



**MUSEC | MUSEUM OF CULTURES LUGANO
FROM 8 JUNE 2024 TO 19 JANUARY 2025**

**THE IMAGE OF THE 'EMPRESENTE'
FOSCO MARAINI
A RETROSPECTIVE**

The largest exhibition ever devoted to the photographic work of the renowned Florentine traveller, ethnologist and writer, 20 years after his death.

Fosco Maraini's renown is inextricably linked to his free and adventurous spirit, as well as his insatiable curiosity. He was a natural traveller and a scholar by passion, demonstrating remarkable ease with both writing and photography. He employed these two mediums in tandem to explore and recount the world, as evidenced by his numerous books, some of which have achieved bestseller status. In addition to his refined and incisive prose, Maraini developed a photographic language of great humanity, capable of expressing a deep inner richness that is reflected in the complexity of the world.

Twenty years after his death, MUSEC in Lugano is celebrating the photography of Fosco Maraini with the largest retrospective that has ever been dedicated to him. This is the result of a research project launched two years ago that has involved the main institutions that preserve and enhance his work. It is thus possible to definitively assign Maraini the role he deserves in the history of photography and, at the same time, to reflect on several levels on the fundamental values of an art form that, faced with the new frontiers of technology, questions its very substance. A reflection aimed at emphasising how every representation of reality, be it concrete or abstract, only makes sense in time if it is able to restore a spiritual universe and an original vision of the world.

The exhibition on the two main floors of Villa Malpensata in Lugano, where MUSEC is located, presents 223 photographs, some of them unpublished, taken between 1928 and 1971 in Europe and Asia. No less than 170 images depict places and people from Italy and Japan, Maraini's two homelands: the former by birth and culture and the latter by destiny and elective affinity. The choice of photographs is the result of an in-depth exploration of Maraini's photographic archives: from the hundreds of illustrated publications that first made it possible to define the chapters with which to structure the project, to the thousands of negatives conserved at the Gabinetto Vieusseux in Florence.

The exhibition curated by Francesco Paolo Campione, director of MUSEC, restores the facets of Maraini's photography. A photography of people and cultures; landscapes that open onto infinity; interior architectures in which the secret geometries of the inner world reverberate; and details that are revealed amidst the plots of a reality interpreted with rare intelligence and described with a cultured and extremely refined aesthetic. They are images taken at the 'empresente', as Maraini liked to say with one of her surprising (and untranslatable) neologisms. This is the unrepeatable moment in which the eye is allowed to perceive the movements of the heart and soul. Always with a light gaze and a subtle irony, like the Citizen of the Moon on an Instructional Visit to Earth [Cittadino della Luna in viaggio di istruzione sulla terra], the 'citluvit' he theorised, who silently observes and records

everything, who becomes passionate to the point of falling in love with the object of his study, but who remains detached from things because 'understanding is the ultimate goal of the whole operation'.

The fourteen sections of the exhibition initially lead the visitor to discover **THE BEGINNINGS** (1928-1937) of Maraini's photography, which includes mountain landscapes, naturalistic macrophotographs, experiments inspired by Futurism and the first real travel reportage, among the cadets of the Italian Navy training ship 'Amerigo Vespucci'. We then proceed to **SECRET TIBET** (1937 and 1948), which recounts a Himalayan world that is 'excessive, gigantic, titanic and satanic at the same time', in sharp contrast to the good-natured and extroverted nature and ancient fragility of the people living there.

The southern Italian region is the subject of **OUR SOUTH** (1946-1956), a work that men, women, and children, at the centre of their own culture and history. The portrait reveals their feelings and the beauty that derives from a secret harmony with the landscape, architecture, and the variety of objects and everyday occasions. The variety and contrast of historical, geographical and social elements are depicted in **LANDING IN GREECE** (1951), which at the same time highlights the original mixing of European and Oriental cultures that characterised modern Greece.

The section **THE MOSAICS OF MONREALE** (1951) presents the results of an extensive photographic census of the Norman mosaics of Sicily, conducted under the scientific direction of the Byzantine art historian Ernst Kitzinger (1912-2003), with whom Maraini formed a lasting friendship. Japan, a country to which Maraini was very close, is the focus of three sections. The first one, **A CITLUVIT LANDS IN HOKKAIDŌ** (1939-1971), is devoted to Maraini's research among the Ainu, the indigenous people of Siberian origin who constituted Japan's oldest ethnic group and still retained some of their centuries-old customs. The second, **ETERNAL JAPAN** (1953-1963), shows Maraini's profound understanding of Japanese customs, social, ideological and expressive systems, which, resistant to change, had been subjected to the pressures of history for centuries. Maraini thus succeeded in portraying the secrets of people, places, events and, ultimately, the very character, the ethos, of a country and a people. Finally, the renowned underwater reportage on the **THE FISHERWOMEN OF HEKURA** (1954) is dedicated to a sunny and vital Japan that was largely unknown to the general public. The Museum of Cultures dedicated an exhibition to this work in 2005 (*The Enchantment of the Women of the Sea*), which has since been repeated numerous times. With Japan, Maraini's other great passion was undoubtedly the mountains.

The photographs in **KARAKORUM AND OTHER MOUNTAINS** (1937 and 1958-1959) illustrate the essential elements of the Himalayan world with admirable contrast. These include paths, crevasses, moraines, gullies, ridges, towers, peaks, expanses of snow, and glaciers sculpted by light and traversed by the breath of infinity. Collectively, these images represent a perfect illustrated epitome of all the mountains of the world. It was in the mountains of Pakistan, in a remote valley, that Maraini was able to discover the Kalash, a people dedicated to ancient shamanic practices to whom the section **THE LAST PAGANS** (1959) is dedicated. This unexpected archaic scenario was immortalised by Maraini's camera for future memory.

A commissioned reportage on **THE ROCKS OF JERUSALEM** (1967) ultimately gave rise to a crude portrayal of the wounds inflicted on the city by the Six-Day War (5-10 June), which, three months before Maraini's arrival, had staged yet another representation of its eternal drama. This portrait was enhanced by a careful visual exploration of the geometries of destruction.

The last section dedicated to travel reports takes us back to Asia. **LETTERS FROM ASIA** (1962) was supposed to be the title of a photographic book that was never realised; the images of the reportage, largely unpublished, express emblematic traits of humanity, revealing Maraini's artistic sensitivity and his remarkable ability to interpret cultures from diverse perspectives.

The concluding sections of the exhibition, **CLOUDS** (1930-1957) and **THE COLOURS OF FIRE** (1956), exemplify two of Maraini's principal thematic interests. His fascination with clouds was first ignited by the diaphanous light of the Tuscan countryside during his childhood. Throughout his life, Maraini continued to observe clouds, fogs, and vapours with unwavering interest and a playful relish, delighting in the metamorphic forms they presented and, in the ways, he could juxtapose them with the figures of his rich visual and literary imagination. The images taken from a reportage in some of the Falk steelworks in Sesto San Giovanni (MI) exemplify Maraini's assiduous practice of colour photography. This is characterised by a language that is generally more casual than that used for black and white photography, where he expressed the more artistic and meditative aspect of composition.

The works on display, which will become part of MUSEC's photographic collections, have been produced using the giclée technique on baryta paper, based on scans of the negatives made specifically for this purpose. Wherever possible, each image has been compared with contemporary reproductions made when Maraini was alive, in order to be as close as possible to the author's taste and artistic sensibility. Accompanying the photographs are works of material culture in some rooms that recall the cultural and artistic contexts represented by Maraini. The **SECRET TIBET** section welcomes four painted banners (*thanghka*) dating from the period between the 15th and 17th centuries, lent by the Museum of Civilizations (MuCiv) in Rome, Tucci Collections; three kalash sculptures from Pakistan (19th-20th centuries) enrich the section **GLI LAST PAGANI** and come from the Museum of Natural History, Anthropology and Ethnology of the University of Florence, Graziosi Collection.

Coming from the MUSEC Collections are exhibited, in the section **UN CITLUVIT LANDS IN HOKKAIDŌ**, two Ainu ornamental trays collected by Maraini, and in the section **LETTERS FROM ASIA**, an Indian stone sculpture depicting the celestial beauty Sundari from the Riemschneider Collection. Also on display is a selection of first editions of books written by Fosco Maraini between 1942 and 1980 (Private Collection, Lugano).

THE CATALOGUE

The exhibition comes with a catalogue in Italian published by Skira and edited by Francesco Paolo Campione. It includes all the photographs in the exhibition and an additional section of six previously unpublished portraits of Anna Magnani, taken during the shooting of the film *Volcano* (1949). The volume includes eight thematic in-depth studies, an anthology of texts by Maraini on photography, the testimonies of his daughters and widow, and a wealth of apparatuses that make it a reference work for future studies on Fosco Maraini.

Francesco Paolo Campione (ed.), *L'immagine dell'empresente. Fosco Maraini. Una retrospettiva*, Skira (Esovisioni/14), Milan 2024, 616 pages. 23 full-page three-colour illustrations full-page, 230 catalogue's ill. (214 in three-colour and 16 in colour). ISBN 978-88-572-5165-3. CHF/€ 72. The volume includes institutional prefaces by Roberto Badaracco (p. 6), Riccardo Nencini (p. 7), Giorgio van Straten (p. 8), and Carlo Birrozzi (p. 9). Introduction by the editor (pp. 15-19). The anthology Fosco Maraini's writings on photography. 1935 and 1950, critical edition by the editor (pp. 353-379). Articles by: Dacia Maraini ("Fosco, falco sognante" [Fosco, dreaming hawk], p. 384); Toni Maraini ("Qualche

ricordo su mio padre e la fotografia” [Some memories about my father and photography], pp. 385-386), Mieko Namiki Maraini and Maria Gloria Roselli (“Uno sguardo universale” – Conversazione [A universal gaze” – Conversation], pp. 387-393); Rossella Paternò (“Il cacciatore di immagini e il suo armamentario fotografico” [The image hunter and his photographic paraphernalia], pp. 399-413); Francesco Paolo Campione (“Il dono della sintesi” [The gift of synthesis], pp. 417-443); Francesco Faeta (“Interpretazioni del mistero. Antropologia, etnografia, fotografia” [Interpretations of mystery: Anthropology, ethnography, photography], (pp. 445-457); Dario Campione (“Anna, Fosco e la guerra dei vulcani” [Anna, Fosco and the war of volcanos] pp. 459-469); Paolo Cesaretti (“Se il Pantokrator commuove” [If the Pantokrator moves], pp. 471-475); Daniele Baglioni (“Fotofànfole”, pp. 477-487); Tiziana Serena (“Dove hanno luogo ‘ombre di amori folli. L’archivio fotografico di Fosco Maraini” [Where ‘shadows of crazy loves’ take place. The photographic archive of Fosco Maraini], pp. 489-499); Gloria Manghetti, (“Il Fondo Topazia Alliata e Fosco Maraini” [The Topazia Alliata and Fosco Maraini Fund]. pp. 501-505). Technical and critical list of works by Chiara Naldi (pp. 509-567). “Biografia di Fosco Maraini” [Biography of Fosco Maraini] by Francesco Paolo Campione (pp. 573-575). “Storia espositiva” [Exhibition History] by Moira Luraschi (pp. 577-581). “Filmografia” [Filmography] by Rossella Paternò (pp. 583-595). “Guida bibliografica all’opera di Fosco Maraini” [Bibliographic guide to the work of Fosco Maraini] by Francesco Paolo Campione (pp. 599-607).

FOSCO MARAINI: biographical notes

Fosco Maraini was born in Florence on 15 November 1912 to Antonio Maraini (1886-1963), a renowned sculptor from an established Ticino family, and Edith (Yoi) Crosse (1877-1944), a writer of English descent and Hungarian-Polish heritage. In 1935, he married the painter Topazia Alliata (1913-2015), a descendant of an aristocratic Sicilian family and, like him, a mountaineering enthusiast. The couple had three daughters: Dacia (b. 1936), Yuki (1939-1995) and Toni (b. 1941). In 1937, Maraini embarked on a long expedition to Tibet with the renowned orientalist Giuseppe Tucci (1894-1984). Upon returning to Italy, he completed his studies, graduating in 1938 with a degree in Natural Sciences from the University of Florence. He was awarded a scholarship which enabled him to relocate with his family to Sapporo, on the island of Hokkaido, where he pursued research into the Ainu. Due to the war, Maraini and his family were also interned in a concentration camp in Nagoya for several months. In 1946, Maraini returned to Italy with his wife and daughters, taking with him his library and collection of approximately five hundred objects of Ainu art and material culture, which are now held at the Museum of Anthropology and Ethnology of the University of Florence.

In 1948, he undertook a second expedition to Tibet with Tucci, after which he published the successful book *Secret Tibet* (1951). Between 1949 and 1953, he dedicated himself to an intense period of documentary work. He subsequently embarked on a period of documentary work, during which he produced several short films in Sicily. In that’s same period the publisher Di Donato had the idea of a photographic volume that should have been entitled *Nostro Sud* [Our South], which at the end was never realised. This project took Maraini on a two-year journey (1952-1953) throughout the entirety of southern Italy where he took thousands of photographs. Between the Spring and Summer of 1951, he also documented the Byzantine-style mosaics in Palermo and Monreale under the scientific direction of Ernst Kitzinger (1912-2003). During the same period, he launched a documentary film project in Greece, which was never completed, and took more 700 photographs.

In 1954, Maraini returned to Japan for other documentary films. At that time, he also took many photographs and gathered material for several books, including *Japan [Ore giapponesi]* (1956), *The Island of the Fishwomen* (1960), and *Japan: Patterns of Continuity* (1971). Maraini was also a keen climber, and between 1958 and 1959 he participated in expeditions to Gasherbrum IV in the Karakorum and Saraghrar Peak in the Hindu Kush, which resulted in the books *Gasherbrum 4. Baltoro, Karakorùm* (1959) and *Paropàmiso* (1963). Between 1960 and 1964, he held the position of fellow at St. Antony's College (Department of Far Eastern Civilisation) in Oxford. In 1962, on his way to Japan to complete his studies, he travelled through several Asian countries. In 1970, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs appointed him director of public relations at the Italian Pavilion of the Osaka World Expo. In the same year, he married his second wife, Mieko Namiki (b. 1940), a Japanese designer he had met four years earlier. In 1972, he returned permanently to Florence, where he taught Japanese Language and Literature at the University until 1983. Concurrently, he worked on systematising the complex interactions between his artistic, scientific and literary interests. In 1983, he founded the Italian Association for Japanese Studies (Aistugia), of which he was honorary president until his death. In the final years of his life, Maraini devoted himself assiduously to the reorganisation of his extensive archive of images and texts, continuing to deepen his Japanese studies and working on the creation of the Vieusseux-Asia Centre for Oriental Studies, which was inaugurated in 2001. Fosco Maraini passed away in Florence on 8 June 2004. In accordance with his wishes, he was laid to rest in the small cemetery of Alpe di Sant'Antonio in Garfagnana, where he owned a house.



L'IMMAGINE DELL'EMPRESENTE. FOSCO MARAINI. UNA RETROSPETTIVA

MUSEC | Museo delle Culture Lugano

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Opening hours

Tuesday closed

Mondays, Wednesdays, Thursdays, Fridays: 11am-6pm

Saturday, Sunday and public holidays: 10 a.m. - 6 p.m.

Tickets

Full (from 16 years): CHF 15.00

Reduced (seniors; university students; FAI Swiss): CHF 10.00

Children (6-15 years): CHF 5.00

MUSEC Mondays promotion-every Monday you enter the Museum at a discounted price.

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Museo culture Lugano

THE IMAGE OF THE EMPRESENTE. **FOSCO MARAINI. A RETROSPECTIVE**
08.06.2024 - 19.01.2025

Selection of images for the media

The images provided may only and exclusively be used in the context of reviews or journalistic reports of the exhibition. **Copyright mention is mandatory, as indicated in the individual captions.**

THE BEGINNINGS

01



[Lily of the valley]. Italy. 1930 approx.
Copyright: Photograph by Fosco Maraini / Property Gabinetto Vieusseux © 2024 Archivi Alinari.

Maraini's interest in the minutiae of flora and fauna, likely derived from his naturalistic training, is a consistent theme in his photography. This is not the same as the "macrophotography" exemplified by Roman Vishniac (1897-1990), but rather a nuanced examination, a journey through the tiniest elements of the visible.

02



Risk of death!. Italy. Florence. 1928.
Copyright: Photograph by Fosco Maraini / Property Gabinetto Vieusseux © 2024 Archivi Alinari.

The work was exhibited at the National Exhibition of Futurist Photography, held at the Permanent Exhibition in Via della Borsa in Trieste in April 1932. It is among the best known of his early photographic activities. The young man climbing the pylon is Bernardo Seeber (1912-2005), one of Fosco Maraini's closest friends and a companion on many of his youthful excursions and climbs.

SECRET TIBET

03



Gyantse. Tibet. Gyantse. 13 April- 5 July 1937.
Copyright: Photograph by Fosco Maraini / Property Gabinetto Vieusseux © 2024 Archivi Alinari.

The photograph of Gyantse from one of the surrounding hillocks is already present in the thirty-seven small-format prints that Maraini sent to his wife Topazia Alliata (1913-2015) in Bagheria in August 1937.

04



[Princess Pemá Chöki Namgyal]. India. Sikkim. Nāthū Lā Pass. 27 February-18 May 1948.
Copyright: Photograph by Fosco Maraini / Property Gabinetto Vieusseux © 2024 Archivi Alinari.

Pemà Chöki Namgyal (1925-1969) was the second daughter of Tashi Namgyal (1893-1963), the Chogyal (monarch) of Sikkim from 1914 until his death. Endowed with great beauty and a keen interest in culture and the arts, she met Maraini in 1948 near the Nāthū Lā Pass (4310 m.), on the present-day border between India and China. This is undoubtedly Maraini's most well-known and iconic photograph.

05

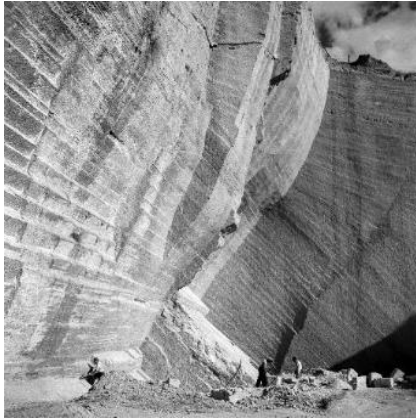


Wandering musician. Tibet. 1937.
Copyright: Photograph by Fosco Maraini / Property Gabinetto Vieusseux © 2024 Archivi Alinari.

The series of photographs from which this image is derived is entitled 'Between Sakang and Gyantse: Group of Travelling Dancers' and was taken between 13 April and 25 July 1937.

OUR SOUTH

06



Tuff quarry. Italy. Sicily. Siracusa. 1946-1953.
 Copyright: Photograph by Fosco Maraini / Property Gabinetto Vieusseux © 2024 Archivi Alinari.
 In Maraini's vision, the great Syracuse tuff quarries emerge from the ground in a manner reminiscent of mountains, their surfaces marked by a dense horizontal web of sculpted lines that give them a resemblance to sails in the wind.

07



[*Laundry Day*]. Italy. Campania. Naples. 1952-1953.
 Copyright: Photograph by Fosco Maraini / Property Gabinetto Vieusseux © 2024 Archivi Alinari.

The photographic documentation of working-class neighbourhoods in southern cities, particularly Naples and Palermo, constitutes a genre in its own right within Maraini's portraits in *Our South*. These images frequently adopt a perspective from below, offering a glimpse of the crowded streets that exemplify the typical urban vitality of the ancient capitals, prior to the processes of modernisation that have forever altered their appearance.

LANDING IN GREECE

08

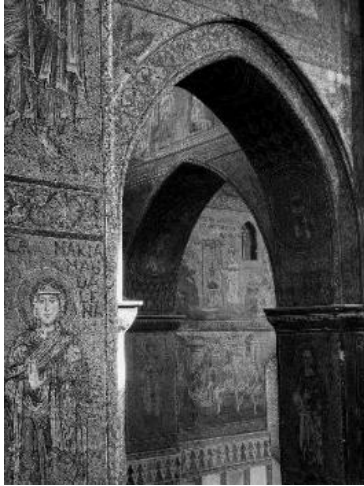


[*New Myths*]. North Greece. June 1951.
 Copyright: Photograph by Fosco Maraini / Property Gabinetto Vieusseux © 2024 Archivi Alinari.

The image is characterised by a clear visual contrast. Two Muslim peasant women are depicted observing a billboard advertising the 1948 film *The Walls of Jericho*, directed by John Malcolm Stahl (1886-1950).

THE MOSAICS OF MONREALE

09



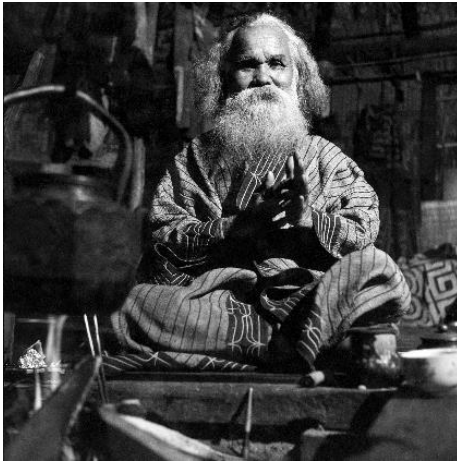
Two arcades. Italy. Palermo. Cathedral of Monreale. 1951.

Copyright: © 2024 Istituto Centrale per il Catalogo e la Documentazione, Rome.

In contrast to the “anatomical” decomposition of subjects required by Kitzinger, Maraini restores the integration between architectural design and decoration that creates the “impressive scenography” of Monreale. This integration is particularly evident in the image of Mary Magdalene in the foreground on the left and the point of light in the window at the top right, which merge with the photographer's perspective to create a plot of great visual poignancy.

A CITLUVIT LANDS IN HOKKAIDŌ

10



Greetings the guest. Japan. Hokkaidō. Shiraoi. 1953-1954.

Copyright: Photograph by Fosco Maraini / Property Gabinetto Vieusseux © 2024 Archivi Alinari.

As Maraini writes, Ushungesh is the chief of Shiraoi, a village along the sea where few Ainu remain. Maraini has known Ushungesh for over twenty years and considers him a reliable and honourable friend. He is a skilled hunter and a traditional bear hunter, one of the last ekashi who preserves the ancestral heritage of their traditions. Here, he is seated at the hearth and greets his guest in the Ainu way, by bringing his hands together. The name Ushungesh is derived from the Ainu words ush (lit. 'to enter the sea'), un (lit. 'at, by') and gesh (lit. 'shore').

11



Children run onto the Lake Kutcharo. Japan. Hokkaidō. 1953-1954.

Copyright: Photograph by Fosco Maraini / Property Gabinetto Vieusseux © 2024 Archivi Alinari.

The image of the two Ainu children running towards the photographer can be considered an exemplar of the "empresente" photography theorised by Maraini. It is a moment among a thousand that has been "captured" by the photographer's eye to fully express his vision of the world.

ETERNAL JAPAN

12



The struggle against nothingness. Japan. Tokyo. Ueno Park, 1963.

Copyright: Photograph by Fosco Maraini / Property Gabinetto Vieusseux © 2024 Archivi Alinari.

The photograph, which depicts the acrobatic exercise of a fireman during the New Year festivities, is undoubtedly influenced by images created by photographers associated with the Yokohama School between 1860 and 1910.

13



[Thirst for knowledge]. Japan. 1953-1963.

Copyright: Photograph by Fosco Maraini / Property Gabinetto Vieusseux © 2024 Archivi Alinari.

The photograph of a child who, like an adult, flips through a newspaper displayed for sale on the street, is an example of the ironic treatment of the world of childhood that is typical of this genre.

14



[Ready to get off]. Japan. Tohoku. 1963.

Copyright: Photograph by Fosco Maraini / Property Gabinetto Vieusseux © 2024 Archivi Alinari.

Maraini's photograph successfully captures the moment of anxious anticipation of the girl, formally dressed in a kimono, as she prepares to disembark from the train at a small station in Tohoku. The image has been cropped in a square format in order to provide a visual analogy with the other works in the section.

15



Mother Shining Knowledge. Japan. Kyoto. Gioji Temple. 1954.

Copyright: Photograph by Fosco Maraini / Property Gabinetto Vieusseux © 2024 Archivi Alinari.

The ideographic space theorised by Maraini is exemplified in the portrait of the abbess of the temple of Gioji. The print has been slightly trimmed while retaining the original square format.

THE FISHERWOMEN OF HÈKURA

16



[Down, definitely fall]. Japan. Island of Hèkura. 1954.

Copyright: Photograph by Fosco Maraini / Property Gabinetto Vieusseux © 2024 Archivi Alinari.

The image of the fisherwoman swimming vertically towards the bottom is not only relevant for its composition, but also for its ability, theorised by Maraini in one of her 1950 writings, to represent the landscape in which the viewer is immersed in a subtly unreal, dreamlike environment. The image depicts a world where cliffs covered in seaweed extend towards the blue of the seabed, while dark ravines full of primordial fears are skimmed across. We are situated at a considerable distance from the world of the sky, mountains and sun. Here, the boundaries of possibility and uncertainty are extended”.

17



[*Pause above a rock*]. Japan. Island of Hèkura. 1954.

Copyright: Photograph by Fosco Maraini / Property Gabinetto Vieusseux © 2024 Archivi Alinari.

In *The island of fisherwomen* (1960, p. 79), Maraini posits “that the Ama produce a distinctive hissing sound (amabui) when emerging from the sea, grasping the boat’s broadside to steady themselves. Each dive may last in excess of a minute. Following approximately twenty dives (equivalent to one hour of work), the Ama return to the boat and rest for about half an hour”.

KARAKORUM AND OTHER MOUNTAINS

18



[*In the crevasse*]. Pakistan. Hindu-Kush – 18 June-25 September 1959

Copyright: Photograph by Fosco Maraini / Property Gabinetto Vieusseux © 2024 Archivi Alinari.

The snow bridge over which the three Italian mountaineers climb serves to heighten the sense of depth of the bell-shaped crevasse that opens at their feet into a dark, seemingly endless chasm.

19



The Dukadak Pass. Pakistan. Hindu-Kush – 18 June-25 September 1959.

Copyright: Photograph by Fosco Maraini / Property Gabinetto Vieusseux © 2024 Archivi Alinari.

The technique of photographing individuals observing a distant landscape from behind was successfully experimented by Maraini from his early photographic days and has been used not only in alpine photography, but also in less extreme contexts. The greatest merit of such framing probably lies in the spatial involvement conveyed to the reader of the image.

20



[*Carrier in the Ice*]. Pakistan. Karakorum. Baltoro Glacier. June 1958.

Copyright: Fotografia di Fosco Maraini / Proprietà Gabinetto Vieusseux © 2024 Archivi Alinari.

The optimal asymmetrical frame, which encompasses Gasherbrum I, was captured from a cave situated in the high glacier of Gasherbrum South. This image has been humanised and imbued with narrative dimension through the introduction of a foreground portrait of the Walser mountaineer Giuseppe Oberto (1923-2018), the last of the protagonists of the 1958 expedition to disappear.

Dinner at the Big Frost. Pakistan. Pakistan. Hindu-Kush. 18 June-25 September 1959.

Copyright: Photograph by Fosco Maraini / Property Gabinetto Vieusseux © 2024 Archivi Alinari.

The aesthetic attention that characterises the line of Chitral bearers along the ascent towards the Dukadak pass leads Maraini's photograph to transcend the documentary intent altogether, configuring itself within the sphere of art photography.

21



THE LAST PAGANS

22



Kafir little girl. Pakistan. Hindu-Kush. Chitral. September 1959.

Copyright: Photograph by Fosco Maraini / Property Gabinetto Vieusseux © 2024 Archivi Alinari.

The traditional costume of Kalash women, which was worn from childhood onwards throughout their lives, comprised a tunic of brown, foot-length sheep's wool and a hood made of a strip of sheep's wool, the same colour as the tunic. The hood was decorated with onions and bits of metal, medals and jingling trinkets; a coloured wool pom-pom was sewn onto the top.

THE ROCKS OF JERUSALEM

23



[Crush barriers and war rubble]. Israel. Jerusalem. Autumn 1967.

Copyright: Photograph by Fosco Maraini / Property Gabinetto Vieusseux © 2024 Archivi Alinari.

Maraini's stylistic signature is evident in the unexpected perspective of the Jerusalem walls, which, in a context reminiscent of a 19th century postcard, appears to convey the tumultuous history of the city. As Maraini notes, "destroyed, rebuilt, shattered and recomposed so many times that, if we could see a film of frames taken one a year and re-photographed at normal speed, the spectacle would be like an epileptic jolt. In this tumultuous vortex, the final atoms are the stones.

These rocks, which are golden-blond in colour, appear to be imbued with light and solar warmth".

LETTERS FROM ASIA

24



The face of the bodhisattva devoured by the forest. Cambodia. Angkor - 1-4 November 1962

Copyright: Photograph by Fosco Maraini / Property Gabinetto Vieusseux © 2024 Archivi Alinari.

The image depicts the face of the bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara, which has been devoured by the forest at the entrance of the small temple of Ta Som in Angkor (late 12th century). The huge canopy of lianas no longer exists today, having been removed by a massive restoration of the architectural complex. The shot forms part of a series of photographs with a similar subject.

THE CLOUDS

25



[Mackerel Sky]. Italy. Sicily. Trapani. 1946-1953.
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The pleasing visual interplay between the clouds and the sheep, distinguished by their white fleece, is here tempered by the presence of a six-bladed windmill, constructed in the sixteenth century to grind salt or pump seawater.

26



[The Cloud Genius]. Italy. Sicily. Cefalù. 1946-1953.

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To the left of the two figures climbing the Caldura Tower, a small-bodied genius with a large head, a prominent nose and an open mouth appears to be sketched in the 'fleeting moment' captured against the light by Maraini's camera.

THE COLOURS OF FIRE

27



[Fire clouds]. Italy. Lombardy. Sesto San Giovanni. Stabilimento "Unione" - March 1956.
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The cooling operations of the flows occasionally result in distinctive lighting effects, such as the cascade of lapilli generated by the fire cloud photographed by Maraini.