

## Displacement? *Spiazzamento*?

When discussing this new project, which reflects on her own work, presenting studies carried out at different times and in different places, Giada Ripa uses two nouns, one in English, *displacement*, and one in Italian, *spiazzamento*. These two words can be the translation of one another, but also have very different meanings. According to dictionaries, the English word is used in Freudian psychology to define a subconscious defence mechanism set in motion by the mind, which redirects its own affection from one “object” perceived as dangerous to another “object”, seen as being safer. The Italian term, in a figurative sense, suggests the effect of surprising somebody, and thus making them uneasy. By using both terms to define her own work, Giada Ripa enriches them with greater depth. Some of her images aim to restore an identity to places and faces, to recreate a relationship between land and its inhabitants. Created in Turkestan or in the Amazon, in the Caucasus or in Central Asia, they record instances of uprooting, of not belonging, of precariousness, with a language that is direct in appearance only, respectful of the places yet permeated by a subtle sense of ambiguity; born perhaps from awareness within the author of the transitory nature of one’s own presence, searching certainly for the identity of others but also that of herself. A solid bond therefore unites the “testimonies”, apparently impartial to the fleeting self-portraits that mark the rhythm of their journeys. In sites of spellbound fascination Giada Ripa places herself in the scene with a fragile stability; a delicate feminine figure captured in the moment of greatest resistance to the forces of gravity. Her presence, almost diagonal within the image, renders the scene that surrounds her incongruous, and provokes questions not destined to be answered. They are images that are “caught off guard”, surprised and disorientated; or their *displacement*, as it were, is the response to a transfer of affection, from the scene to the feminine figure which might, however – and here again there are Freudian

undertones – signal a sense of precariousness. The questions, as has been said, do not have answers because this too is one of the characteristics of the works accomplished: arousing emotion, provoking reflection, and – why not – suggesting a whisper of healthy unease.

Giovanna Calvenzi, photo editor and curator