



Janice Mehlman

Carved in the light

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English Translation

Photographs that depict something, other than people and things, need to be seen not only for what they make you recognize immediately, but in particular for what they transmit after the first glance. When in front of a photo, one must be able to perceive the artistic intent without effort, but we should not presume to understand the meaning immediately. It takes time to absorb the beneficial luminosity that the eye can derive from a harmonious vision. The photographic vision of Janice Mehlman, asks of those who look, to spend time in order to be capable of seeing the feelings that the images transmit.

Janice Mehlman is a renowned New York photographer, refined in her selection of images, unusual in her artistic intent, poetic in her attempt to carve real space using light and its possible contrasts, like the tools of a sculptor. When she photographs, she does not portray human bodies

or objects explicitly, instead she cuts into real space, objects, and details, and after her optical selection is made the images become a transformation of architectural volumes. At times she re-assembles a large abstract image combining several smaller photos into a new and unique composition, which is different in its intensity, then the sum of its parts.

The artist has exhibited her photographic works in both the United States and Europe beginning in the early eighties and the work can be seen in International Museum and Corporale Collections, as well as in many history books on photography. Part of the year she teaches in the City University of New York, where she is a Professor of Photography, and probably the light that she sees in America is different than that which she sees during the time she spends in Versilia, Pietrasanta.



Suffusive Sensuality, 2005, cm. 68x52 (particolare)

Pulling space apart and obtaining its soul, appears to be Janice Mehlman's artistic intent. Architecture divides space as a function but it takes the aesthetic quality of the same division to make poetry. For our wellbeing, we try to live in harmonious spaces (not that everyone perceives or wants a certain sensibility, and indeed it takes a certain sensitivity to feel good when the space is beautiful, and feel bad when architectural structures are offensive, irritating and unpleasant). When you find a guide, who directs you with sweetness and without forced impositions, you can only be grateful. A vague spatial visual awareness can only be educated following an experts vision which is

capable of guiding you to see and feel the sense of what you would normally be limited to just observing. The "click" of Janice Mehlman is a poetic vision because it "creates" the space using a specific quantity of white and black (black and white reverses the alphabetical order of colors, but not the order of the contrasts and the volumes).

With "her" colors, she photographs the real, and at the same time she extracts sentiments taking nothing for granted, provoking a syntheses between documentation and art. The documentary intent is not in respect to everything, but to the details, and in this, the images transform into poetry and take absolute possession of space. So much so, that the artist returned to the same location to re-shoot an image in color that she photographed years before in black and white, and the difference of the composition of the new image (positioning of the lens) was absolutely less than a centimeter off, less than a hair. The "feeling" for space, in Janice Mehlman's hands, enables her to respond with poetic intention, born in the brain and the heart, and render in photography true spatial poetry.



Fotografia di Libero Musetti (particolare)