

Ando Gilardi "About Paolo Gioli's Spiracolografia", 1979.

A mini-introduction for a micro-book to explain the means and the way how these images are created.

Paolo Gioli, the author, uses nothing but a button, those of the press-button type: two small iron «bumps», the first one getting stuck in the latter, thus being fixed. The second press-button is fitted with a small hole on the top, to let the air out when the second gets stuck.

Gioli, who knows about photography, as well as cinema - in this field he is an avant-garde author-operator - knows that a hole is also a lens without glass, which is called stenoepic hole: when the light gets through, it is just a narrow beam, and is compelled to transfer its message: the image.

Leonardo da Vinci called the stenoepic hole the «spiraculo», which is very nice. It is therefore on historical bases that I call these images of Gioli, with the consent of their father, «spiracolografie». Hereinafter is the proper quotation from Leonardo's to stress their authoritative birth: «quando per alcun piccolo spiraculo rotondo penetrano le spetie degli obbiettivi alluminati in abitazione fortemente oscura: allora tu riceverai tale spetie in una carta bianca depola posta dentro a tale abitazione al quanto vicina a esso spiraculo e vedrai tutti li predetti obbiettivi in essa carta colle loro proprie figure e colori ma saran minori e fieno sotto sopra per causa dela intersegazione, li quali simulacri se nasceranno di loco alluminato del sole saran proprio dipinti in essa carta la quale uole esser sottilissima e veduta da rovescio e lo spiraculo detto sia fatto in piastra sottilissima di ferro».

Hundreds of times I wrote that I have the proofs of how the photographic culture (that does not keep pace with technics) started its decay from Leonardo's times onwards, up to precipitating nowadays. I think that this booklet is a proof of it.

I am talking about the mass photographic culture, not of the one that lives in some creative people whom I desperately cling to, as to essential testimonies: Paolo Gioli is amongst those. But let's go back to his «spiraculo» and his iron piece: why a button? It could be any type of «abitazione» with a hole, able to catch simulacra. But the button, though it was the death of photography as culture, art, marvellous game (you Man will just press the button, I camera will do the rest) will be in Gioli and for Gioli the rebirth.

Gioli does is exactly like that: he presses the button against the thumb with the index and ring-finger; a tiny bit of standard film is placed between the thumb finger tip and the button. The middle finger of the same hand closes the «spiraculo» on the bump, then moves and acts like a shutter.

Gioli works in the dark with one lamp only, or even with a small flash, whose light blow is enough to fix the forming image, with no more than 3 mm diameter. He then obtains a negative film which he enlarges, like those in this micro-book.

Nothing but a game? But you will be playing a game if you are among those who use the more or less automated reflex camera, more or less motorized, with more or less adjustable lenses, more or less!

This one - of Gioli - is a gesture that is photographically pure, etymologically qualified and that can be qualified with several historical fringes, critical glitters, references to Talbot or Herschel and Eder's quotations, so many as the Photokina Cultural Committee would not be able to gather for Stieglitz or Bresson Cartier. But this may very well be what this extraordinary artist would not wish, and his «Spiracolografia» proceeded thanks to his not wishing it: his images became increasingly larger, coloured, rich in shapes, meanings and quotations taken out from the history of art: the serious one, that needs not being called «of photography» because it is only history of that man who is called artist.

"Paolo Gioli. Spiracolografie" prefazione di A. Gilardi

Ed. Il Diaframma / Canon, Milano 1978