

REVOLUTIONS Upheavals, Changes, Utopias

The word revolution comes from the Latin term *revolutio*, which in turn finds its root in the verb *revolvere*. Its common and widespread perception is in the realm of politics: a violent disruption of the established order, aiming at a **radical upheaval of the *status quo***. The best-known examples of such an interpretation would be the French and the Russian Revolutions, two events that also exemplify the **paradoxical aspect** of the term, interpreted here as a sudden interruption of a process of change – seen as too slow by revolutionaries that are often guided by a utopian vision - and which therefore provokes a **halt in the current evolution** (in politics, in this instance) and not necessarily a step forward.

On the other hand, the term revolution - as renewal, not necessarily traumatic in nature- belongs to every field of human knowledge and behaviour: let us think of the Industrial revolution (with particular reference to the European society of the 18th century), the digital revolution (in which we are all involved), and the revolutions in manners and morals (the most well-known took place in the 1960s). In these instances the word revolution describes **fundamental, ground-breaking changes, whose effects persist far beyond the moment they took place**.

Similarly, we talk about cultural revolutions, at times linked to political ones (as it was the case, at least for a few years, of the Russian avant-garde, or of the surrealist movement), at times more directly part of an evolution of thinking and of various artistic expressions. There is yet another realm we need to consider: the scientific understanding of the term revolution, which comes back to its Latin root. It is the one Copernicus expressed in his mid-16th century work *De revolutionibus orbium coelestium* (On the Revolutions of the Heavenly Spheres), which started a new vision of the world.

Thus the term Revolution, or **revolutions** rather, understood in the broad sense of rebellious acts, change, renewal, which may or may not provoke an immediate response leading to direct consequences, which may or may not preserve the utopian character which often shaped its original ideal, which may or may not be characterized by things turning onto themselves. And therefore we wonder: how can we represent the revolution today, besides and beyond the most immediate journalistic practices? More importantly, **what is the meaning of the word revolution in today's world**, in our complex world, increasingly marked by social tension and mass migration, factors that undermine the stability of entire geographic and cultural areas? Who is a revolutionary today? It is difficult to imagine Che Guevara's epic deeds played out in our current world, where the revolutionary myth has become a ready-to-wear functional icon: perhaps this is yet another case in which we need to rethink not only in terms of images, but rather in terms of collective imagination.

The new edition of the *Fotografia Europea* is dedicated to all these possible interpretations and suggestions. The festival will therefore act within the realm of the "*revolution of gaze and vision*" that originated at the very birth of photography (which was greeted as "a new art in the midst of an old civilization", a perfect revolutionary condition), a realm that still marks today's photography in the middle of the current digital revolution. And yet we wonder: **is the digital revolution an actual revolution, or is it merely an evolution?**