10 years after those shots, the never seen photographs are being exhibited for the first time. The exhibition in the spaces of Alchemilla wants to be a new chapter of this project, linked to the book but autonomous and independent from it. Collaborations between artists have become rare and do not happen often. For this reason, the exhibition becomes a valuable laboratory-style opportunity, an experiment between two artists who are dialoguing on equal terms, surrounded by the enchanting landscape of our Apennines. In the large exhibition spaces, the images are dilated and, thanks to this change of scale, they establish a deep relationship with the viewer, highlighting the performative component at the origin of the photos and the immersive nature of the environment in which they were taken.

Antonio Grulli