A Contemporary Daguerreotypist in Venice in the Footsteps of John Ruskin

by BENIAMINO TERRANEO, contemporary Daguerreotypist, Italy

“For some years now I have been making daguerreotypes and I consider this to be a perfect procedure for my photographic work at present. I like the characteristic sharpness of daguerreotypes, the purity of the thickly deposited silver, its brilliance, and the image that is simultaneously negative and positive, appearing or disappearing like a divinity, depending on the angle at which the plate is viewed.

In the series “In the Footsteps of Ruskin” I tried to create a timeless setting and to evoke reality instead of just imitating the past. I felt that a return to the original technique would help me to savour once again the unique wonder of the landscape that so fascinated Ruskin and that still attracts the modern traveller. I advocate an honest kind of photography that is simple rather than sensational. My intention is to produce photographs that are objects to be viewed closely, just as if one were reading a book: images that suggest something precious, living and organic.

In the nineteenth century Ruskin was one of the first visitors to take home a very lifelike souvenir of the beauty of Italy, but today there is no longer the same pressing need to create a “portrait” of things. Everything has been photographed already, and yet the daguerreotype has a clear relationship with atmosphere, dust and memories. In these times of the digital flood what interests me is these oases of the true, the simple and the natural, far away from any screens or pixels”.

Ill.1 Benimino Terraneo, Ponte dei Consafelzi, Venezia, 2014
Ill. 2, Beniamino Terraneo, Scala del Bovolo, Venezia, 2013

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