

PAOLO GIARDI
AURORA BOREALIS
2013

How do you make an image seductive enough so that it will draw you in.

'Le Vie del Mondo' was a monthly geographical/travel review published by the Italian Touring Club under slightly different headings over the years between 1924 and 1992. The publication changed its title to 'Le Vie d'Italia e del Mondo' from 1933 to 1937, and offered themes and illustrations that were highly influenced by the fascist ideology of the time. Under the pretext of showing the picturesque diversity of customs and costumes, the wonder of nature and the beauty of artifacts, the reviews were actually proposing a perspective of the world that was west-centric, bigoted, colonial, and kept feeding to its readers ridiculous and dangerous prejudiced cliches.

The reviews were collected and bound, according to the year, in three hard cover volumes by the artist's grandfather, Napoleone Giardi, and passed down two generations. As a child, Paolo Giardi used these books as a surface for his first attempts to draw with scribbles and doodles. As a young man their beautiful photographs were used as an endless source of reference for illustrations. As an adult he discovered their not so hidden ideological darker side.

With 'Aurora Borealis' Paolo Giardi presents us his most personal work to date. It is a reflection on the act of seeing and its process of attraction and repulsion. It explores what draws us into something and what pushes us away, what makes a subject alluring and what is its real context. In short, this is an exercise on aesthetic and ethic.

Giardi wants the viewer to discover his grandfather's books with his very own sense of wonder and curiosity that he felt as a child. He is adding geometrical shapes borrowed from the modernist movement, quoting contemporary artists, pasting colorful screens in order to conceal the view and obliterate any form of nostalgia. Underneath the playful doodles another reality exists, and it is not always pretty.

'Aurora Borealis' is an ongoing series of collages on Arizona UV digital prints.