

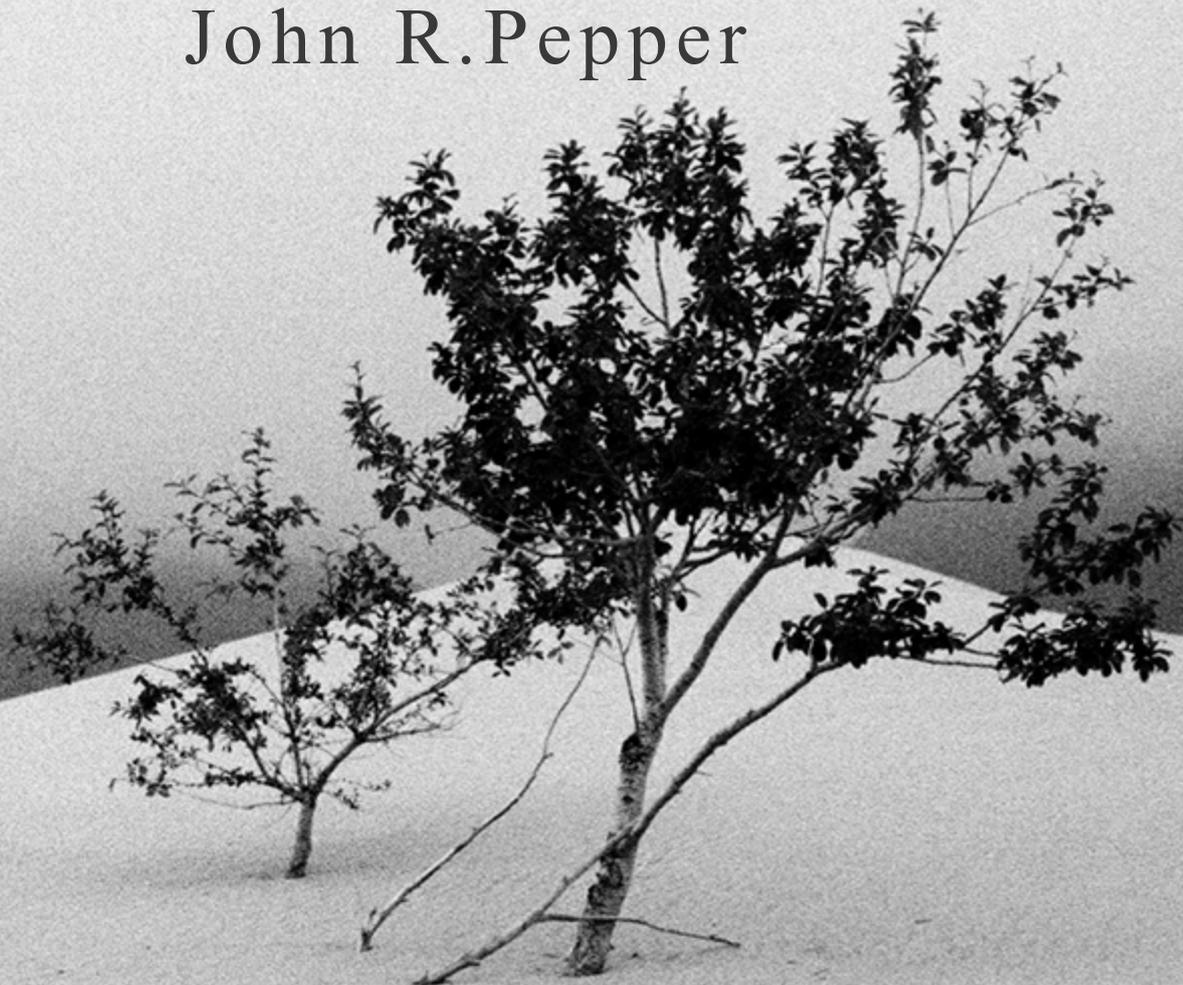
II BIENNALE DI SENIGALLIA

Summer 2021

Conference, Inauguration
& Photo Fair 24-26 June

Inhabited Deserts

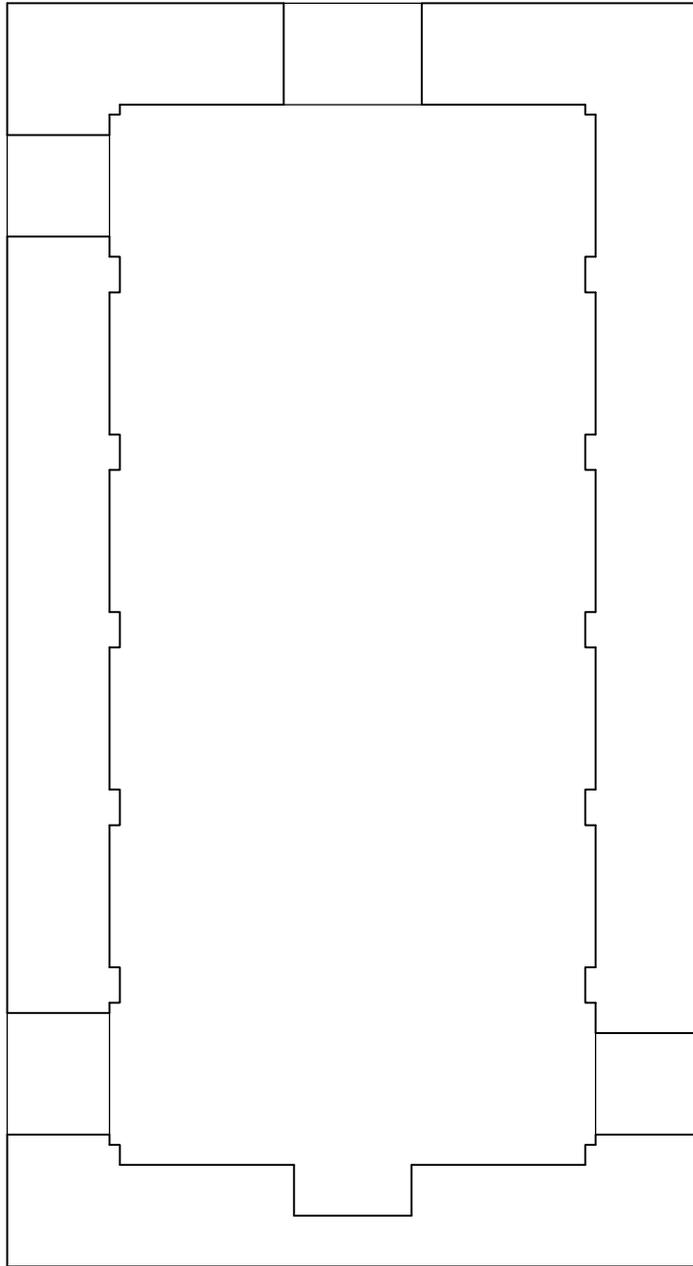
John R. Pepper



Con il patrocinio del



Comune di Senigallia



Inhabited Deserts' — John R. Pepper

Deserts have always fascinated photographers. Often a photographer enters deserts to capture the beauty of the landscape with a setting sun or a beautiful cloud formation and that is the final result. As beautiful as that might be, it was not what I was seeking. I wanted to go further.

My concept, my goal, has been to use the desert as a painter sees a crisp white canvas, and while traveling through different deserts of the world (from Russia to Egypt, Mauritania, Oman to the USA etc.) through to discover what imagery was revealed to my eye — sometimes it was figurative, sometimes abstract.

In the South Sinai in Egypt, there were tall hills of rocks. Climbing these hills, walking through what appeared to be a simple arrangement of stones, I discovered anthropomorphic figures such as faces, feet, elephants, human etc. Suddenly the rocks, these non-living elements were transformed into the expressive, living, expressive, vibrant figures. In the Nevada desert, in the United States, or the vast deserts of Mauritania, I would look across the dunes and see what seemed like "nothing" — dead trees or a grouping of dunes plants. After walking through and around them, allowing my eye to wander freely, keeping my mind empty, without pre-conception, these non-living objects would suddenly become a human being crying in the sky, a simple arching, a dune resembled a face in the desert of Oman the lights and shadows transformed a seemingly natural rock into the body of a young woman rising to emerge from the sands. In one desert the moving sand would gradually transform a small valley into a beautiful landscape. In still another desert from inside the small puddle of desert soil like appears a man sitting or a man walking or a figure from Dante's Inferno and I, like the painter in front of his canvas, with my small Leica, from time and effort film, attempt to capture this image and the soul behind within.

Conceptually I attempt to find the symbiosis between the landscape before me and the imagery behind within me. I do not seek the image rather the photograph finds me. Through this relationship what the result is, hopefully, my photograph, my "can-van" is an expression of my inner being, of what I feel or see or sense.







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