

LUCUS - the project

CONSIDERATIONS

The first temple in which men have worshipped their gods, was the forest. These immense cathedrals of nature that covered the planet, evoking the magic and sacredness of the divine, create environments of light and shadow, perfumes and colors, suggestions and emotions.

Over time, cathedrals became of stone and brick, but the relationship between man and the forest continued: just think of the thousands of legends that have for background or character the forest, or *Lucus* of the Romans, the sacred groves that could not be violated because dedicated to the gods, or think of Selva Cimina of the Etruscans, considered impassable, or medieval witches' Sabbath, that took place -according to popular belief- in clearings of the forests.

Only in more recent times, the relationship between man and the forest seems to have stopped, or at least have suffered a backlash: the wood can become an economic thing or a place for entertainment, but seems to have lost that aura of magic that had characterized it for millenniums.

Yet, within each of us, a reflection of that magic remained.

We realize that when we cross the threshold of a wooded area, the verticality of the trunks (the "pillars of heaven" of American Indians), the inability to gaze wander too far, the games of light and shadow, the shapes of the log or the texture of the bark, the cracks of dry leaves underfoot, the smell of earth and moisture, the shapes and colors of mushrooms, berries, vines, everything seems to contribute to create an habitat able to solicit the imagination and stimulate the senses.

For this reason the woods -even though sometimes we refuse to admit it- are absolutely essential for us.

They are the home of our fantasies and our dreams.

My project aims to explore, thanks to photography, forests not only as a natural environment, but also as places where is deposited and secured our imagination, the place of the sublime and the beauty, the perfect harmony between culture, history and nature.

The lack of wide horizons determines, in those who come to pass within a forest, the immediate flowering of new sensations: the indeterminate, the hidden, push our imagination towards new frontiers. In this, at least, the modern man is not so different from its medieval ancestors, who saw in the dark forest, the magic, the forbidden, the dangerous.

The trees themselves, individually, and especially trees great and mighty in size, became in ancient times symbols of the virtues or emblems of the power that nature can express when undisturbed by man.

After all, even today, when we see a large tree standing out on top of a hill, we can't remain indifferent!

THE EXHIBITION

The basic concept of the show (and the project) is that the forest is characterized by two key elements: **the light of the sun** (which provides the energy) and **the time**, that allows the trees to grow, become monumental, and to live for thousands of years old.

To emphasize the importance of the energy of the sun and the concept of time, the prints of the exhibition are made by two ancient techniques invented by Sir John Herschel: the Cyanotype (for the core part of the project) and Anthotypes (I choose to create the section called "Herbarium").

In greek, *anthos* meaning "flower": the Anthotype is a technique to create images from a sensitive emulsion made from plant materials such as flower petals, leaves and berry juice. Once the emulsion, spread on a sheet of drawing paper, is dried, I placed on parts of a plant (leaves, twigs, etc..) and everything is exposed to the sun for two, three, seven, twenty days, depending on the season and the sensitivity of the emulsion itself. The sun fade the parts exposed to its light, and the protected parts remain dark.

To create Anthotypes the sun and time are the basic element, just as in nature. In addition, by their nature, the Anthotypes are not perennial: despite the protective coating that can cover them, sooner or later will vanish. A beautiful metaphor of the decline of nature in modern times!

THE BOOK AND DVD

As any show of respect, there will be a catalog. The catalog will include all the photographs of the exhibition, plus several extras, as well as texts written specifically with informations about the relationship between man and trees, and numerous practical advices.

Finally, there will be a DVD with several 3D images to watch with special glasses cyan/red, and QTVR images.