

RECEPTION

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Luigi Ghirri Vintage Prints 1970–1980

Jan. 15 – Feb. 20, 2010

Opening Friday, Jan. 15, 2010, 7–9 pm



We have pleasure in presenting a selection of early vintage prints by the Italian photographer Luigi Ghirri (1943–1992), taken between 1970 and 1980. Since more than 25 years this is the first solo exhibition in Germany for this outstanding photographer who was named “discovery of the year” by *Time-Life* magazine in 1975. Since the 1970s his work has been presented internationally in numerous exhibitions – but still remains relatively unknown to the general public.

William Eggleston, whose work was very important to Luigi Ghirri, wrote in the catalogue for a Ghirri exhibition at Aperture Foundation, New York in 2008:

“It is the variety of Luigi Ghirri’s work, the eclectic aspect, that most surprises and excites me. I cannot necessarily tell that they are all taken by the same person – which is a compliment! With a Friedlander, you can always tell it’s a Friedlander... and probably with an Eggleston too. With Ghirri, it’s not simply the subject matter that distinguishes each of his series, it’s the whole idea, the whole picture. Everything. His work is remarkably disparate, and there are moments – many – when it just hits.”

Ghirri worked on a genealogy of the world that surrounded him with great curiosity and analytical precision and, at the same time, an almost tender way of perceiving apparently casual and unimportant aspects. Like William Eggleston or Stephen Shore in the USA, he used his camera to record everyday scenes, landscapes, architecture and things. The result was exceptionally precisely composed pictures that define the typical and the specific in everyday life at one and the same time, and which are atmospherically very

condensed and intensive despite their usually small format. From the very beginning, the Italian landscape, and in particular his home region of Reggio Emilia, formed a focal point of his work, so that his photographs also are historic documents on Italy’s history.

Ghirri regarded his work as a photographer as an attempt to interpret the world through artistic means. To him, photography represented a possibility of approaching this world and examining more thoroughly the things that make up our reality. He was well aware of both the ambiguity of concepts such as reality and the fragmentary character of photography, which can only show incomplete fragments of the world in terms of both space and time. Ghirri himself wrote in 1978:

“The cancellation of the space surrounding what is framed is as important for me as what is represented, and it is thanks to this cancellation that the image acquires sense and becomes measurable. The image [...] invites us to see the rest of the non-represented real.”

To discover the invisible behind the visible, as well as the magical and metaphysical qualities of things has been an important aspect of Ghirri’s photographic exploration of the world we live in:

“My work stems from the need and desire to interpret and translate the sign and sense of this sum of hieroglyphs [that the world is made of] – not only the reality that is easily identifiable or has a high symbolic content, but also thought, memory, imagination, and the fantastic of alienated content.”

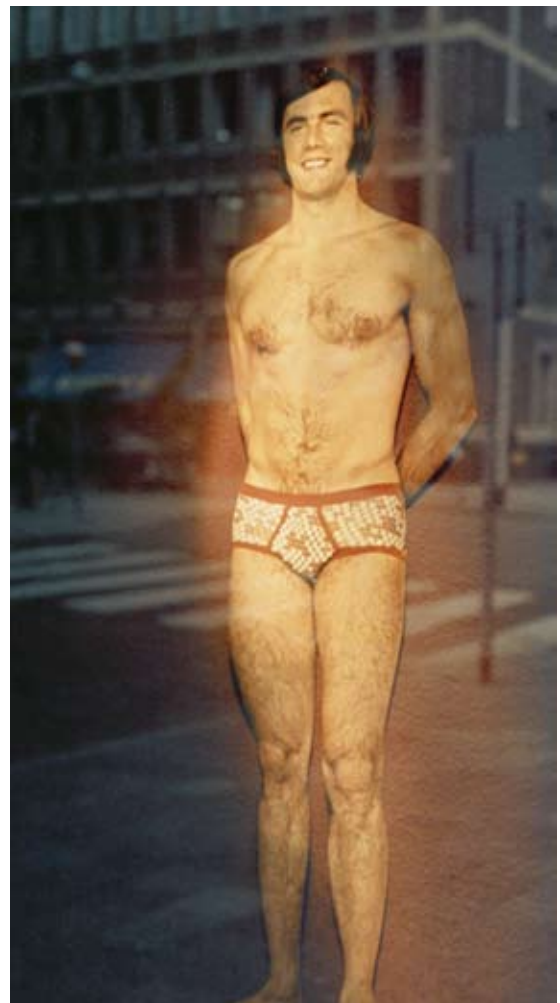




Luigi Ghirri grouped his pictures into thematic series – which do not, however, represent hermetic units – which he would occasionally expand. Frequently, he would put individual photographs into several different series, a clear indication of the importance that he ascribed to seeing things in lively correspondence with one another. Recently, several important monographic exhibitions introducing the work of Luigi Ghirri have been held, for example at Fotomuseum Winterthur in 2001, at the Galleria d'Arte Moderna in Bologna in 2005, and at Aperture in New York in 2008. Ghirri's photographs are represented internationally in important museum and private collection. The exhibition at RECEPTION has been shown before at MAI 36 gallery in Zurich in 2009.

List of Illustrations

cover: **Parigi**, 1972, C-Print, Vintage, from the series *Diaframma 11, 1/25 luce naturale*, 12,5 x 17,5 cm
 left page: **Modena**, 1973, C-Print, Vintage, from the series *Kodachrome*, 10,1 x 15,3 cm
 right page: **Ferrara**, 1979, C-Print, Vintage, from the series *Topographie-Iconographie*, 12,1 x 18,2 cm
Rotterdam, 1973, C-Print, Vintage, from the series *Paesaggi di cartone*, 19 x 11,1 cm
 back: **Svizzera**, 1971, C-Print, Vintage, from the series *Fotografie del periodo iniziale*, 12,5 x 17,5 cm



News

RECEPTION at The Armory Show 2010

From 4-7 March 2010 RECEPTION will take part in The Armory Show, New York in the section Armory Focus: Berlin.
www.TheArmoryShow.com



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