

## CROSSED GAZES

*Toni Catany, the body, the gaze, the memory*

Artur Ramon Art

Each session was like starting over, as if it were the first time. The setting was the living room of his house: a piece of fabric hung on the wall as a backdrop—half white, leaning toward beige, an undefined, time-faded color—plus two spotlights hanging from above. Toni Catany gave few instructions; he let things happen. In that space of approximately 2 to 4 square meters, the body ended up adapting to the setting, where, after a while, a synthetic language of small gestures emerged—hesitant, unintentionally, blindly—until silently weaving together a story.

Shortly afterward, he would put on music: Beethoven, Mozart, Theodorakis... Interestingly, he took photographs depending on the music he selected. Catany's world is rich in sound and also literary, imbued with the slow, contemplative rhythm of Marcel Proust, the lyricism of Rainer Maria Rilke, and the decadence of Gabriele d'Annunzio.

One day, he invited me into the room where he developed his photographs. There he had the trays laid out in which he submerged the sheets of photographic paper. "The day I stop having fun, I'll quit photography. It will no longer make sense. To create, you must have excitement," he said. A chemist by training, Toni Catany looked in his small lab like a Renaissance alchemist magician, experimenting with fluids from which his creations appeared printed on paper—his visions taking shape like ghosts with sensual and warm forms, thanks to selenium toning, managing to reach a human temperature, before delicately hanging them up to dry.

Each photo was—and still is—a poem, probably an epic one, a visual sequence that holds a story, a reflection. And that is where Catany's camera captures an emotional space of full imagination, where we hear Rilke whisper in our ear: *"Go to the limits of your longing."*

In that creative space, the body manifests itself not just through its nudity, but through gestures that caress the space, charged with baroque connotations, drawing hieroglyphs in the air. And there, Toni Catany's gaze captures us by seizing that instant, like a mirage at the gates of Olympus. In his gaze, the model—mostly dancers—seemed to take on another

dimension, escaping their shadows in search of light. Movement lends the image, like the wind, a pictorial as well as mystical quality.

Throughout history, man has always needed to materialize the divine to draw closer to God.

Once the session was over, the photographed body became the artist's creation, where the photographer now becomes the CREATOR.

Carlos Murias

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