

Aurelio Amendola*
(Pistoia, 1938)

Aurelio Amendola's photographic research is almost equally divided between images dedicated to architecture and ancient sculpture, from Jacopo della Quercia and Donatello to Canova, and portraits of contemporary artists, from Marino Marini and De Chirico to various leading contemporary figures.

A comparison between his black and white photographs that focus on historical subjects and those dealing with contemporary art, usually in color, reveals the power with which Amendola manages to convey the physicality of the material, volume, and, literally, weight of sculptures and architectural elements.

His shots of St. Peter's are responses to the stone, the marble, the cyclopean scale of the entire basilica, the power of every sculpted gesture and the corporeal relief of every element of ornamentation. This series, devoted to Michelangelo Buonarroti, is significant and was shown at the Hermitage, the first exhibition of a living photographer at the St. Petersburg museum.

In parallel fashion, the portraits of contemporary sculptors bring out the genuine physicality of their works, and the artists often even rest against them, exposing their familiarity and symbiosis with their art. In some cases the viewer can also see their physical confrontation with the materials, the noble hand-to-hand struggle from which the work is forged, as if leaning against it were the definitive act of a conquest achieved, like the foot of Donatello's David on the vanquished Goliath's head.

Amendola's photograph of Emilio vedova is memorable, the image of the artist's hands, face, forehead, and clothing are covered and spattered with paint. His body, arms open, emerges against the backdrop of the canvas he has just painted, as if the artist himself were emerging from the work's embrace, freeing himself from the energies he has unleashed, not yet completely separate from the hands from which they have been imparted.

His series of photographs of Burri are well known, showing the artist at work on his large plastic pieces, lacerating with fire the transparent screen of the material, igniting and then extinguishing it to regulate the size of the burns and the dripping of the shriveled edges. All these are images that express to the greatest extent possible that epic confrontation between artist and work, which Amendola's lens seems to fully and naturally sense. (EV)

Additional Works in the Collection

Giorgio De Chirico, Venice, 1972, two prints from a transparency, 13.40 × 13.40 inches

Giorgio De Chirico, Venice, 1972, print from a transparency, 11.43 × 9.06 inches

Alberto Burri, Morra, Combustion, 1976, print from a transparency, 15.37 × 15.37 inches

Alberto Burri, Morra, Combustion, 1978 (77), three prints from a transparency, 15.37 × 10.43 inches

Alberto Burri, Morra, Combustion, 1978, print from a transparency, 15.37 × 15.37 inches

Emilio Vedova's Studio, Venice, 1987, print from a transparency, 15.76 × 15.76 inches

San Galgano, 2002, six prints from a transparency, 13.99 × 10.24 inches

FACERT