

ECO
Veronica Greco
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What remains of a river without water are the debris that once flowed from the Sila Greca mountains to the Ionian Sea. In these remnants along the dry bed of the Trionto River, towards its mouth, Veronica Greco finds her roots, on the same banks that once bore the name Traente, and where, in the sixth century BC, battles were fought between the cities of Kroton and Sybaris. Among these remnants lie the artist's childhood excursions with her father and brother during summer mornings spent in the Calabria of her grandparents, and the afternoons spent listening to the many legends of the great river, a witness to multiple battles between greek colonies, the Norman victory over the Byzantines, still visible in the blue eyes of the area's elderly inhabitants, and the home of the nymph Calliroe. History and legend immerse themselves in that river, which has largely been dry since the 1980s.

What remains of that part of the Trionto are merely the stories and the echoes of women who, until about forty years ago, would wash clothes there, singing chants and exchanging stories. What lingers is the sound: the crunch of dry earth beneath the artist's feet as she retraces the river's course, rediscovering its bends, the clash of weapons, the scurrying of animals that once drank from its waters and the splashing of water on laundry. The photograph that greets the visitor in the exhibit, introducing them through a theatrical backdrop, tricks us into seeing a body of water that, like memories, occasionally loses its clarity. What we actually see is the dry skeleton of what, not too long ago, was an integral and significant part of the region's geopolitical landscape. For this area, the river, in its non-dry sections, still serves as a key source of potable water for many localities and is home to several hydroelectric plants. Greco draws attention to the drought in southern Italy and, more broadly, to the water resource crisis that now affects not only the entire peninsula but tragically the entire planet. She urges us to reflect on the harm that irresponsible exploitation of energy and resources causes not only to the environment but also to the culture of these places, which will become increasingly arid.

Exhibition text by *Ilaria Nerli*

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