

Astronomy is an observational science. From time immemorial astronomers could do nothing but observe. They can't experiment, get closer to stars or galaxies nor recreate them in a laboratory. The true, deep nature of the oldest science is observation. And observation can provide us with measurements of physical quantity which can make us comprehend which phenomena have provoked the emission of that sign we are immersed in: light.

To observe also means to remember the observation. That is why the liaison between astronomy and photography has been celebrated from the beginning. Daguerre himself failed in his attempt to taking pictures of the moon with his as much miraculous as primitive emulsions. Since then that relationship has never dissolved and in fact today astronomy is known to everyone as the science that employs images which can be exposed to the public in just seconds, thanks to data processing and modern technology information transmission. Either taken from observatories scattered on mountain tops or parked orbiting space telescopes, amazing colourful fascinating images of bits of universe enter our lives through media almost every day.

A result unwinding ever since at the end of the 19th century dozens of photographers and astronomers ventured for years and years to photograph the entire sky. Crucial deeds for science, repeated across the decades every time technology came up with something that enhanced observation and allowed to enjoy a better view of heavenly bodies further and further apart.

The coming of IC networks and CCD developers have changed the work paradigm, and astronomy, whose works, by definition, have to be carried out in isolated places and far from civilisation, doesn't miss the opportunity to access the telematic and electronic image analysis improvement.

To watch more, to watch weaker objects and to watch now.

Yet the image's importance has not changed, rather it is enhanced because the increasing cost of equipment and international competition to have few hours' use is more and more fervent. Because for an astronomer the image of this or that heavenly

body is both a starting point and a finishing line. The finishing line of a complex research, of infinite calculations, hypotheses to be verified, to observe something new or confirm an idea. A start because, now that he has at last achieved it after having spent months on end thinking and asking and justifying the use of this or that telescope now he can finally start getting around to "what is inside that image". Therefore that image is both private property of the astronomer who acquired it and a public one, since today, at a time when, on the one hand, nobody even thinks of embarking upon scientific studies, on the other, hundreds of thousands of science magazines are surprisingly sold and like never before known of in the past. And good magazines indeed, glossy, well done with nice pictures of stars, galaxies, nebula that excite everyone's imagery.

But these images are not the same ones used by astronomers.

In this scenario breaks in the desecrating naïve intelligent and overwhelming project with such a "natural" idea to seem sacrilegious and to make any astronomer or divulgation professional start. How can it be, after all these years spent in the attempt of making these black and white pictures "pleasant", all of a sudden this Ms Angioletti tells us that putting them together with their parameters scrolling on them, is the right way to do it? You must be joking. Yet it is no joke, it is the creation, a process which might be a bit intuitive and inexplicable, which allows a non pro to see a profile, an extreme pure essence so far kept if not undisclosed at least camouflaged by the pros.

It takes the images, it respects them, it composes and renders them for everyone to see, sense, interpret. And perhaps even dream over them.

Naturally for a pro, like me, all this is of hard digestion despite everything. But one cannot but perceive in Meris Angioletti's attempt, in which the National Astrophysics Institute enthusiastically teamed up, after the first amazement, yet never mistrust, the print of that essential and constructive creativity – of the same kind one can always find in art, poetry and science - that sometimes allows someone to see further than the others.