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CULTURE /

# The Sibyls of Siena Cathedral come to life in Bill Armstrong's photographs, a blend of vision and mystery.

*In the crypt of Siena Cathedral until November 15th, ancient prophetesses re-emerge in the reinterpretation of the American photographer in a dialogue between the present and the past.*



/ Costanza Baldini

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Bill Armstrong

The exhibition entitled *“Sibyls”* is on display in the crypt of Siena Cathedral until November 15th, featuring photographs by American artist **Bill Armstrong**.

The protagonists of his works are precisely the **Sibyls of the Duomo floor** , reinterpreted in a completely new visual experience.

**These enigmatic female figures dissolve, split, and vibrate** . Their image, through the blurring of light—a hallmark of Armstrong's work—constructs a language that denies documentary precision to **instead convey ambiguity, oscillation, and doubt**.

The result is a short circuit: **the solidity of the stone dialogues with the fragility of the photographic image** ; in this suspended space, **the Sibyls re-emerge as mobile presences**, crossed by a continuous tension between appearance and disappearance.

The floor of Siena Cathedral – defined by Giorgio Vasari as *“the most beautiful, largest and most magnificent ever made”* – thus becomes the site of **an unexpected comparison between past and present** .



## *Armstrong's Sibyls: Uncertain, Alive, Contemporary*

Figures born in the ancient world as oracular voices, heralds of higher truths, the Sibyls today find a **new dimension**: no longer images to decipher, but enigmas to be explored.

**THE BLUR BECOMES A COGNITIVE DEVICE, CAPABLE OF VISUALLY RESTORING THE INDETERMINACY OF ORACULAR KNOWLEDGE.**

**Their fragmentary and contradictory nature** is visually translated by Armstrong into a **grammar of the indefinite**.

Because **it is precisely in disorientation**, the photographer seems to suggest, that the image begins to generate meaning again. **The Sibyls have never been so uncertain, so alive, so contemporary.**

*"If in the Sistine cycle," explains Tommaso Casini, professor at IULM University, "dissolution affected the body, here it focuses on prophetic vision: the Sibyls appear as **images in transit**, traversed by a tension between revelation and loss. **The blur thus becomes a cognitive device, capable of visually conveying the indeterminacy of oracular knowledge**. Armstrong's work occupies an intermediate space between an original, visionary rereading of art history and contemporary abstraction, reactivating images of the past not as objects to be contemplated, but as open fields of interpretation."*

