

Alessandro Mallamaci

Un Luogo Bello

May 24, 2023

Alessandro is an Italian photographer interested in documenting his surroundings as a way to feed reflections and create a debate around visual arts. In his series 'Un luogo bello', Alessandro portrays in a sincere and direct way the places and inhabitants of the valley of the Sant'Agata river in southern Italy. These images are product of a continuous observation, in which the photographer combines his vivencies and the curious eye of an intruder.



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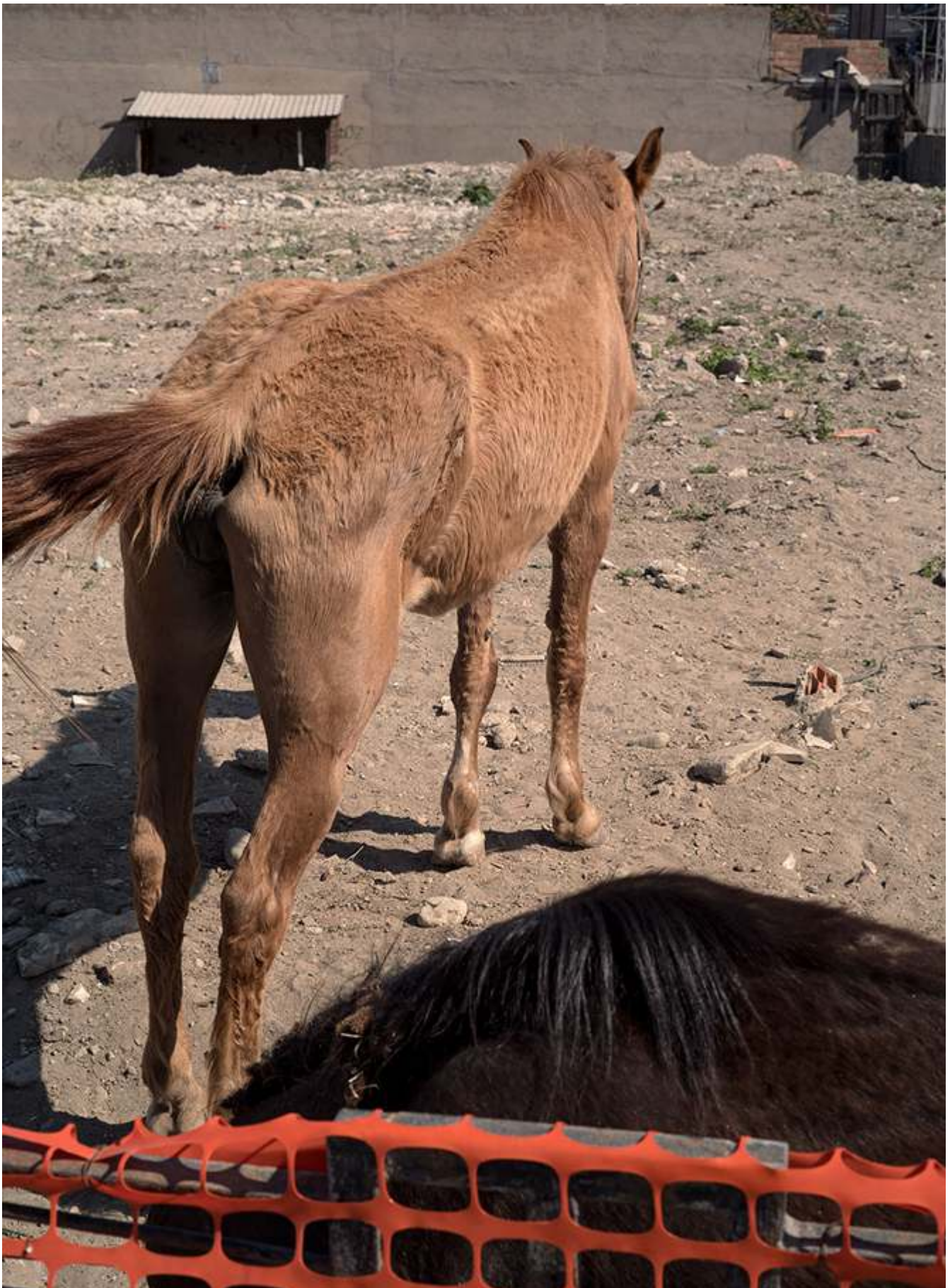


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First of all thank you very much for your contribution to our project. Can you please introduce yourself for us?

I'm a professional photographer since 2007, but I'm playing with photography since I was 16.

I live in Calabria, in Southern Italy, and working as a professional photographer, I had to do all kind of photographic work, but I'm specialised in interior and corporate photography. Obviously I really like to spend my energies producing my own projects.

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Since 2009 I've organised lots of workshops, festivals and photographic events, because I believe that growth happens through the sharing of knowledge and experiences. I'm also a teacher (I collaborated with Fujifilm, Leica and EIZO) and directed a photography school and a fine art lab in Calabria.

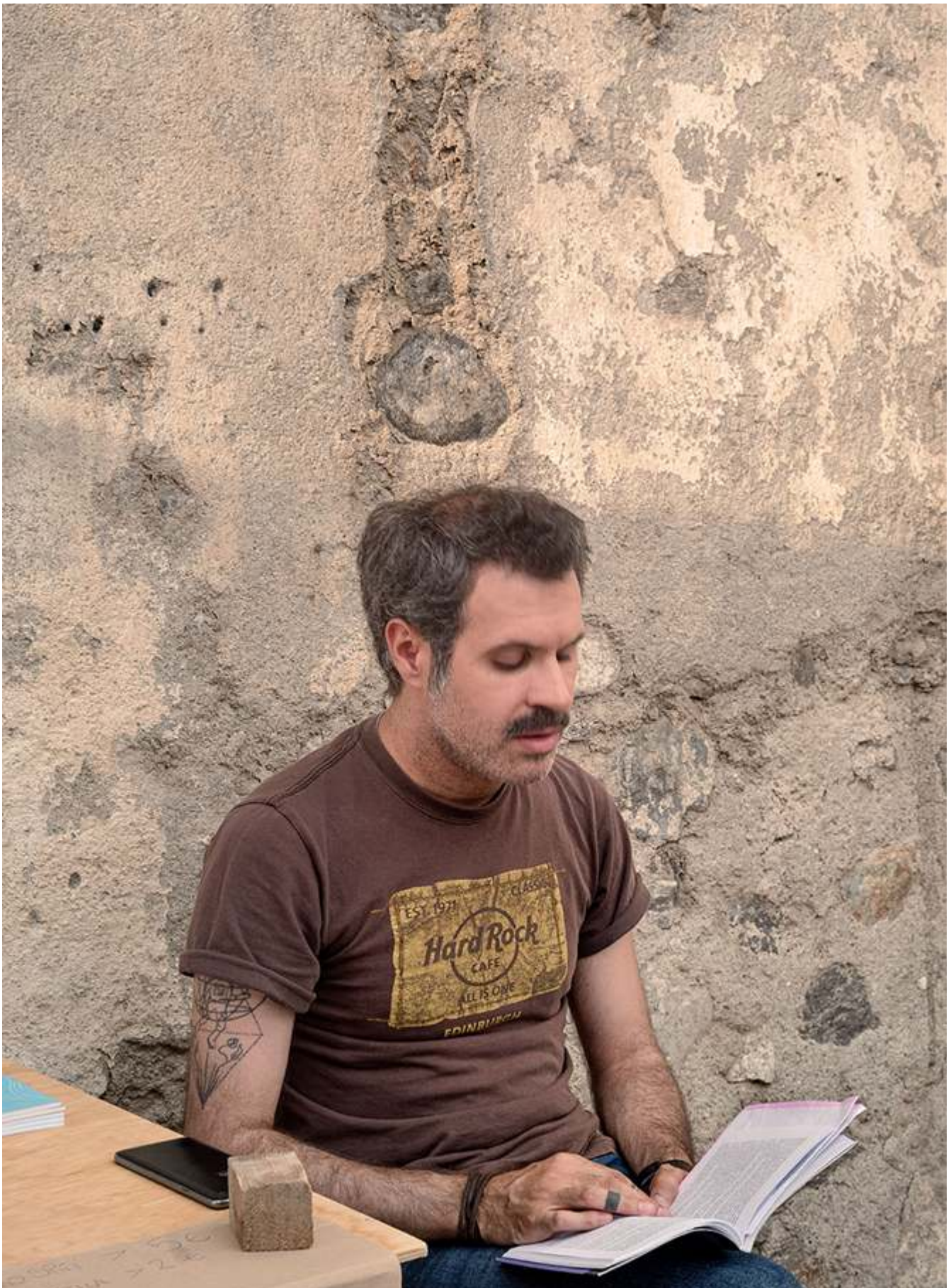
But trying to be less boring, I love travelling, visiting exhibitions and museums, going to the cinema. I love walking through cities. I am passionate about sharing knowledge and the art of teaching.

How did you start in photography?

In 1996 I put a finger on the shutter of my father's camera! After that I started with several teenage experiments while I was part of the editorial board of the school newspaper. At this time I was doing my first multimedia projects (do you remember CD-ROMs?) and starting to play with Photoshop and Premiere.

After my degree in Disciplines of Arts, Music and Spectacle in 2003, I started to work as a web designer, a graphic designer and eventually, as a photographer.

In particular I remember that one of my first jobs was in a photographic studio with a well-equipped pose room. Every night I was there. I spent thousands of hours experimenting with photography, shooting, developing my own negatives and trying to post-produce my photos.



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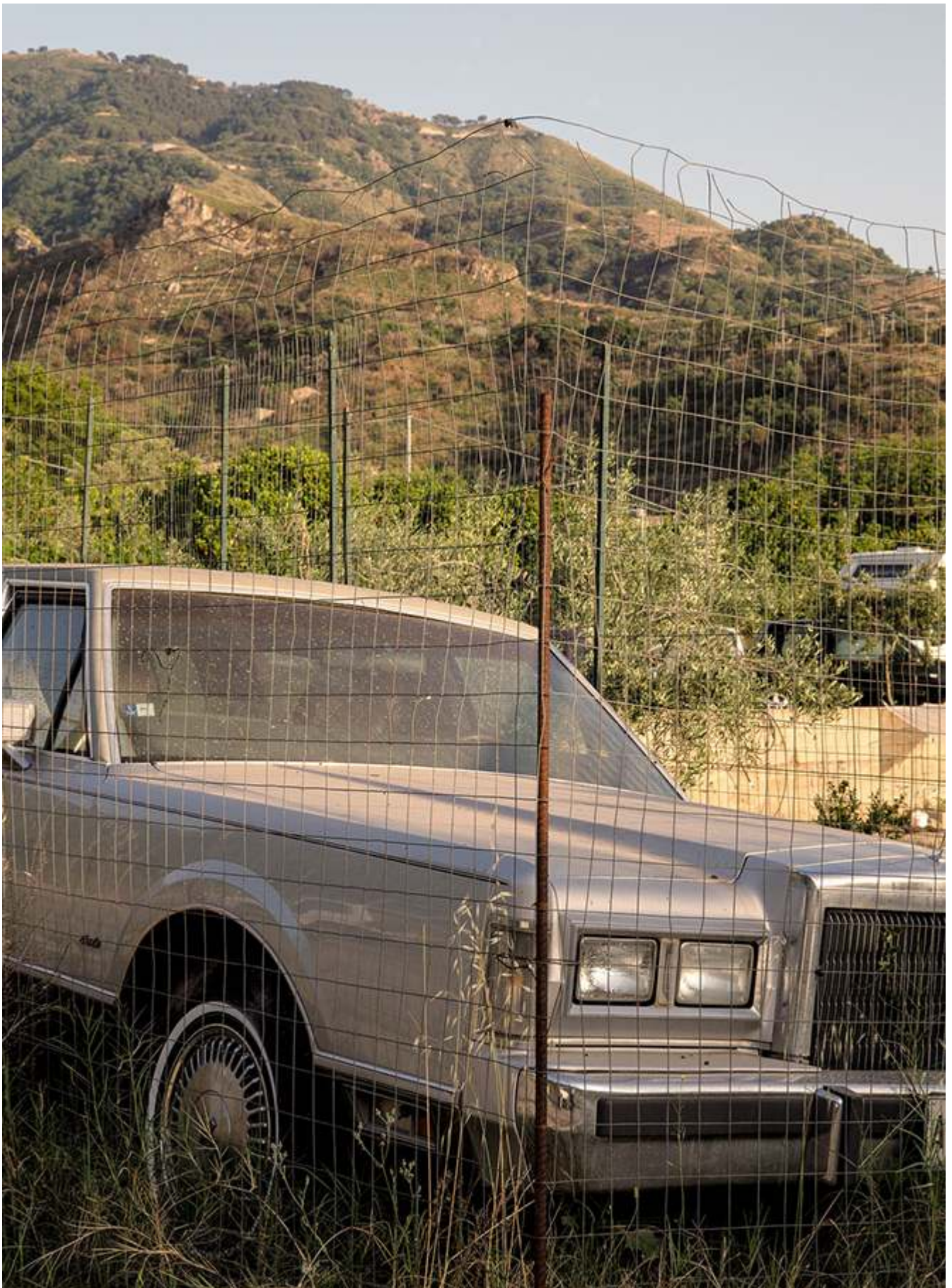


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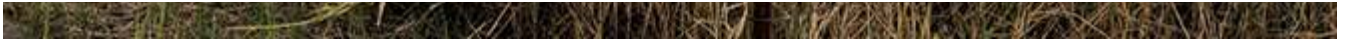


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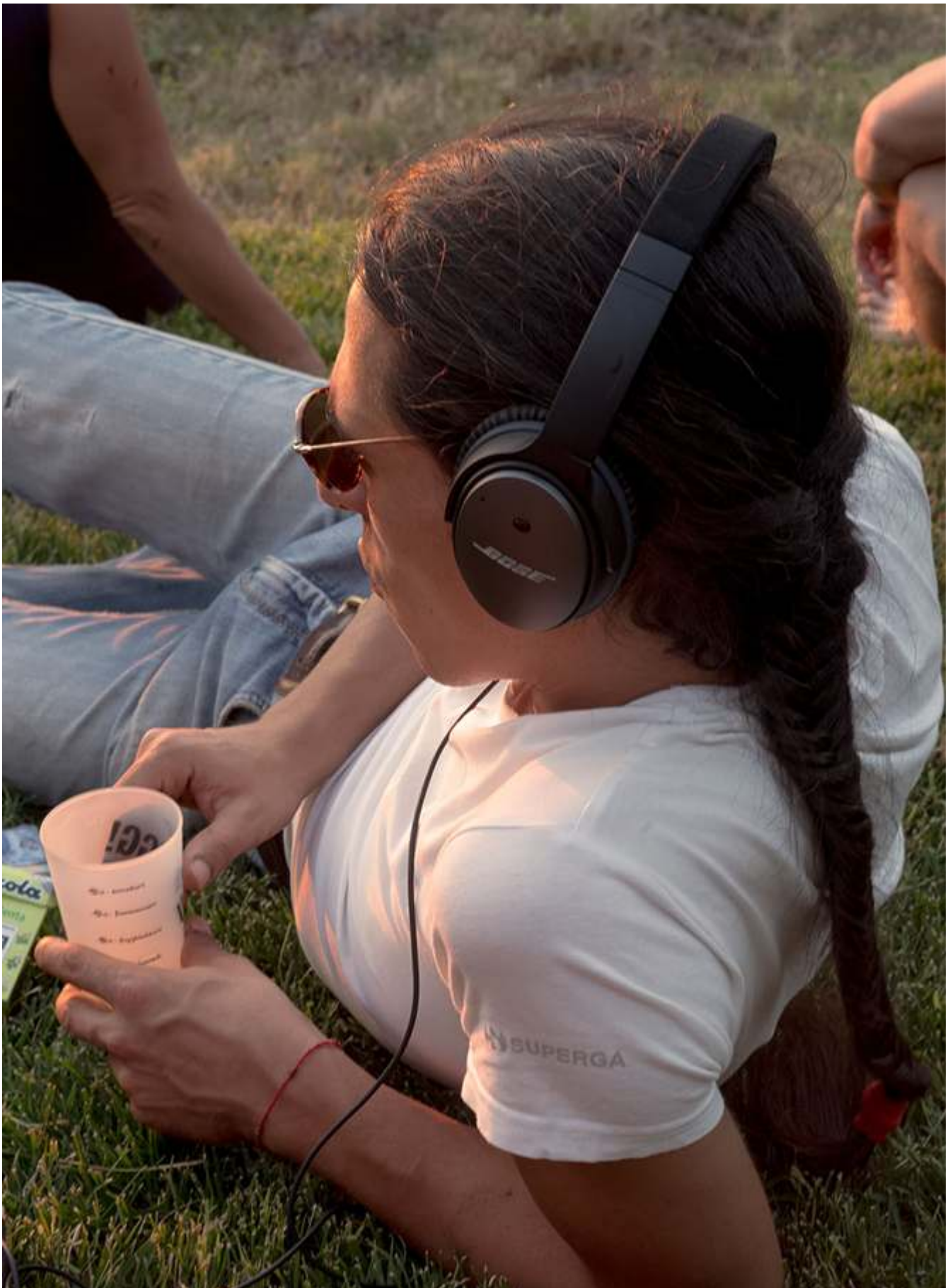


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What is 'Un luogo bello' about?

The valley of the Sant'Agata river is nestled in the red land of the Aspromonte mountains, in Southern Italy, and flows towards the sea, until it plunges into the Strait of Messina.

The name of the waterway originates from the Greek "aghatè", which is linked to concepts such as beauty, goodness and nobility; as if travellers from the Magna Graecia period had been enchanted by this place.

I live in the valley of Sant'Agata river so I know this a place very well.

(See the flipping book dummy here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r3duJMuNTPs>)

What was your motivation behind this project?

I could answer with the last phrase of my dummy book: "This is my landscape. I cannot help but love it. It is a beautiful place". I started to take photos for myself. After many years I printed many photos and decided to continue the project getting closer and shooting lots of vertical sections of this landscape. On the book I also used some horizontal photos previously taken: wider visions to create pauses in the narration, trying to allow the observer to breathe among those sequences of vertical photos.

Giovanna Calvenzi on the introduction of the book wrote: "Mallamaci dedicates an enduring love song, aware that in the images of his Calabria everyone will see what experience has taught them to see, but what they will also see is a remarkable poetic dedication to a suffering land." I was inspired by the structure of the sonnet, that is composed by four stanzas. For this reason I used four

and Norman Douglas. These texts - that are not directly connected with the photos - have different styles of writing and I found interesting to add them to enrich the narration.

In general, what inspires your work?

I really love photographs that ask questions and make us lose references. Photographs in front of which we are displaced, rather than having confirmation of what we already know or expect to see.

I find it essential to continue to represent the landscape to feed reflections, involving in the debate even those who are not interested in visual arts, are not used to looking at it with the right slowness or simply that no longer see it.

Who are your favourite photographers / artists?

I could make an infinite list... during my training as a photographer I fell in love with several photographers, starting with very famous photographers such as Bresson, Ansel Adams, Richard Avedon, Herb Ritts, Kertesz, etc. I find it interesting to know the influences of each photographer, for example visiting an exhibition I found out that Herb Ritts bought some prints of Horst, inspired by the work of Salvador Dalí! Incredible.

After this initial period I discovered Robert Adams, Berndt and Hilla Becher, Stephen Shore, Lee Friedlander - that makes us travel to a world that we can only see through their images - and the Italian photographers Gabriele Basilico, Luigi Ghirri, Guido Guidi, that I love. Even though their pictures are so inspiring, I think that reading what they wrote about their work is sometimes more interesting than looking at their photos. I'm referring to books such as "Beauty in Photography: Essays in Defense of Traditional Values" by Robert Adams, "The Nature of Photographs" by Stephen Shore, "Lezioni di fotografia" by Luigi Ghirri, "Architetture, città, visioni" by Gabriele Basilico, "La figura dell'orante. Appunti per una lezione" and "Carlo's Scarpa Tomba Brion" by Guido Guidi, and also "Le désir du monde" by Antoine D'Agata. I also found interesting what some writers wrote

What is your favourite photo book?

For many different reasons I could quote "Minamata" by Eugene Smith or "Invasion 68: Prague" by Josef Koudelka. Looking at the contemporary photographers I really love "The lonely ones" by Gus Powell - which mixes photography a text in an incredible way - "El Porqué de Las Naranjas" by Ricardo Cases, "Sleeping by the Mississippi" by Alec Soth, "Provisional arrangement" by Martin Kollar, "Lunario" by Guido Guidi, "Grays The Mountain Sends" by Bryan Schutmaat, but I could go on and on.

Thank you very much for your time and contribution to analog magazine.

Many thanks to you for your hard work in diffusion love for photography and the research of many authors.

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