

Luca Mantovani

A musical view: the secret mechanics of a landscape

Abstract

This article is a sort of story in images about landscape photography. The author, an architect by training with significant experiences in the field of architectural photography, invites us to see the landscape with a "musical view" through the photographs of different places, mostly in the Po Valley (from Sabbioneta to Mantua, Pomponesco, Bagnolo San Vito, etc.). A short but dense text forms both the incipit and basic explanation of the article.

Parole Chiave

Musical view — Architecture — Landscape — Photography



Andrea Mantegna, *Orazione nell'Orto*, 1455, tempera on wood, 63x80 cm.
Londra, National Gallery.

The landscape is not only an expanse of spaces, alternating stops, and escapes towards an immobile panoramic horizon, but it is also a field of levels, intensity, timbral sounds, local colors, emotional memory. The interior resonance of places is comparable to the functioning of remembrance, the device that moves all of Marcel Proust's research. The landscape is custody, vigilance, defense of an invisible harmony perceived through visual acoustics, understood as a complex sensory intertwining of hearing and sight, appearance and resonance, view and memory: a second and more universal nervous system that branches off in the earth, in the air, and in the water, a "sensory device" (Proust 1978).

The sound scales that preside over the identities of places must therefore be monitored, in order to prevent the intensity flows from exceeding that threshold beyond which the resonant form falls into a deafening disorder, exercising the poetic faculty which Gaston Bachelard calls "material imagination" (Bachelard 2007), capable of making matter converge, unconscious of form and fantasy, as a game of influences. We could thus listen to places following an entire architectural tradition that has tied optical sensoriality to that of acoustics with the aim of bringing the sensory phenomenology of the places closer and penetrating the secret mechanics of the landscape. According to the French philosopher, "One step, three steps: that's all it takes to define a kingdom" (Bachelard 2007) and to see the solid reality transfigured in reverie, just as it is enough to find a few scales of coloristic and atmospheric notes in the liquid reality to generate a clearly recognizable refrain, even in its local inflections. As primary elements of the landscape, the earth and water must be laid out, arranged to make their potential physical transformations resonate with meaning.

To transform a physical use of the territory into an aesthetic and fantastic experience of the landscape, it is therefore necessary to resort to the mediation of a device capable of enhancing the sensitive and expressive virtualities of the environment. There is a whole theater of places that is not historical but phenomenological, capable of awakening under the discreet touches of a musical view. Not only do the stones of the Catalan cloisters sing, as Marius Schneider has shown, but the whole landscape reveals its hidden rhythms to those who know how to find the right melodic angle to look from. Le Corbusier had a small mound made from which to successfully photograph the Church of Notre-Dame du Haut, and Aldo Rossi gazed entranced at the landscape of Lake Maggiore from behind the eyes of the gigantic statue of San Carlone di Arona:

«Like in the description of the Homeric horse, the pilgrim enters the body of the saint, like in a tower or a chariot governed by a wise technique. Climbing the external staircase of the pedestal, the steep ascent inside the body reveals the wall structure and the welds of the large sheets. Finally, the head is an interior-exterior; from the eyes of the saint, the landscape of the lake acquires infinite contours, like a celestial observatory» (Rossi 2009)

Bibliography

- BACHELARD G. (2007) – *La terra e il riposo. Un viaggio tra le immagini dell'intimità*. Red Edizioni, Milan.
 PROUST M. (1978) – *La strada di Swann*. Einaudi, Turin.
 ROSSI A. (2009) – *Autobiografia scientifica*. Il Saggiatore, Milan.

SABBIONETA



SABBIONETA



MANTOVA



MANTOVA



VENEZIA



BAGNOLO SAN VITO



POMPONESCO



MANTOVA



FONTANELATO



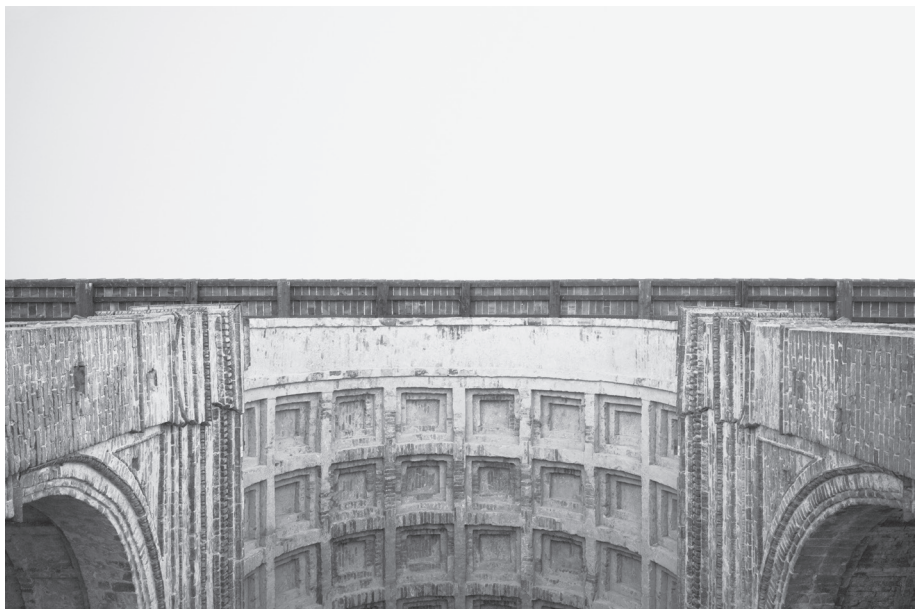
FONTANELATO



MANTOVA



MANTOVA



Luca Mantovani, Born in Mantua in 1988, has a degree in Architecture and Arts from the IUAV University of Venice. He has collaborated with architects such as Paolo Zermani and Alessandro Gattara. In the field of Visual Studies, he has collaborated with Gloria Bianchino, Arturo Carlo Quintavalle, Lucia Miodini of the CSAC of Parma, and participated in the course held by Giovanni Chiaramonte, Dramaturgy of the image at the IULM University Institute and the NABA Academy in Milan. He is currently assistant to Luca Capuano at Isia in Urbino. His publications include *Piccole terre di frontiera. Il Serraglio mantovano*, edited by G. Bianchino and P. Zermani, Parma: Grafiche Step, 2018; *Anablefobia. Le pieghe dell'arte, le inflessioni nell'anima*, edited by A. C. Quintavalle, Mantua: Tre Lune, 2020. A book on his work is currently being prepared, *L'abito come paesaggio*, edited by L. Miodini and G. Bianchino.

*Black and white photographs taken in 2018/19. Photographic equipment: Leica M6 TTL, Summicron 35mm; Leica M7, Elmarit 28mm; Olympus OM-2, Zuiko 28mm. Ilford FP4 PLUS 125 film.