

Michael Kenna

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Press Release

Where are the world's roots? Are they within myself, does the world appear only when I look at it, and do I determine how it appears? Or is the world already there and I am determined by it? Michael Kenna's answer is unambiguous: The world is there already, and he tries to see it in his camera's viewfinder.

Michael Kenna photographs landscapes, they are his passion, but perhaps his real passion are actually allegories, the search for things in which a word, a feeling, indeed human existence is condensed. In nature, trees seem like the main bearers of symbolism, but also mountains, clouds, the mysterious surface of water and the traces that humans leave there.

Nature determines what the photographer sees, not the other way round. Michael Kenna's love for Japan has produced numerous photographs reminiscent of that country, and most recently he published the wonderful book *Forms of Japan* (2015). In 2015 and 2016, he travelled to the Abruzzi, where he encountered a wild, archaic landscape charged with emotion – and his photographs reflect that. They show nature's harsh as well as its tender sides, and we see how ably man once used to accommodate himself into nature. The settlements, built to be protected by the mountain, seem as if they were part of it.

Michael Kenna found something else in Italy which doesn't exist in quite this way anywhere else: many small Catholic churches, and in them a great variety of confessionals (*confessionali*). Patiently, he collected them over the course of several years. The series *Confessionali* comprises more than 70 of them, all from the region Emilia Romagna. Each of them has its own character, and they seem like living creatures, not just in the eyes of believers, but also to uninvolved observers. One wears the cross quite sternly, the next one a crown. One looks as if it wanted to start dancing, the other one appears rather sedate. One looks rather elegant in its spot, others look a bit lost and forlorn. Have confessionals ever before been looked at in this way? Furnished with all the human, all too human characteristics, as mirrors of all of us?

Galerie Albrecht is pleased to be able to show photographs of the Abruzzi and the *Confessionali* – as one of the first galleries worldwide. Signed copies of the book "Abruzzo", just published by Nazraeli Press and "Confessionali", published by corsiero editore, are available at Galerie Albrecht.

www.galeriesusannealbrecht.de
post@galeriesusannealbrecht.de