



# **JÄINEN MATKA SUOMEEN**

## **WINTER VOYAGE TO FINLAND**

### **PRESS KIT**

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## **1. THE AUTHOR**

### **Biography**

Jacopo Brancati (born in 1966), professional photographer and journalist, lives and works in France since 1992. After his studies in Political Sciences at the University of Genoa (Italy), he turned to photography as a means of ethnological study. Since then, he focused his main interest on maritime cultural heritage. In cooperation with several European maritime museums he carried out some projects exploring the activities of seafaring people in their highly peculiar environment under different historical and geographical perspectives.

At the same time, he devotes a part of his activity to architecture, with the aim of explaining the « spirit of places ».

In his photography, light depicts with gentle, precise strokes the psychology and the emotions of the people he runs into during his voyages.

Since 2004, Jacopo Brancati is represented by Infine Arts, his work group and agency.

In 2007 his book "Pilot on board! Men and Ships of Genoa Harbour" was awarded the prize "Sanremo Libro del Mare", for photographic book section.

### **Some commissioned works**

#### ***"Cap sur le Horn"***

*Musée Portuaire, Dunkirk France*

*For this exhibition he organized the photographic section based on the classic of maritime literature "The Last Grain Race" (1954) and "Learning the Ropes. An apprentice on the Finnish barque Moshulu" by the English writer Eric Newby.*

#### ***"Pilote à bord! Hommes et navires du port de Gênes"***

*Musée Portuaire, Dunkirk France*

*An ethnographic study about men and ships in one of the most important Mediterranean harbours, it tells how tightly sea and shore are bound to each other, revealing the unexpected, exceptional face of everyday harbour life.*

#### ***"La cité aux visages de pierre"***

*Institut Culturel Italien of Lille France, for*

*"Lille 2004 European Capital of Culture"*

*A study on funerary sculpture of Genoa Monumental Cemetery. The depiction of ideals and fashions of Italian society during the late 19th century is the starting point for an intimate meditation on death and life. The sense of an ambiguous, mesmerizing flow of reality into imagination is enhanced by the choice of colour pictures.*

### **Some personal exhibitions**

- *Museo del Mare – Genoa, Italy, June/August 2007*
- *Musée Portuaire – Dunkerque, France, from November 2004 to February 2005*
- *«Lille 2004, European Capital of Culture» - «Les Journées du Patrimoine 2004» Palais Rihour – Lille, September/October 2004*
- *Institut Culturel Italien – Italian Embassy, Paris, October 2003*

### **Awards**

*“Casinò Sanremo Libro Mare 4° edizione”, winner of the photographic section, with the book “Pilota a bordo”, July 2007*

### **Publications**

***“Pilota a bordo! Uomini e navi del porto di Genova”***

*Bilingual edition Italian-French*

*200 pages, 150 colour and b&w photos*

*Erga Editore, 2004 Italy*

*ISBN 88-8163-387-6*

*[www.erga.it](http://www.erga.it)*

### **Articles for specialized press**

*Jacopo Brancati currently writes articles for the maritime magazines “Chasse-Marée” (France) and “Arte Navale” (Italy)*

## **2. PRESENTATION OF THE WORK by Gilles Perrière**

The realization of "Winter Voyage to Finland" is the result of a long maturing of which I was the privileged witness for several months. Four journeys over a three-year period, a camera made unusable due to the intense cold and many pleasant human contacts were needed in order for Jacopo Brancati to finalize his project about the universe of Finnish maritime pilots and traditions.

Carried out with a Nikon F4 and Kodak Tri-X black and white film, the journey is inscribed, by its classical approach, in the line of major humanist reportages which made the good days of magazines such as *Time Life* and *National Geographic*.

All photographic exhibitions are polysemous. That's why it's always interesting to consider the multiple ways of interpreting a series of photographs: from the view of the "author" of the images to the visitor who contemplates them for the first time.

In just one of these photographs I catch a glimpse of a secret conspiracy in a forgotten story. That's what I call the miracle of photography. This evocative strength, almost shamanic, of the image that recalls in our minds the memories, real or imaginary, of a past that we believed to have disappeared. The frail silhouette of the man lost in this vastness of ice, pushing the gangway when meeting the steel monster to retrieve his companion who descends the flanks of the beast, reminds us of rock-drawings of ice-age hunters fighting a fabulous beast.

The frost appearing to have taken up a creative madness transforms a metallic guardrail into a marine monster's jaw with a thousand sharpened teeth. A solitary grave drowned in a sea of dry grass tells us the story of someone who, arriving as an enemy, never returned home. And the complicit, kind smile of the man who appears to speak to the fish in some sort of fourth dimension.

In a more formal way, the "traveller" visitor of this exhibition — because this is an initiating voyage — is invited to go back and forth between the overall views, which each time set a specific scene, and the close-up portraits. This visual alternation sets the rhythm of the whole. It echoes the ceaseless trips of the pilots and the photographer between land and sea; between the pilot cutter and container ships. From one place to another.

The portraits are always respectful, taken on a "human scale" and without false modesty, which is always the signature of good reporters. Patience and real human contacts are required to be able to succeed. This type of photography is demanding. But what a pleasure to be able to contemplate the result of this long project, and to share it with others!

To finish, the "traveller" visitor is invited to consider for one moment this photograph representing a cloakroom containing overalls and working boots. It emanates an impression of waiting, one then thinks about the owners of these uniforms. A group of men linked by the same destiny. A clan with ancestral rules of life?

So where did they go to? They are perhaps in a room close by, just speaking about the weather... Or other things. The image of a strongly-bonded clan of hunters from the time of the ice age appears once more. Come closer. Look carefully. Yet the only things there are oilskins and empty boots.

The magic of photography can be found in the most incongruous places.

Gilles Perrière, Ulan Bator, July 2008.

### **3. THE EXHIBITION**

#### **- INTRODUCTION**

*Winter Voyage to Finland* is the result of a patient, passionate work on the Finnish maritime world that Jacopo Brancati started over three years ago. At that time he has just finished a long maritime reportage in Italy, but the call of the sea is already making itself heard. Just then, in Paris, comes the encounter with the photographs of Ismo Hölttö and with the kantele of Arja Kastinen: the enthralling invitation to discover a country whose face can be seen on travel magazines but whose soul remains partly unexplored. A long bibliographical research reveals him the unexpectedly rich maritime culture of Finland.

Jacopo Brancati chooses to focus his attention on the work and the universe so particular of the maritime pilots, and on the navigation in the frozen sea. He will have to win the notorious shyness of seafaring people (and of the Finns); he will also have to cope with the harshness of winter navigation in the North that during one journey causes the "death" of his Nikon F4.

He is eager but respectful and meditative in his approach to this universe. Black and white film will depict it with precise, all but demonstrative strokes.

#### **- THE EXHIBITION**

The exhibition develops through four steps. In the first three sections we follow the author's exploration of different geographical areas: the south-east (Kotka region), the east (the Archipelago) and the north (the Gulf of Bothnia).

His eye focuses on the work of men, on their skills and everyday life, depicting at the same time the peculiarities of the environment they belong to : ships, harbours, open sea, ice pack...

The fourth and last section – "Memories" – is a touching, respectful homage to the traditions and to the intimate world of Finnish seafaring people.

Sixty large format, black and white fine-art prints made in Paris by the art printer Andres Romero from Label Image.

#### **- THE MUSEUM**

The Maritime Museum of Finland opened in 2008 at the Maritime Centre Vellamo in Kotka, a significant achievement in recent Finnish architecture and museology. The Maritime Museum of Finland is a national maritime museum whose role is to preserve and interpret the history of Finnish seafaring, describing its importance to Finland . Mercantile marine and the history of the Maritime Administration of Finland are among the special interests of the museum, which shelters a rich material cultural legacy: objects, photographs, manuscripts, literature and other material regarding Finnish seafaring and yachting.

#### **4. CONTACTS**

Jacopo Brancati is a member of **Infine Arts** work group.  
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## 5. PICTURE GALLERY

*These pictures can be used exclusively for the purpose of advertising the exhibition "Winter Voyage to Finland. Finnish Seafaring People"*



Chief pilot Juha Tulimaa  
"Are pilots only above the Seas?" - Kotka



A Russian cargo loaded with timber approaches the pier - Kotka



Getting the gangway ready to take back the pilot - Kemi



Moments of concentration for pilot Lasse Turunen steering a ship during a snow storm – off Loovisa



The world is tuned upside down through the Fresnel lens of Utö lighthouse – Archipelago



Family portrait of the last lighthouse keeper of Utö in the hands of his younger son Fjalar. In the picture Fjalar is the second from left