

FONDAZIONE PRADA OSSERVATORIO
QUESTIONING PICTURES: STEFANO GRAZIANI

Fondazione Prada is presenting "Questioning Pictures," a new exhibition project by Stefano Graziani, at the Osservatorio in Galleria Vittorio Emanuele II, Milan. The exhibition will be open from 9 November 2017 throughout 26 February 2018. Curated by Francesco Zanot, the exhibition includes a new body of works commissioned by Fondazione Prada that explores photography as a tool for narration, cataloguing and reinterpretation.

Stefano Graziani investigates archival and conservation systems in museums like the Canadian Centre for Architecture (CCA) in Montreal, Canada; Sir John Soane's Museum in London, UK; the Kunstmuseum Basel, Switzerland; Museum Insel Hombroich in Neuss, Germany; the Museo di Castelvecchio in Verona, Italy; and the Plaster Cast Gallery at Museo Canova in Possagno, Italy, focusing on the ambivalent relationship between photography and the museum object. Photography navigates an ambiguous territory in Graziani's work: on one hand he documents diverse materials like drawings and architectural models, books, photographs and paintings; on the other, he embarks on an interpretative path through the careful use of light and camera angles, as well as the inclusion of disturbing elements in his shots. His photographs not only shed light on museum collections and archives usually denied to visitors, but reactivate them according to entirely subjective logic and perspectives.

As Francesco Zanot emphasizes, "Questioning Pictures" is a sort of crash test designed to assess the museum's ability to resist external attacks and increase its permeability in proportion. Graziani transforms the invisible into something visible, preventing these terms from being subsequently reversed, and thus sheds light on one of the primary mechanisms through which museums generate and control their power. The regulations that museums impose on reproducing materials in their collections fulfill the same role. Graziani systematically evades them, carrying out an act of civil disobedience by adopting an ethical and formal rigor reminiscent of the photographs of Walker Evans and Lewis Baltz." As Okwui Enwezor maintains, Graziani is tackling an indisputable fact "because the camera is literally an archiving machine, every photograph... is a priori an archival object." And Graziani is building an anti-archive.

The exhibition set up was designed by studio OFFICE Kersten Geers David Van Severen as a system of colorful, modular screens laid out across the two levels of the Osservatorio, creating unexpected visual and semantic combinations between the photographs and the objects represented. A model of a building by Aldo Rossi is connected to a drawing by Gordon Matta-Clark; a late nineteenth-century photo album of Pompeii is set alongside a plastic model of the Pantheon on display at Sir John Soane's Museum in London; a plaster by Antonio Canova conserved in Possagno dialogues with Lucas Cranach's *Three Graces* (on display at the Kunstmuseum Basel, Switzerland); the maquette for a utopian project by

Cedric Price is associated with a table prototype designed by Mies van der Rohe. This heterogeneous collection of objects and artworks is united through Graziani's thinking, as the artist transforms them into disorienting and unexpected still lifes. As Zanot notes, they are "enigmatic, just like the nature of the photograph, which here becomes unmistakable: it is a non-document document."

In this project photography functions as a conveyor belt, collector and transmission vehicle that can reconnect and combine works that are far apart in space and time, and that are often impossible to physically transfer from one place to another. It also operates as a tool that – through subtle deviations, minimal alterations and personal interpretation – unhinges traditional archival and cataloguing systems in order to grant new visibility, and therefore new life, to the documents, materials and artworks conserved in museum collections. Graziani injects "visual and interpretative viruses" into these archives, accomplishing a feat of "hacking" that triggers a potentially infinite chain of new analyses and enigmas.

"Questioning Pictures" is accompanied by a publication in the Fondazione's Quaderni series, which include a critic text by Francesco Zanot and an interview to Stefano Graziani realized by Giovanna Borasi, curator at the Canadian Centre for Architecture (CCA) in Montreal.

Press Contacts
Fondazione Prada
T +39 02 56 66 26 34
press@fondazioneprada.org
fondazioneprada.org

Stefano Graziani (Bologna, 1971), has published, among others: *Nature Morte, Fictions and Excerpts*, with texts by Nanni Cagnone e Pierpaolo Tamburelli, Galleria Mazzoli, Modena 2016, *Neon Palladio*, with a text by Guido Beltramini, Architecture without Content, form epfl, 2016, *Fruits and Fireworks*, with a text by Francesco Garutti, a+mbookstore, Milan 2016, *Caraibi*, with Matteo Campagnoli, Humboldt Books, Milan 2015, *Salto Grande Estasi*, with a text by Ilaria Speri, Skinnerbook, 2015, *It seemed as Though the Mist Itself Had Screamed*, with texts by Nanni Cagnone, Kersten Geers, Francesco Zanot, Galleria Mazzoli, Modena 2014, *Conversazioni notturne*, texts by Alessandro Dandini de Sylva, Quodlibet 2014, *Some of these Places have been serving in greater Depth*, 2013, text by Francesco Zanot, Neo Udine, *Memory Talks*, a+mbookstore, Milan 2012 text by Elena Turetti, *Under the Volcano and Other Stories*, Galleria Mazzoli, Modena 2009, texts by Anselm Franke, Rene Gabri, Arturo Carlo Quintavalle, Gianluigi Ricuperati. *L'isola*, Galleria Mazzoli, Modena 2009, with a note of the author and selected quotations from *Scritti*, by Roberto Bazlen, Adelphi, Milan 1984, *Taxonomies*, a+mbookstore, Milan 2007, with a note of the author and texts by Stefano Boeri, Antonello Frongia, Rene Gabri. Editor of Jeff Wall, *Gestus*, Quodlibet/Abitare, 2013. In collaboration with other authors he has published *Proofs of Relevance, AP164: Abalos Herreros*, curated by Giovanna Borasi, CCA Park Books, Zurich, 2016, the introduction of *The Dilution of Architecture*, by Yona Friedman and Manuel Orazi, Park Books, Zurich 2017, *More than a Hundred Year*, with Christ&Gantenbein, Venezia/Basel 2016, *How Things meet*, with Falma Fshazi and 51n4e, Art Paper, editions, 2016, *Casa della Memoria* with Baukuh, a+mbookstore, Milan, *Kunstmuseum Basel, New Building*, with Christ&Gantenbein, Hatje Cantz 2016. Soon to be published a new project about Superstudio with Gabriele Mastrigli. He co-founded, with other colleagues, the architectural magazines *San Rocco* and *Genda Magazine*, constantly collaborating with publishing houses and magazines, his work has been internationally exhibited and it is part of private and public collections (CCA Montreal, Maxxi Rome, Fondazione Fotografia di Modena). Curator in 2017 of *Trough your Eyes*, the photography room introducing the works of Go Hasegawa, Kersten Geers and David Van Severen, an exhibition curated by Giovanna Borasi, CCA, Montreal. He collaborates with different architectural offices, Baukuh, Christ&Gantenbein, Office KGDVS, PioveneFabi, Studio Mumbai, 51N4E. Stefano Graziani lives in Trieste, graduated in Architecture at luav, he is teacher at the Master in Photography luav in Venezia, and at Naba in Milan.