

# An Italian perspective Una prospettiva italiana

Luigi Ghirri | Gabriele Basilico  
Massimo Vitali | Vincenzo Castella

February 3 – March 13, 2012

Opening Reception:

Thursday, February 2, 5:30-8:00 pm



Luigi Ghirri, Gabriele Basilico, Massimo Vitali, Vincenzo Castella

Howard Greenberg Gallery is pleased to announce *An Italian Perspective/Una prospettiva italiana*, the inaugural project/exhibition at Howard Greenberg Gallery Two. Produced in collaboration with Studio La CITTÀ (Verona), *An Italian Perspective/Una prospettiva italiana* draws on an important chapter of Italian photography, focusing on four of the leading protagonists from the 1970s to present: Luigi Ghirri (1943-1992), Gabriele Basilico (b.1944), Massimo Vitali (b.1944) and Vincenzo Castella (b.1952).

The exhibited works represent a break in the history of Italian photography, where the artists rejected their identification with the narration, creativity, or linguistic analysis of the preceding generation. "The disappearance of the 'author' is characteristic of this generation," wrote Ghirri of Castella, relying on "a total faith in leaving the greatest communicative potential to photography without the coercion of any other strategies." Ghirri's statement applies to the four artists, who each take a conceptual approach in creating their representations: Ghirri depicts landscapes as surreal artificial constructs; Basilico focuses on urban edges and outskirts; Castella uses high vantage points to create impersonal panoramas of indistinguishable cities, while the architecture of place is the dominant subject in Vitali's socio-landscapes.

*An Italian Perspective/Una prospettiva italiana* presents a new context in which to consider these photographers within the history of Italian photography as each artist addresses the theme of cultural identity through topographical exploration. The exhibition investigates not only the differences in

aesthetic approaches among the photographers, but also generates a dialogue concerning new views, wider perspectives, and thoughts on identity of Italian photography through unifying threads and underlying sensibilities.

**Luigi Ghirri**, a pioneer of contemporary color photography, whose work from the early 1970s until his death in 1992 comprises a key part of the conceptual photographic tradition that shifted attention from the manual processes of creating an object to the examination of the nature of that object and its relation to the reality recorded by photography. Ghirri's visually profound and delicately colored images examine the nature of representation and perception. Despite their small size and modest demeanor, Ghirri's prints anticipate the large scale contemporary work of later photographers.

Originally trained as an architect, **Gabriele Basilico's** lifelong fascination with the city as a densely collaged environment is reflected in his landscape photographs. Basilico's images are marked by an unsettling stillness and a notable absence of people, an aesthetic that propels architecture and landscape to the forefront while engaging the viewer's attention to often overlooked places and telling details. The themes of spatial isolation and urban indifference persist throughout his work, as he documents the continually evolving urban landscape of the post-industrial—post-modern—city.

After working as a photojournalist and film cameraman, **Massimo Vitali** acquired international renown for his large-scale photographs of communal spaces, such as Italian beaches, parks, and discos, in which he explores the ethnographic relationship between man and nature through depictions of anonymous people during their leisure time. Vitali stations his camera on a raised platform and waits for the landscape to fill with people, watching their individual dramas, complexities, and a multitude of interactions unfold.

Using a large format camera, **Vincenzo Castella** explores the contemporary urban and industrial landscape of the places he knows well, including Milan and Naples. Influenced by his background in anthropology, Castella chronicles and synthesizes the urban landscape to investigate the commonalities and differences between cities of the Western world. Through minute details and distant horizons, Castella's urban overviews compare and contrast not only the evidences of history, but proof of unstoppable technological change. *An Italian Perspective* includes images from *Siti*, Castella's vast series of color photographs that he began in the late 1990s, as well as his latest work *#3Venice*, completed in January 2012 specifically for the exhibition.

*An Italian Perspective/Una prospettiva italiana* is presented in conjunction with *Peripheral Visions. Italian Photography in Context (1950s-Present)*, a survey of the past sixty years of Italian photography curated by Maria Antonella Pelizzari at the Bertha and Karl Leubsdorf Art Gallery at Hunter College.

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