
The heart is the place, and the street. Pathos. By Giorgio Negro.

"This book is about a journey, both physical and spiritual, made of experiences and feelings, carried out over many years and through a hundred places, yet timeless and immobile. A deep dive into the human soul. Life has led me to witness suffering and cruelty. It was my choice, and my job was to fight that cruelty and alleviate that suffering."

Pathos is the first book by the Swiss photographer of Italian origin Giorgio Negro born six decades ago. A first book, and a masterpiece, everything is so alive, whether it is the subjects represented or the framing, raw, firm, of pure contact. Sensuality of images, black and white, flesh, naked life. Impression of direct life and taste of hand-to-hand, far from social distancing, new totalitarianism of the 21st century.

Here we touch, breathe, sweat and throw saliva showers on the passing dog, on the child, on the little sister, on the concubine, on the photographer. Here, we do not fear the carnal beauties of analog film, without rejecting the flexible game of digital encryption. Mexico, Cuba, Peru, Brazil, Ecuador, these are the countries met by Giorgio Negro, who reveals in all their pre-capitalist, indigenous strength in some way.

No morals, but the uninterrupted dance of good and its opposite, fragments of reality caught in the manner of Orson Welles: thirst for existence, thirst for skin, thirst for mystery, thirst for evil.

No explanation, but the irreducible, fundamental visual discourse.

We are here on the side of Baroque and Expressionism, of carnival life in the ontological sense, or of spending in the manner of Georges Bataille. Faces, animals, landscapes form Pathos, this Greek word for suffering, so close to the name of this island where St. John thought of the Apocalypse, Patmos.

There is a lot of life here, because there are many dead people and creepy ghosts around you.

Send the music, we probably won't be here tomorrow.

Pray dear brothers, Christian missionaries have robbed you of your convictions and your salvation.

Everything is beautiful, so poetic and very poisonous.

A dog lies in the mud. Alive or dead?

Kiss me, gringo, I want you, you are my happiness and my curse.

The sky is on fire, the rain is on fire and only migratory birds will have the strength to flee.

Your face is bandaged, you howl at the moon, you are uprooted.

A man gently holds the head of a sheep, before slaughtering it without cruelty.

We humans sleep in the streets, or in the jungle, and we are the beasts of a vain sacrifice.

In the nonsense that has arisen, there is a photographer, attentive, who seeks order in disorder.

Almost everywhere on the planet, lonely and fraternal, Robert Frank has beautiful children.

Giorgio Negro tells of his work:

"Almost to no avail, and to my utmost frustration.

Humanitarian work has put a strain on my soul.

Photography then became my healing escape, a way to speak without words to people, like a bridge, communicating only through shared feelings and common sensations.

It led me to reconcile my soul with what was outside of me; with humanity; with nature; with life.

Every act of taking a picture was a moment of relief, even if only a hundredth of a second. It was also the final moment of a long process of

reaching out again and getting closer to the rest of the world, of the physical sensations, never experienced.

Preparing this book, with my mind still wandering through all those experiences and atmospheres, something casual made me think about what had been so important to me in my photography.

It had been pathos.

That word, so important in the ancient Greek world, in our Mediterranean culture, which is to live emotions, passions and deep sufferings. And in the same way the ability to inspire emotions in another person through an empathic appeal. Pathos has been my faithful companion throughout my photographic journey.

I always felt it around me when I wandered the world, camera in hand. I guess I never chose the subjects of my images, they chose me. They had the magical power to attract me, to evoke in me all sorts of feelings.

A call I couldn't help but answer.

I walked for a long time, listening to the voices and emotions that welcome my steps; the ambiguous but unforgettable beauty of the fallen angels, while smiling devils winked at me from around a corner; many shadows and many rays of sun; a mirror that sends me back reflections of tenderness and compassion, shyness and passion, desolation and joy.

PATHOS (from the Greek πάσχειν "paschein", literally "to suffer" or "to get excited") is one of the two forces that regulate the human soul according to Greek thought.

It opposes the Logos, which is the rational part.

λέγω (λέγω), which means to choose, tell, speak, think

The Pathos in fact corresponds to the irrational part of the soul.

It can have both positive and negative connotations depending on the context

It can indicate, therefore, both the feeling as an affection of the soul, and a medium-effect used to create the empathic participation of the public (συμπάθεια "sumpatheia", literally "conformity of feeling" or "sympathy").

For the ancient Greeks this "emotional force" was closely linked to Dionysian realities or in any case to mystery rites. This is why Pathos indicated all the irrational instincts that bind man to his animal nature and prevent him from rising to the divine level.

SHARP CONTRAST WITH LOGOS

According to Martin Heidegger in the ancient Greek language the verbs to speak, to say, to tell referred not only to the corresponding noun logos but also to the verb leghein which also meant to preserve, collect, welcome what is said and then listen.

In the development of Western culture, in his opinion, the value of thinking and saying has prevailed over that of listening while hearing and saying, as it was proposed in the are both essential "Authentic hearing belongs to the logos. Therefore this hearing itself is a leghein. As such, the authentic hearing of mortals is in a sense the same logos."