

GALLERIA RAFFAELLA CORTESE

PRESS RELEASE

FRANCO VIMERCATI



Franco Vimercati

via a.stradella 4-7-1

Opening reception wednesday, may 25, 7.00 - 9.00 pm

may 25 | august 5, 2016

tuesday - saturday 10.00 am-1.00 pm | 3.00-7.30 pm and by appointment

Galleria Raffaella Cortese is pleased to present an exhibition dedicated to the Milanese photographer **Franco Vimercati**, the protagonist of the launch of the gallery activity in 1995.

Fifteen years after the artist's death and following two recent presentations in public institutions such as the Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden (2014) and Palazzo Fortuny in Venice (2012), the exhibition takes place in all three gallery spaces, bringing together three significant moments of the photographer's work, whose personal research is substantial for the history of Italian photography of the late 20th century.

Born in 1940, Franco Vimercati was a meticulous and essential photographer, an interpreter of stillness and the repetitive nature of reality. His interest has always been directed towards images that – despite being apparently simple – open up a research on *photography* that originates from elements taken from reality. His approach is characterised by the delicacy of his language, that talks about the intricacy of existing and his favourite subjects are the ones belonging to every-day life, common objects that start a wide consideration on vision and the photographic gesture. Vimercati was sensitive to the new artistic discoveries and along the years he has been compared to artists linked to minimalism – such as Ad Reinhardt, Robert Ryman, Agnes Martin – and conceptual art, as Giulio Paolini. Ugo Mulas and Luigi Ghirri were important references, too.

In via Stradella 4 are displayed works from his first photographic series, realised in 1973 and titled *Sulle Langhe*. The series consists of black and white shots depicting the inhabitants of a village in the Piedmont countryside, where Vimercati used to spend his summer holidays. The portraits reveal the intention to classify trades, in the wake of the great project of cataloguing the human types by August Sander. From these early works, it is possible to trace how Vimercati was interested in repetition and in exploring the language of photography (rather than in the subject), and its conceptual approach. These features will become distinctive marks of his consecutive production. These works are precious and rare, not only for having been exposed in very few circumstances, but also because after this first experience Vimercati isolated the camera within his home environment.

The space in via Stradella 7 is dedicated to the core of the artist's production: the *ciclo della zuppiera*. The *zuppiera* (tureen) is a small found object that has interested the artist over a period of almost ten years, between 1983 and 1992. The photographs realised during this decade represent the same tureen, that appears changeable because of variations in focusing, framing and use of light, opening a fascinating research on *photography* starting from a small object which becomes the subject of 99 shots, at first organised in groups of 6 and later as individual images. It is no longer the series to be potentially endless, but the never-ending possibilities of representation. The object becomes for Vimercati a sign of experimentation and acquires an almost ritual significance. "This is a reduction needed to highlight the differences - the theme of my whole work - that each photograph shows when it is compared to the others."

In via Stradella 1 is shown a significant series from the '90s, the *capovolte*, photographs that depict capsized everyday objects, as they are captured by the photographic eye. After the first shots, Vimercati's approach becomes even more radical, leaving the image blurred or impressing it through the use of a pinhole camera. This was the expression of a further radicalization of the photographer's objectivity: he did not intervene in the photographic process anymore to straighten or regulate the focus of the image in order to make the subject more readable, but he rather lets that the photograph "become" and "shoot out" autonomously.

The exhibition is accompanied by an introduction by Andrea Viliani and an essay by Simone Menegoi. We wish to thank Archivio Franco Vimercati for its precious cooperation.

Franco Vimercati (Milan, 1940-2001). Significant solo shows have recently been dedicated to the artist: 2014 *Die Dinge des Lebens / Das Leben der Dinge*. *Franco Vimercati & George Kubler*, Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden, Dresden; 2012 *Franco Vimercati. Tutte le cose emergono dal nulla*, Palazzo Fortuny, Fondazione Musei Civici Venezia, Venice; 2009 *Fotografia Europa – Eternità*. Il tempo dell'immagine, Reggio Emilia. Among the recent group shows: 2016 *The Unarchivable*, FM Centro per l'Arte Contemporanea, Milan; 2015 *Cantiere del '900.2. Works from the Intesa Sanpaolo Collection*, Gallerie d'Italia, Milan; 2012 *Addio anni settanta. Arte a Milano 1969/1980*, Palazzo Reale, Milan; 2010 *Conceptual Art – The Panza Collection*, MART, Rovereto; 2008 *Italics – Arte italiana fra tradizione e rivoluzione 1968-2008*, Palazzo Grassi, Venice and Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago.

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