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# The Spatial Elegies of Massimo Listri

By Apostolos Mitsios, 15 May 2012



self-portrait, photo © Massimo Listri

When everything seems to have been said and done as far as interior photography is considered, Massimo Listri reminds us that everything is a question of perspective where even the most over used thematic can acquire a new dimension when approached from the right vantage point. Massimo Listri's career has spanned 30 years and although he has experimented with everything, he is famous for his interior photographs. Listri first discovered his passion for photography at the age of 16, motivated by the books and magazines that his father, a journalist and literary critic, used to receive at the family home. Having access to the latest materials, as he says, gave him the opportunity to discover the world of arts and photography and literally fall in love. Since then he hasn't stopped taking photos, having shown his work from London and New York to Milan, Hong Kong and Bangkok.



Reggia di Venaria II, Piemonte 2007 | photo © Massimo Listri

What makes his work unique is how he has made interiors look so absolutely vivid, as if they had a secret life of their own that only he knows how to portray. Listri has the extraordinary ability to capture all the small details that make the difference and reveal all the stories that remain hidden behind the surface. When asked about his distinctive approach, he reveals: *"It is purely a question of sensibility. The secret is in the light*

*which highlights the details. That's why I definitely prefer to use natural light when possible". Listri's photos transmit an almost deafening silence, as if time had stopped and humans had suddenly disappeared and the only thing reminiscent of them are the interiors they've left behind, the remains of their lives and their passions, their art and their culture. It comes of no surprise that his interiors have gained him a lot of fame and many people have honored him with their trust, giving him the privilege of photographing unique and restricted places, including among others the Vatican Museum in Rome and Palazzo Pitti in Florence. Massimo Listri comments on this: >> *My photography is an expression of tranquility and silence in this chaotic society -a sense of perspective and equilibrium. This is therapy for the soul. Every time I take a photo is like the first time a treasure is revealed, a first emotion, be it an empty room or the greatest treasures of the Vatican.* <<*

When asked about what is more important to him, the technique or the intuition, Listri points out: *"Intuition is something you cannot learn, it is your emotions, the way you look at your subject. Technique is just a tool which we all have to learn at the beginning of our career"*. As far as the most important influences in his work are concerned, he declares, without second thought, his love for the masters of painting Piero della Francesca and Vermeer. Listri believes that there are no secrets in photography and, in this sense, there are no specific things one must have in mind when photographing interiors. *"Proust wrote that acts of creativity do not have laws of precedence. It is an instinct, a great, obscure and incomprehensible power that can never be repeated. Each occasion, each photo is just unique"*. As for his future plans, Listri points out: *"My future is what is unknown to me. The only thing I am sure of is that discovery will continue being a great element in my work"*.

Listri recently inaugurated his first show in Latin America, in the Museum of Modern Art of Bogota. For this show, which is a 'not to miss opportunity' for the Latin American audience to get in touch with his work, Listri chose 45 photographs from his repertoire, focusing on palaces and libraries. In a celebration of Massimo Listri's extraordinary career, we leave you with a wide selection of his work, hoping that you will fall in love with his spatial elegies just like we did!