

BEPI GHIOTTI
SELECTED WORKS

ON RIVERS

SOURCES

2007/in progress

To date 23 'major' river Sources and 14 'minor' river Sources have been reached.

Minor Sources refer to watercourses that do not have a specific name and whose discovery is left open to instinct and chance.

'Major' Sources, on the other hand, are the result of long researches which must be undertaken before these precise locations are reached.



Sources moves on a symbolic territory so dense it risks bringing the audience into a hyper-trophic, overwhelming, excessive assignment of meanings, eventually minimizing the value of the artist's action, framing it in a far too easy system of semantic references.

Here's why it's necessary to look back to the long relationship between Ghiotti and Photography in order to better understand the value in the concepts of complexity/essentiality in the artist's iconological research. The typical image bulimia of our contemporaneity forces the consumer addiction to ingesting a quantities of signals and meanings among which the relationship between the contents seems to be built in retrospect, almost trying to "justify" some kind of plot in the mind of the audience, bringing it to an effective message decoding: simple, unique, unmistakable.

In Sources instead Ghiotti appears to move through a someway backwards path: starting extremely complex, loaded, a true generator of sense, finally renders it essential, flawless and noiseless. The chosen subject, significantly charged of symbolic attributions: place in which, according to many cosmogonist myths, water is separated from the earth to give birth to life, which focuses archetypal concepts such as sacredness, origin, boundary, nevertheless economic, political, environmental issues that have to do with water and it's incommensurable value, is solved in the final, synthetic, perfect form which we can see only after physically walking kilometers of land, after having left behind, along the road and during the time separating the images - since 2007 - all the unnecessary, the blatant, the redundant.

As if, the most interesting re-appropriation that Bepi Ghiotti operates on the photographic tool was achieved through his personal, rather existential, path to synthesis. Almost telling about a trip backwards, made of subtraction and of lightening once he reached the sources. That only in the end shows a new symbolic, ancestral, sacred beginning, able to distill the initial complexity in a simple, essential vision.



Tigris-Birkleyn

Archival pigment print on Baryta, 124x158cm (framed), edition of 03 +2AP, 2011

TIGRIS - BIRKLEYN

35 MONTHS SINCE I THOUGHT THE
RIVER

29 HOURS TO REACH THE SOURCE

3000 Km FAR FROM HOME

750 m FROM THE MAIN ROAD

2011 DATE ON PLACE

1014 m³/S RIVER FLOW RATE

1890 Km WATER LENGHT TO THE SEA

221,000 Km² RIVER WATER BASIN

23,4 MLN BASIN POPULATION

970 m ABOVE SEA LEVEL

38°31'48"N 40°32'48"E



Yellow River

Archival pigment print on Baryta, 124x158cm (framed), edition of 03 +2AP, 2012



Po

Archival pigment print on Baryta. 124x158cm (framed), edition of 03 +2AP, 2009



Rhine

Archival pigment print on Baryta, 124x158cm (framed), edition of 03 +2AP, 2008



Unknown Source, Bali

Archival pigment print on Baryta, 124x158cm (framed), edition of 03 +2AP, 2015



Elbe

Archival pigment print on Baryta, 124x158cm (framed), edition of 03 +2AP, 2010



Sources Artist Book containing a selection of 15 images from the work in progress 'Sources'
Printed by Phos Lab on Fine Art Giclée on Baryta paper in january 2014
Limited edition of 30 copies, numbered and signed by the artist, 91x70 cm

RIVER LINE

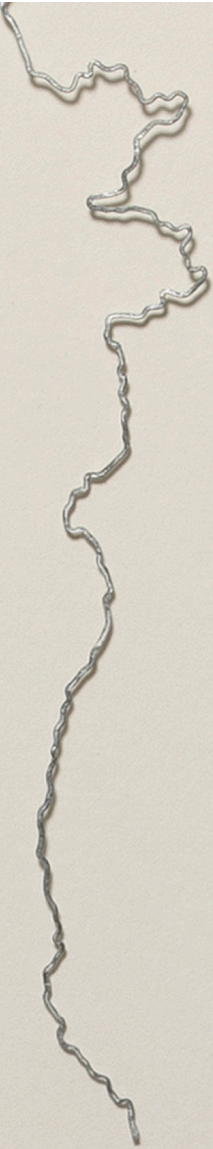


Neochrome Gallery, 2018



River line, Mekong

Steel wire on paper, pencil, 49,5x43cm,



18 MONTHS SINCE I THOUGHT THE RIVER
23 DAYS TO REACH THE SOURCE
7500 Km FAR FROM HOME
177 Km FROM THE MAIN ROAD
2012 DATE ON PLACE

33°34'13"N 94°18'7"E

from a single cut in a block of clay, following the river line







YTBT, Mekong

bronze cast 37x18x13 cm, 2019

BEPÌ GHIOTTI

Participations

2019 - Piedmont Pavillon
curated by Marianna Vecellio
Castello di Rivoli and Fondazione Sandretto Re Rebaudengo
Combo Venezia, ex Convento dei Crociferi, Cannaregio 4878, Venezia, IT
2018 - Confronti/4 Carol Rama/Carlo Mollino e le immagini di Bepi Ghiotti
curated by Maria Cristina Mundici, Musei Reali Torino - Galleria Sabauda, IT
2017 - Campo Video, curated by Manuela Galliano, Andrea Lerda e Marianna Sabena
Arte video in Valle Grana, IT
2016 - Art Basel, Isabella Bortolozzi Galerie, Main Fair Booth M6 Hall 2.1
2016 - Carol Rama Portraits during Ferite Della Memoria
Isabella Bortolozzi Galerie, Berlin, DE
2015 - MAM Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris
Inside Carol Rama - Site-Specific Installation
curated by Anne Dressen (section of Carol Rama's solo exhibition)
2014 - Artissima 21, Exhibiting Museum, Inside Carol Rama
Fondazione Sardi per l'Arte, Turin, IT
2014 - Nottingham Contemporary, Small Collections Room, Inside Carol Rama
curated by Irene Aristizábal (section of Carol Rama, and Dan Vo exhibition)
Nottingham, UK

Solo exhibitions

2018 - Bepi Ghiotti, Neochrome Gallery, Turin, IT
2016 - Materia Prima, curated by Franz Paludetto
Centro d'Arte Contemporanea Castello di Rivara, IT
2016 - Inside Carol Rama, curated by Isabella Bortolozzi,
Eden Eden, Berlin, DE
2011 - Sources, curated by Claudio Composti
Acquario Civico, Milan, IT
2010 - Sources, curated by Diletta Benedetto and Franz Paludetto,
Centro d'Arte Contemporanea Castello di Rivara, IT

Main group shows

2021 - Living Room, The space of imagination
curated by Andrea Lerda, associazione Art.ur, Cuneo, IT
2021 - Constellation #6
Honold Fine Art - V-Room, Ubud, Bali
2021 - Constellation#5, curated by Marco Cassani
V-Room at KS Tiang, Ubud, Bali, RI
2019 - ArtSite, curated by Domenico Papa and Michele Bramante
Castello Reale di Govone, IT
2019 - Under Water, curated by Daniela Berta and Andrea Lerda
Filatoio di Caraglio, IT
2018 - Post-Water, Museo Nazionale della Montagna, Torino, IT
2017 - In the depth of identity, curated by Andrea Lerda, Studio la Città, Verona, IT
2017 - Concept, CICA Museum, Seul, South Korea
2017 - Here - Cavallerizza Irreale, Cavallerizza Reale, Torino, IT
2016 - Follow the White Cube, curated by Astrid Honold, Ubud, Bali, RI
2016 - Biennale Cina-Italia 2016, curated by Mian Bu, Su Lei and Sandro Orlandi Stagl 798 ArtZone,
Chaoyang District, Beijing, CHN
2015 - Museo d'Arte Italiana 1985-2015, 30 Anni d'Arte Contemporanea
curated by Franz Paludetto, Centro d'Arte Contemporanea Castello di Rivara, IT
2015 - Biennale Italia-Cina 2015, curated by Mian Bu, Su Lei, Sandro Orlandi Stagl
Mastio della Cittadella, Torino, IT
2014 - Opere e progetti del Museo di Fotografia, Contemporanea 2004-2014
curated by Roberta Valtorta, Triennale di Milano, IT
2012 - Principia Naturalia, curated by Valentina Ruospo and Michele Bramante
Castello Contessa Adelaide, Susa, IT
2012 - Docks912, 100 anni in evoluzione, curated by Michele Bramante and Francesco Poli, Docks Dora,
Turin, IT
2011 - The Others, Paludetto Contemporary Art, Ex Carceri Le Nuove, Turin, IT
2011 - Drawing Connections, curated by Miriam Grottanelli, Siena Art Institute, Siena, IT
2010 - Opening Contemporary, curated by Franz Paludetto
Allegretti Contemporanea, Turin-Rome, IT
2009 - Dimensionemassima 10x12, curated by 3terzi, RomaFotoGrafia, Rome, IT
2008 - Rencontres d'Arles, Grande Halle - Parc des Ateliers, Arles, FR
2001 - Fotografia Quotidiana, curated by Miuccia Salvati and Luca Ballavicini
Centro Studi sulla Contemporaneità, Bologna, IT
1998 - Versus IV, curated by Vezio Tomasinelli, ex Lanificio Bona, Carignano, IT
1995 - Studi Aperti, curated by Beatrice Merz and Maria Centonze
Dock's Dora, Turin, IT
1995 - European Kodak Gold, il Diaframma Gallery, Milan, IT

The way the salmon jumps

Most people simply move with the flow, dragged along by the stream, without opposing any resistance. From time to time it may happen to see someone going upstream, immediately distinguishing themselves by following the opposite direction of the crowd. Hence, bringing to life unconventional thoughts and unexpected points of view. Bepi Ghiotti is one of these distinctive individuals, who walks upstream with a long stride. Sometimes this may be wearing, but his movement is always natural, thus leading us to unanticipated visions.

It's certainly not a coincidence that one of his most challenging researches consists in following rivers upstream to discover their sources, to create an image – a single one – able to condense a long preparation process made of studies, visions, thoughts and paths.

«My present work focuses on sources.» explains Bepi Ghiotti «I reach them and I photograph them in a single shot. The work is divided in two branches: one concerns the sources of the main rivers in the world, such as the Mekong; the second focuses on unknown sources, the ones you reach following the scent of water, like a dowsing.

In the first case, each source implies a year or more of research and study, including cartographic surveys, the organization of a long journey in remote corners of the planet outside tourist tracks, and finally, days of walking upriver to reach the source. In the second case, everything is much more extemporaneous: I take the car and drive up the valleys nearby or around the hills, then I walk up the streams. In most cases these watercourses wind up into nothing, however, they may also offer unexpected surprises.

In this second situation everything has a more familiar and immediate flavour, whereas, following up a big river and succeeding after a very long process, intrinsically entails the added value of a temporal dimension.

Either way, the hours and months preceding the contact with the source are crystallized in one single shot. Once I reach the source, I wait for the most suitable weather and light conditions and in that precise moment I shoot – just once. Then I turn around and walk back».

In chronological order, the Sources project (2007-2014) is Bepi Ghiotti's most recent commitment. Set aside his career in advertising photography, he has always accompanied the production of commercial glossy images with a personal visual research, often using the same photographic medium.

Sources is probably the work that best reveals the artist's need to take a distance from the world of commercial photography. This is where the shift takes place: from images conceived in a studio to images that capture a corner of Nature; from the alteration of a digital process to photographic print without any variation; from overabundance – of shots, colors, decorative details and fiction – to essentiality: one single shot, rejection

of picturesque and empathic cooling of the vision.

First and foremost, Time: Bepi Ghiotti attains the image of the source after a time consuming process that remains quietly in the background and can only be guessed by the viewer. Time has often been one of the key elements in many other works by the artist: the final image can be achieved at times with long exposure or it may describe generational differences, or still, it may be in the alterations occurred throughout the course of months or years. The length of the working process also adds to the artwork a meditative element and a consistency that, with its own pace and breath, both relates and takes distance from the stream of life.

Then, the shot. An arrow from a Zen bow, the unique and absolutely singular result of a long preparation and concentration process: devoid of embellishments, without color-polishing sunlight, without post-production alterations to clean and modify the image, and lacking any human presence which may distract towards narration. An image as "unique" as art work was before the age of its mechanical reproduction - an easy, yet fitting quote (Walter Benjamin) that stresses on the need of the artist to emphasize the artwork status of the Sources images. Because this is exactly what they are: works of art and not mere photographic reproductions.

A result achieved through a process of subtraction, possible only when the beginning is rich, the skills are high and the process is lengthily meditated and performed.

There is a sort of double focus in the image composition: the image embraces the full extent of the scene with great attention for detail. Therefore, the viewer can follow and intertwine the two paths: getting lost in the landscape or diving into details, as if it were possible to move two ways, despite the fixity of the artwork: going in and out, closer and farther, narrowing and expanding one's attention. Also the attitude in the artist's gaze seems to double, fluctuating between detachment and empathy, attentive distance and unconditioned acceptance, in an unusual balance between reason and emotion. As if he tiptoed into the scene that he is portraying and, at the same time, this were possible only thanks to a process of intimate knowledge of the place and of its cultural, geographical and visual value: an untouched and essential rendering, achieved through a long practice of thoughts, eyes and evaluations.

Quoting Gabriele Basilico: «...during a Bechers' exhibition I understood a key principle that still has an essential role in my work. You cannot use photography to make this world a better place, but you can use it to perform a preliminary and essential activity: you can measure the world. And measuring the places that we create is much more urgent than judging them». Something similar happens in Bepi Ghiotti's Sources, where spaces are not man-made, yet they are sometimes enriched by artifacts or interpreted by local culture: there is no judgement, there is measure.

Becher docet; here the fundamental roots of the work of the artist.

Maria Cristina Mundici, 2013

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