



# ASYLUM

## FUOCO DAPERTUTTO

Photography Gilles Elie Cohen  
Text Gilles Roland Manuel



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In the 1970s the repression and violence of psychiatric hospitals (asylums) had been the regular way of treatment in Italian psychiatry, as it was everywhere else. Mental patients were hardly considered as human beings.

At the same time a large anti-psychiatric movement started to spread across Europe looking for change. In Italy a group of young doctors came together around Doctor **Franco Basaglia**. Most of them were very young, having only just finished their studies and some had never even worked in a hospital. For these Italian doctors there was no possible alternative without the prior destruction of the system of psychiatric hospitals. In 1973 their movement, *‘Psichiatria Democratica’* (Democratic psychiatry) swept across the whole of Italy.

As a result on 13 May 1978 the so-called ‘Law 180’ was passed, abolishing the asylum system. It stated that ‘psychiatric hospitals may no longer be constructed’. And the following definitions were removed from the Italian Penal Code: ‘Alienati di menti’ (mentally ill) and ‘inferme di menti’ (mentally disabled). Law 180 recognised human beings as such.

In 1978 Doctor **Gilles Roland Manuel** had just finished his psychiatry studies. He decided to base his thesis on the Italian anti-psychiatric movement. He left accompanied by his friend, photographer **Gilles Elie Cohen**. They arrived in Italy the day after the new law had been passed.

This book tells the story of that journey. In 250 photographs and a text spanning some one hundred pages it recounts the journey that took the shape of an immersion into the world of Italian mental care, turned upside down by this revolution.





