



MYTHOGRAPHY

VOL. IV

VULCAN + URANUS

Mythography Vol. IV

Book Series Mythography
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PHOTOGRAPHY MEETS MYTHOLOGY

MYTHOGRAPHY VOL. №04 - VULCAN AND URANUS

Photography meets mythology in the **Mythography series**, which was launched in 2021. This series consists of collective photographic books that draw inspiration from Greek and Roman mythology. It has led to exhibitions and discussions at the international Trieste Photo Days event.

The latest volume, **Mythography - Vol. #04**, focuses on the figures of Vulcan and Uranus.

Vulcan, the god of fire and metallurgy, who symbolizes creativity, craftsmanship, and technology, is often depicted as physically impaired, with one leg shorter than the other. Despite his deformity, he possesses remarkable intelligence and seeks perfection in his craft. According to ancient beliefs, Vulcan's workshop is located within Mount Etna in Sicily, where he serves as a divine blacksmith.

Additionally, **Uranus**, the personification of heaven and the sky, played a significant role in the creation of the world

as both the son and partner of Gaia, the Earth goddess. He was the progenitor of the powerful Titans and is credited with inventing the solar system. His domain is visualized as a brass dome adorned with stars, and he ruled over everything above the ground, including the sun, moon, stars, winds, clouds, day, night, rain, and snow. However, his power diminished significantly when his son, Cronus, overthrew him, leaving Uranus as a quiet and weak outsider among the Titans and later gods.

The volume includes photos and projects from authors around the world, selected through an open call by Exhibit Around. **Enrico Medda**, a professor of Greek literature at the University of Pisa, serves as the scientific consultant for the series.

The Mythography series is created by the dotART and Exhibit Around APS associations, the organizers of the Trieste Photo Days festival.

EXPLORING BEAUTY AND WONDER: VULCAN AND URANUS

ENRICO MEDDA

Time runs fast, and almost without realising it we have reached the fourth stage of the great photographic cavalcade of the 'Mythography' project. After the joyful female divinities that populated the previous volume, this year the starting point of the book is offered by two gods that are as present as ever in the everyday life of every human being: Vulcan, the god of fire and metallurgy, and Uranus, the primordial god who envelops the Earth with his starry vault and together with her has generated the divinities that rule the world.

These two fascinating divine entities invite us to come face to face with the experience of the marvellous, understood in the dual sense that the ancient Greeks associated with this concept. They were capable of coining a splendid word, 'deinos', containing within itself the two faces of wonder: the admiration for something that appears to us astounding in its beauty and grandeur and the fear that every superhuman manifestation inevitably instils in us. Who has not experienced a mixture of these sensations when contemplating the wild power of a volcanic eruption or when looking up to infinity on a clear night?

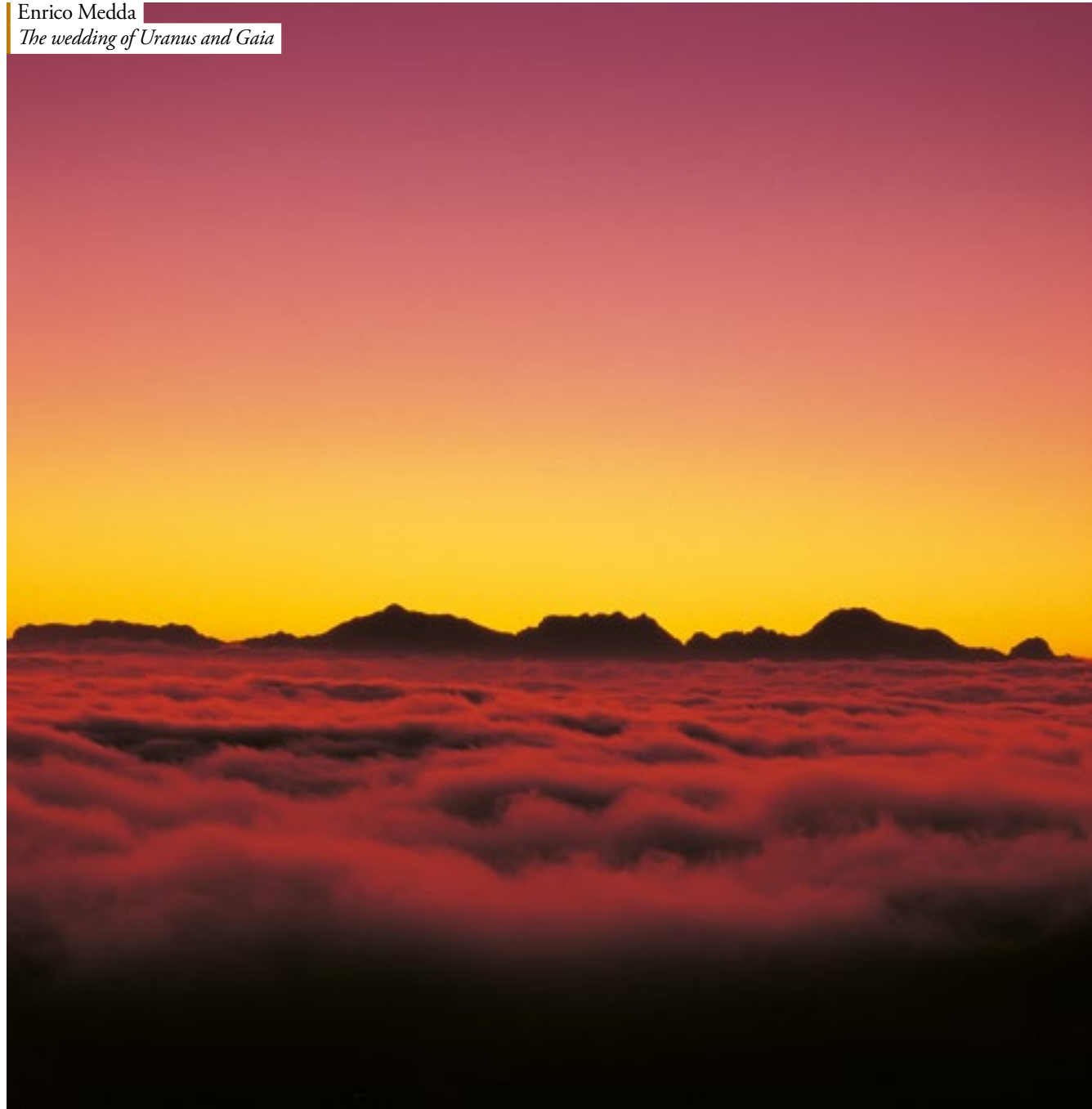
Exploring the emotion of wonder is an act which can illuminate our existence, capable as it is, in the confrontation with what towers above us and attracts us, of bringing us closer to poetry, and in this way to the very experience of the divine. Moreover, Vulcan and Uranus are gods closely associated with light, whether it be the hot, reddish light of lava and fire, the marvellous light of the sun sweeping across the daytime sky, or the pale light of the stars that reaches us from faraway worlds. There is no need to emphasise how their nature offers a myriad

of themes that are truly congenial to those who make light an expressive tool through the camera lens.

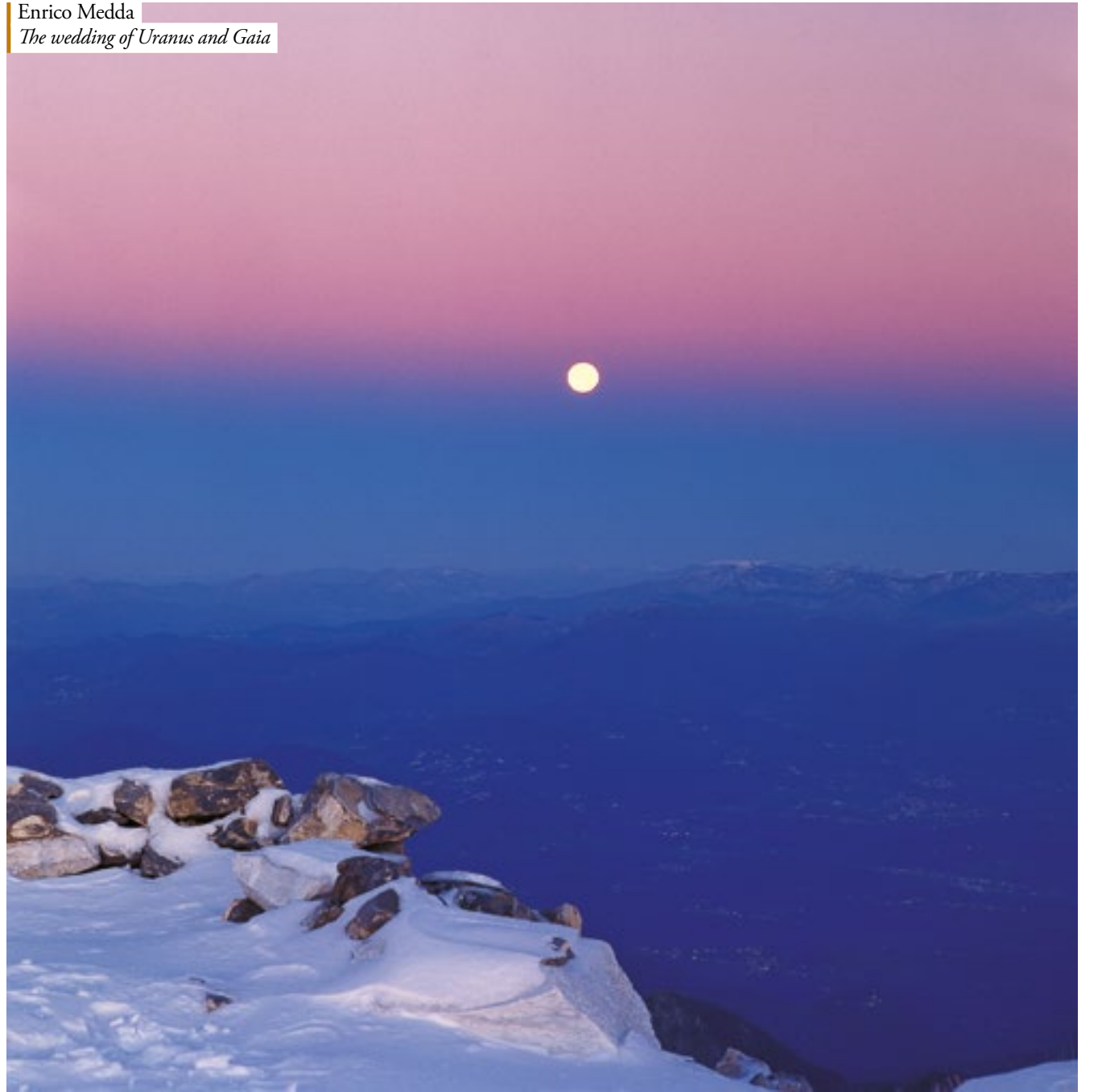
Beyond the varied aesthetic possibilities, the encounter with these two ancient deities also offers profound insights into the world in which we live and our ability to modify it, sometimes ingeniously, sometimes disgracefully. The ability to use fire to forge metals has allowed us over time to create new industrial landscapes, rich in fascinations unknown to our predecessors, but also fraught with disturbing problems for the future of humanity. But however great man's technical achievements may be, one need only look up to the starry sky to be immediately reminded of the enormous disproportion that exists between us and the rest of the Universe, the infinite cosmos moved by forces so great that we can barely imagine them. Our power and our limitation meet at the same point, as the author of one of the most beautiful verses in Greek literature understood many centuries ago: 'There are many formidable things (deina), but none more formidable than human beings' (Sophocles, *Antigone* 332-3).

Interpreters of a world suspended between creation and destruction, the photographers of 'Mythography IV' take the reader of this book on a fascinating journey, each with his or her own language and ability to recount the real, letting the power of the imaginary emerge from it. Each reader will find images that are more or less close to him or her in terms of sensitivity and photographic taste: but all of them will certainly experience an encounter with two gods that we cannot pretend to ignore, if we do not want to lose contact with emotions that makes life worth living.

Enrico Medda
The wedding of Uranus and Gaia



Enrico Medda
The wedding of Uranus and Gaia



VULCAN



Among the twelve greatest gods of the Olympian pantheon, the Greeks counted Hephaestus (Vulcan to the Romans), the god of fire and metallurgy, whose workshop they imagined was located inside Mount Etna, whose mighty lava flows they believed were generated by the work of the god and his assistants, the Cyclopes. The son of Zeus and Hera, Hephaestus is a god characterised by the contrast between his great intelligence and his deformed physical appearance: he is lame from birth, which is why his mother throws him down from Olympus as an infant. He is saved by the sea goddess Thetis, who raises him in a cave in the Ocean where the child acquires his skills as a blacksmith and jeweller. When he becomes an adult, he takes revenge on his mother by building a splendid golden throne with invincible bonds that chain Hera as soon as she sits on it. Hephaestus refuses to set her free, until Dionysus, getting him drunk, convinces him to cast off his chains, reconciling with his mother. His troubles, however, are not over yet: for sticking up for his mother in an argument with Zeus, his father grabs him by the foot and again throws him down from Olympus. Poor Hephaestus falls for a whole day, until he hits the ground on the island of Lemnos, whose inhabitants take care of him. The god finally returns to Olympus, reconciling with Zeus and fighting by his side in the war between the gods and the Giants.

Hephaestus' marvellous technical skills give rise to a series of wonderful creations. First of all, he builds the abode of the gods, made of gold and bronze, aided by automata of his own construction. For the Sun, he makes the marvellous golden cup which every night ploughs the Ocean to bring back the god of light from West to East. One of his masterpieces is the armour

that at the request of Thetis he builds for Achilles to substitute the hero's weapons which had fallen into the hands of the Trojans. The astonishing shield, described in the 18th book of the Iliad, is thickly covered with decorations which paint a vivid picture of humanity's social life.

In spite of his ugliness, Hephaestus has as his wife the most beautiful of goddesses, Aphrodite, who shamelessly betrays him with Ares, god of war. The two adulterers end up going for the tremendous and cunning retaliation of the cuckolded husband. In the 8th book of the Odyssey, Demodokos recounts how Hephaestus designed and constructed a trap-bed in which the two naked lovers were imprisoned and exposed to the mockery of all the gods. Although sometimes involved in comic situations such as this, Hephaestus knows how to reveal himself in all his power at the right moment. In the 21st book of the Iliad, when the waters of the Scamander, outraged by the enormous amount of Trojan blood spilled by Achilles, rage against the Greek hero, it is Hephaestus who with his fire dries them up, saving his protégé.

Two episodes highlight the god's relationship with Athena, the other goddess of creative intelligence. Summoned by Zeus, who can no longer bear the terrible headache that afflicts him, the divine blacksmith wields his axe and smashes Zeus' skull from which Athena leaps out, already adult and equipped with armour. Afterwards, Hephaestus will try to do violence to her, but he fails and his semen, falling to the ground, gives birth to Erichonius, king of Athens. The Athenians indeed held the cult of Hephaestus in high regard, to whom they dedicated a beautiful temple that can still be seen in the agora of the city.

The photographic potential related to Hephaestus/Vulcan is great indeed. It is no coincidence that fire is a direct source of light, which makes it a perfect subject for photographers. The profound fascination it exerts is something we all experience in our life, both positively and negatively. If the power of a fire is a spectacle that arouses admiration, the fear of flames belongs to the most archaic layer of the memory of humanity, which marked a decisive step in the direction of civilisation precisely through the ability to control fire's devastating power.

It is precisely this memory that resurfaces in the joy with which many communities gather on ritual occasions centred around the lighting of large fires symbolizing the overcoming of the past and the opening of a new life cycle. In the images dedicated by Nicola Smaldore to St. Joseph's Fires and in those by Paolo Maschio ('The gathering'), large tongues of flame stand out in the darkness of the night and form a backdrop to the silhouettes of small human figures joyfully involved in the ritual. In Georg Worecki's 'Burgbrennen', the observer is struck by the fascinated gaze of the participants as they watch the fires raging in the night. And who does not return as a child in front of the astonishing magic of the fire-eaters who seem to blow dragon flames from their lungs? Oliver Gargan and Walter Fogel restore this childlike sense of awe in powerful images.

But Vulcan's fire is first and foremost a creator of objects and an indispensable tool for technology. It is therefore understandable that many photographers have explored the opportunities offered by the noble profession of the blacksmith, in images that revolve around the dark red heart of the forge. Inside dark workshops, luminous trails of sparks draw fantastic shapes,

as for example in 'Tra ferro e fuoco' by Toni Spagone, in 'Vulcano' by Fabrizio Franzin, in 'Atto di creazione' by Luigi D'Aponte. The delicate balance between fire and metal is the protagonist of the vibrant portfolio 'Yaki-Ire' by Shoei Yokohama, which brings to life the millennial quest for perfection of the artisans who forge the splendid Japanese swords.

Equally intense are the images dedicated to the art of the goldsmith, in which strength and delicacy merge inextricably (see for example 'How a jewel is born' by Ilaria Tassini and 'Hammer' by Giustina Wind, in which the object, the hands and the tool appear as different gradations of the same reality), and to the ancient wisdom of the farrier: Georg Worecki ('Farrier II') captures the profound bond between man and animal in the act of tending and shoeing its hooves.

Of course, the noble work of metallurgy often conceals serious social problems, highlighted in the exciting portfolio 'Atom 13' by Alain Schroeder, set in aluminium factories in Bangladesh, where people work in precarious conditions to produce a metal sought after for its versatility.

Once out of the forge, the products of Vulcan's fire begin to live a life of their own, full of energy and promises for the future: the joyous explosion of sparks in Nikolay Schegolev's 'A Powerful Start' and Sophie Décors's powerful black and white in 'The Machinist' recount the power of the steam engine that created so much excitement between the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century. But even after their abandonment, the machines created by Vulcan remain endowed with a timeless fascination, captured by Nicola Bertellotti in the 'Soft Machine' portfolio, a search for industrial archaeology

that enhances the aesthetic autonomy of technological apparatuses that have lost their primary function. Alternatively, machines can transit completely into the fantastic dimension, as happens in 'The vessels of Odysseus', Foivos Stampoliadis's portfolio that, playing on the shapes and colours of metal corroded by sea salt, imagines the appearance of a vessel that, like Odysseus', has wandered the seas for ten years.

No less powerful are the images inspired by the destructive aspect of fire, which, escaping the precarious control of mankind, returns to being the ancient divine power, capable of transforming even the most beautiful places into parched, smoking landscapes. Yuri Pritisk, in 'After fire', paints them in their silent sadness, denouncing the serious problem of the threat that fires pose to the preservation of biodiversity, symbolised by the lonely living beings that wander lost among the charred remains. Against this unstoppable force, men can only oppose their courage, which finds its most engaging form in the tireless work of the firefighters, ready to put their own lives at risk to save the lives of others. Martin Kesting, in the images entitled 'Cui bono?' renders in a powerful black and white the drama of confronting fire in urban settings.

The places where the creative and destructive forces of fire coexist in the most fascinating form bear the very name of the god that inspires this section. Alma Bibolotti's 'Vulcan Metamorphosis' portfolio guides the reader through the soft, sensual forms of the granite rocks that were once scorching streams of magma in the depths of the Earth. Volcanoes are perceived in their disturbing power, which at times, as in Roberto Doger's 'Popocatepetl at sunrise', is diluted in the delicate light of dawn,

and at other times expresses itself in the violence of eruption: Jean-Paul Soujol Benedetti's 'La forge' brings us back to the astonishment of the ancients who saw in the lava the sign of Hephaestus' work, while Zsófia Daragó's creative imagination makes a delicate female creature rise from an erupting crater. As one might expect, great space is reserved for Italy's two great volcanoes, Etna and Vesuvius, captured at different times and from different perspectives by Teresa Molinaro, Viviana Bertelli, Nicolò Masini, Agnes Budai, Thibaut Fleuret, Fabrizio De Marco and Jean-Paul Soujol Benedetti. Etna in particular is the focus of an evocative series of images by Claudio Sericano that highlight its unusual and fascinating atmospheres.

Volcanoes create desert landscapes around them, and deserts are also part of the god's sphere of influence, investigated by many beautiful images (by Andrea Gluckman, Massimiliano Costantini, Ivan Vysochinsk): a special mention deserves, for the very effective contrast between the subject in backlight and the colours of the sky, 'A camel herder walks in the Sahara Desert' by Viet van Tran.

Finally, a bridge between the section dedicated to Vulcan and the one dedicated to Uranus is represented by Yuri Pritisk's evocative images, in which old ships at berth are silhouetted against the backdrop of an immense starry sky, an omen of the book's continuation.

ATOMIC 13
ALAIN SCHROEDER



Aluminum factories in Bangladesh face scrutiny over working conditions and labor practices. Poor ventilation systems, and insufficient safety gear against toxic aluminum dust are important health risks, while child labor and exploitation also remain concerns in some areas.

Despite these challenges, aluminum's versatility, non-toxic, lightweight nature, and malleability make it widely used in consumer goods like cookware and utensils in Bangladesh. Aluminum is also 100% recyclable, retaining all its properties. Using recycled aluminum is cost-effective and promotes resource conservation.













AFTER FIRES

YURI PRITISK

Forest fires are a global problem that directly affects the climate and biodiversity of the planet. A new report from the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) claims that by 2030 the frequency of forest fires will increase by 14%, by 2050 by 30%, and by 2100 by 50%.

In Australia in 2020, about 1000,000,000 (one billion) wild and domestic animals were killed by wildfires. Biodiversity is being lost worldwide and over 4,400 terrestrial and freshwater species have been threatened in recent years. The effect of the fires affects the Arctic, increasing the melting of ice, and during combustion, carbon dioxide is released into the atmosphere - causing a greenhouse effect and climate change.















BLACK HOLE

ALAIN SCHROEDER

Globally, fossil fuels are slowly being superseded by cheaper renewable energies, but as I have documented in Ukraine and Poland, coal continues its slow burn. On this trip, I venture to Kyrgyzstan to see the state of mining operations in this former Soviet republic.

1100 kilometers and two days of driving separate Kyzyl-Bulak Mine in Sulukta in the western Batken region, from Jyrgalan-Dorgokomur Mine, in the easternmost region of Issyk-Kul. The terrain and the size of the operations could not be more different yet the modus operandi is the same.

Neither has a working vertical shaft mine. Instead, I discover horizontal mines, something I have never seen before. Horizontal or “Drift” mines are generally 100 to 500 meters in length and run horizontally along the vein of coal to be extracted. The entrance tunnel or “Adit” is constructed by drilling holes in the coal, igniting explosives in them, manually shoveling out the ore, then shoring the tunnel with wooden beams. With no electricity and only their bare hands, small teams of 3-4 miners advance just one meter every couple of days.

Mining outfits in Sulukta are considerably larger with dozens of working mines and enough coal to excavate for the next two decades, yet production has plummeted 80% since the Soviet era when companies were mining up to 1 million tons per year. The coal here is purported to burn “cleaner” and longer. Trucks pick up the loads every few days and the coal is sold throughout the country with a small fraction exported. Miners work 15 days per month and are well paid compared to the few jobs available in these small towns.

While demand has diminished significantly, the nefarious effects of burning fossil fuels is nowhere better illustrated than in the capital Bishkek which this winter (2020) took the pole position as the number 1 most polluted city in the world, surpassing New Delhi.













Maria Piera Branca
Il deserto attraversato



Andrea Patrino
Dea del deserto

Massimo Tabasso
Deserto Indiano





A road trip through the volcanic island of Fuerteventura.
A reconnection with the earth element, in all its meanings.
A journey between deserts and empty beaches, sacred mountains
and volcanoes, external and internal heat.
In silence, human presence is limited and insignificant.
A rediscovery of oneself in the earth and soil.



Yuri Pritisk
Untitled





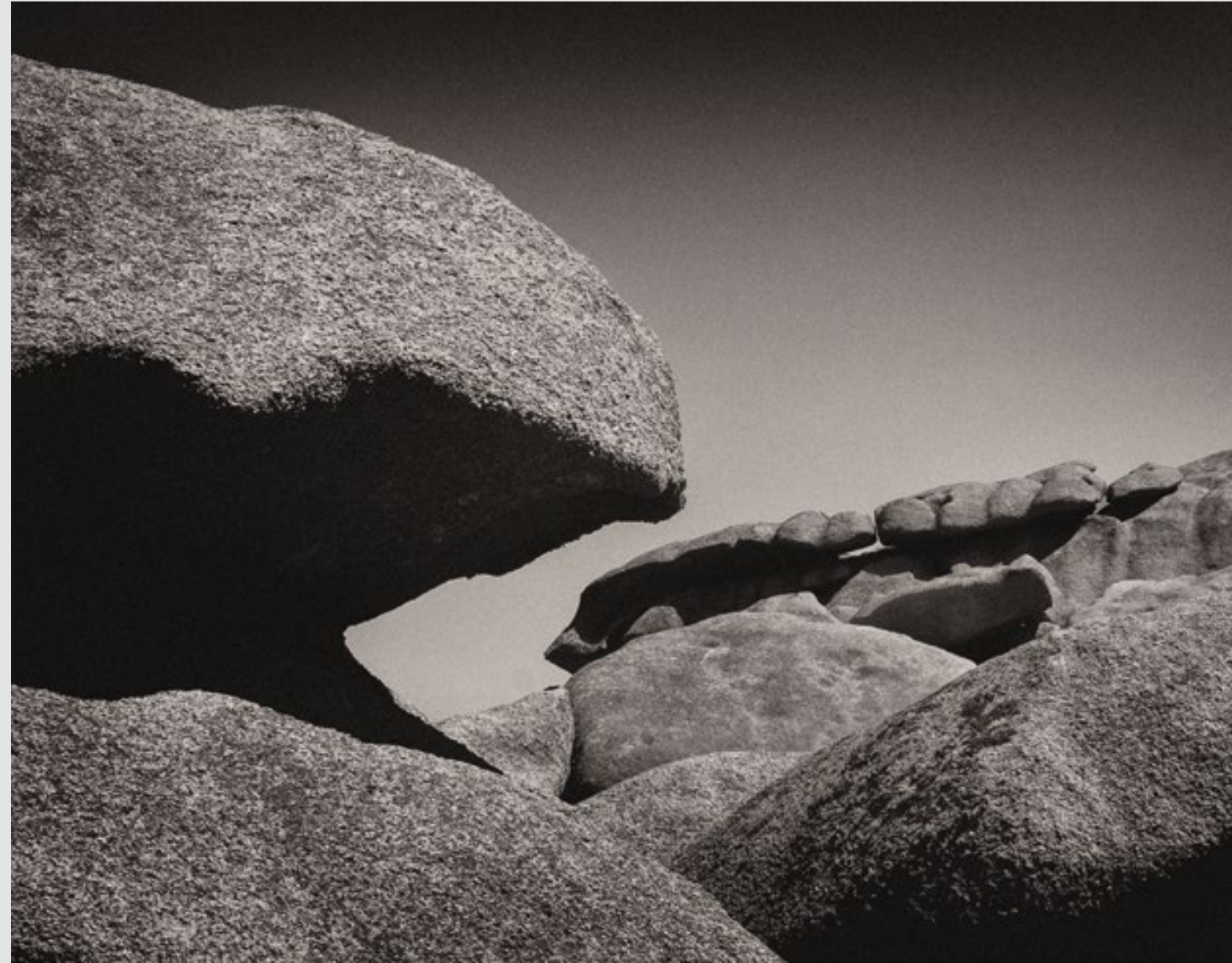


VULCANUS METAMORPHOSIS

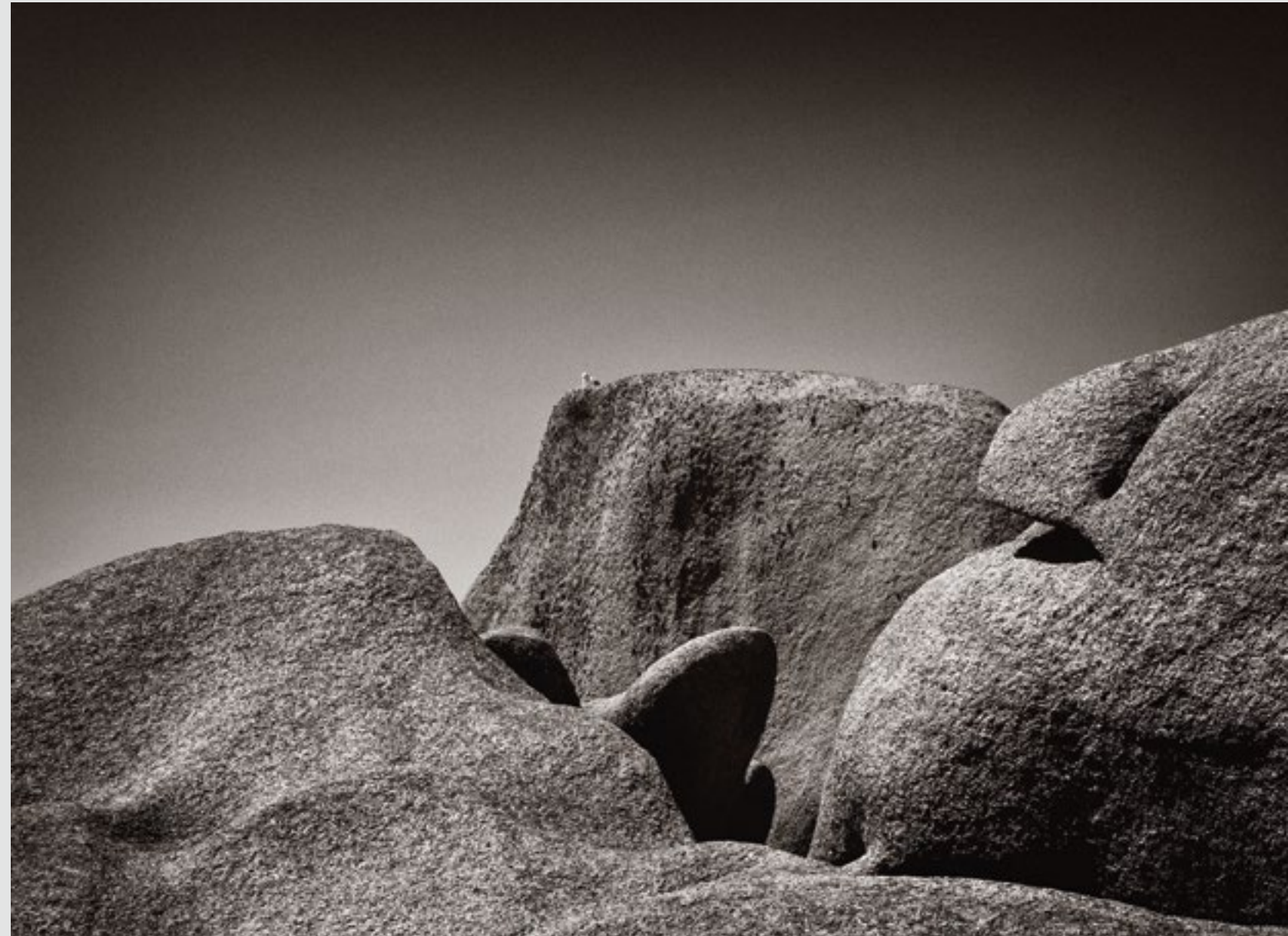
ALMA BIBOLOTTI

I have always been fascinated by the analogies hidden in natural elements, their interaction and structure. The photographs of granite rocks that make up this series were taken at different times and places, Brittany and Sardinia: they are part of a work in progress that questions the conventional view of nature and seeks to give voice to the imagination which, as Paul Valéry argued, allows certain manifestations of nature to combine, becoming new objects of mental contemplation. The surface of the granite, struck by light or shrouded in shadow, the sensual curves that are the subject of my visions evoke bodies, wounds, faces, as if there were a kind of universal syntax underlying natural forms, revealing analogies between the mineral and anthropic worlds. Is it only wind and water that have sculpted granite, giving it sculptural forms? Granites are, according to the most widely accepted hypothesis, intrusive igneous rocks that would have formed as a result of the slow solidification of magma: thus, one of the many faces or creations of an extraordinary craftsman. Fragments of ancient fire from Vulcan's secret and profound universe that tell new stories.











Viet Van Tran
A camel herder walks in the Sahara Desert

Andrea Patrino
Formiche nel deserto



Viet Van Tran
Sunrise in Sahara







Teresa Molinaro
On the craters of Etna



Viviana Bertelli
Il vulcano Riflesso

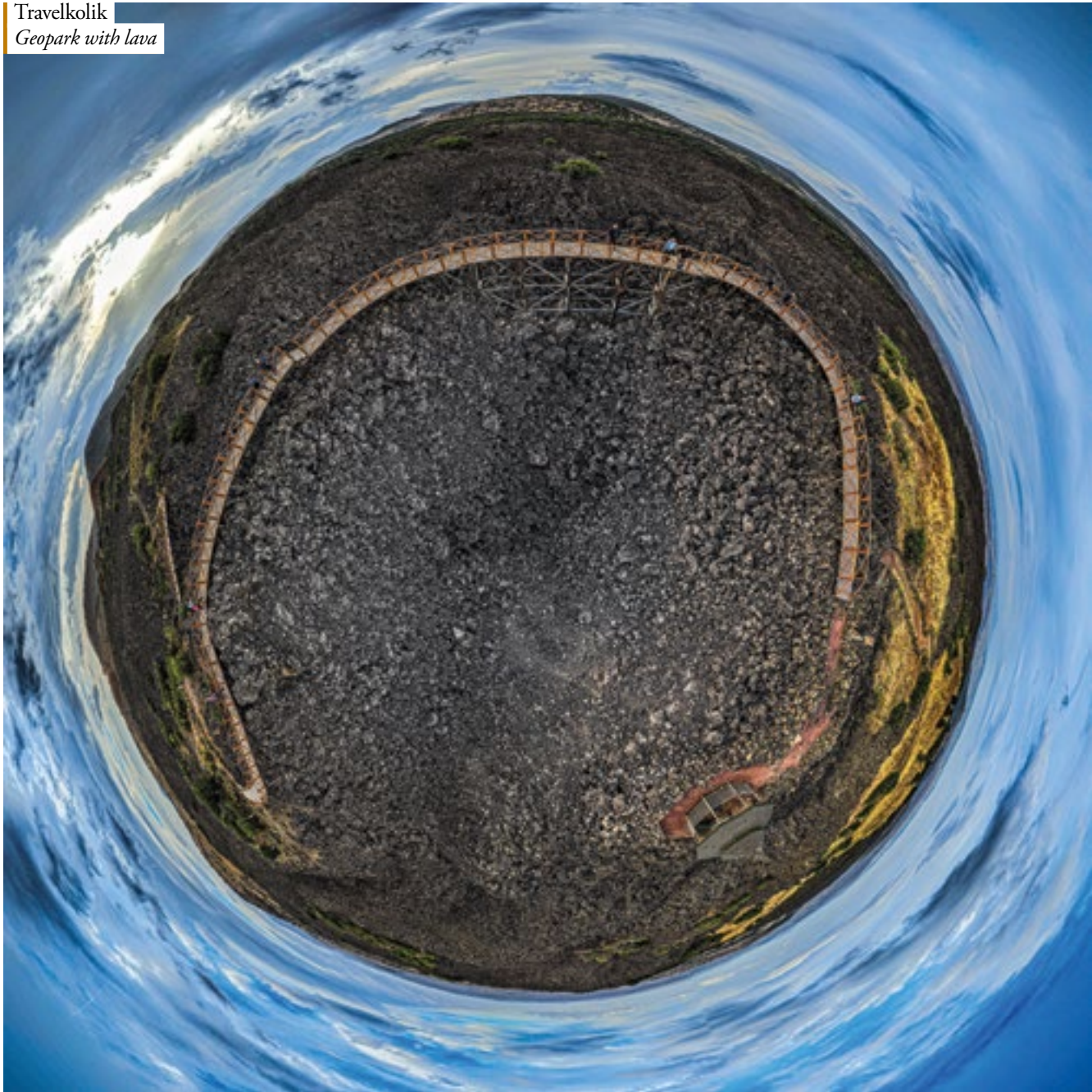


Nicolò Masini
L'alba sul Vulcano

Roberto Dóger Fotografía
Popocatepetl at sunrise



Travelkolik
Geopark with lava



Travelkolik
Sandal Divlit Vulcano





Thibaut Fleuret
Taranaki

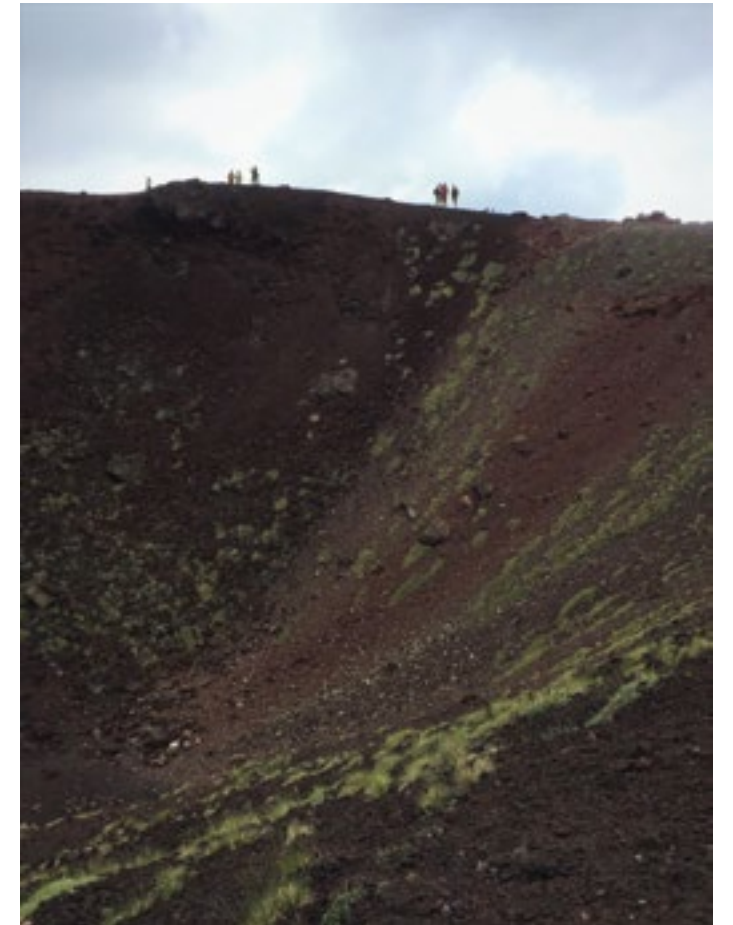


Thibaut Fleuret
Pompei



Thibaut Fleuret
Maungawhau







Renzo Schiratti
Il Pignarol



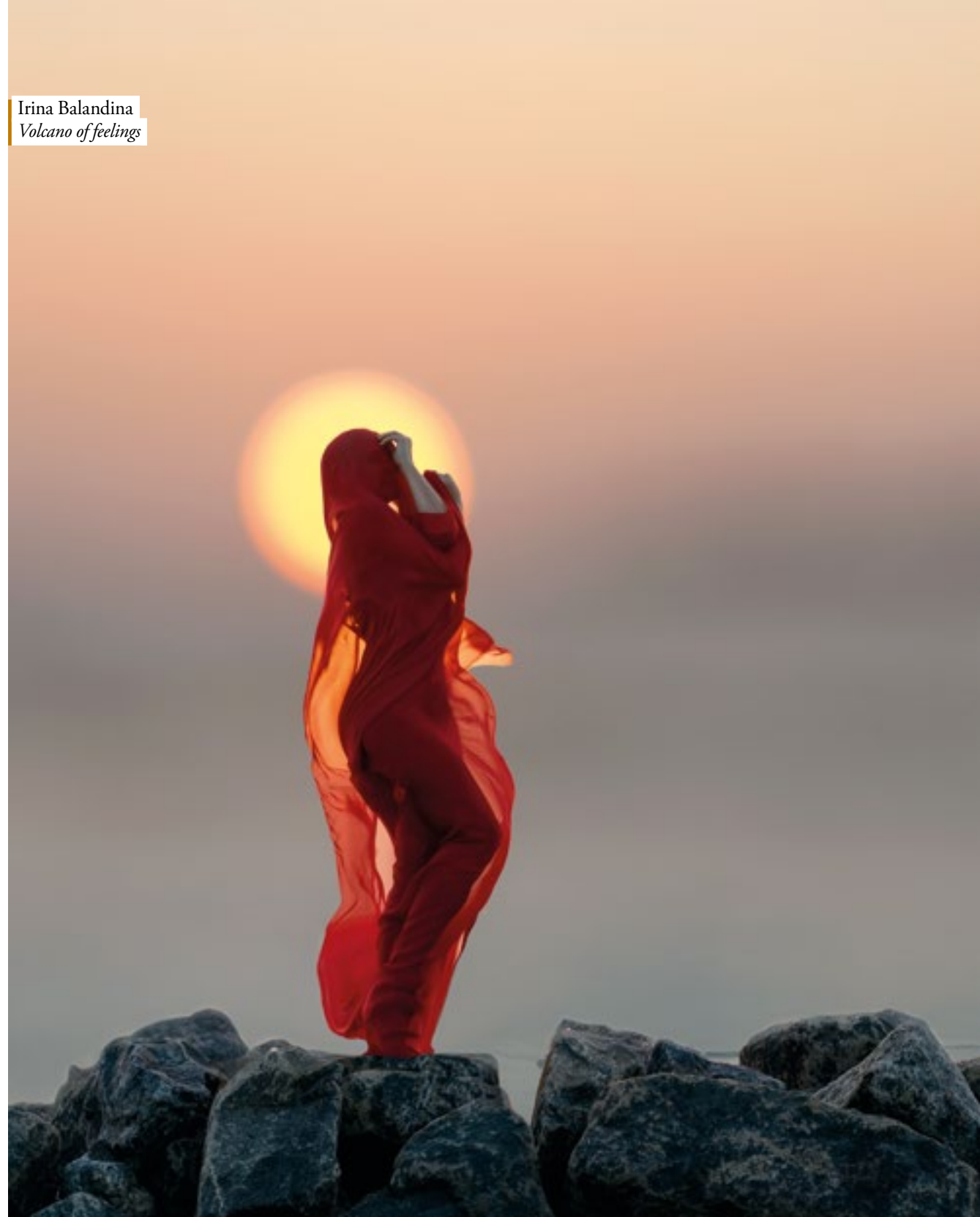
Andrea Trabucco
Cumbre Vieja (Isola di La Palma)



Jean-Paul Soujol Benedetti
La Forge



Irina Balandina
Volcano of feelings



Anestis Kornezos
The fire god





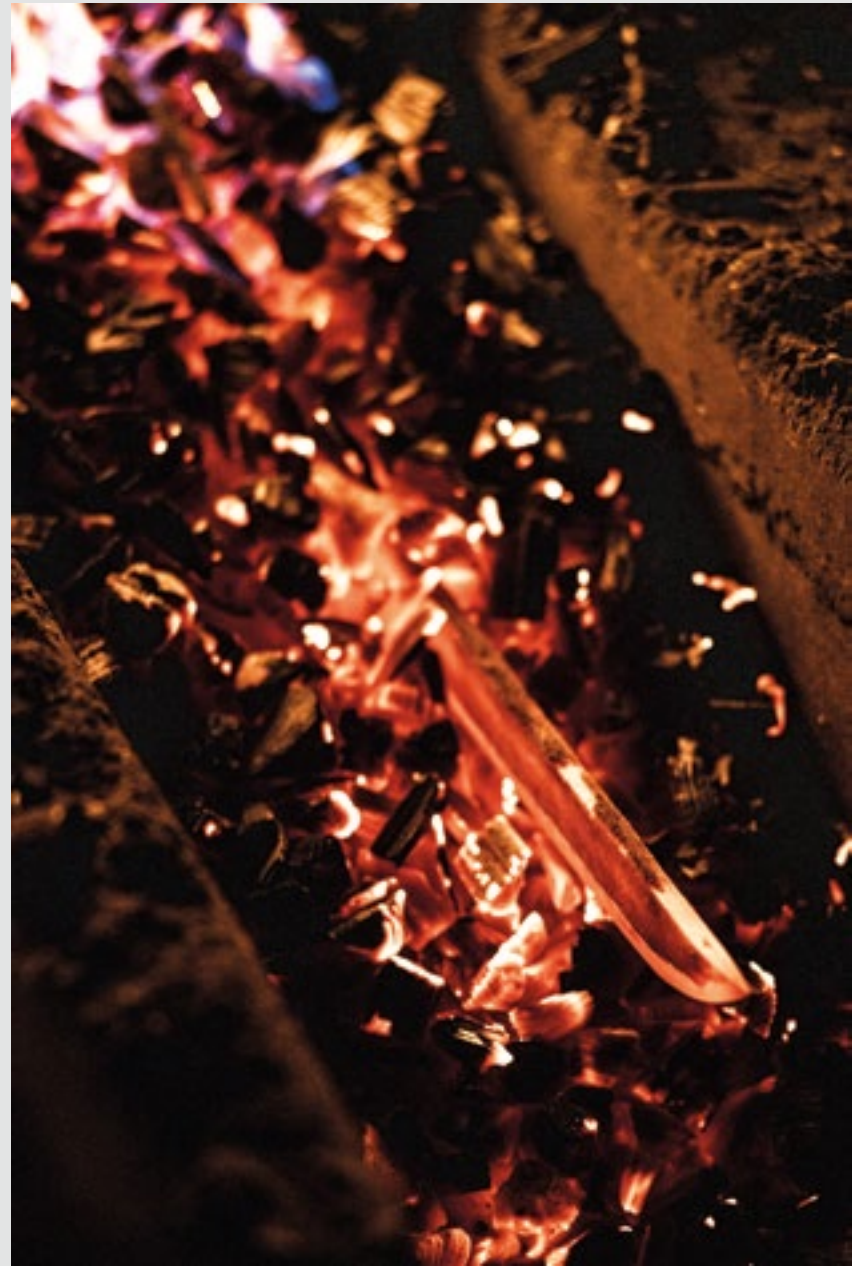


YAKI-IRE

SHOHEI YOKOYAMA

The final annealing process can make or break the sword, which has been pounded into shape for the past three days. The sword smith gives his utmost attention to the flame and the glowing steel. A slight misjudgement can result in drastic alteration to the final product. Only with his experience and instinct as guides, the man battles the intense heat and the pressure of the tradition.







IL CAMMINO DELLA VITA

ROBERTO CARLON

In this project, through more conceptual photography, I tried, using lit matches, as a metaphor for our life: from birth to the creation of a family up to aging and the end of life. Perhaps the ending is a little sad (fire which “embodies both positive and destructive power”), but the path of our lives can be full of serene and happy moments, where fire represents the vitality of the human being.





Creazione della famiglia



La famiglia cresce



La fine

*La nascita e la morte
di un amore*





*L'amore che
ti spezza il cuore*



Vita spezzata



Principio e fine



| *Vite finite*

| *Vite consumate*



| *Vecchia coppia*





Peter Wach
*IISG Steel No 1 Steel Producing Building
Pollution Control Device September 2002*



Nikolay Schegolev
A powerful start

Oliver Gargan
Fire starter



Walter Fogel
Fire spout





Paolo Maschio
The gathering



Paolo Maschio
End of the celebrations



Nicola Smaldore
I fuochi di San Giuseppe



Nicola Smaldore
I fuochi di San Giuseppe



Georg Worecki
Burgbrennen



Georg Worecki
Burgbrennen



Georg Worecki
Burgbrennen



Georg Worecki
Burgbrennen





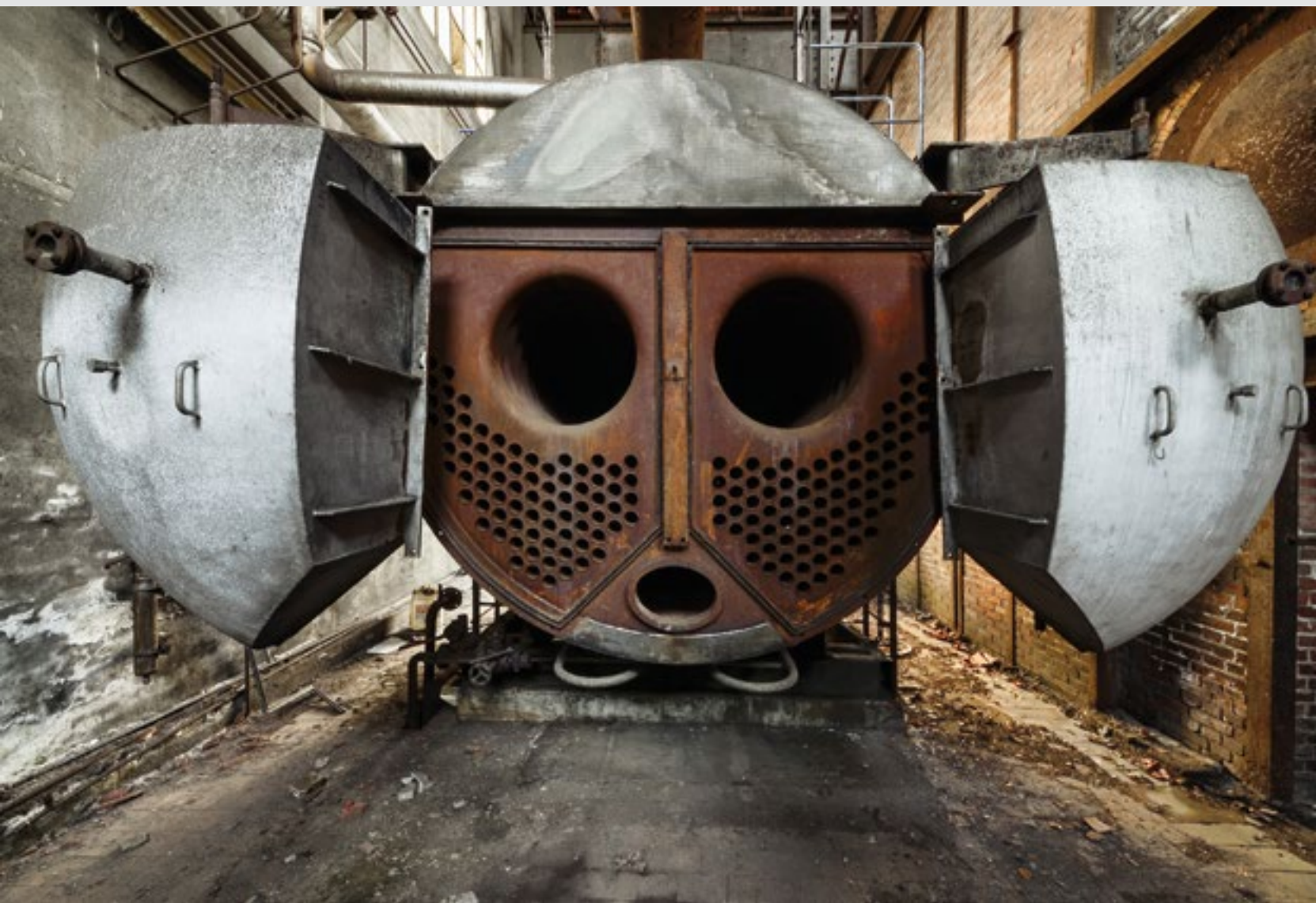
SOFT MACHINE

NICOLA BERTELLOTTI

The architect Peter Davey defined Soft Machine as those constructions that, while being based on the most advanced high-tech, have soft characteristics, meaning qualities that are not only materially mechanical but also culturally and aesthetically expressive. I have tried to give a visual representation of this concept by photographing sites of industrial archaeology throughout Europe.

I wouldn't be surprised if, in a not-too-distant society that has overcome the current sad situation of conflict between poverty and consumerism, between progress and tradition, there could be, on a generalized level and not just reserved for small elites, that balance between invention and design, between seriality and uniqueness. This balance could offer the future city the dominance of the imaginary over the purely "building," which once existed even at the expense of the absolute functionality and economy of every building.

Perhaps only in the ruins, in the remnants of structures now returned to almost vegetative conditions, will it be possible to rediscover the charm of an "architectural imagination," meaning that mythopoetic quality that was present in many great constructions of antiquity.







THE VESSEL OF ODYSSEUS

FOIVOS STAMPOLIADIS

At the time of Odysseus, the vessels were wooden. However, if they were metal this would be the surface of his vessel after 10 years of struggling to return to Ithaca.











Claudio Rizzini
Untitled



Olga Arune
Symmetry



Claudio Rizzini
Chiedilo alla polvere



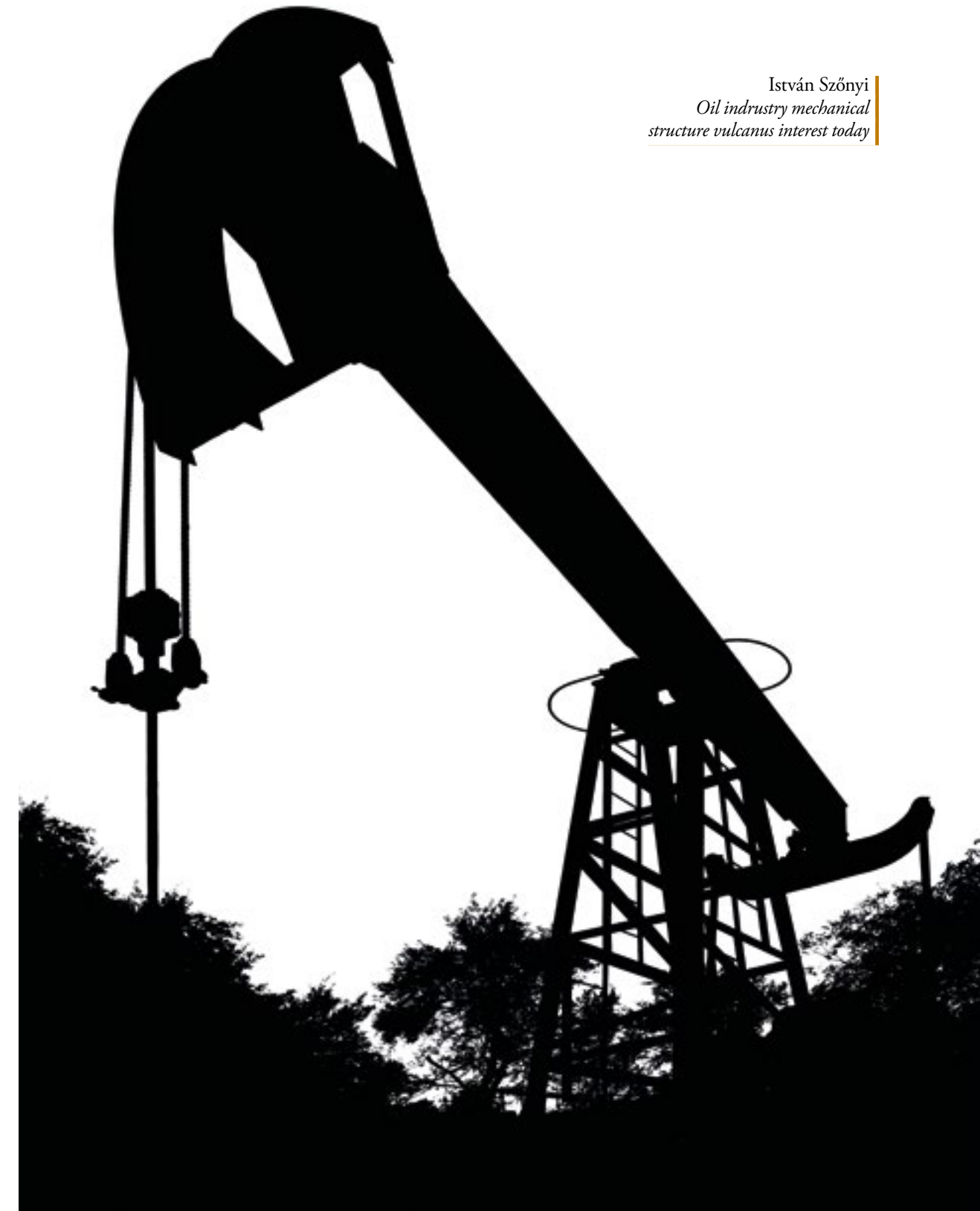
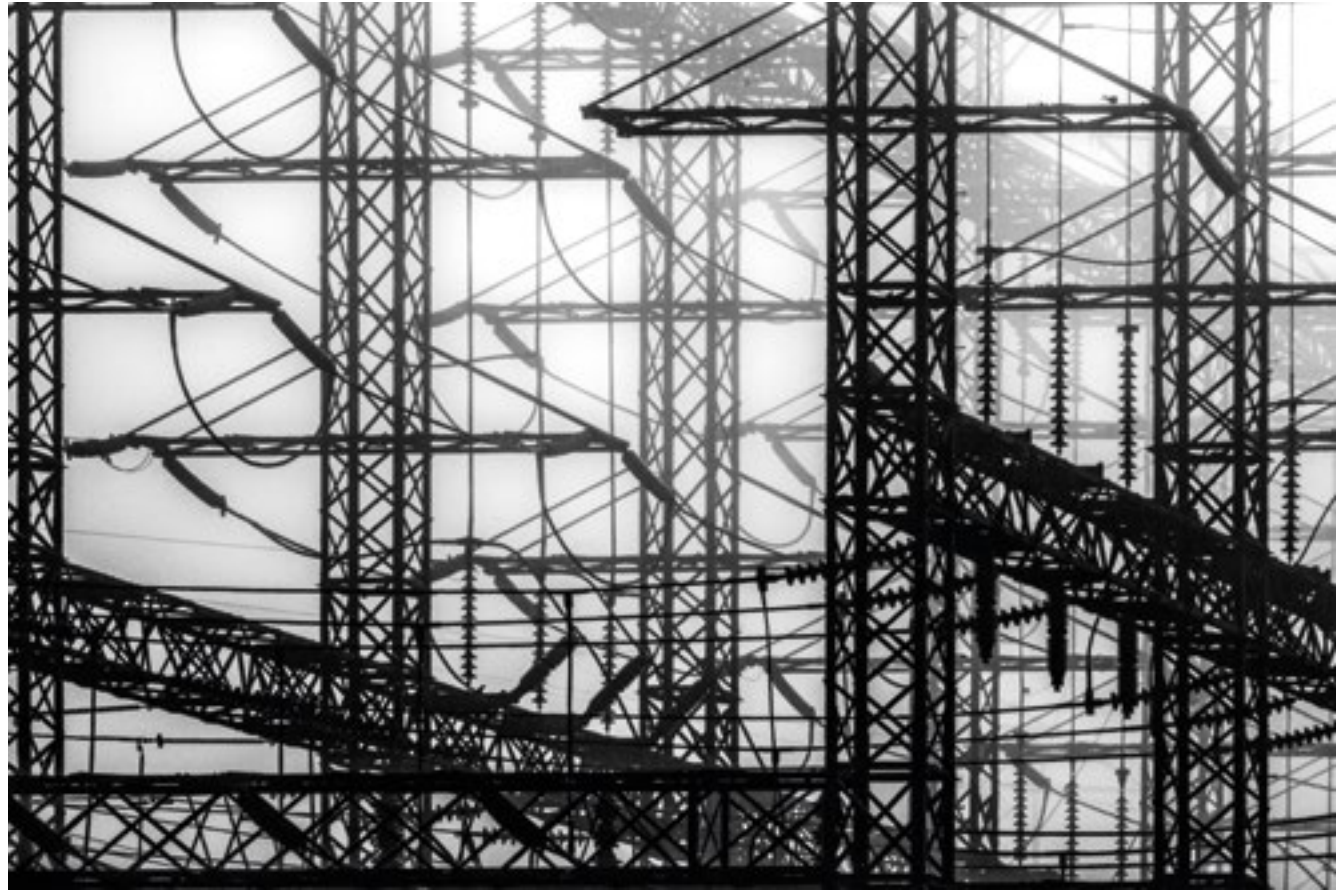
Renzo Schiratti
Il fuoco scolpisce a modo suo

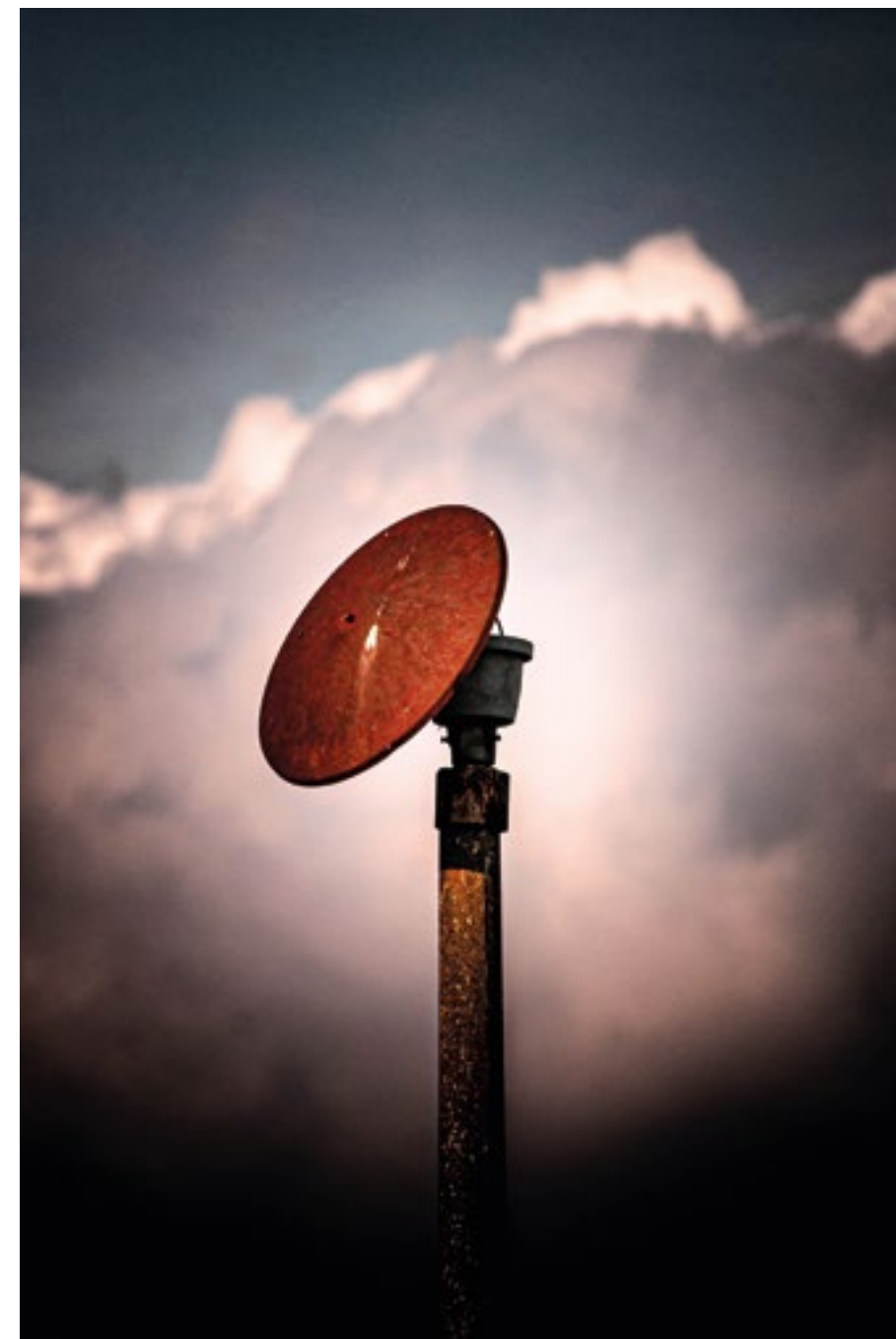
Stéphane Louis
Bethlehem Blast Furnace #2



Peter Wach
*Blast Furnace C6 LTV Steel,
May 1994*





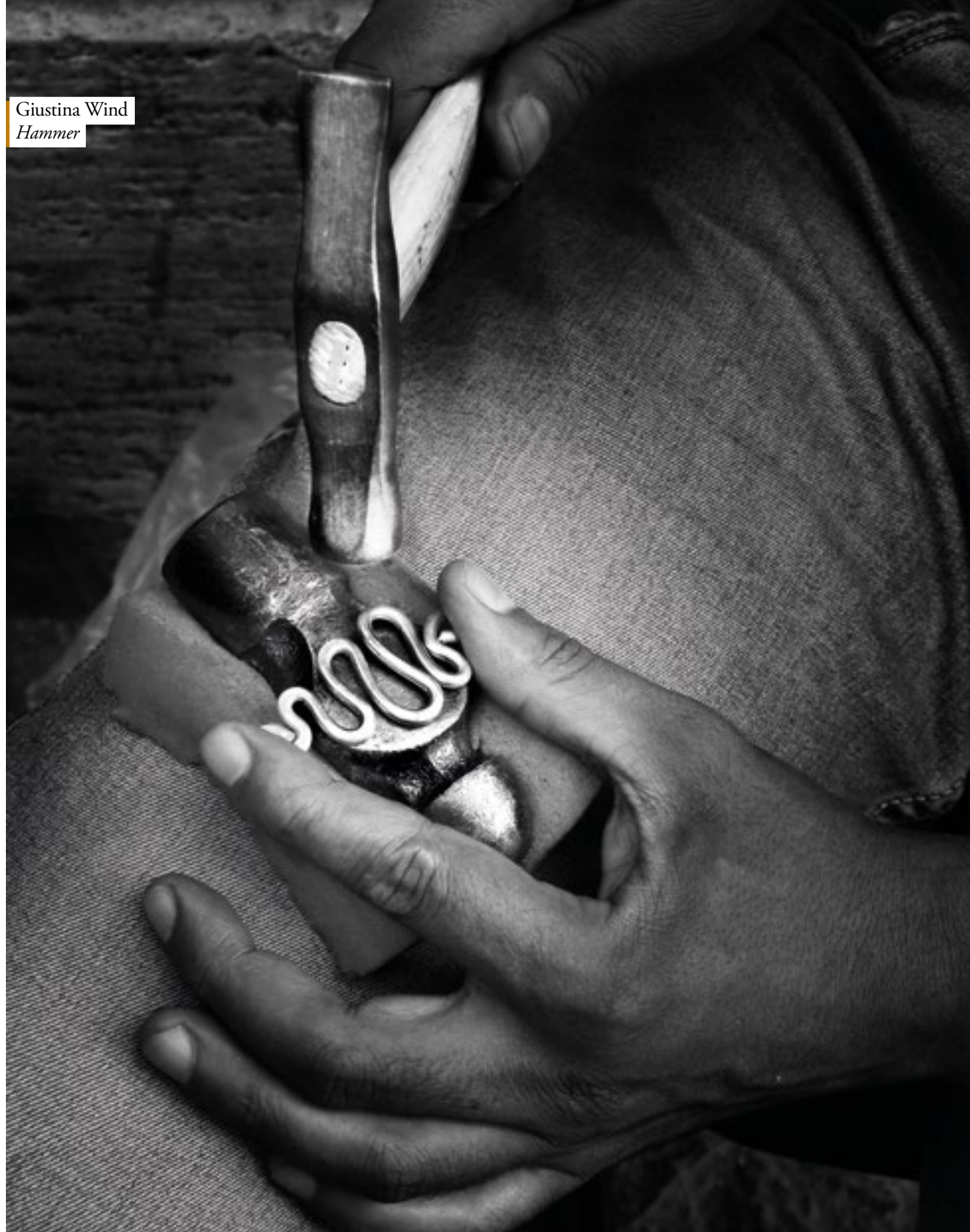








Giustina Wind
Hammer



Ilaria Tassini
Artigianato umano



Giulia Cagnelli
Burning Pottery



Giustina Wind
Hephaistos



Bekir Yesiltas
Casting Master



Cristiano Calvi
Untitled



Cristina Morettini
Fusione

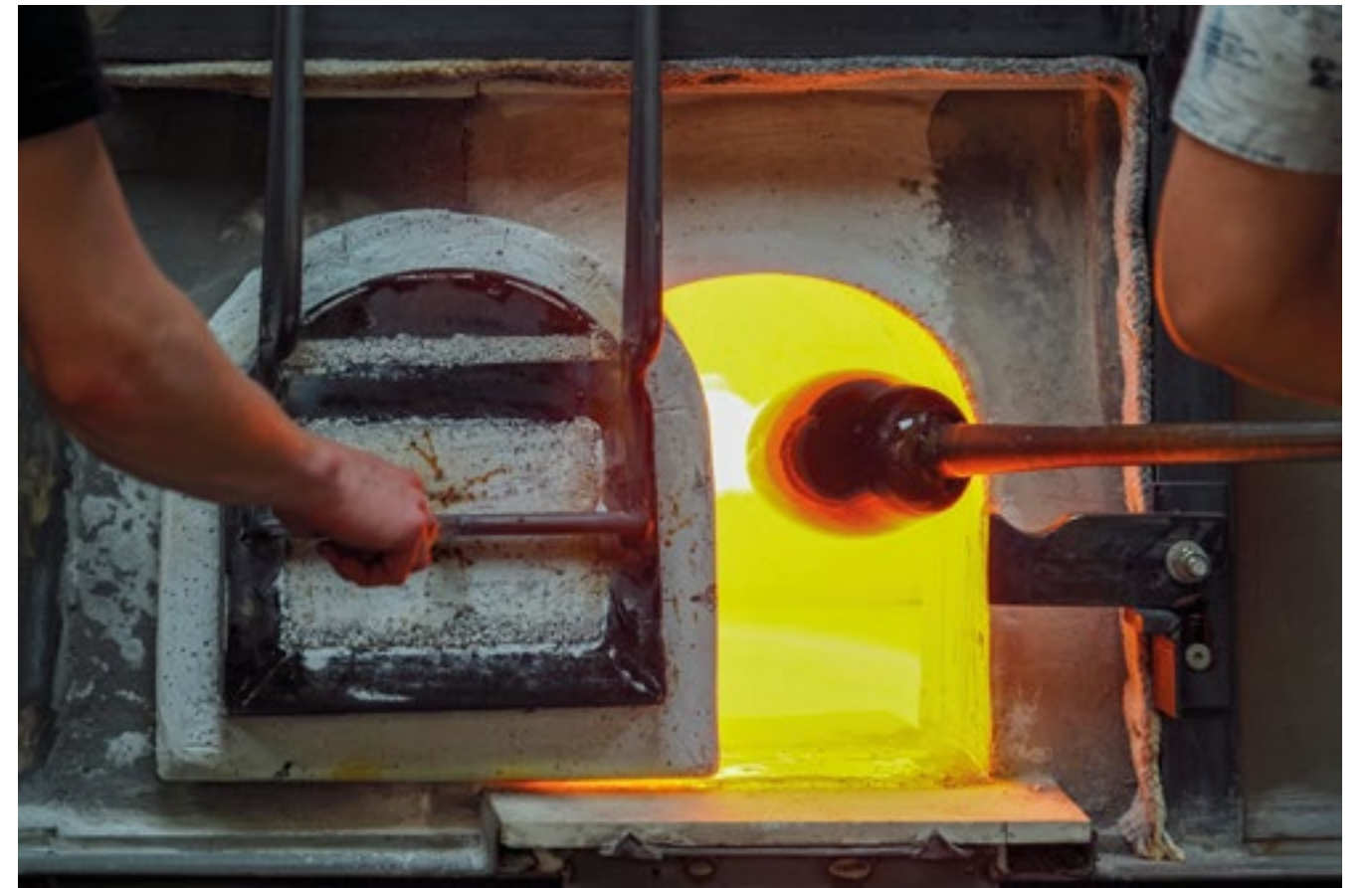


Fabrizio Franzin
Vulcano



Pia Parolin
Untitled

Pia Parolin
Untitled





Toni Spagone
Tra ferro e fuoco



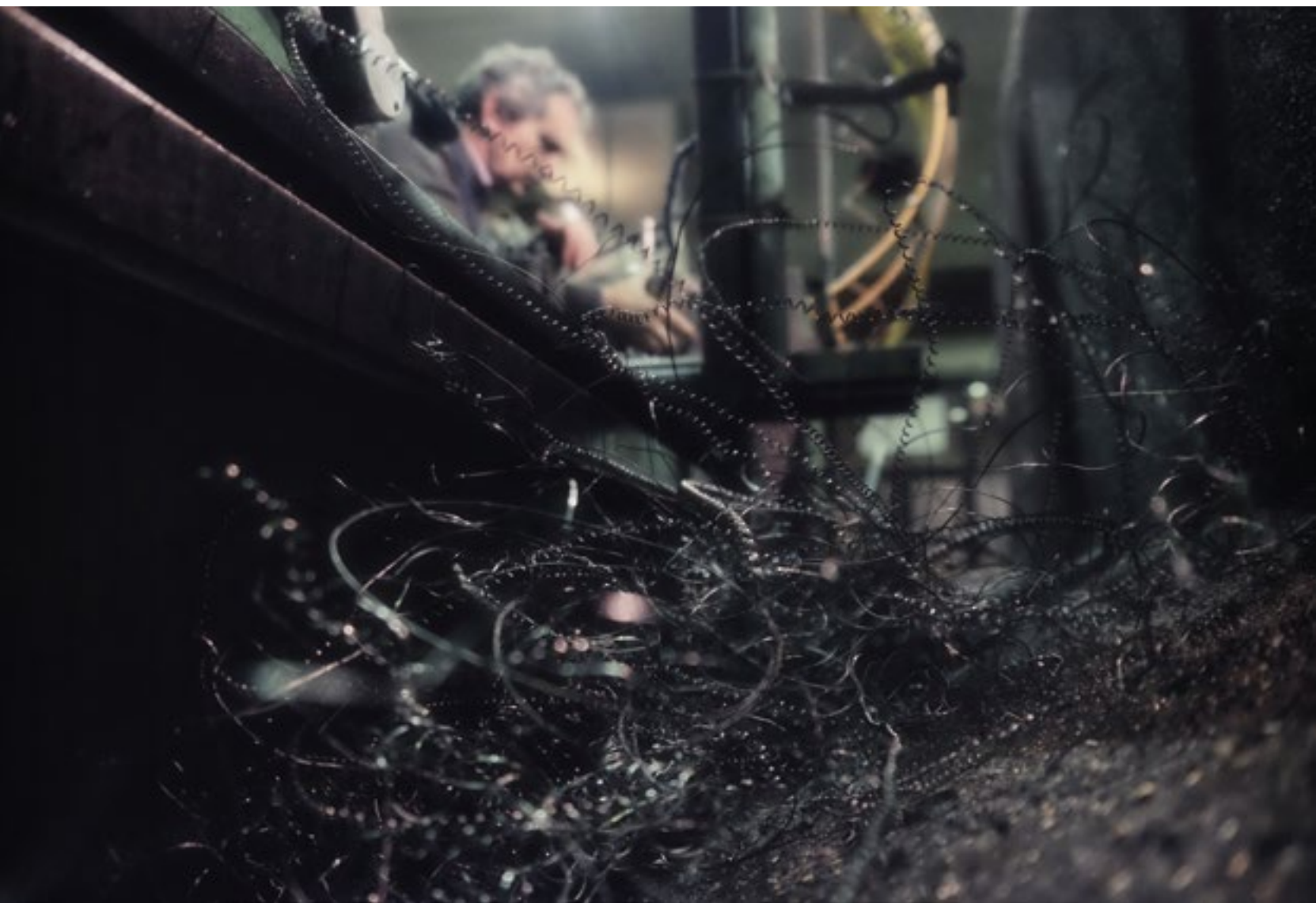
Kirill Nikitin
Blacksmiths workshop



Luigi D'Aponte
Atto di creazione



Renzo Schiratti
Il fuoco che salda



Ita Kovač
Untitled



Elena Santucci
Firefish



Immacolata Giordano
Fire



Massimiliano Costantini
Il soffiatore di vetro



Nikolay Schegolev
Welder Muxim

Lidija Jevremovic
Artist and his work



Luca Menotti
Vulcan



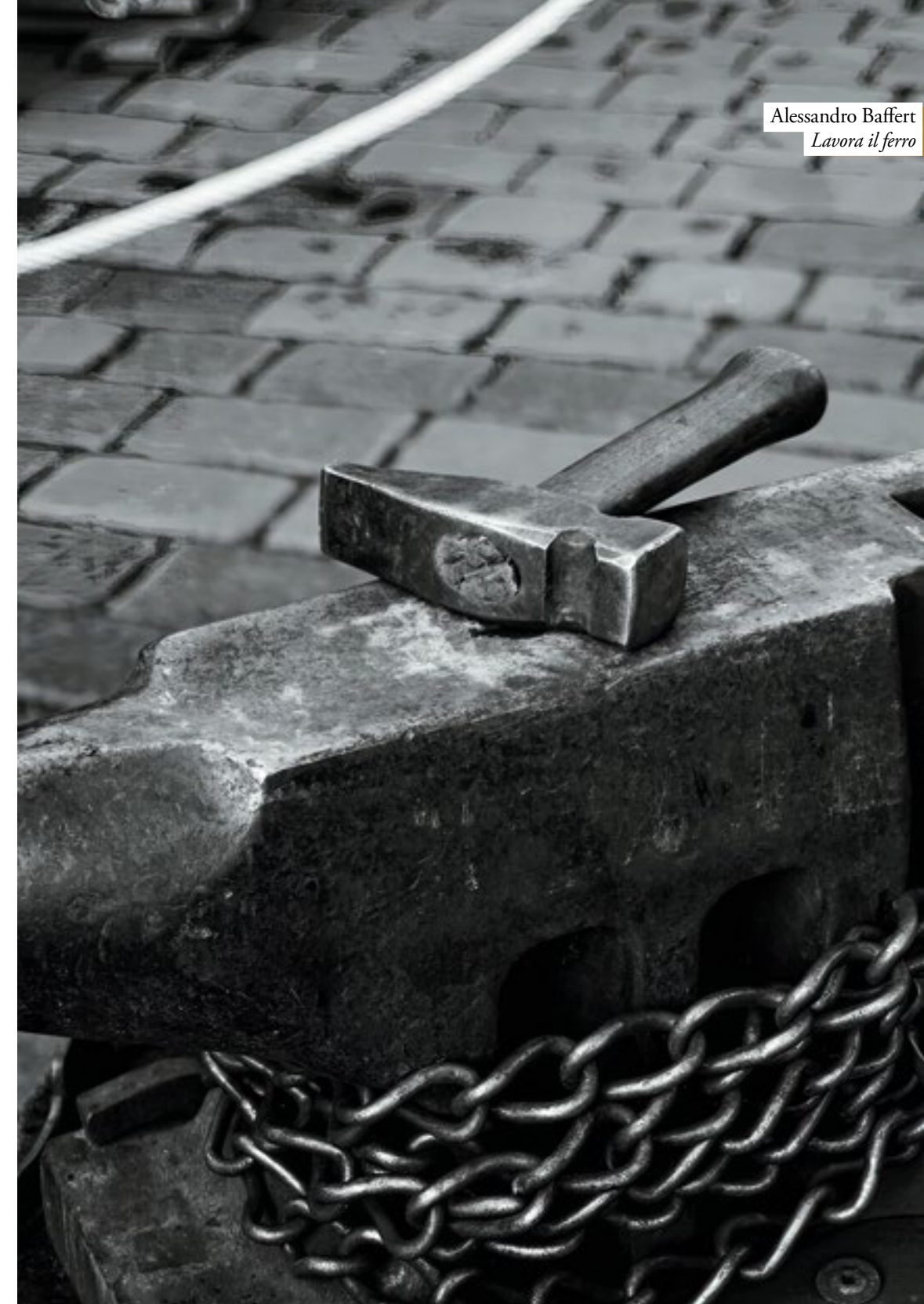
Maurizio Zanetti
Vetraio a Murano



Georg Worecki
Farrier II



Alessandro Baffert
Lavora il ferro





Gular Abbasova "Guliko"
Tinsmith



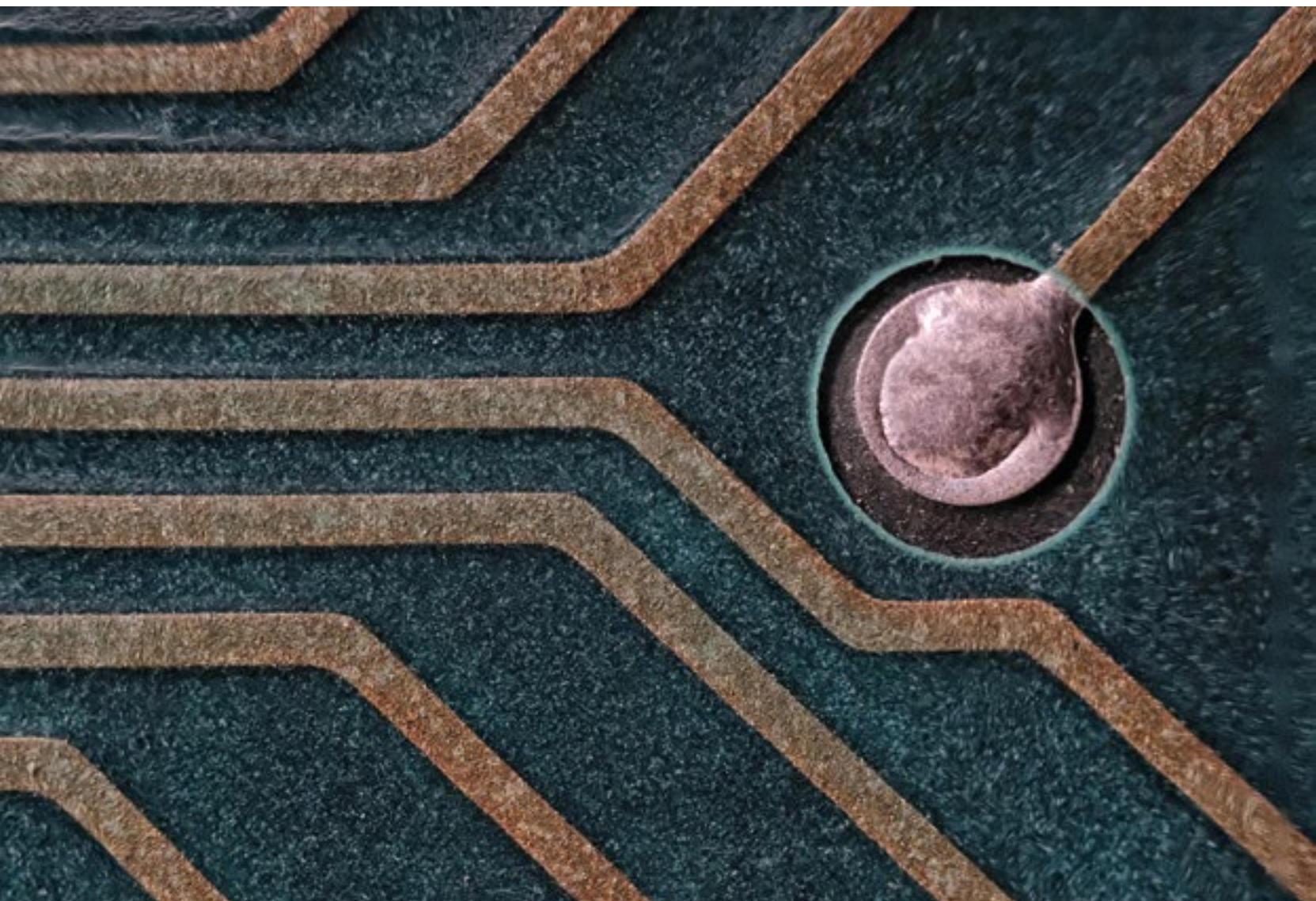
Ruggero Barberi
Carlo De Meo

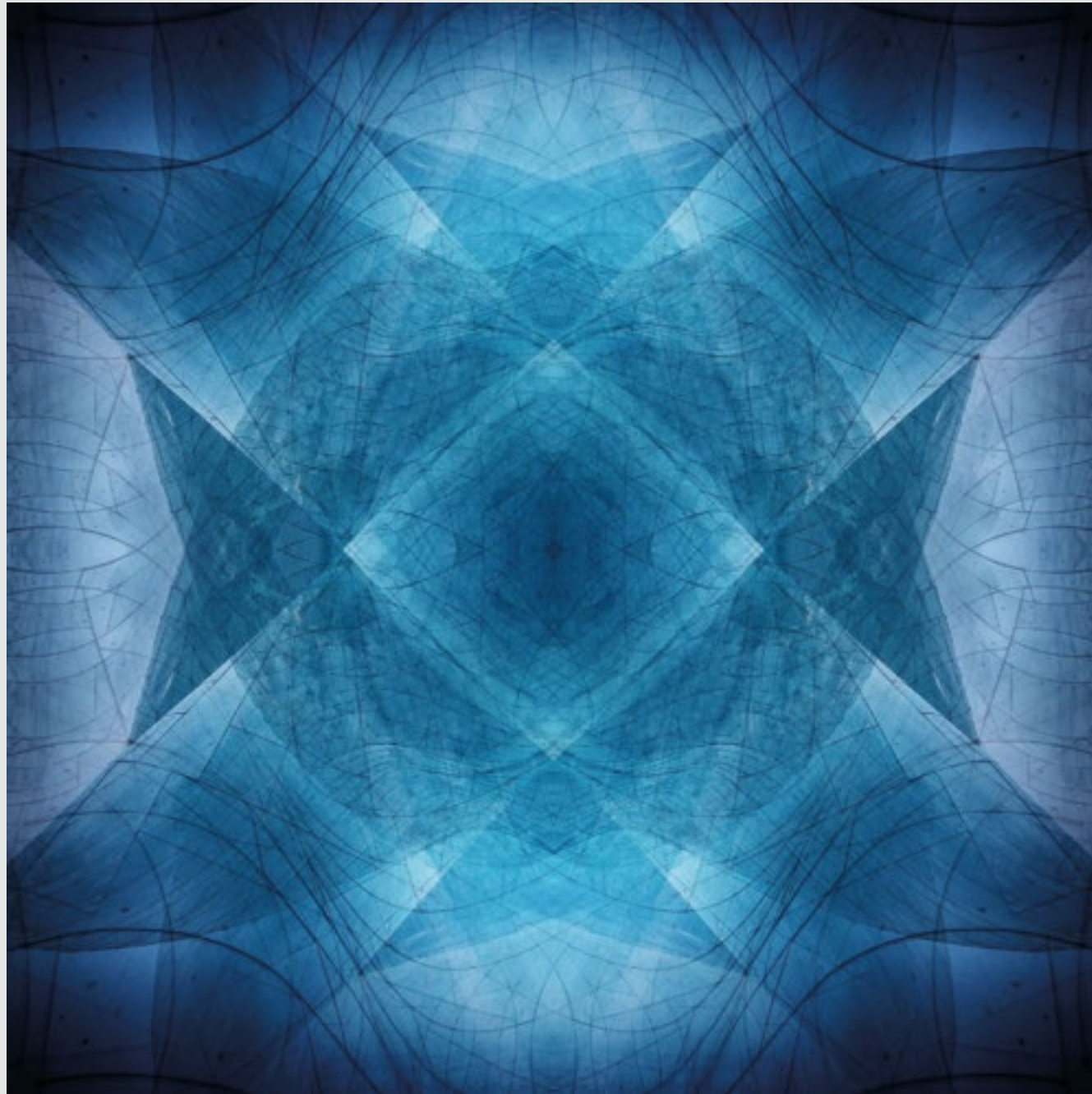


Sven Delaye
The knife grinder









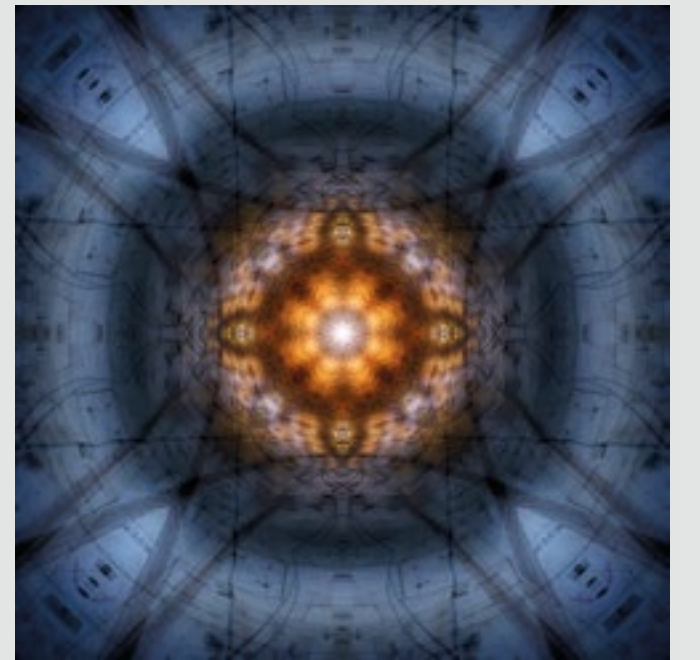
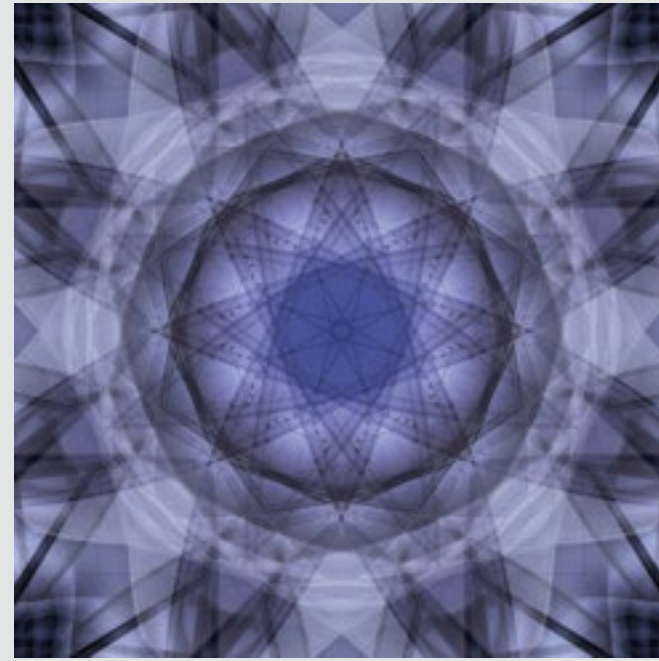
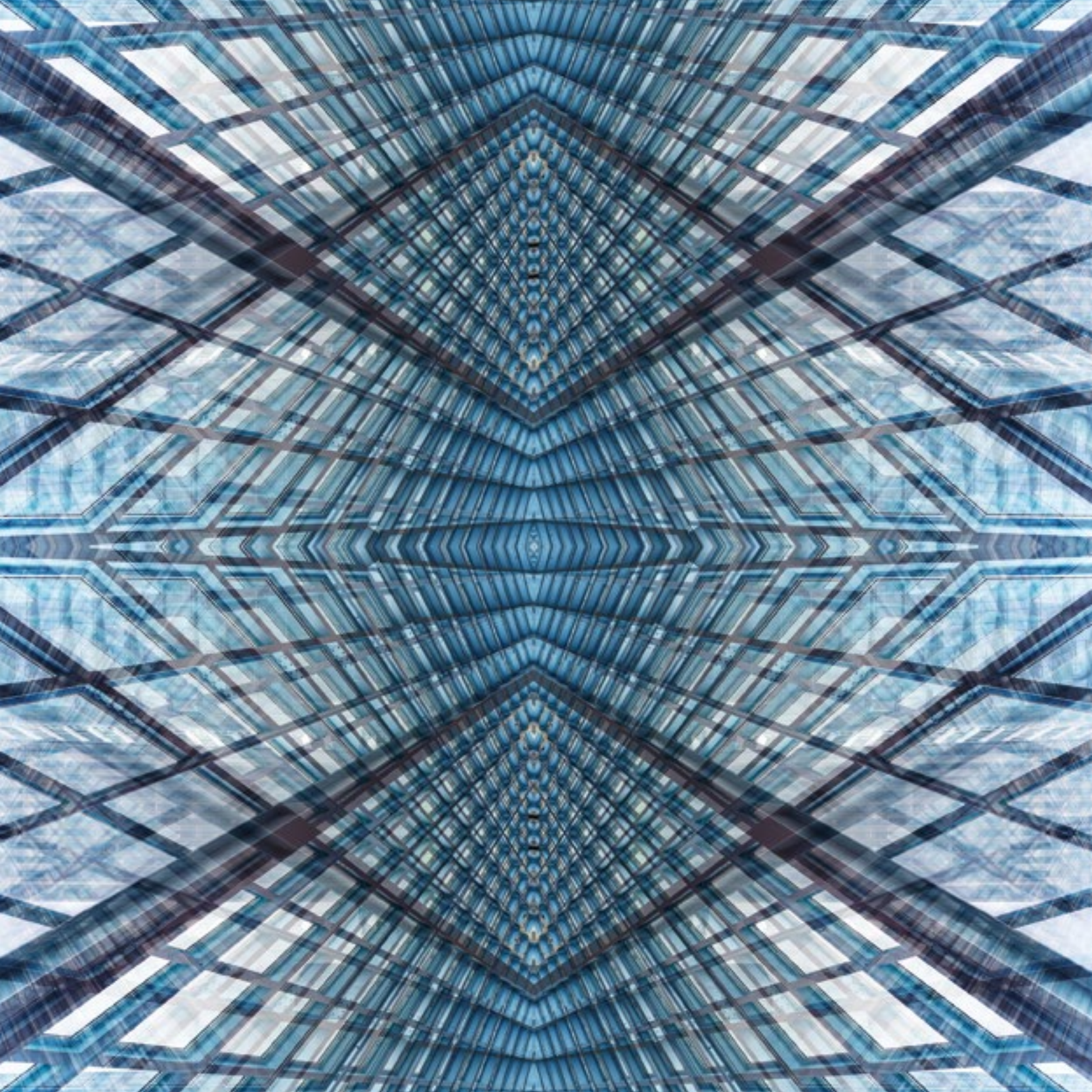
ARCHITECTURAL MANDALAS

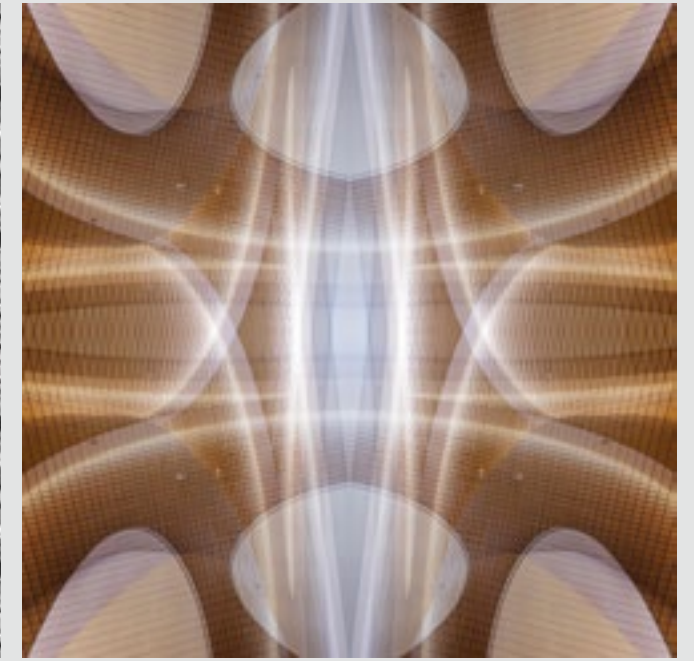
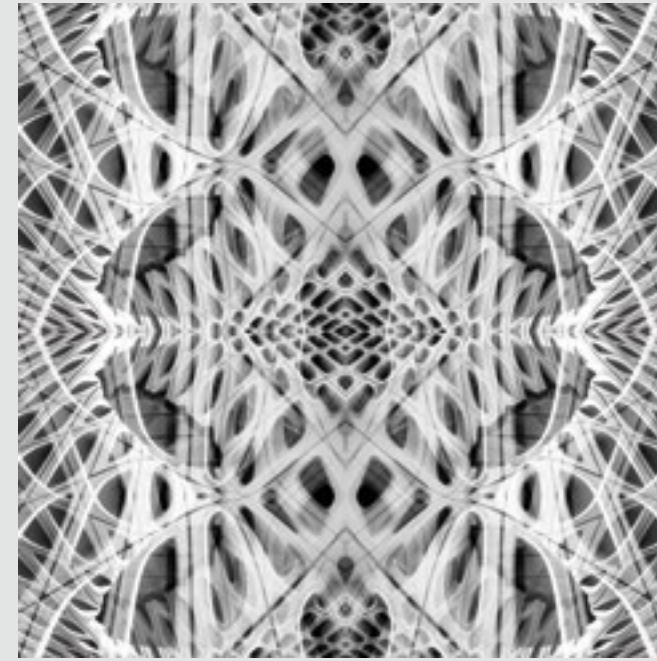
PYGMALION KARATZAS

'Architectural Mandalas' is a series inspired by the traditional mandalas' geometric configurations. The images have - as a starting point - an architectural detail from commissioned projects which are then deconstructed and manipulated to reach mesmerising geometric abstractions.

In spiritual traditions, mandalas have been used as a guiding tool for focusing attention to aid meditation or for establishing a sacred space in induced trance. In Eastern religions like Hinduism and Buddhism, cosmic symbols and sacred geometry are layered upon each other to represent maps of a spiritual journey and the archetypal relationship between the outer world (macrocosm) and man's inner world (microcosm). As such they are visualisations of the inner-outer synthesis of human consciousness.

Contemporary architecture broke free from the constraints of Euclidean geometry and disassociated itself from the politically-charged sacred geometry, while at the same time finding inspiration and new interpretations in cosmogenic architecture, biomimicry and biophilia. In my architectural formative years those two strata have co-developed in an irregular tapestry of content creation and consumption rarely finding moments of reconciliation. Working on the creation of this series, gave me the feeling that these two worlds that externally and internally have spend years drifting in opposite directions have found unifying holons to co-exist. Visual manifestations of inner-outer synthesis concurrently personal and transpersonal.











Alex Premoli
Chiesa Incoronata di Lodi



Luca Menotti
Mechanism



Valentina D'Alia
Double turn

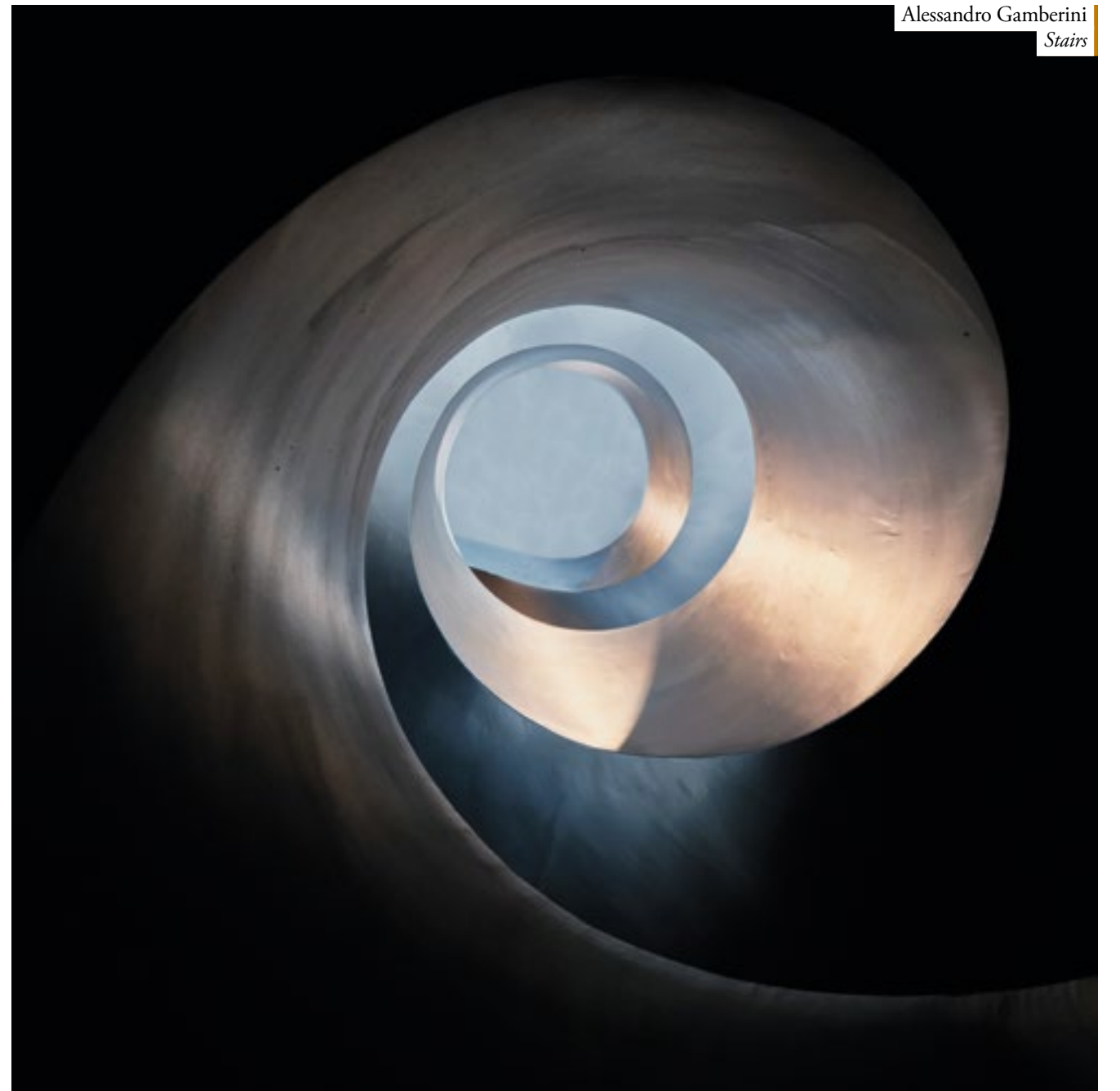


Stefania Grasso
Geometria di stelle

Alex Premoli
Spiral staircase



Alessandro Gamberini
Stairs

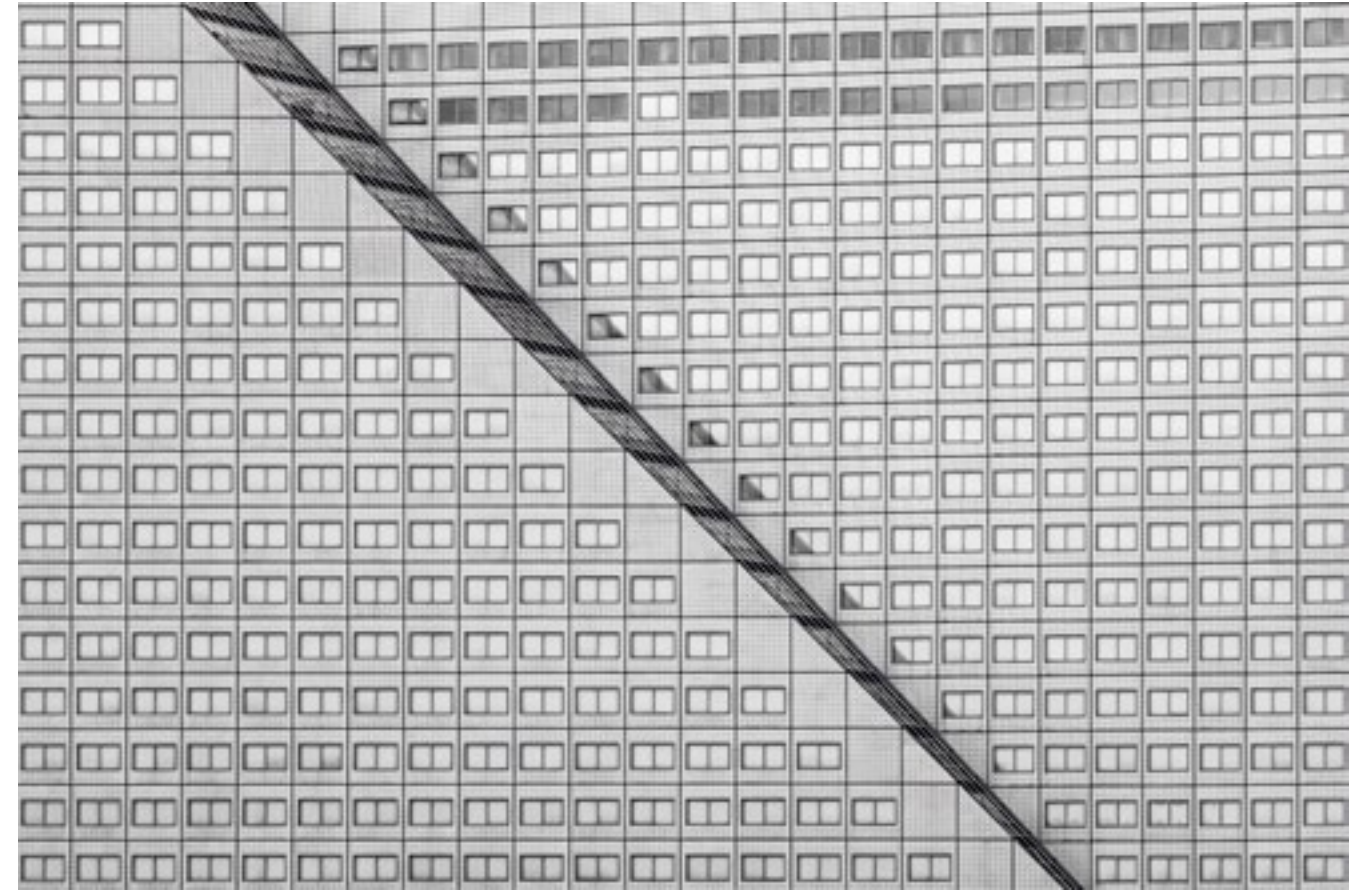


Alex Premoli
Scala del Bramante in bianco e nero

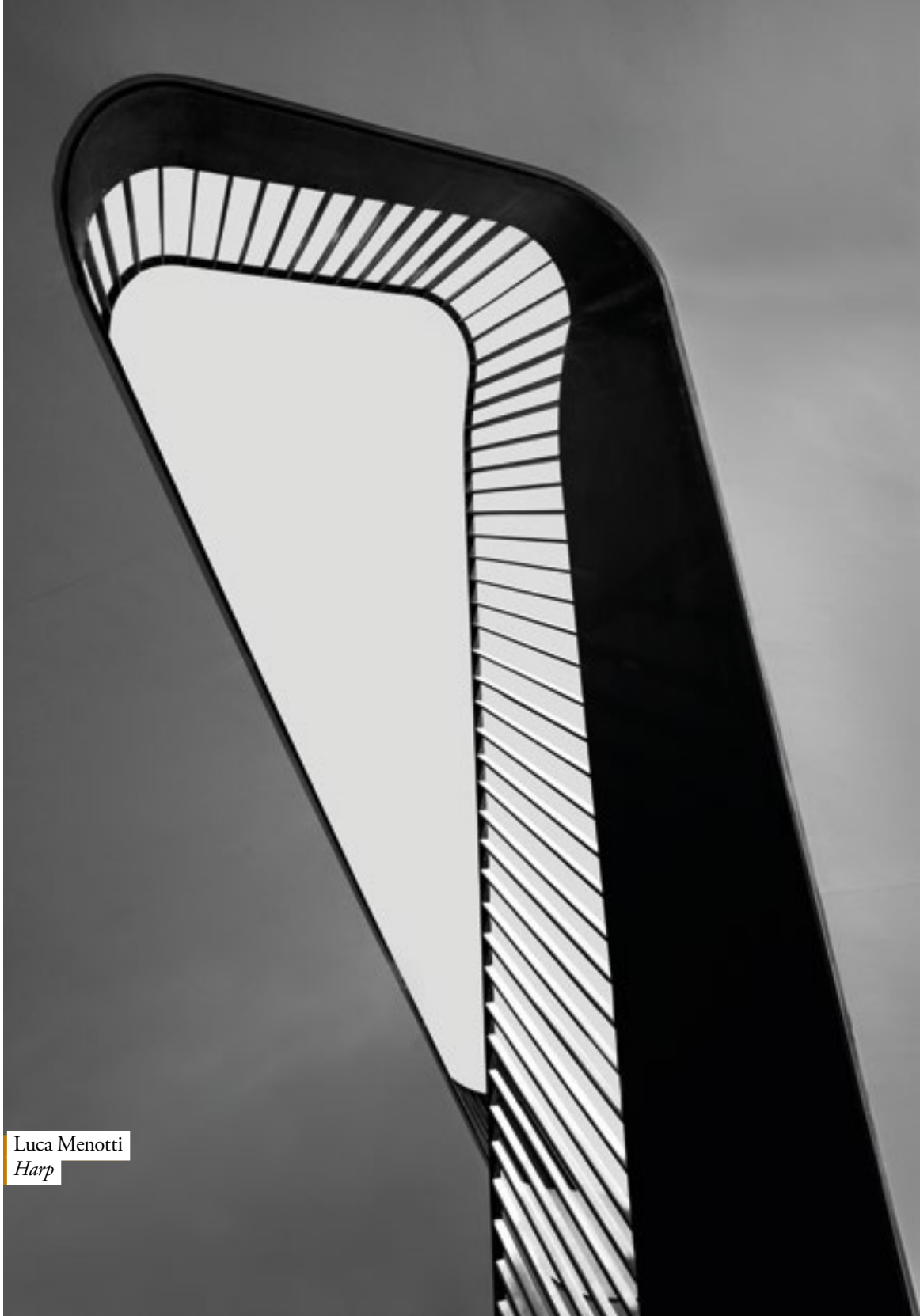


Nurlan Tahiri
Run spiral









Luca Menotti
Harp



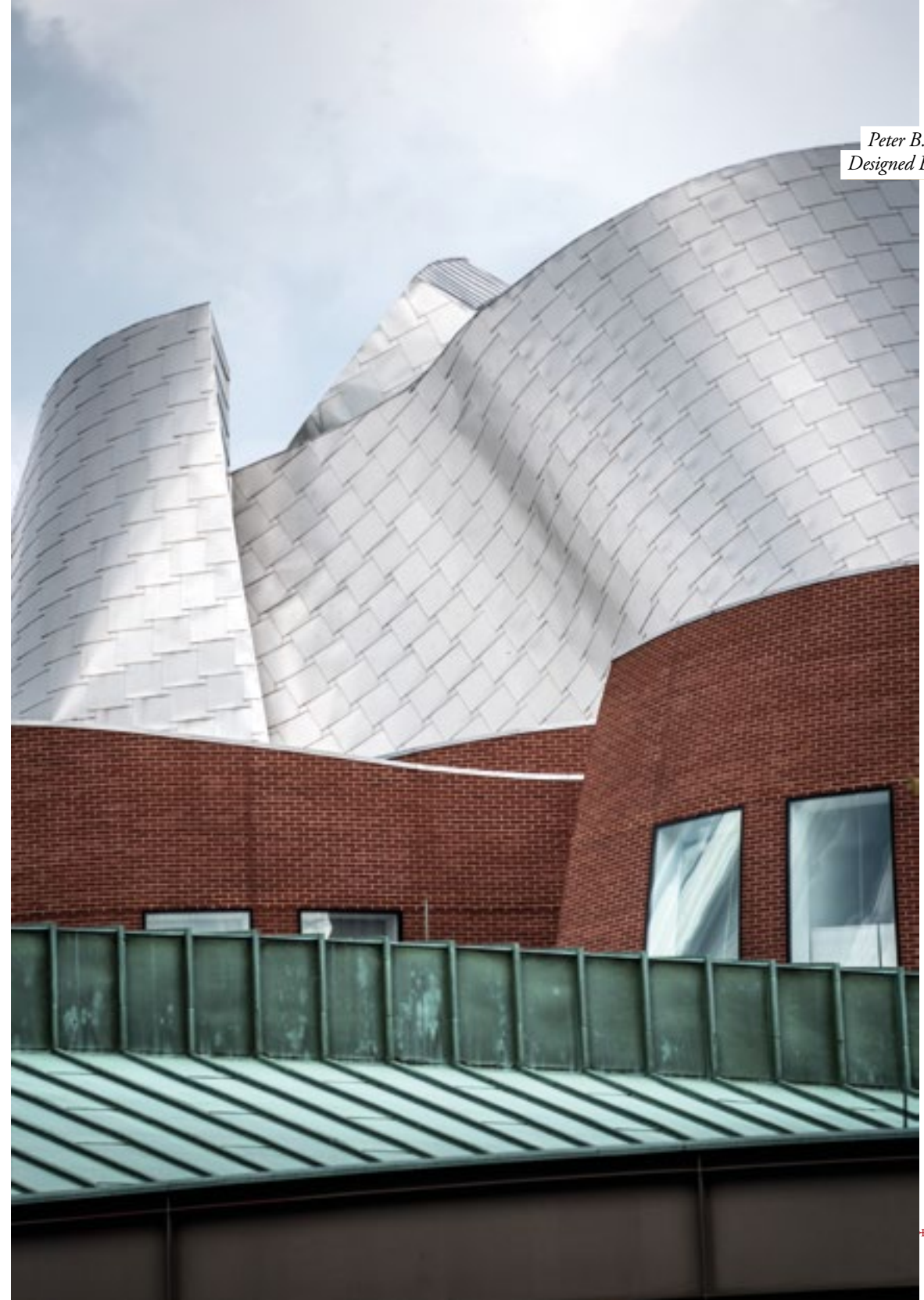
Paula Kajzar
Between the lines

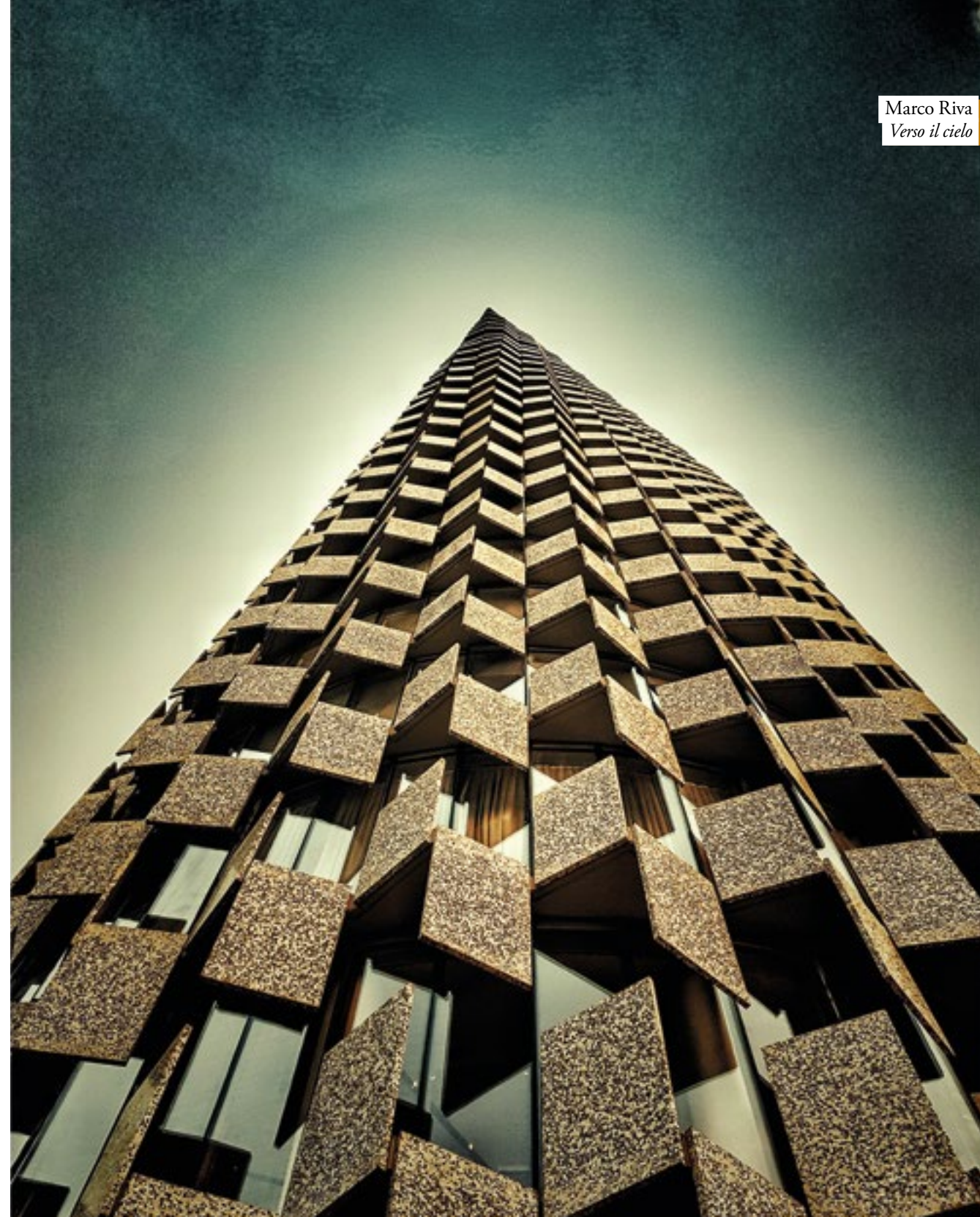
Sophie Décors
A door to Heaven



Valentina D'Alia
Glass and metal









Armando Tinnirello
Pisa



Alex Premoli
Fâr ros di Lignan



Syarafuddin
Unity





Dorota Yamadag
Touch me if you can



Ilaria Tassini
Architetture e cieli - Paris

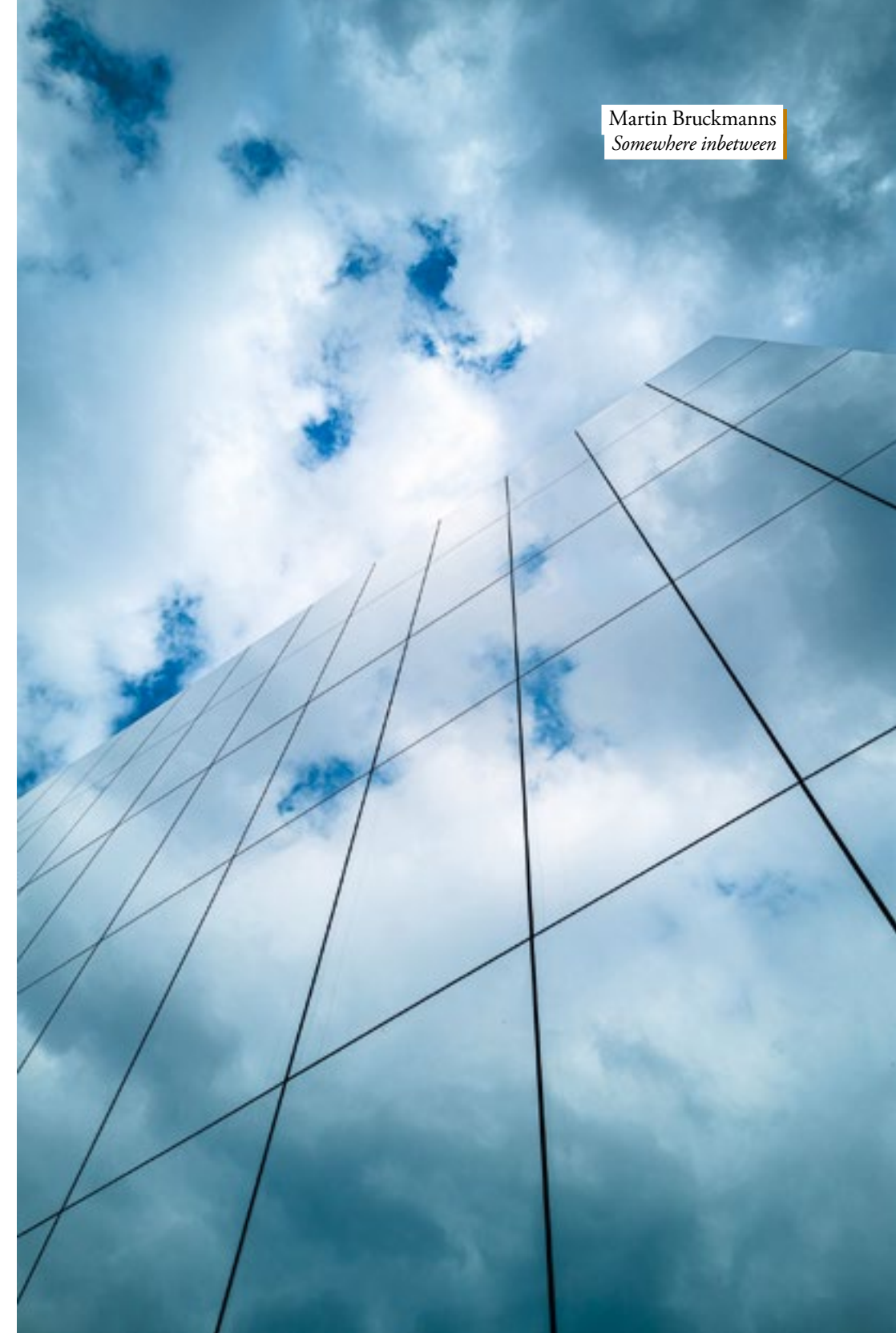


Dorota Yamadag
Playing Jenga



François Gil
The titan









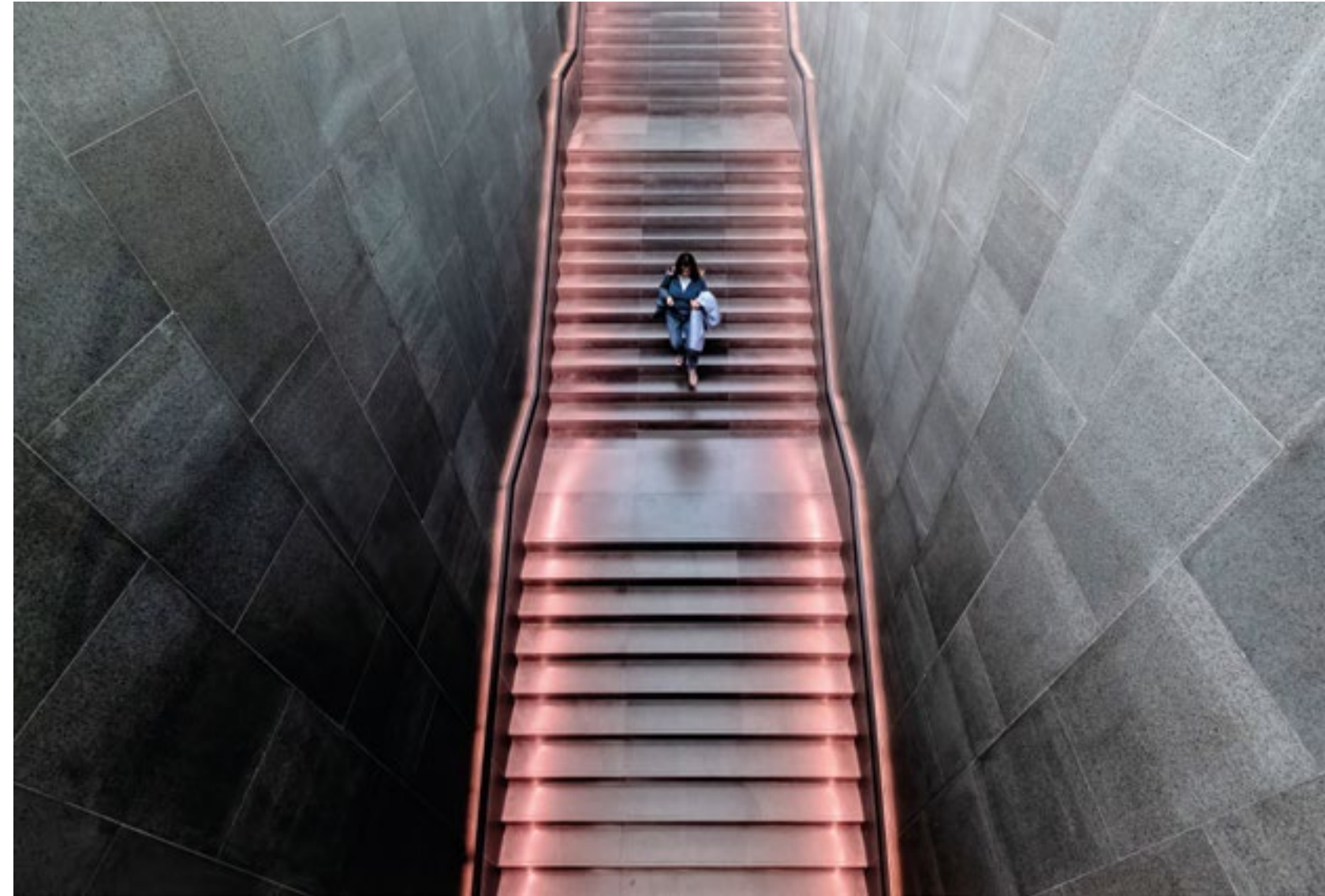
Julie Kotova
Glass and concrete



Lorenzo Rossini
Cemento







Luca Menotti
Dark mosaic



Paula Kajzar
Between the lines



Paula Kajzar
Between the lines





URANUS



With Uranus we are dealing with a *primaeval* power, connected with cosmogonic myths. In Hesiod's *Theogony* (8th century B.C.), it is told that four powers existed in the beginning, Chaos (i.e. empty space), Gaia (the Earth), the dark underground abyss called Tartarus, and Eros, the god who generates the impulse to reproduce. The immense Gaia gave birth to Uranus, the starry sky, whose enormous dimensions were able to envelop her completely. Uranus lay with his own mother, begetting a long series of sons, called Titans, including Ocean, Hyperion father of the Sun, Japetus, Rhea, Mnemosyne, Themis, Chronos; later Gaia begat again to Uranus the three Cyclopes Brontes, Steropes and Arges, and the terrible Hecatoncheires (Kottos, Briareus and Gyges) who each had fifty heads and a hundred arms.

Uranus was a violent god in his amplexions with Gaia and harboured a deep hatred for his children, which he hid, as they were born, deep inside her womb, which was soon burdened with an unbearable weight. Gaia then planned revenge: she built a huge scythe, and turned to her children, asking for help in punishing their father's violence. They were afraid, however, and Kronos alone agreed to take on the task. Gaia had him hiding in ambush in her womb, and the moment Uranus returned to lie on top of her, yearning for intercourse, Kronos leapt out and cut off his genitals, throwing them over his shoulder. The member of Uranus fell into the sea and wandered for a long time on the surface, until it reached the island of Kythera, where from the foam that had gathered around it, Aphrodite Cytherea, the goddess of beauty and love, was born.

Kronos thus became the new king of the cosmos.

One version of the myth has it that the mutilation took place at Cape Drepana (i.e. 'scythe'), located on the island of the Phaeacians, which according to one tradition would even have been Kronos' own scythe, rooted in the sea. In other versions, the emasculation takes place in Sicily, and the drops of Uranus' blood falling on the ground guarantee the island's fertility forever.

A very different story is told by Diodorus Siculus, a historian from the 1st century BC (*Bibliotheca historica*, III 56-7). Uranus was the first king of the Atlantes, a population that lived on the distant shores of the Ocean. Under his guidance, they learned to live in association and moved from a primitive, lawless life to respect for justice and the gods. Uranus taught them how to cultivate the land and store its produce, and above all, thanks to his careful astronomical observations, he was able to foretell many events and make the people understand the movements of the stars, giving rise to the first calendar. After his death, he received divine honours, and in homage to his knowledge of celestial phenomena, his name was given to the vault of heaven, so that he was identified as the ruler of the universe. This narrative responds to Diodorus' desire to recover the ancient myth in a rational key, while retaining a sense of the importance of the powerful influence exerted on men by the contemplation of the immensity of the starry sky.

What is certain is that Uranus for the Greeks remains an atavic and distant god, belonging to a time of violent conflict.

In Greek mythology of historical times, there are no stories about him comparable to those of other gods such as Zeus, Poseidon or Hephaestus.

If the fire of Hephaestus is a source of light and multifaceted photographic inspiration, what about the sky, which cyclically alternates between the flood of daylight and the darkness quilted with infinite lights? How to represent the beauty of the firmament and the never-quenched aspiration of the human being to rise towards it, even at the cost of risking one's own life like the ancient Icarus or modern cosmonauts?

The images in this section of the volume propose various paths, the most direct of which is the representation of the celestial vault, which contains within itself such beauty that it requires no justification. The main subject is the brightest manifestation of the sky that surrounds us, namely the Milky Way to which we ourselves belong, fixed in evocative images by Giustina Wind ('Milky way'), Corinne Doucet ('Cosmos'), Christian Formosa ('Milky way and the carobs'). It was difficult to escape the temptation of taking advantage of the Earth's rotational motion to make the stars draw fantastic luminous circular trajectories with a prolonged pose: the theme is approached by Nurlan Tahirlı ('Bigway') and Alberto Simonetto ('Startrail cittadellese') by making the distant astral drawing interact, with high-impact results, with the signs of human presence, marking the distance, and at the same time the profound contact, between the two dimensions.

In this dimension, the portfolio 'The Poetics of the Sky' by Teresa Molinaro deserves special mention. In it, the author boldly opts for black and white in search of fascinating astral spectacles of light and beauty. Equally exciting are the images in the portfolio 'Astro Meteora' by Pygmalion Karatzas, in which the starry background enhances the breathtaking beauty of an exceptional landscape such as that of the Meteors in Thessaly, where the astonishing Orthodox monasteries built between the 13th and 14th centuries stand out against the mighty rock formations, inspiring a meditation on the very origins of life.

No less powerful than the representation of the night sky is that of the overpowering light of the daytime sky, which, through a happy effect of refraction of the sun's rays, surrounds us with a blue that alone fills us with gratitude for the world in which we live. The joy of the pure colour of the sky, contrasting with the ochre tones of a desert region, animates the images of Andrea Gluckman ('Sky over Wadi El Hitan' and 'Empty Horizon'), while in 'Blue' by Marco Riva, the blue sky forms one with the equally intense colour of the sea. The meeting of sky and sea is an inexhaustible photographic theme, explored in the most delicate chromatic gradations by Yuri Pritisk ('Untitled', p. 254) and in the strong contrasts of an intense black and white by Irene Lorget ('Alone before Infinity' and 'Before the Storm').

The same applies to the relationship between sky and earth, which meet in the photos of Makyra Pierce ('Where land and sky meet') and Yuri Pritisk ('Untitled', p. 282), and often mingle in a play of mirrors involving the waters of rivers and lakes (Bea-

trice Ius, 'Sky in the Mirror', Thibaut Fleuret, 'Taranaki', p. 235, Soroush Khazraeializadeh, 'Mirror', Dorota Yamadag, 'In the Mirror'). Jean-Paul Soujol Benedetti ('Le blé et l'orage') offers a much less appeasing image, in which the black of a stormy sky occupying the upper part of the photo is connected to the golden tones of the part below by the powerful discharge of lightning.

For those who aspire to get closer to the sky, the mountain is a place of choice, and mountain landscapes have largely attracted the interest of photographers in search of Uranus, such as Laura Noè ('Breathing heavily'), Cristina Embil ('Scar'), Francesco Tanferna ('Untitled'), Alessandro Baffert ('Rifugio Sellaries Val Chisone'), Sophie Décors ('Where is the horizon'), Massimiliano Del Bianco ('Uranus'). Masahiro Hiroike, in 'Mt Daysen and the Milky way' recounts with delicate emotion the rise of the mountain's snowy ridges between the immensity of the night sky and the distant lights of the plain. In 'Layers of the rockies', Soroush Khazraeializadeh finds in the mists the junction point between the mountain and the sky, which delicately fade into each other. A very creative variation of the same theme is proposed by Corinne Doucet ('Chroniques Martiennes'), who plays on the orange-red lights of the last moments before nightfall to immerse the viewer in the suspended atmosphere of what could be the Red Planet.

Other photographers choose the symbolic route to express the profound aspiration of the human being towards the sky. TeamGeir ('Loneliness') introduces two enigmatic naked female figures turning their backs on each other, seated on the rock

of a mountain and silhouetted against a twilight sky; Pietro Calligaris ('Landing ground') imagines an angelic figure descending from above into the earthly dimension. The human figure that Ingrid Gielen places in the landscape of 'Reach for the sky' seems to cry out to the heavens her desire to reach them.

An even different path is to explore the places that best represent the tension upwards, namely religious buildings: ancient Greek temples are the subject of Pietro Calligaris and Claudio Viarengo's images, while Marco de Giosa ('Summer solstice in Bari') contaminates the sacredness of a cathedral with the ancient rite of the solstice, celebrated by dancing figures illuminated by the sun's rays penetrating through the church's rose window.

Anyone who looks up cannot help but encounter the fantastic forms of clouds, capable of infinite metamorphoses, which Stéphane Louis looks to in his portfolio 'The Eternal Recourse: Clouds' as a source of inspiration, capable of bringing man's spirit closer to the ancient dimension of myth. Their nature as intermediate creatures between earth and sky is captured in a peculiar shot by Luigi D'Aponte, in which a single cloud drawn on a dark sky appears as the goal of an infinite chase ('E torneremo a inseguire le nuvole').

To close, a mention must be reserved for the dreamy female figure of Zsófia Daragó who, in an image full of poetry, stands out to paint a marvellous trail of stars in the sky: in some ways a synthesis of what all the participants in this volume have done, drawing the immense canvas of the celestial vault with their photos.



Lana Prosenak
The world of misfits



Ingrid Gielen
Reach for the sky



TeamGeir
Loneliness



Pietro Calligaris
Landing ground



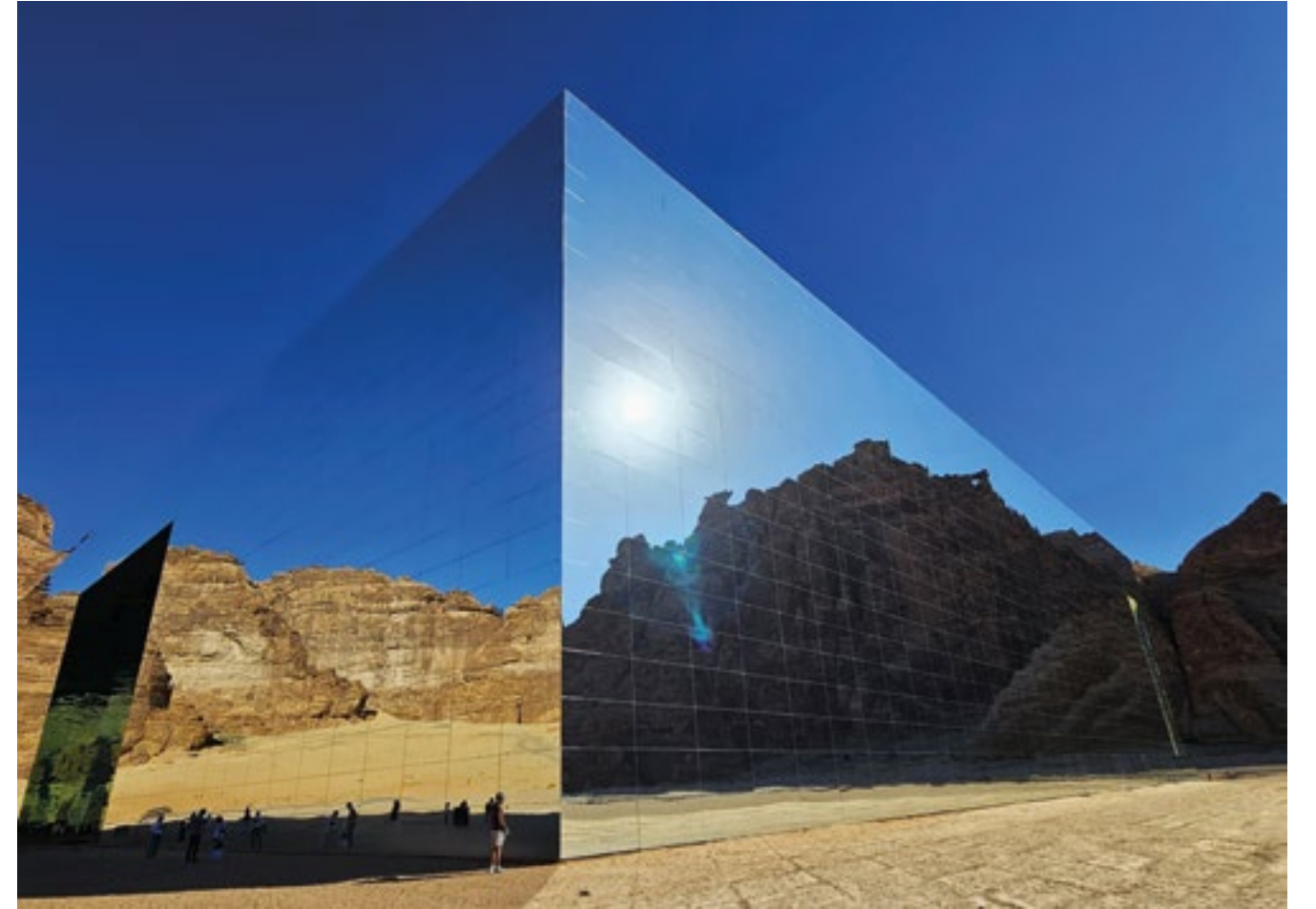
Marco De Giosa
Summer Solstice in Bari



Walter Fogel
Beachlife



TeamGeir
Then end of the day







Laura Noè
Respirare a pieni polmoni



Cristina Embil
Scar



Cristina Mascarenhas
*Azores - the islands
of volcanoes and craters*



Olga Arune
Winter landscape



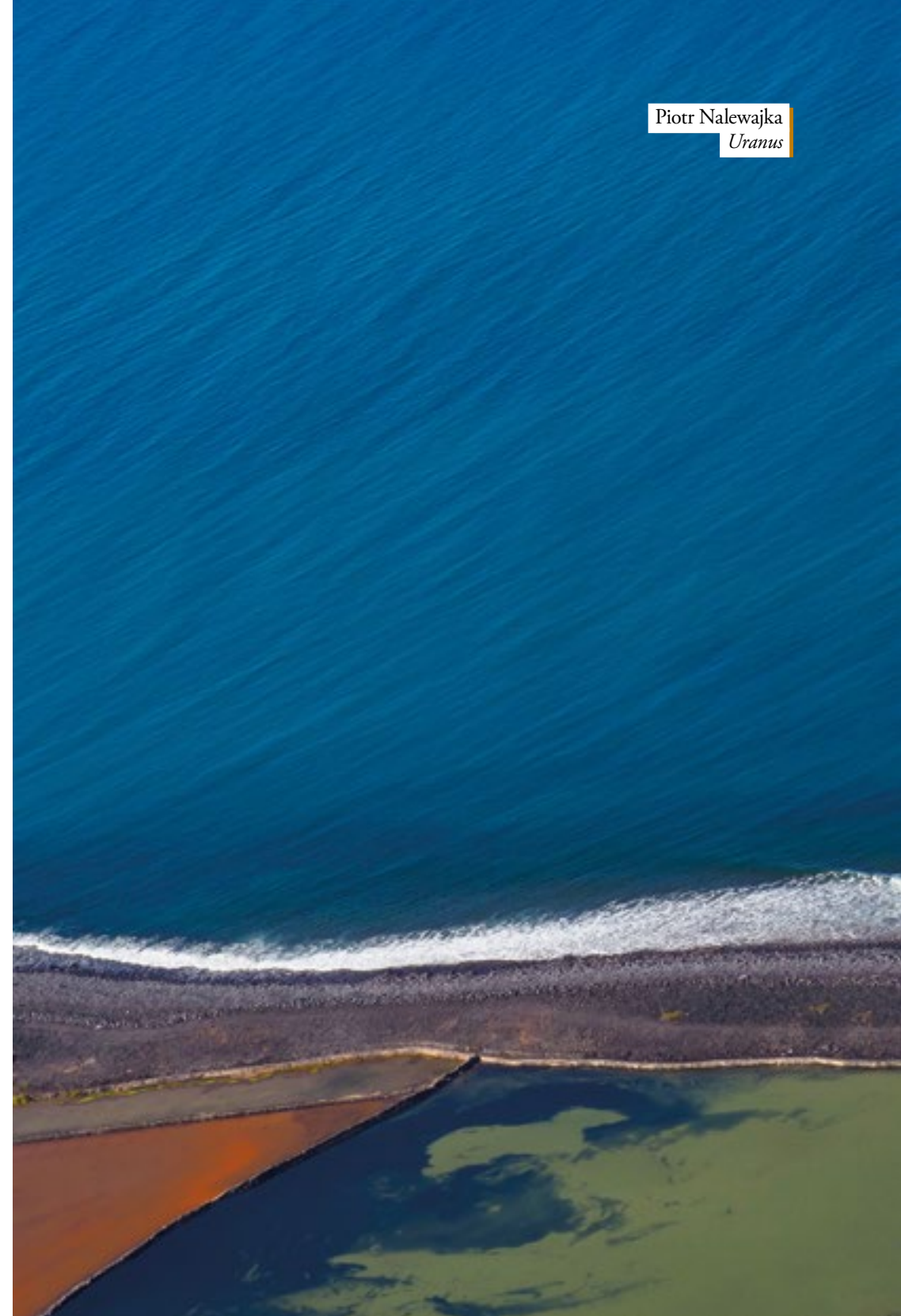
Fabrizio Franzin
Uranio



Luigi D'Aponte
E torneremo a inseguire le nuvole

















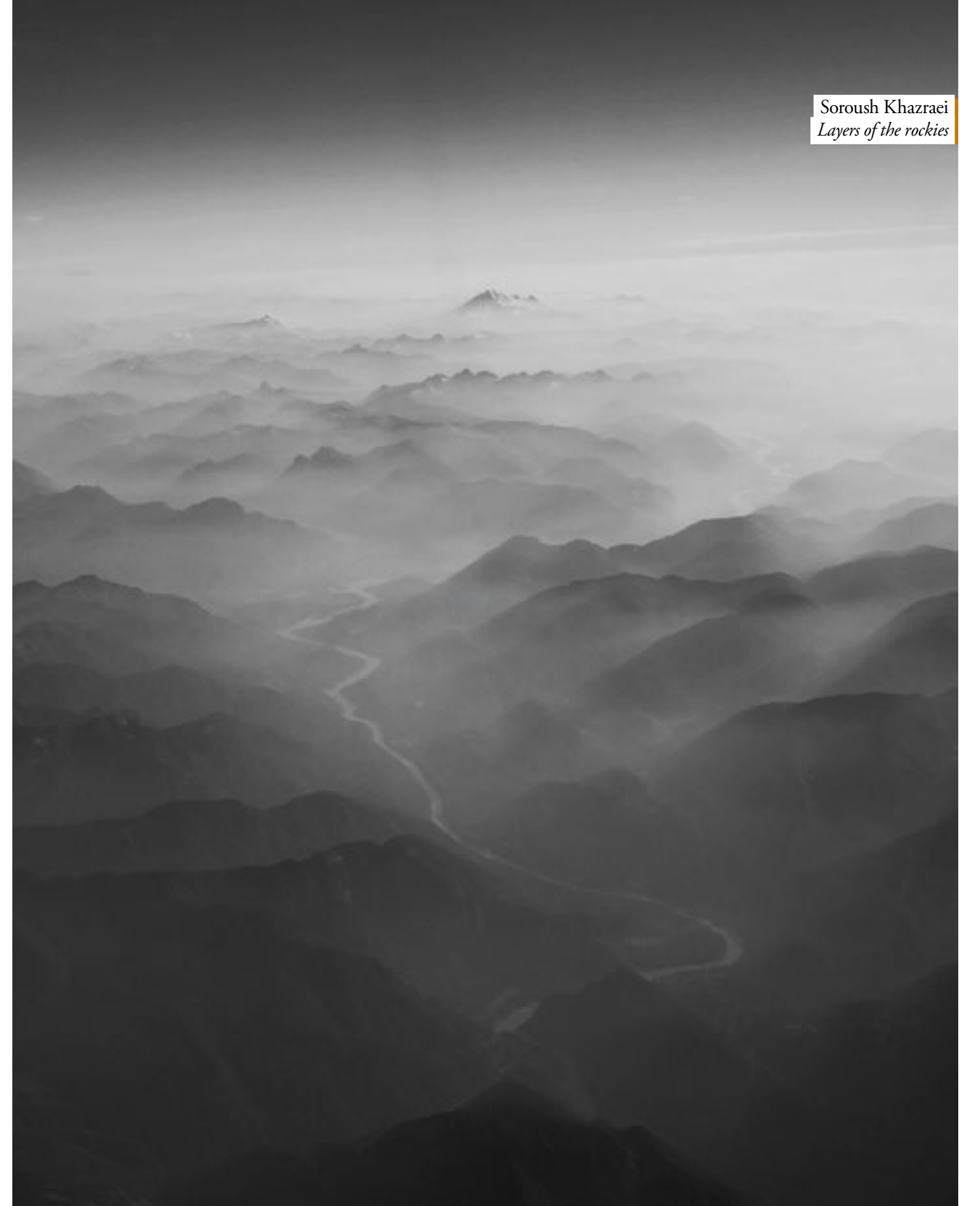


Mariolino Laudati
La Piana del Dragone



Mariolino Laudati
La Piana del Dragone

Soroush Khazraei
Layers of the rockies



LA POETICA DEL CIELO

TERESA MOLINARO



Rising full moon



The autumn Milky Way



| *Glimpses of infinity*



| *Summer night*



Beyond the clouds



Moon set in the morning clouds



A comet in the summer



Gibbous waning among dancing clouds



Sophie Décors
Where is the horizon?



Massimiliano Del Bianco
Urano

Irene Lorget
Solo davanti all'infinità







THE ETERNAL RECOURSE: CLOUDS [2007-2024]

STÉPHANE LOUIS

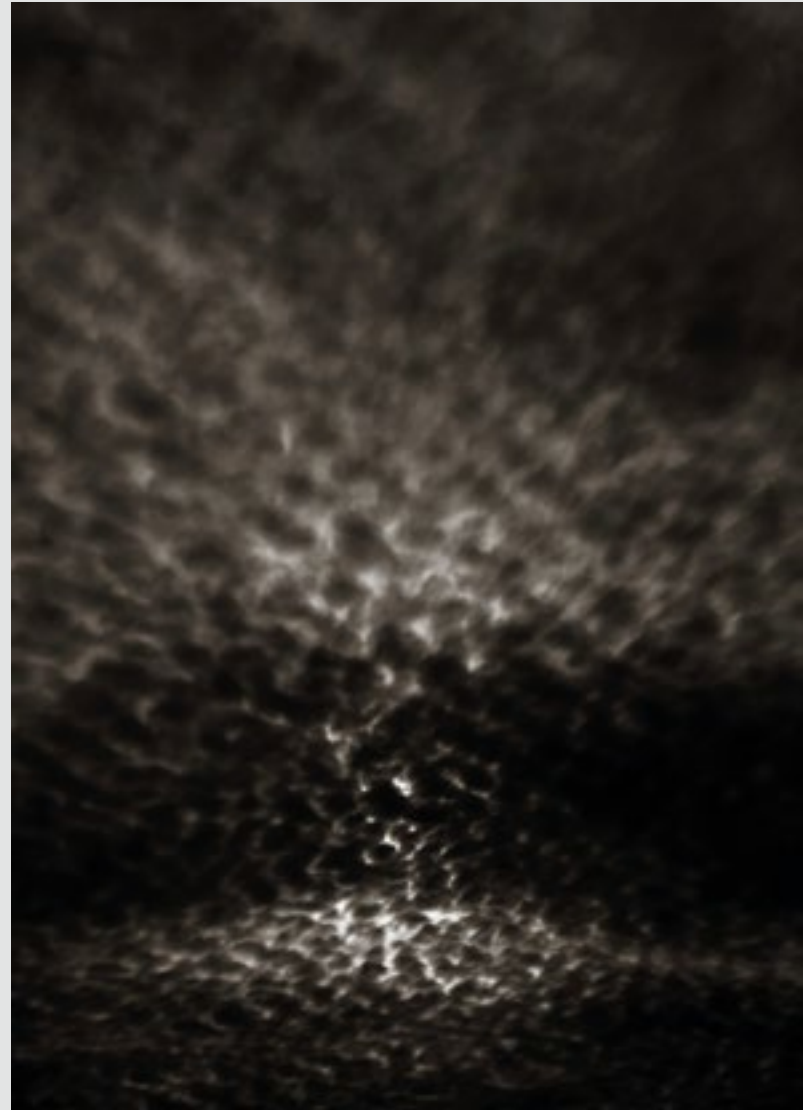


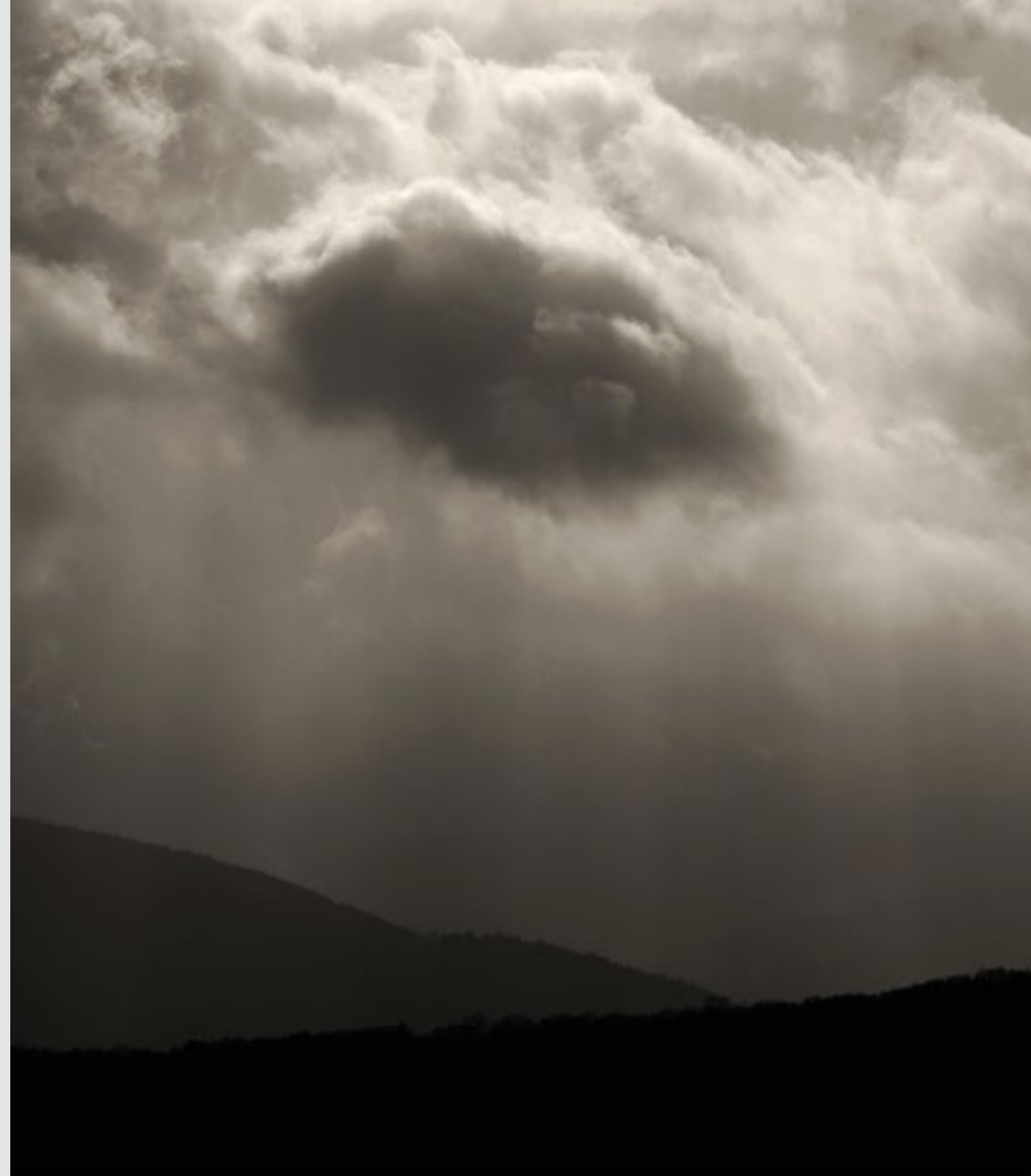
Clouds as a tribute to Uranus.

Whatever they call to mind, clouds have always been important to me. Essential components of my artistic work, they constitute at once a spiritual landmark, a reconnection with the mythic world but above all a primary manifestation of Beauty which shall define our horizon.

As concrete as abstract, they represent both permanence and metamorphosis, constantly reinventing themselves, as a perfect illustration of the eternal recurrence of the recomposed.











Mariolino Laudati
Untitled

Alfredo Aruquipa
Level up



Yuri Pritisk
Untitled



Yuri Pritisk
Untitled









Jean-Paul Soujol Benedetti
Lavandes sous un ciel menaçant



Jean-Paul Soujol Benedetti
Le blé et l'orage

Claudio Viarengo
*Celestial Majesty:
Where Sky Meets Earth*







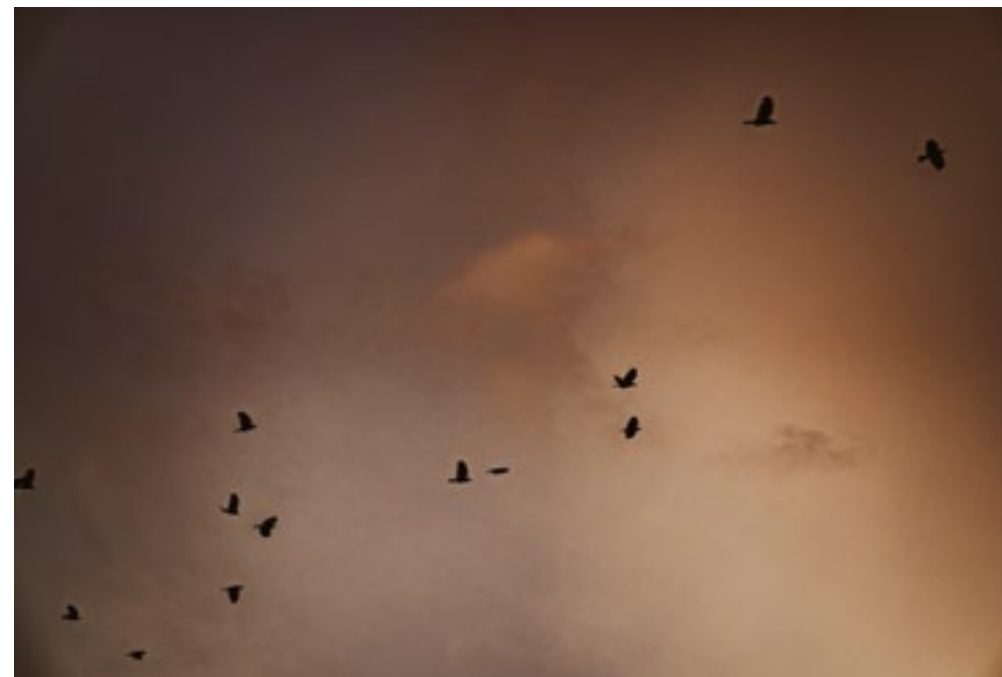








Laura Noè
Architettura di fuoco



Pietro Calligaris
Towards new beginnings



Caterina Mattana
Stagno di Cabras in Sardegna



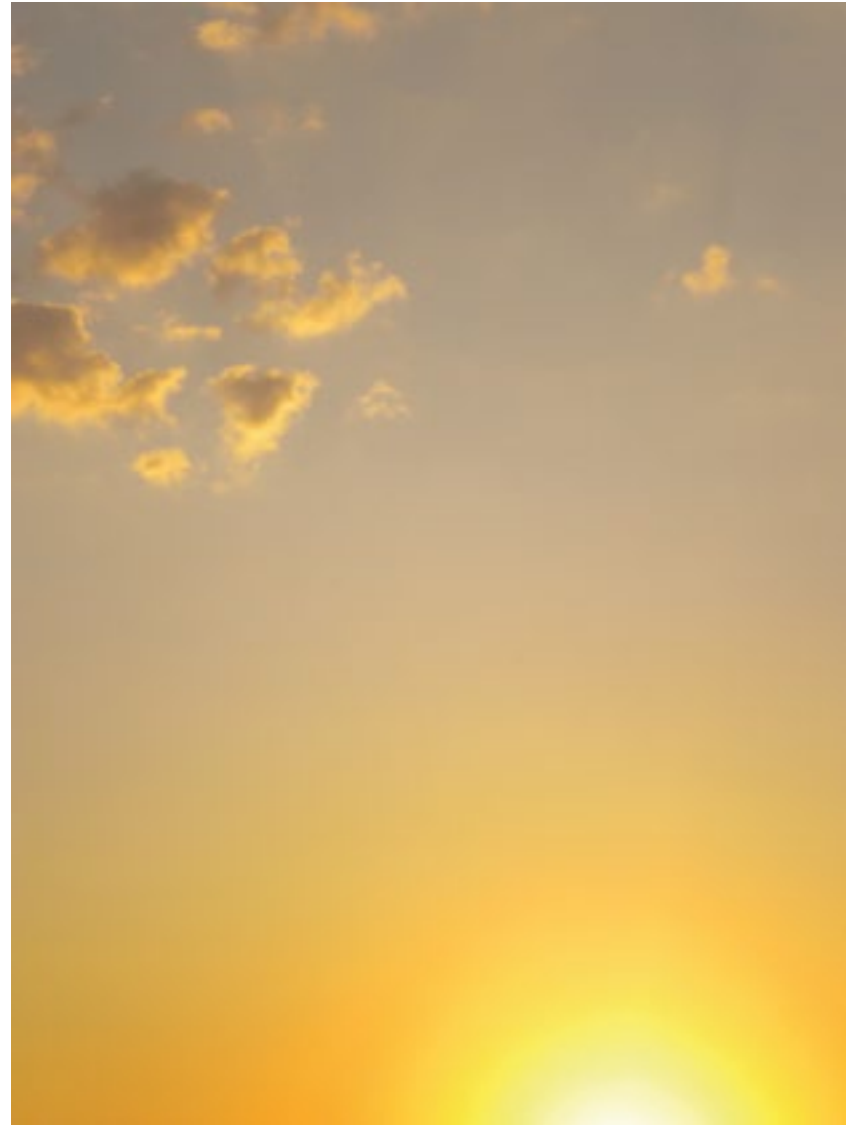
Olga Arune
Street Lamps



Simonetta Rossetti
Sleeping Volcano



Fede La Fede
Untitled

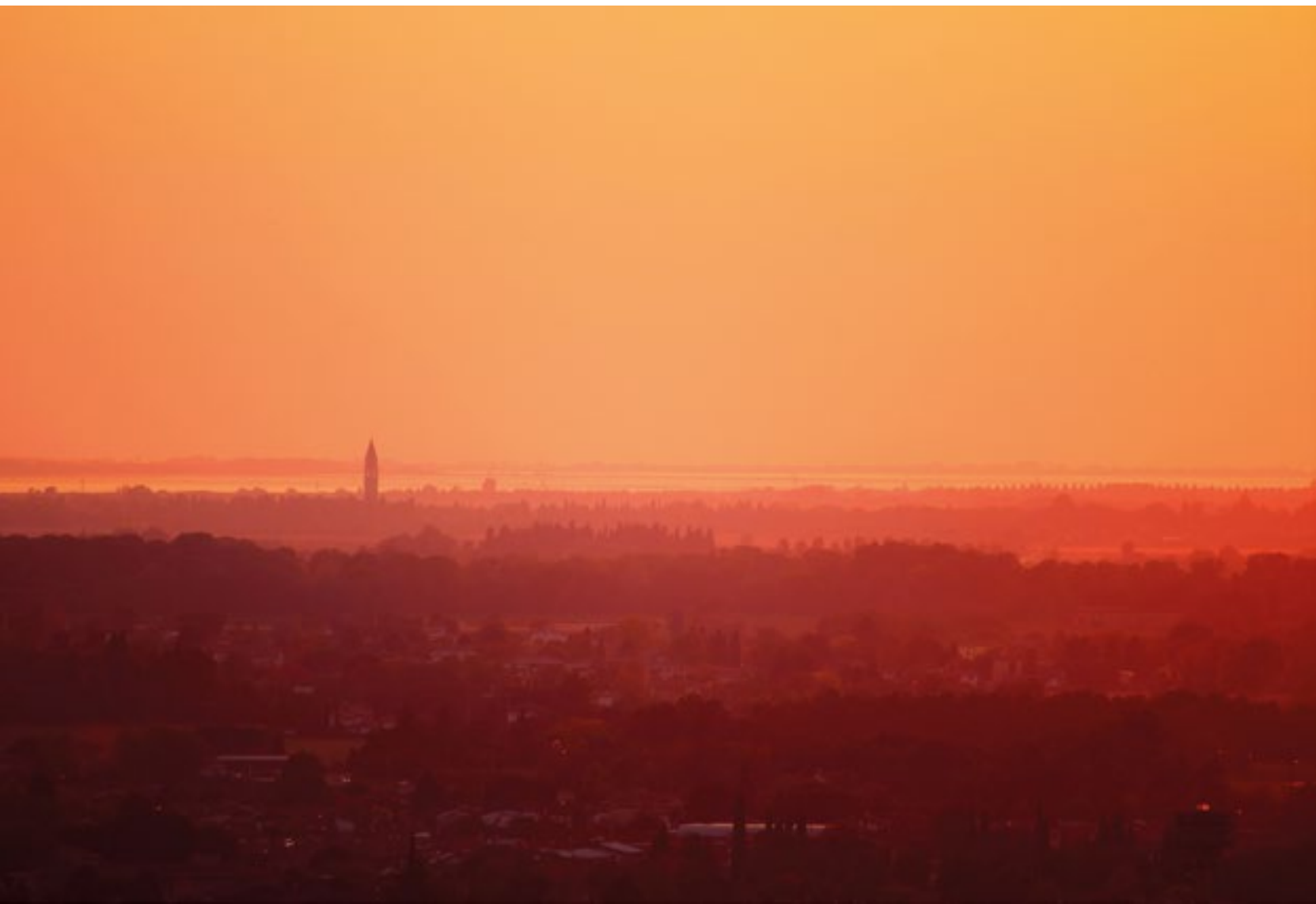


Anna Tut
Untitled



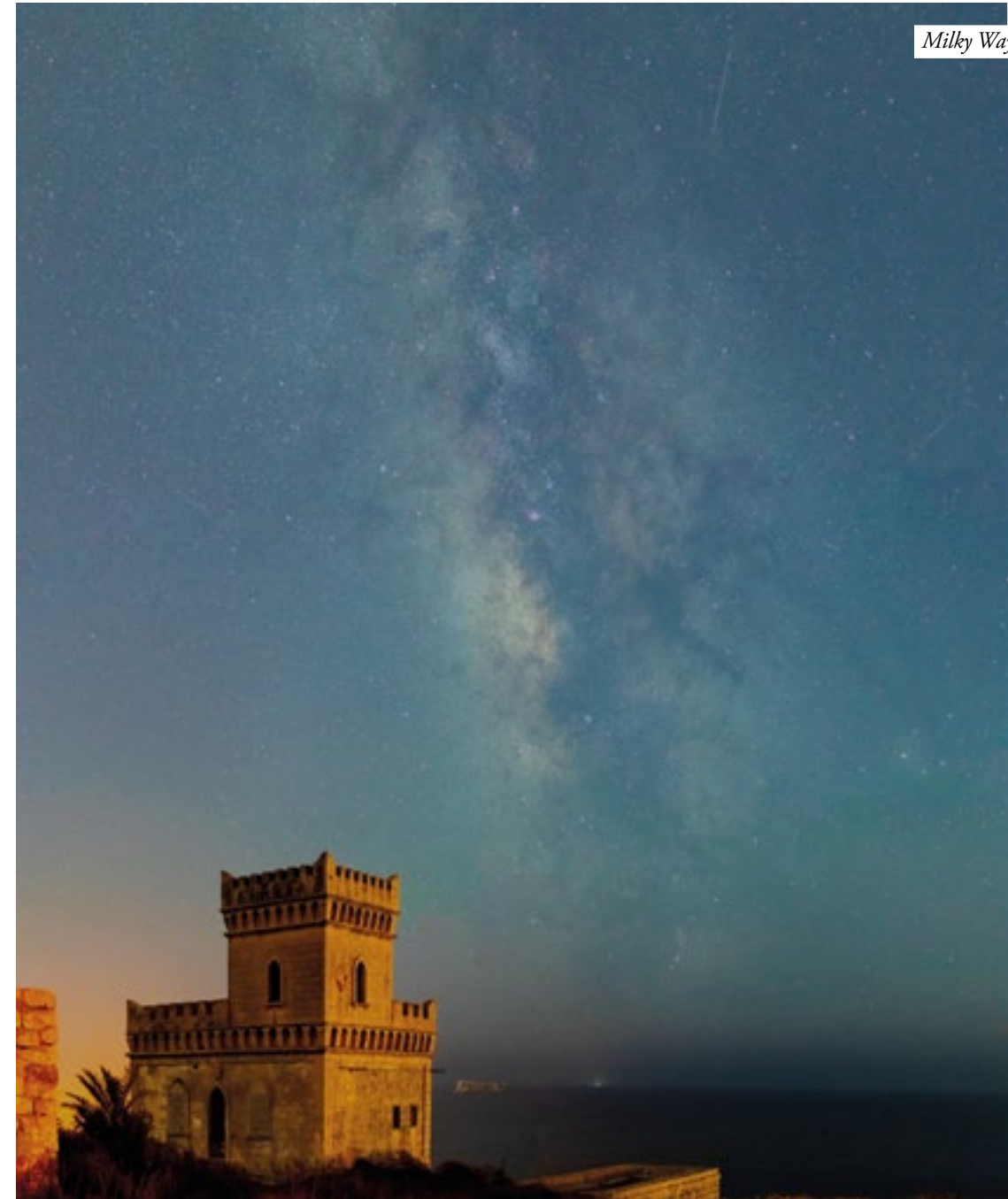




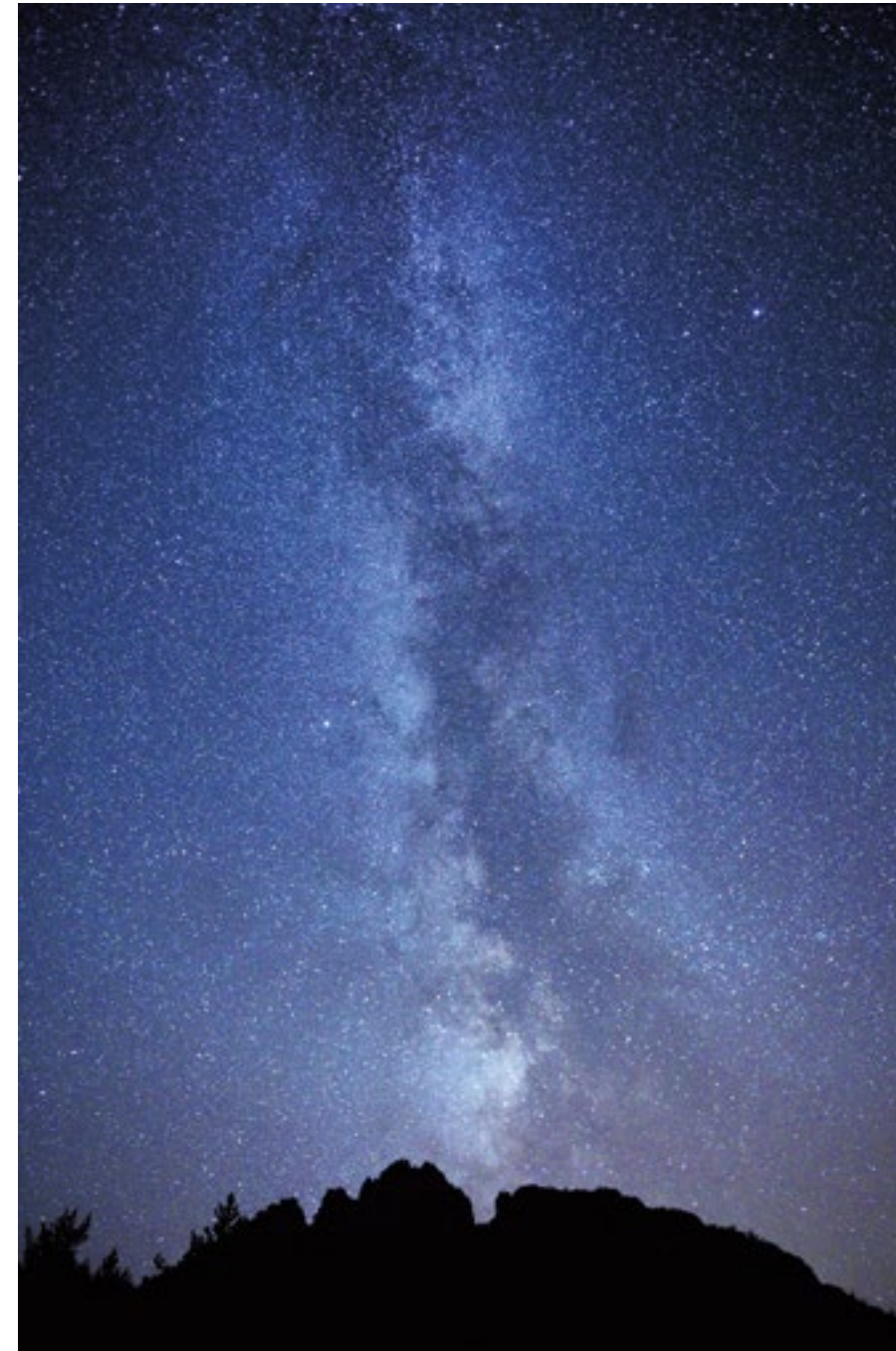


















ASTRO METEORA

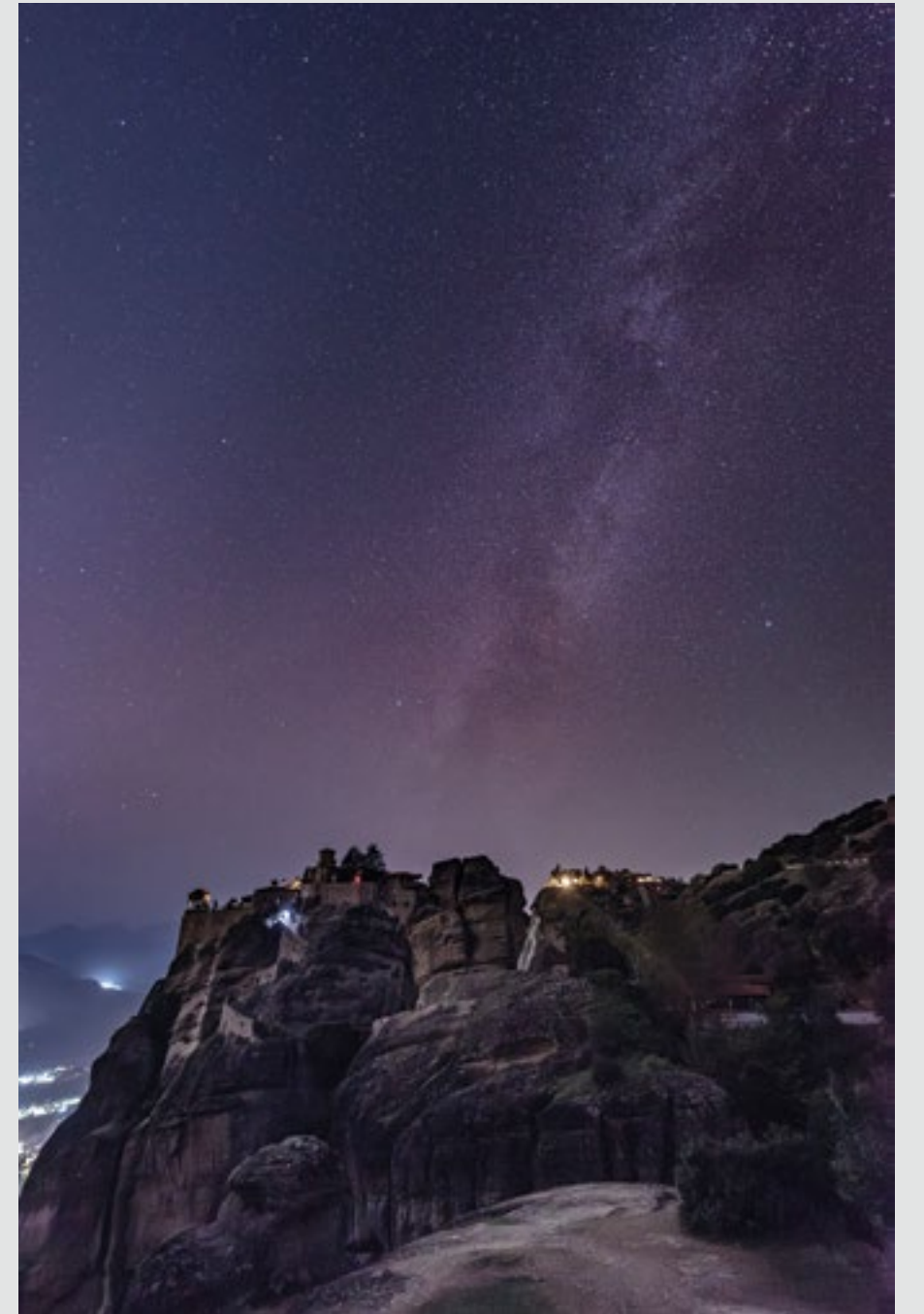
PYGMALION KARATZAS

“My soul comes from better worlds and I have an incurable homesickness of the stars” - Nikos Kazantzakis

‘Up from Eden - Astro Meteora’ is a photographic series from the UNESCO World Heritage site Meteora, located in Thessaly region in Greece. This unique landscape of rock formations rising from a lush valley coupled with monasteries built on the immense natural pillars and hill-like rounded boulders, became the second in importance Eastern Orthodox monastic center after Mount Athos during the 13th and 14th centuries and in contemporary times the 2nd most visited site in Greece after the Acropolis.

The period of the photo shoot (November) was near the end of the visibility of the Milky Way over the horizon but giving a favorable orientation / alignment of the valley with the monasteries on both sides and the Milky Way belt moving across the background from south to west. With little light pollution, the night sky could be captured vividly along with the monasteries atop the rocks. For the star trail image, 240 images were captured over the period of one hour and blended together in post.

The awe inspiring natural landscape, that took millions of year to formulate, in combination with the astonishing craftsmanship of the monasteries painstakingly blending for centuries with such an extreme and unique environment, is a meditation on the origins of life, Earth’s connection to the Cosmos and our collective higher purpose.













Simos Charalambous
Untitled



Paula Siwek
Barbados cave



Maria Remo
Venere



Adriana Ferrarese
Untitled



Artur Jastrzębski
Cielmice is a unique village



Mariolino Laudati
La Piana del Dragone

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Alessandro Baffert (Italy)
Alessandro Gamberini (Italy)
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