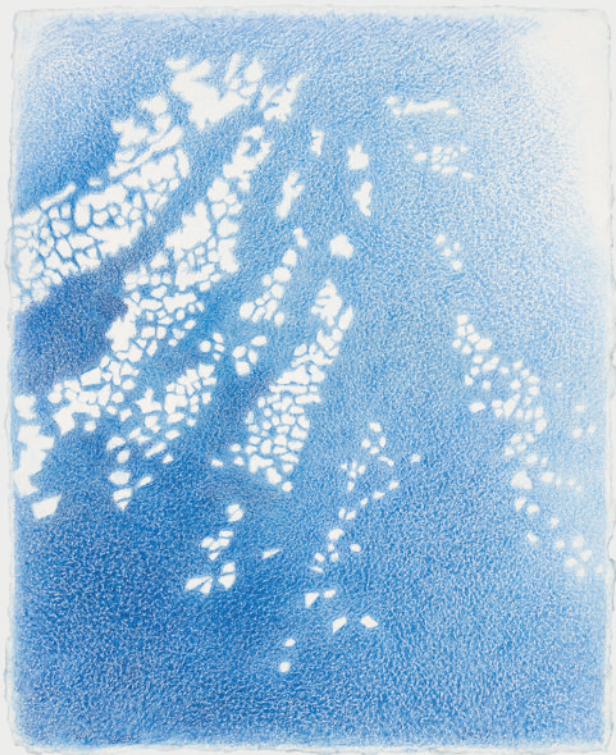


The Light of Shadow

Giulia Napoleone



The Light of Shadow

Three Pastels and Ten Engravings, 1975-2014

Giulia Napoleone

Edition

Kärjäkivet

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[Morning Shadows], 2020-22.

Pastel © Giulia Napoleone.

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© Rauno Hiiander. Courtesy of the photographer.

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Editor's Note

We dedicate this issue to the Italian artist Giulia Napoleone who generously accepted the invitation to publish a set of works about her long investigation around the light of shadow. More specifically, they consist of three pastels and ten engravings that are accompanied by small excerpts from some interviews where the artist talks about her life and work.

“An investigation around the signs and archeology of the territory”.¹ If it was necessary to do an interpretation of Giulia Napoleone's work, this could very much be one of them and one of the main reasons why we felt the need to include it in this collection of booklets. A work defined by the subtle, delicate and meticulous way in which it underlines small signs within territories that are often only emotional.

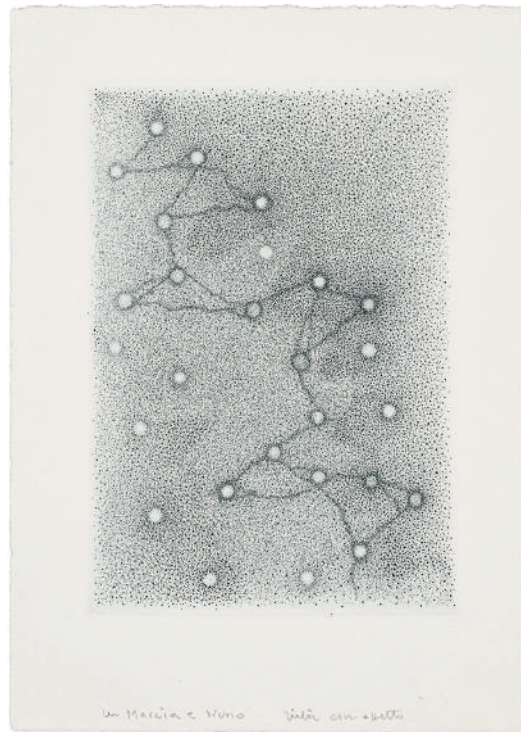
We would like to reiterate our deep gratitude to Giulia Napoleone for accepting to participate in this publication. A special thanks as well to Loredana Müller and Roi Carrera, mutual friends without whom this issue would not have been possible. Finally, a special acknowledgment to the friend and Galician photographer Fuco Reyes for the difficult but exceptional task of documenting the published works.

1. Definition attributed to Kärjäkivet by the Swiss newspaper "L'Osservatore" in a review published online on October 7th of 2020.

The Light of Shadow

- Light ²

Giulia Napoleone,
Artist



Il nove escluso [The excluded nine], 2002. Punch

© Giulia Napoleone. Photo: Fuco Reyes

My work is often an investigation of light.

I like to observe the small changes of the leaves, of the weed strands, of the sky that changes with the variations of light. When I was a child, I used to lose myself observing the moss, following a story that I later found on the trails of sand by the sea. Now I have to try not to get lost in the dewdrops, in the weed strands that I find on my daily walks. I would like to interpret these drops of light where the sky is reflected, giving life to a "humble and earthly" blue which is lost in the glory of light and rivals the blue of the sky.

Technically, I work with light in different ways.

In the engravings I usually get light vibrations, adding dots to dots, to increase the vibrations.

In the drawings and watercolors, the points of light are the white of the paper. Also in this case I usually make each corner of the sheet vibrate, as if they were particles of a large amount of dust.

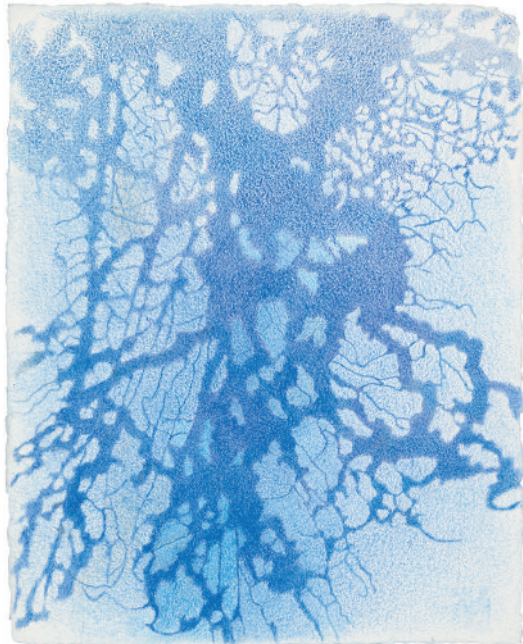
In the oil works, it's the material itself that becomes light. In these works, the attempt is to move the surface with the alternation of small pieces of varying intensities of color or with parallel lines divided by a thin mass of matter, small color densities that innervate the entire surface of the painting.

*

The shadow is a choice, a choice of work, a choice of life, because I could define my work as an investigation of the light of shadow. That is, the shadow does not exclude light. Generally we think of shadow as being dark, in other words, as the opposite of light. However, for me the shadow (that's why I said it's a condition) it's like light: It has its own lights and shadows.³

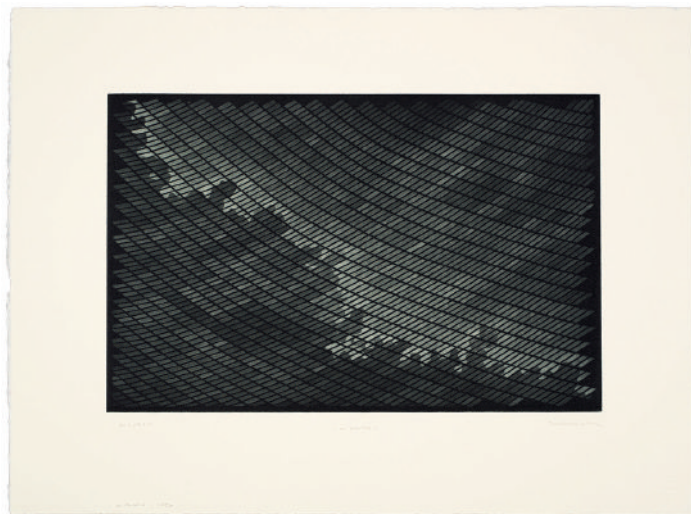
2. Excerpt from the interview of Luca Saltini to Giulia Napoleone in the Catalogue: *Il Segno e la poesia* · 25 libri d'artista di Giulia Napoleone

3. Excerpt from the interview of Lucio Saviani in the documentary: *In luminosa riga*



Ombre del mattino [Morning shadows], 2020-22. Pastels

© Giulia Napoleone. Photo: Fuco Reyes



In Ombra [In shadow], 1996. Mezzotint

© Giulia Napoleone. Photo: Fuco Reyes

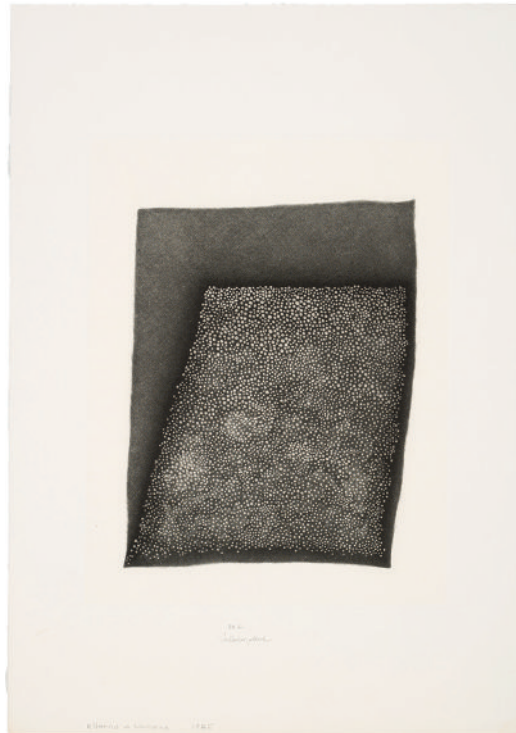
- Work +

The rhythms of work coincide with the rhythms of life and I say many times that the goal is to give value and quality to the days themselves. Therefore, listening to music and reading poetry plays a decisive role. Experimentation is part of the job. It arises from the analysis of the different components of the type of technique I choose. It is never casual, but corresponds to the internal needs of this expressive language. Whether it is the punch or the lines created through the numerous passages from *berceau* to the mezzotint, the lines and hatches of ink drawings, the watercolors and pastels or the subtle tonal progressions in oil works. The image is born and lives from the arrangement of small particles and their densification and rarefaction within the composition.

(...) I learned to have faith in the making and it is this faith in work that led me to decide to dedicate my life, my time and energy to give shape to my internal images, in search of that light and that vibration that makes every little part of the image come to life. (...)

(...) My work, I can say my life, is a walk towards, towards Perfection, towards Beauty. In fact, it is a search for balance, between geometry and nature, feeling and reason, reality and dream.

4. Excerpt from the interview of Maria Gioia Tavoni to Giulia Napoleone in the *Insula Europea Magazine* entitled: *In viaggio nelle profondità di un'artista.*



Ritorno a Numana [Return to Numana], 1985 / *Ombre* [Shadows], 1989. Mezzotint

© Giulia Napoleone. Photo: Fuco Reyes



Ombra en "il buio e il petalo" [Shadow in "the darkness and the petal"], 2014. Punch

© Giulia Napoleone. Photo: Fuco Reyes

- Journey⁵

Confined between house, studio and garden, (I live) times of complete isolation, working many hours, dot to dot, line to line, between music and poetry.

Over the years I have alternated long periods of isolation and work with frequent traveling, whether short or long, always with careful and precise preparations. That combination allowed me a proper balance of life, relationships, participations, encounters with "the other me".

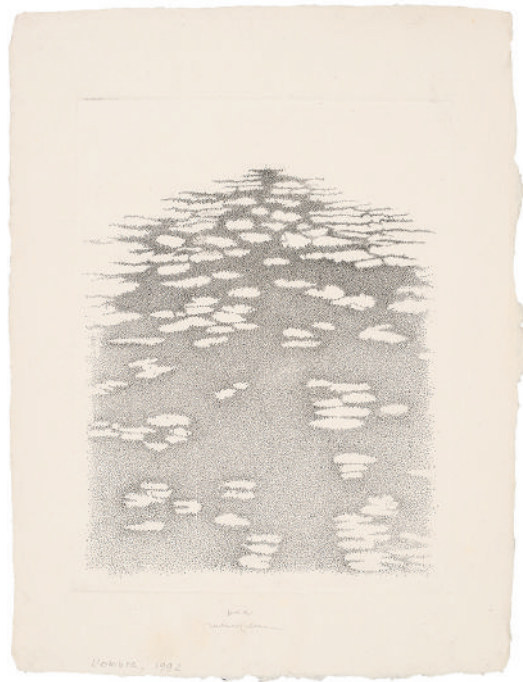
For me, the journey is not just moving, it's not leaving one place to get to another.

For me, traveling is a condition, a vital necessity that allows me to reach that balance that I constantly seek.

*

Traveling is a deep need that soothes any restlessness, any desire of change, any form of experience or knowledge. It's past the time of the pilgrimages and long journeys in the lonely regions of the North or in the deserts without borders where silence accompanies the journey, but the necessity for the journey resists and is still part of me.⁴

5. Excerpt from the interview of Luigia Sorrentino to Giulia Napoleone in Poesia di Luigia Sorrentino blog entitled: Giulia Napoleone, "Le fragilità dentro e fuori di me"



L'Ombra [The shadow], 1992 / *Ombre parallele* [Parallel shadows], 1989. Punch

© Giulia Napoleone. Photo: Fuco Reyes

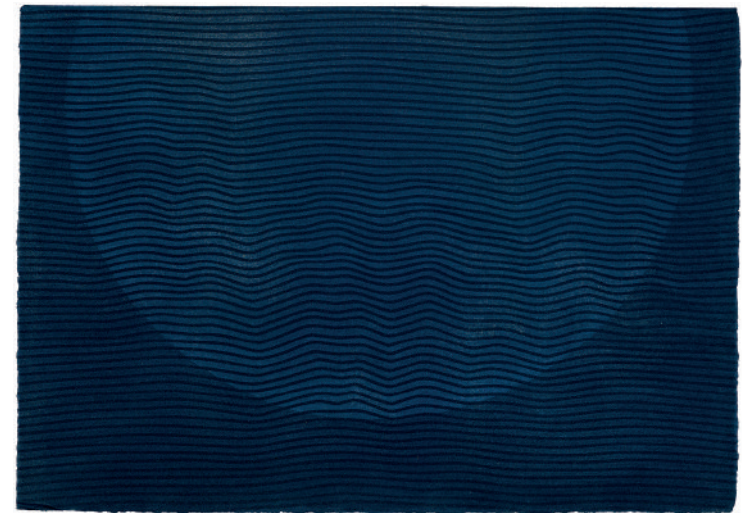
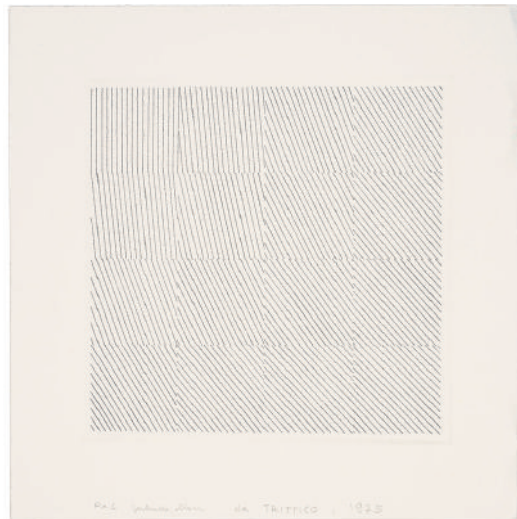
- Memory²

Memory is of great importance because many images, carefully observed, live inside me; only with time do they ask to become form. One of the reasons that makes me love traveling by train is precisely this: observing the landscapes for a limited time, capturing the changes, the play of light and shadows, looking closely and making sure that these lines, these flashes of light will remain inside me to come back again, after an indefinite time, to live as images.



Luci sospese [Suspended Lights], 2011. Punch

© Giulia Napoleone. Photo: Fuco Reyes



Da tritico [From triptych], 1975. Punch / *Rimanenze* [Remainings], 2001. Mezzotint

© Giulia Napoleone. Photo: Fuco Reyes

Kärjäkivet is an independent publishing project of thought and criticism of art and architecture that was born from an artistic research around the unbuilt Saivaara Monument designed in 1978 by the legendary Finnish artist Tapio Wirkkala for the Saivaara fjeld in Lapland. The publication has been achieving, not in form but in content, the concept of Kärjäkivet that Tapio Wirkkala wanted for the Saivaara Monument: the creation of a place where men of all races and colors can gather to think. In this sense, there is an online platform - www.karajakivet.com - where several invited authors are able to gather through literary constructions produced by them, sharing their ideas about art, architecture and culture in general, in a sort of modern-day assembly.

Evoking the place that Tapio Wirkkala wanted to create at the top of the Saivaara fjeld, Kärjäkivet meant to be a place of slowness and introspection where to stop, "observe the landscape" that surrounds us and think.



KÄRÄJÄKIVET

Finnish word meaning “court stones” or “circle of stones”: places of judgment (originally iron age graves), where judgments were held and justice carried out, accordingly to the Finnish National Board of Antiquities.

In the ancient times, they were important places where the primitive leaders of the North got together in order to discuss and decide about common matters.

www.karajakivet.com

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