

## **Bruna Biamino**

(Turin, 1956)

Reopening to the public in 2017 after its development commissioned by the Fondazione CRT, the OGR – Officine Grandi Riparazioni is imbibed in the recent history of Italy since its unification. The factory, which began operations in 1895, long represented an architectural and industrial point of excellence in the maintenance of railway rolling stock, and underwent heavy bombing throughout WWII. Finally, when the very last of its machines were dismantled, it was at the heart of a debate as to whether or not it should be demolished. The major photography fond of Brunna Biamino purchased for the collection describes the state of the complex in the very years in which it lost its productive purpose, marked by its definitive closure in 1992. In these images, the photographer focuses her interest on industrial archaeology and the history of factory workers in Turin, underlining the potential of the building even in the state of partial abandonment it was in prior to its transformation into a hub of culture and innovation. We may recognise the sloping roofs and the typical bare brick walls, along with the railway coaches waiting to be repaired and the now iconic traces of spray paint on the walls of the 'dome' (the highest room in the whole building) which the recent restoration project opted not to remove, out of respect for the historical memory of the numerous lives that have been lived by the OGR. But what emerges most clearly in Biamino's shots is the presence of thick vegetation growing around the structure, a clear sign of nature forcefully trying to take back its spaces. Rather than being a research into architecture itself, in fact, Biamino's photographs are something more intense and profound: an emotional and psychological study of places, which tries to render to the viewer the unique atmosphere of a moment. This is particularly true for the representations of the natural landscape, which the artist strips of all superficial elements. They are silent images, dematerialised, and ones from which the human figure is temporarily absent.

After her early involvement with the photographic medium at the start of the 1980s, Biamino completed her training in the United States, where she investigated black-and-white print techniques and psychoanalytical theories applied to photography. She has made numerous journeys around the world, always skilfully captured by the lens of her camera, from the desolation of Polish concentration camps to the rationalist architecture from the colonial era in Eritrea. However, she frequently returns to the images of Turin, her hometown, of which she also captures another soul: that of the noble courtyards of the city centre, of the Savoy gardens and residences, of the theatres and of the extraordinary public collections of ancient and modern art.

RA