

Mario Cresci (1942 Genoa) *Biography*

Since the end of the Sixties, Mario Cresci has been the Italian artist whose work has brought about the development of an experimental language specific to photography.

His complex work is rooted in the multidisciplinary studies he undertook in Venice in 1962, and has been influenced by his meetings with the main artists of Arte Povera, in particular Pino Pascali, Eliseo Mattiacci, Yannis Kounellis and Alighiero Boetti, after he settled in Rome in 1969.

In 1969, he made the first photographic Environment at the *Il Diaframma Gallery* in Milan, exhibiting a thousand transparent cylinders containing a thousand photographs, also transparent.

In 1970, he was invited to his first Biennial in Venice; since then he has been invited again three times (1978, 1993, 1995).

In 1974, he settled in Matera – which has been chosen to be the European capital of culture in 2017 – where he undertook a project that would become essential to the development of photography in Italy, especially with the publication of *Matera, immagini e documenti*, a book that today is seen as the first photographic work on urban cultural anthropology.

His photographs went into the collections of MoMa in New York at the same time as those of Luigi Ghirri.

He returned to Matera in the Eighties, and contributed to the re-installment of landscape as photographic subject. He was one of the main artists in the exhibition “Viaggio in Italia” organized by Luigi Ghirri in Bari’s Pinacoteca Provinciale, in 1984.

Later on, Mario Cresci developed new themes and new experimentations that gave him a prominent place among the Italian photographers who give meaning to photography: a photography with its power to constantly shift our relationship to reality, a photography that alters the terms of the question, evoking an “illusory” form of natural.

Isn’t the only question that perhaps enables us to validate the practice of photography, the question of the meaning of reality, of knowing how to represent it and how to imagine it? Mario Cresci answers that question in a remarkable manner.

His works are in the collections of many Italian and foreign institutions like MAXXI in Rome, Pinacoteca Nazionale in Bologna, Centro Studi e Archivio della Comunicazione in Parma, Museo delle Arti in Catanzaro, Istituto per la Grafica in Rome, Museo d’Arte Medioevale e Moderna della Basilicata in Matera, Museo d’Arte in Gallarate and Centro Ricerca e Archiviazione della Fotografia in Spilimbergo.

Mario Cresci teaches at the Fondazione Fotografia in Modena and at the University of Urbino. He lives and works in Bergamo.