
SENSO UNICO

Cocumola

Nick Orloff

ARTIST STATEMENT

These images were made in the summer of 2026 in and around Cocumola, a small village in the Salento, the heel of Italy. I carried a supply of Kodak Gold and two cameras. The first, a Mamiya Six, is a folding medium-format camera made in Japan in the 1950s; unusually, it focuses by moving the film plane rather than the lens. The second, a Nikon F80, is a 35mm camera from the early 2000s, built just as digital photography was becoming widespread.

Working with old equipment changes the pace of looking. The Mamiya gives just twelve square frames to a roll, and each one is focused, set and wound by hand. There is no auto exposure, no screen to check, and no second attempt that costs nothing. I found myself waiting more and shooting less, standing in place until a shadow reached a window or a swimmer crossed a patch of clear water. Film also keeps its distance: the pictures could only be seen later, once developed, long after the moment had passed, which made each frame feel less like a record and more like a memory.

The real subject is the light. Southern Italian summer light is fierce. At midday it flattens white walls and bleaches limestone; in the late afternoon it turns low and golden and finds texture everywhere. Kodak Gold, an everyday colour film, answers that light with warmth and a soft grain that suits the place.

I was drawn less to monuments than to the small, overlooked, everyday details: a faded one-way sign, the shadow of a stair rail, two odd doors propped in a doorway, watering cans left out at the cemetery. On the coast I watched people sharing rock and water with an ease that seemed ritual. Inland, olive groves across the region have been stripped bare by disease, a reminder that this landscape is changing.

The book begins with an arrow pointing one way and ends at the water's edge, where nothing points anywhere at all.

Nick Orloff, Melbourne (Naarm), 2026



Shadow of a stair



Ladder and towel



Audience



Giallo e azzurro



Shallows



For the graves



Ghost tree



Reader



The empty pool

Cocumola
Photographs by Nick Orloff, made in and around Cocumola, Salento, summer 2026.
Mamiya Six and Nikon F80 on Kodak Gold.
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Back cover: *Afternoon light*
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