

# Multiple visions of an island

## *Capri Trend*

*Capri Trend* is an exhibition of photography by Olivo Barbieri, Maurizio Galimberti, Francesco Jodice, Irene Kung and Ferdinando Scianna. These five photographers have separately interpreted Capri, the Neapolitan, multifaceted island, which is entwined with the history of the avant-garde, and has acted as a refuge for modern art and thought.

In the second half of the 18th century, travellers from Northern Europe contributed to the artistic flourishing of Capri and it inspired the tormented landscapes of romantic artists, attracted by the harsh yet immaculate Mediterranean beauty. In the 19th century Capri was chosen by artists, intellectuals and writers as a cosmopolitan destination for the avant-garde. The island was an essential stopover on the Grand Tour, the journey of young aristocrats throughout Europe. It later welcomed political-literary refugees, particularly Russian exiles from the conflict between Russia and Japan in 1905. In the second half of the 20th century, Capri became the meeting place of Café Society, opening its doors to seasons of fashionable parties, dinners in evening dress and a whole range of luxurious and high society social events. The island of Capri has an ever-changing artistic imagery, and projects like *Capri Trend* offer an expressive synthesis of the island's historical and inherited plurality and creativity.

Barbieri, Galimberti, Jodice, Kung and Scianna, each in their specific relationship with photographic languages, regenerate and reinvent the very image of the island.

Kung absorbs the silent emergence of the natural and architectural beauty of the dark Mediterranean night. A single image expresses the source of this sentiment in which the "faraglioni" seem to speak of Capri, as it emerges from the sea, as though the origin of its ancient nature. Capri is a place which, due to its harsh and luminous, ambivalent nature, has inspired symbolist iconography. This spans from the metaphysical atmospheres, reinterpreted by Galimberti, to symbolist painters like Wilhelm Diefenbach, revisited by Jodice.

In Galimberti's work the open and melancholy spaces that can be seen from the railings of a vantage point, or the pier splashed by the sea, are immortalized in warmly and seductively colored polaroids, free from human presence, the subject matter alone and contemplative in the face of the force of nature. The evocation of the landscape soon alternates with fragmented images, consisting of dozens of polaroids.

In Jodice's practice, the canvas as a pictorial and imaginary support is more than present, due to the detail of colors and the texture of the surface. In this journey,

which goes from the elaboration of the material to inspiration, Jodice retraces the places of Capri explored by Diefenbach, as if affected by a particular form of Stendhal Syndrome. Evocative impulses give way to contemporary investigations of the relationship between the island, nature and human intervention.

Barbieri and Scianna tell the story of the human dimension of the island and of the life that is lived there. Barbieri's site-specific photography hovers over Capri, describing its form via extensive views of specific places and spaces. From the sky of Capri, looking down on the island just as he did on previous helicopter trips over megalopoli around the globe, Barbieri focuses on the relationship between man and the environment. Here the island assumes its position within the contemporary urban context, as the portrait of a world in miniature.

If aerial photography narrates the island in a "global" dimension, the photographs of Scianna speak of a different identity, an environment populated by tourists and travellers, farmers and fishermen. These are social portraits taken "inside" the island, through a journey which originated in the 1970s, when Scianna discovered the wild and uncontaminated nature of Capri. They remind us that the beauty of the landscape is accomplished through cultural habits and shared traditions, where the sentiments of identity and belonging merge with a love of home.

**[Olivo Barbieri](#)** is an artist and photographer of urban environments. He is recognized for his innovative technique creating miniature still photography from actual landscapes by simulating shallow depth of field. Barbieri has exhibited his work at the Venice Biennales among other international exhibitions, and in galleries and museums throughout Europe, North America, and China.

**[Maurizio Galimberti](#)** is a visiting professor at the Domus Academy and the Istituto Italiano di Fotografia, Milan. He regularly holds creative photography workshops at the major photography festivals. His works are found in some of the most important photography collections. At present he is working on a book featuring the city of Milan, which will be launched to mark the Expo 2015.

**[Francesco Jodice](#)** is professor of Urban Visual Anthropology at the Master in Art and Curatorial studies and professor of Photography at the Cinema and New Media Department at NABA. His projects have been exhibited at dOCUMENTA in Kassel (2002), the Venice Biennale (2003), the São Paulo Biennial (2006), the Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía in Madrid (2007) and Museo del Prado, Madrid (2011). His publications and other works include *What We Want*, a photography worldwide Atlas; *Secret Traces*, an archive of human shadowing; and *Citytellers*, a series of films about new forms of social and urban landscapes. He was a founding member of the Italian Multiplicity group, an international network and experimental forum of architects and artists.

**Irene Kung** began her career as a painter and in recent years has expanded her repertoire to include photography. Her images are dark and isolate the objects or subjects she photographs. She has photographed architecture in several cities in Europe and in the USA, capturing a detailed look that the human eye does not easily perceive. The finished prints are of a textural subtlety that sets them apart from mainstream contemporary photography. Her success in these last years has been chiefly in Europe and South America with both private collectors and institutions.

**Ferdinando Scianna** published his first book in 1965, *Feste Religiose in Sicilia* [Religious Festivals in Sicily], after which he took up a job as reporter for *L'Europeo*, in Milan and then in Paris. From 1987, he combined an intense period of activity in the field of fashion and advertising. He also published books of portraits of Leonardo Sciascia, with whom he co-authored *Ore di Spagna* [Spanish Hours] in 1988, and of Jorge Luis Borges. Scianna has developed another facet in his career, as a photographic and journalistic critic organizing forums, the last of which, coordinated with Antonio Ansón was for PhotoEspaña. His latest publication is *L'etica nel fotogiornalismo* [The Ethics in Photojournalism].