

## Vittorio Fagone "The engraved face", 1984

Two characteristics are constantly salient throughout the photographic work of Paolo Gioli. One is the stratified complexity of the image which almost always has an intermittent aspect that is superimposed, improvised, kinetic, illuminative; the other is the direct evidence of the technical process used. These two elements coexist without contradicting each other, exalting sensitive matter and virtuality of appearance from the photographic image.

Every one of Gioli's photographs results in a dense matrix taking direction according to its own dynamic nature which engages the perception in a game of profound identification equilibrium and unity. The direct recourse to technique in order to emphasise single objects in the field of imagery, does not bind the freedom of visual expression but on the contrary identifies a generative, highly individualistic moment. There is also the specificity, the uniqueness and unrepeatableness declared by Gioli's photographs. The new and unpublished series of "Carved Faces" developed from an analytical interpretation of the Etruscan statues of Volterra, confirm the distinguishing traits and sense of direction of Gioli's photographic work. From the penetrating and silent expressiveness of the Etruscan funereal sculptures, Gioli gathers particulars and moderations like the boundaries of a sealed mysterious, remote world. Yet in describing a white aspect of stone, he stimulates the coming into being of a parallel icon determined by colour. The white image and the coloured image balance each other like two instances of a single analysis. Through technical analysis the material thickness of the photosensitive pigment is once again explicit and not a secondary element of the compressive display.

Reduplication, the superimposition of writing and snippets of matter, the articulation of quavers and quick marquetry shape a dynamic field where the image vibrates in a dispersion of apparitions. The free interpretation stimulated by a world of petrified faces brings about an unveiling of the mechanism of representation and concentration. The ecstatic, contemplative vision of the work of art appears mobilized, following other paths of knowledge. The eye is alert passing from the images to reality, to the many other associated and contingent images, recalling a coloured phenomena which does not contradict the whiteness but renders it ardent and immediately funereal.

The photography which Gioli presents, a sharp and balanced lattice of signs, is a vital transgressive image in which, however, it is important to know how to recognise rhythms of development, acute equilibrium, effusiveness and vibrations.

At a time when in the world of significant images, the memory of history is an opportunity for slow and heavy imitations, this work presents, from one of the sacred points of Western history of art open, new and corporeally dense figures, elaborated in a creative, perspective dialectic within a technique which competes with ease, indeed ironically, with the more recent sophisticated techniques. It is an exemplary undertaking which merits attention.

Technical language can be deconstructed and rendered fluent it can be effective and resolute to a way of producing and interpreting images and does not have need of simplistic reductions The "Faces" of Gioli are carved in a prismatic time which does not have shaded and continual contours but reflections and sharp considerations. The time of the photographic memories.

"Paolo Gioli. Il volto inciso", Volterra 1984  
Catalogo Comune di Volterra