

**Cornelia's Walks** (2008)

Jan 9<sup>th</sup> 2009

Dear Luca,

I have bad news. The films I took in Lugo last week are all underexposed. The electronic shutter of the Mamiya lens was not working properly. Although it was timing the shutter speed correctly, the actual blades closed themselves at a default 1/60 of a second. Consequently all my films are massively underexposed, between four and six stops! I can't understand the mechanics of this malfunction, perhaps a fault in the electric connection between the camera and the lens. Anyway, I have come up with three options for you to choose from:

Option 1. I could come over to Lugo on Tues 13<sup>th</sup> (Ryan Air to Bologna), photograph on Wed and leave on Thursday (I would appreciate if you could pick me up in Bologna). I know the 5 pictures I need to take, so I can do it in a day. This option, of course, is only possible if you can postpone a few days the printing of the postcards.

Option 2. As you know, on my last day I took some images in what I now call 'Cornelia's room', the *saletta* of the original *Palazzo dei Conti Rossi* that is now your family's hotel. Prior to taking the pictures with the film camera, I took some snapshots with my digital camera, kind of close up observations of the surfaces and objects in the room. These digital pictures are now the only images I have of the whole stay! You also know that, during my walks in Lugo, my son Ged came along with me, as he does whenever he can. As always he took some pictures with his 35 mm film camera. His pictures in some way are like notations of where I stopped to photograph. In those moments of waiting, he wanders around with his camera, sometimes photographing what I photograph, but most of the time following his own photographic explorations. Other times it is me who waits, and I watch him taking the pictures. Out of these two sets of images I have sequenced 5 pairs. In each pair there is one image of Lugo by Ged and one of Cornelia's room by me. The pairs create two parallel narratives pulled together by the (un)fortunate malfunction of my camera, or if you prefer, more romantic, by Cornelia herself. I like to think she is the true storyteller in this sequence, which represents two walks, one around Lugo and another around her room. The work is therefore a collaborative piece by Ged and me and should be credited as such.

Option 3. You write me off the project and try to forgive me.

I will call you later today.

Xavier