

## The Gift

Giorgia Fiorio belongs to that family of photographers who are, when all is said and done, quite rare – not simply in a quantitative sense – and who have chosen to work on projects of a long-term nature. In an age when photography is frequently the instrument of the ephemeral, because too often limited to the spectacular, a handful of lone figures work steadfastly on the margins of the fray. And time is on their side. Giorgia Fiorio's approach is comparable to that of someone like Sebastiao Salgado, in that the energy she deploys is almost entirely focused upon an undertaking of several years which she has set out for herself. In the manner of the documentary photographer, she has singled out a territory – which happens to be of an anthropological nature. Yet her concern is not to exhaust this terrain, but to find the means to progress in the knowledge and creative restitution of it. The work she undertook in 2000, and whose title "The Gift" epitomizes this spirit, is as much a questioning of her own self as of mankind. Her approach is at once objective and subjective, documentary and meditative. In the course of the last few years this project has continued to evolve. So much so, that each time I meet her as she completes a new phase of reportage, her personal quest has gone yet another step beyond the mere discovery of new ritual practices and has grown into an ever greater awareness of inherent mystery. When this project comes to a close in 2008, Giorgia Fiorio will have explored the most diverse aspects of the human quest along the time-worn path of truth – her own truth and that of the human community – But she will also doubtless have come close, if not shed light upon, a possible bond between these many rites whose beauty and purity she has captured the world over.

Gabriel Bauret

