

Roman Impressions

The city that makes us dream in the reflections of the camera's eye. *By A.M. Navarra*

ROME HAS BEEN photographed many times, and in many different ways: we are all accustomed to seeing such images in school books, tourist guides, magazines and, of course, on postcards. Photographs of all kinds - in colour or black and white, photographs of people, or of simple scenes and views, maybe taken at sunset with that great ball of fire nodding off over one of the city's domes.....

After having travelled around the world as a press photographer, I found myself visiting Rome like a tourist with a camera around my neck. While I felt the need to

discover and comprehend the city in which I lived, I was especially overwhelmed by an excessive sense of "responsibility" mingled with a sort of "guilt." I was fully aware of the assignment that I

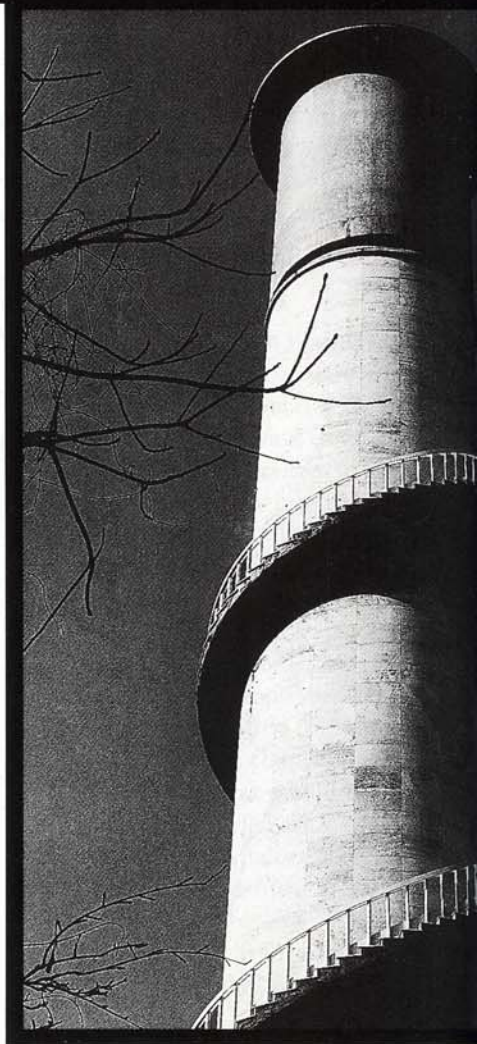
wanted to fulfill, and ashamed that I had ignored the beauty right outside my doorstep.

Fountains, alleys, squares, unique glimpses of magical spots: I tried to underline both their simplicity and their impressiveness, tradition rather than negligence. I didn't want to take advantage of the strokes of light or of the breathtaking sunsets, images that remain impressed in the mind of the observer. I tried to keep in mind the glorious past of this city and its people, highlighting its architecture, including modern urbanistic innovations, glad to be able to express myself on such an important theme, so frequently exploited and, at times, even wrongly interpreted.

They are simple images, direct, coherent and respectful that have the aim of transmitting a message to whoever looks at them, of leaving an impression, perhaps even a small one, but enough to follow a trace even if sometimes difficult to observe with the naked eye.

With these shots I've tried to allow the city to express herself, to "talk," to defend herself against those who abuse her and her beauty. Careful! I don't think that I've taken advantage of her splendours - I tried to ask for

From left: the Ponte Sant'Angelo, the tower of Termini station, the colonnade of St. Peter's, an overpass and the Mouth of Truth



her permission and authorization, in a cautious and respectful manner, without arrogance or insistence.

Photography is an old art form, a type of direct expression in which it's easy to be carried away by details, by quick glimpses, by the desire to overdo things. It's sometimes difficult to interpret because it's excessively artificial, almost spectacular. My primary intention was to exclude this spectacularity



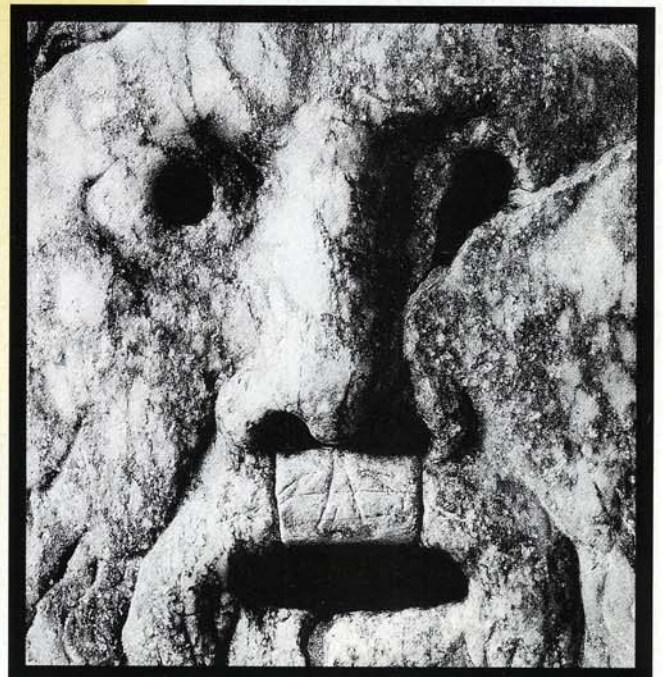
WHO IS A.M. NAVARRA?

Attilio Maria Navarra was born in Rome in 1969 and lives in Umbria. After graduating with a degree in economics and business at the age of 22, he began his career as a contractor in the construction industry.

He did photo reportages in different areas of Africa (his first love), in Greenland, Yemen and Greece and is currently finishing a publication regarding Tibetan realms outside of Tibet: reportages of everyday life and suggestive images of landscapes taken in the region of the Himalayas with particular attention to the mysticity of Tibetan Buddhism.

He photographs in black and white and prefers the 6x6 Hasselblad format.

In 1993, he presented his photographs in his first photo exhibit "Rome and surroundings"; in 1995, he presented his first book of photographs entitled "Campi Aperti" ("Open Fields"), published by Newton Compton, in a personal photo exhibit in Rome on the Umbrian and Tuscan countryside. **In the year 2000, he produced and realized the calendar "2000 Roma," from which all of the photos featured in this article are taken.**



and to leave out exaggerated technicalities, to try and reconcile these sites that are so "full of themselves" with an almost "annoying" simplicity. On the other hand, I wanted to break away from the conventional image of monumental Rome to instead turn to

historical memory. Rome with its statues, its fountains, its alleyways and also with its metropolitan scenes have thus

I wanted to break away from the conventional image of Rome to turn to the very essence of the city of today

the city of today in all its most unusual guises, for the most part ignored by its very citizens: strong witnesses of industrial technology, modern roads and bridges which live with the sovereign presence of the

ancient without being taken by surprise by the lens in the most natural way, as if the click of the camera were the

Above: the Gazometro in the Ostiense area; below: a suggestive shot taken in an ancient Roman structure

batting of an eyelid: this spontaneous and direct photogenic quality, in conformity with some specific rules, has permitted me to express myself freely and, at times, I think, has allowed the most authentic image of

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