

Ferdinando Scianna*
(Bagheria, 1943)

“The sun, I always repeat, interests me because it creates shades; it is so dramatic that it dialectically produces its opposite.” (Scianna, F., *Il sole mi interessa perché fa ombra*, in *Ferdinando Scianna. Fotografie 1963-2006*. Lucca: Fondazione Raggiante, 2006). One of the photos by Ferdinando Scianna acquired for the CRT Collection is *Sant’Elia*, 1980, shot in the shade of an open interior, looking through the shutters, against the luminosity of the sea. Unlike the water, lit up by the reflection and sprinkled with touches of white light, the sky is permeated, substantiated by the sun. Focusing on it the light becomes black in our blinded glance, in the same way that the Sant’Elia sky is so luminously dazzling that it becomes leaden.

Scianna credits the photographer Henri Cartier-Bresson as his teacher. From him, he says, he learned and was trained to be fortuitous, to be ready to capture the moment and the understanding of the world that is guarded within it. Looking at some shots from the series devoted to *Feste religiose in Sicilia (Religious Festivals in Sicily)*, published in 1965, one could say that Scianna succeeded precociously and effortlessly in being able to record reality, captured in the beauty of a gesturalism that is both volatile poetry and fleeting, but also a clear, solid, historical form. Still in his twenties, he demonstrated mature compositional knowledge.

The naked body of the child raised up amid the excitement of the crowd, in *Tre Castagni*, possesses the same plastic force as the sculpture of the dead Christ, carried in procession and portrayed in the tacit but persistent memory of Mantegna. The expressive force of curves is striking. The arching body of the child seems to correspond to the line of the neck of the man between the funerary wreaths in *Bagheria*, 1965, or the open curve in the raised arms of a woman caught in an explosion of joy, or again, the arch inscribed in the movement of flight mimed by Ignazio Buttitta. The existential explosion of popular festivals that Leonardo Sciascia saw captured in Scianna’s images is made up of curves and shadows. All of Scianna’s photography is made up of curves, shadows, and cuts, but also literary resonances and the continuous intuition of the drowsy stories in people’s faces. (EV)

Additional Works in the Collection

Italy, Sicily, Bagheria. Tanina Visconti, 1961, photograph, 11.82 × 15.56 inches

Italy, Sicily, Bagheria, 1961, photograph, 15.56 × 12.02 inches

Italy, Sicily, Palermo. Pilgrimage to Santa Rosalia, 1962, photograph, 15.56 × 10.02 inches

Italy, Sicily, Bagheria. Michele Toja, 1962, photograph, 15.56 × 12.02 inches

Italy, Sicily, Enna. Good Friday Procession, 1962, photograph, 12.02 × 15.56 inches

Italy, Sicily, Enna. Good Friday Procession, 1963, vintage print, 7.09 × 9.46 inches

Italy, Sicily, Roccamena. Ignazio Buttitta, 1963, photograph, 11.82 × 15.76 inches

Italy, Gorizia. In the Madhouse Run by Basaglia, 1968, charcoal print, 15.56 × 21.87 inches

Tunisia, Kairouan, 1969, photograph, 15.56 × 12.02 inches

Tunis, Douz. Sandstorm, 1969, photograph, 12.02 × 15.56 inches

Italy, Lucania, Serradarce. The Temple of Alberto Glorioso, 1970, photograph, 12.02 × 15.56 inches

Bangladesh, Decca. Fainted from Hunger, 1971, photograph, 11.82 × 15.56 inches

India, Trivandrum. Psychiatric Hospital, 1972, vintage print, 11.82 × 15.76 inches

India, Benares. Dog on the Ganges, 1972, vintage print, 15.96 × 11.82 inches

Italy, Sicily, Bagheria. Cat in Villa Palagonia, 1972, photograph, 15.56 × 12.02 inches

Lebanon, Beirut. Christian Militiaman, 1976, vintage print, 16.15 × 19.90 inches

Italy, Sicily, Assoro. Songs of Easter Week, 1977, photograph, 12.02 × 15.56 inches

France, Paris. Roland Barthes, 1977, photograph, 11.82 × 15.76 inches

Italy, Sicily, Sant'Elia. From my Window, 1980, photograph, 24.03 × 20.69 inches

Italy, Sicily, Capizzi. During a Festival, 1982, photograph, 11.82 × 15.76 inches

Italy, Sicily, Sant'Elia. Moonlight, 1982, photograph, 12.02 × 15.56 inches

Italy, Sicily, Palermo. Murdered Man, 1982, photograph, 15.56 × 12.02 inches

France, Opio. Jacques Henri Lartigue, 1984, photograph, 12.02 × 15.56 inches

Italy, Sicily, Palermo. Jorge Luis Borges, 1984, vintage print, 15.96 × 12.21 inches

Greece, Metsovon. Funeral Wake, 1984, vintage print, 15.96 × 19.90 inches

Ethiopia, Makallè. Famine Emergency, 1984, vintage print, 12.02 × 15.56 inches

USA, New York. Subway Station, 1985, vintage print, 12.21 × 15.96 inches

USA, NewYork, 1985, photograph, 12.02 × 15.56 inches

USA, Nashville, 1986, photograph, 15.56 × 11.82 inches

USA, NewYork. Under the Manhattan Bridge, 1986, photograph, 9.46 × 12.02 inches

Bolivia, Kami, 1986, vintage print, 12.02 × 15.96 inches

Bolivia, Kami, 1986, vintage print, 16.15 × 19.90 inches

Bolivia, Kami. Partially Sighted Boy, 1986, vintage print, 15.96 × 12.21 inches

Italy, Sicily, Palermo, Marpessa, 1987, charcoal print, 15.96 × 20.29 inches

Italy, Sicily, Bagheria. Marpessa, 1987, vintage print, 19.90 × 15.96 inches

Italy, Sicily, Caltagirone. Marpessa, 1987, photograph, 15.56 × 12.02 inches

Italy, Milan. Marpessa Backstage, 1987, photograph, 12.02 × 15.56 inches

Colombia, San Juan de Neponuceno, 1987, photograph, 12.02 × 15.56 inches

Italy, Sicily, Caltagirone. Marpessa, 1987, vintage print, 9.46 × 11.82 inches

Italy, Sicily, Modica. Marpessa and the Women, 1987, vintage print, 15.76 × 20.29 inches

Italy, Sicily, Cefalù. Fashion Photos, 1988, photograph, 15.56 × 11.82 inches

India, Madras, 1989, photograph, 15.56 × 11.94 inches

Italy, Campania, Paduli. Mimmo Paladino, 1990, vintage print, 16.15 × 12.02 inches

Hungary, Budapest. Statue of Stalin in a Warehouse, 1990, photograph, 12.02 × 15.56 inches

USA, NewYork. Martin Scorsese, 1990, photograph, 12.02 × 15.96 inches

USA, NewYork. In the Subway, 1991, photograph, 24.03 × 20.69 inches

Italy, Puglia, Brindisi. Albanian Refugees, 1991, photograph, 15.56 × 12.02 inches