

Ancient Lights: Four Metaphors

“Archaeology of light” is a beautiful metaphor, but it also represents an oxymoron: it juxtaposes the knowledge of an ancient past with a fleeting vision of reality. The presence of light makes us perceive space in an instant that is permanently changing. Archaeology, on the other hand, is the material record of a slow tempo, superimposed in multiple layers, detained at a certain point of the process of construction / destruction that inevitably pervades all architecture with the passage of time.

“The edges of the world” is also a highly evocative expression, which conceals—in a rather ambiguous way—another contradiction. The surface of the planet that we inhabit is continuous; it does not have real limits. The edges exist only in our memory and imagination: dry deserts, bleak forests, steep cliffs, remote landscapes that mark the itineraries of an intimate journey that each one of us undertakes and interprets through our own personal experience.

“Extreme landscapes” recalls a deep beauty that nests within the violent power of nature. Landscape is always the result of the forces that have modeled nature in the same way that architectural atmospheres are shaped by the physical and mental actions of its inhabitants. A contemporary landscape represents, in that sense, only a moment in the extension of the vast geological time.

“Personal geographies” contraposes the particular to the universal. The measure of the world —geography—is interpreted through the subjective view of the artist as fragments of natural and built landscapes form a personal atlas of memories.

Erieta Attali employs these four metaphors to express in words what her photographs already reflect with great eloquence. Her work possesses a strong hypnotic power where architecture is revealed through its connection to a specific landscape. The camera frames an exterior “objective” world. She directs our attention towards a certain point consequently distracting us from the rest, provoking a view that inevitably conditions the way we will perceive reality. On the other hand, the artist’s mind reflects like in a mirror a “subjective” inner world that only belongs to her. The eye and the mind merge in time and space to reveal an unexpected paradox: while the architect dives in time in search of an imagined space, the photographer travels in space to capture fleeting instants of an ancient light.