

Ri-scrivere Napoli oltre il presepe dei luoghi comuni di Vittorio del Tufo

Gabriel García Márquez once observed that every man has a public life, a private life, and a secret life. Cities, like people, are no different. They, too, possess a secret life – woven from traces and voices, stories, memories, echoes, stone and shadows.

Naples is a city made for storytelling. Its stones are millennia old, and so are its shadows. Yet even today, it is most often portrayed through stereotypes and clichés – through its symbols, whether positive or negative. It's a city easier to recognize than to truly know. It can enchant, repel, suffocate, or wound to death.

To reimagine a city like Naples through the lens of eleven photographers is to attempt a quiet revolution – to free it from the endless carousel of commonplaces. It can help transcend the veil of color and folklore without reducing its complexity to a mere stereotype.

Naples is a great European capital that has reclaimed its rightful place in the world, particularly within the global circuits of art and tourism. It is a city built upon a vast reservoir culture and history, striving to cast a light brighter than the shadowed tangle in which many insist on keeping it submerged. What we seek to leave behind is precisely the eternal presepe – that figurative nativity scene filled with the same old characters, feeding the mythology of cliché and freezing the city's image into a static, folkloric collage.

To re-write Naples is not just an exercise in style – it is a necessity, a categorical imperative. Naples is a city that is perpetually on stage, performing before the eyes of the world. All seek to represent it and the city for its part delights in endlessly representing itself – buoyed by the force of its evocative presence, endowed with an extraordinary power of attraction.

To break free from the cage of stereotypes is to reclaim a complexity we can be proud of. Cities, like people, bear ancient wounds, unresolved tensions, and long-held memories. They must learn, as we do, to confront their past, to gather the fragments, to hold together both shadow and light – and from them, shape a future that belongs entirely to them.

And cities, like human beings, must come to terms with their past in order to stay still – they must learn to deal with their past, hold together the fragments, reclaim every piece of their history, embracing both light and shadow, and upon that foundation, build their future.