

Alessandra Spranzi  
Mani che imbrogliano

with a text by Chiara Camoni  
and a note by the Artist

17.11.2018  
— 19.01.2019

P420 Gallery  
Bologna

*I love Alessandra's work.*

*OK, I know that is not a proper way to begin an essay.  
But it is true. And it is also my main thesis.*

*We know each other, though not so well.  
It is the work that knows us.*

Every morning I get up and look at a row of birds saying things to each other, that know things, a concentration. Then two overlapped bicycle tires, two sets, infinity, a promise. They are photos from the "Vendesi" series. I still haven't tired of them, after years. The conjectures, the nuances multiply infinitely.

The world, the table, the time

First of all we have a need for wonder, even those of us who set out to create it. We need processes, limits and wonder.

We need proximity, intimacy. At the same time we require a certain – correct – distance, to be able to look at today. (You can choose to go the Middle Ages, or the childhood of your parents.)

Surrounded by a multitude of signs and images, we work through reduction. We turn a toy around in our hands, the same toy, but by magic a new story always begins.

Alessandra Spranzi works with Polaroids, also with those that have expired. After the shot, sometimes, she removes the instant film pack and replaces it with regular film. She then photographs the same subject, and nonchalantly shifts from non-reproducibility to reproducibility. The subject is the same

**but the photograph is another, original, different.**

**Collages are ambiguous by nature. They bring together images belonging to different worlds. Things get complicated when they are then photographed or reutilized.**

A flow is created, which I could not define as either linear or circular.

*But what happens then?*

Anything can happen on that table. There are the near and the far. The self and the other. There are flowers, houses, stars, hugs, migrations, hunger and thirst, war, the news of the day.

*How to do it? How?*

I feel an infinite sharing of the secret of those rested forks, the eggs of different sizes, the light of each photo, the out of register, the colors that change of their own accord. A disarming honesty in the desire to again bestow again an image, the same image. Perhaps larger this time, or maybe just a detail.

*(Or should I change position? A bit further this way, just a little...)*

**The table is place, measure of space, indication of the vantage point.**

Black

**Alessandra Spranzi's images are mysterious. They search for something in the darkness, they find it, but then they stop short, one pace back, prior to certainty. They do not shed light on all of it. In the collages and videos the black can be background, contour, framing, hole.**

As a child, I could not believe that white was the sum of all colors and black was a subtraction. Even today I can't resign myself: when I mix all the colors, I get a grayish brown. Nothing like white. The black on the sheet always has a certain thickness.

**A black hole is a point of space-time in which the gravitational field is so strong that it attracts everything to itself, even light.**

*I know so much and I no longer know anything.*

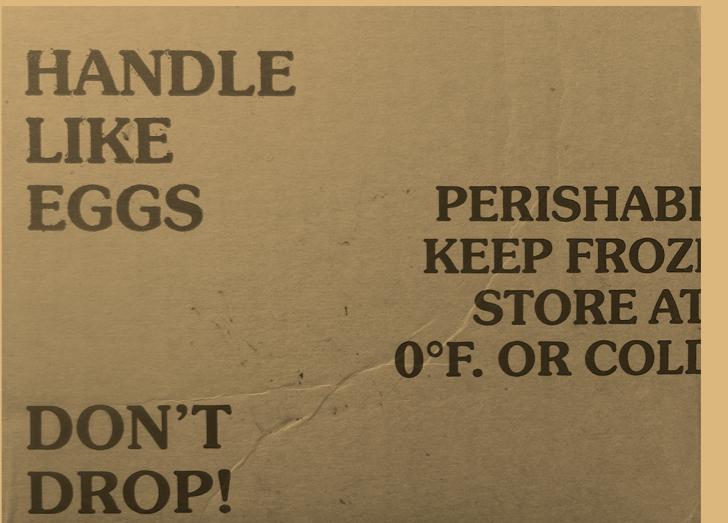
Note  
di Alessandra Spranzi

I would like to introduce this exhibition, *Mani che imbrogliano*, with the history of the titles that led up to the definitive choice. The sleight of hand may make them hard to glimpse, but they are there, like echoes.



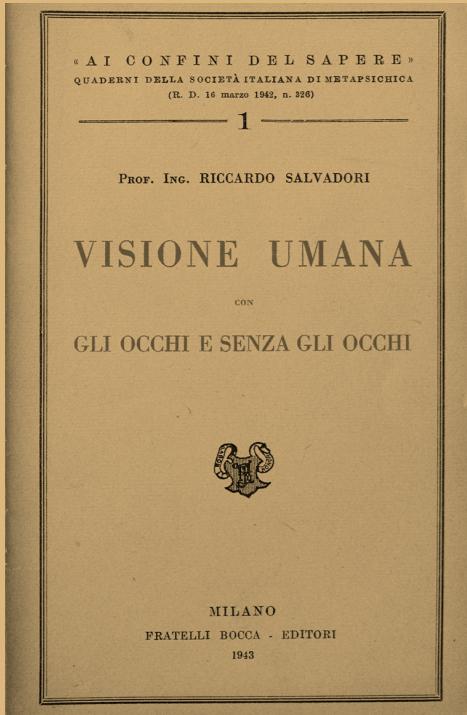
**1 L'apport du noir**

For more than a year, when I still wasn't clear on what I was going to show, this was the title. It was the heading that held the various thoughts and works together. *L'apport du noir* was a starting point, a passage, to cross, back and forth, inside and outside. (Photograph from a French decor magazine from the 1950s)



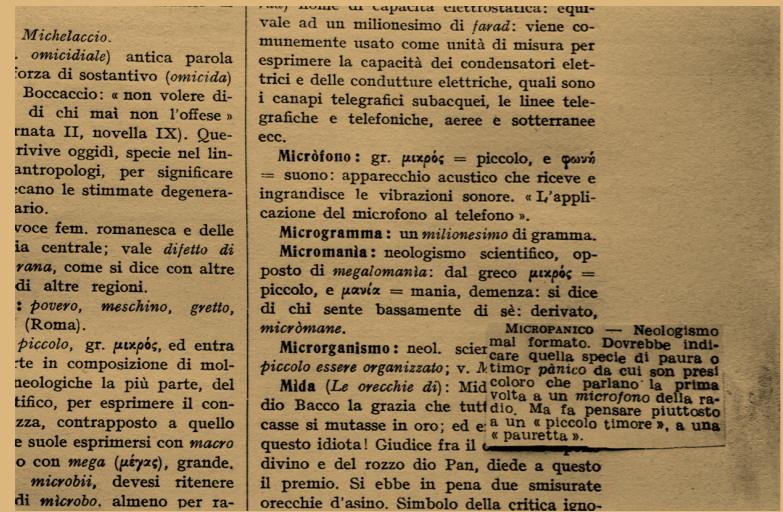
**2 Handle like eggs**

An explicit, direct title. The hands, and that rounded fragility that requires attention. The fall that awaits, that can be avoided. Must be avoided. (Found on cardboard egg packaging kept for years on the bookshelves)



### 3 Visione umana con gli occhi e senza gli occhi

The title of a book (roughly Human vision with and without the eyes) purchased precisely for its title at the Sunday book sale on Piazza Diaz. Page 28 reads: "Clearly this is vision without the eyes." "The visualizer": the person who is able to see a drawing inside a sealed envelope.



### 4 Micropanico

From the *Dizionario moderno* of Panzini, 1930, a word inserted in the copy in my possession by an unknown reader by adding a clipping. I have already used this dictionary "augmented" by about thirty definitions in for the words *Sortilegio* (in 2012) and

*Maraviglia* (in 2014), and I liked the idea of continuing my dialogue with that faraway reader who missed those words. A "micropanic" can accompany any form of darkness and fragility, the unexpected transformations of things, or bizarre encounters.



### 5 Enciclopedia delle meraviglie

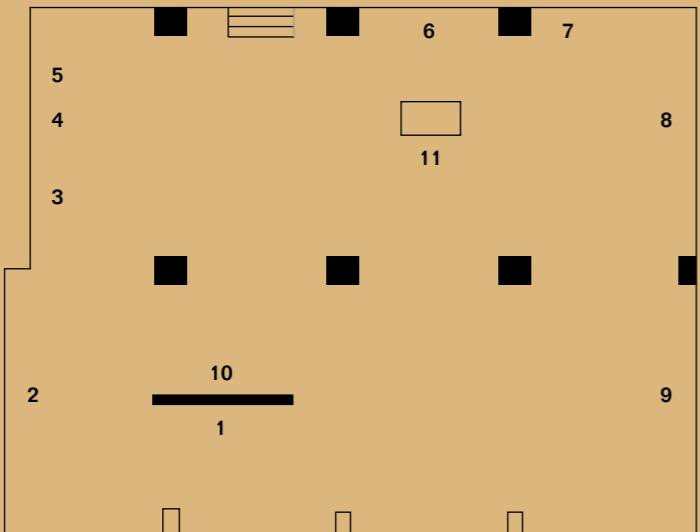
*Maraviglia* was the title of the solo show in 2014 at the old venue of Galleria P420 (one year after the group show curated by Simone Menegoi, *Lumpenfotografie, Towards a photography without vainglory*). While in *Maraviglia* the extra "a" doubled the marvel, here the "encyclopedia" promises to deliver many, infinite marvels.

"Enciclopedia delle meraviglie" is the name of a series of publications. I own only one book from this range: *Mani che imbrogliano*. I bought it this summer, on the way to Acceglio, in a market amidst the mountains of Val Maira. My son Elia was the one who found it, called to me and said: "This is for you."

### 6 Mani che imbrogliano

At the start of September, when I was asked to finally decide on the title of the exhibition that was to open on 17 November, I wrote *Mani che imbrogliano*. At the last minute,

## Room 1



1  
*Cose che accadono #16*, 2002–2005  
c-print mounted on aluminium  
40×60 cm, ed.5+2ap

2  
*L'ipnotismo illustrato, figura 6 (L'insieme è nero)*, 2017  
gelatin silver print on baryta paper  
80×54 cm, ed.3+2ap

3  
*Bicchieri a righe (L'insieme è nero)*, 2017  
gelatin silver print on baryta paper  
52,5×80,5 cm, ed.3+2ap

4  
*Tavolo per magia (L'insieme è nero)*, 2018  
gelatin silver print on baryta paper  
26×39,5 cm, ed.3+2ap

5  
*Tavolo per magia con tre scatole e tre stelle (L'insieme è nero)*, 2018  
gelatin silver print on baryta paper  
26×39,5 cm, ed.3+2ap

6  
*L'ipnotizzatore di animali (L'insieme è nero)*, 2018  
gelatin silver print on baryta paper  
36×26 cm ed.3+2ap

7  
*Maniera di tenere un bicchiere (L'insieme è nero)*, 2017  
gelatin silver print on baryta paper  
25×27 cm, ed.3+2ap

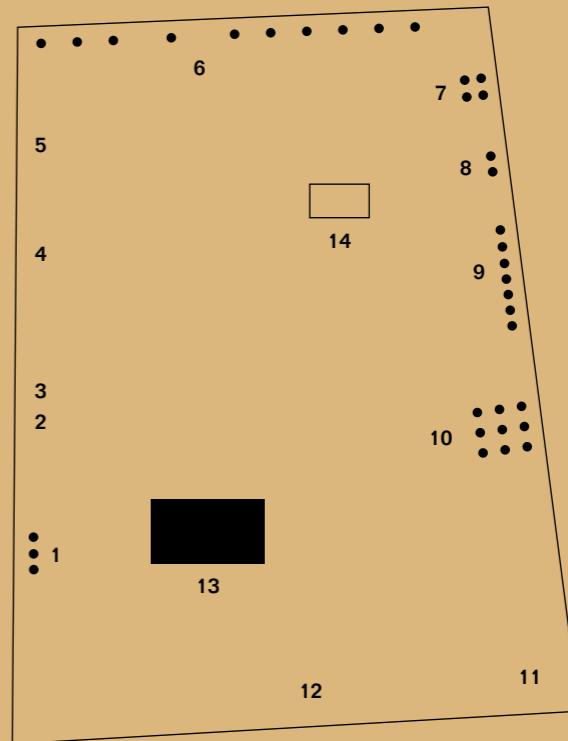
8  
*Alluminio per alimenti (L'insieme è nero)*, 2018  
gelatin silver print on baryta paper  
21×39 cm, ed.3+2ap

9  
*Tovaglia sospesa (L'insieme è nero)*, 2017  
gelatin silver print on baryta paper  
101×148 cm, ed.3+2ap

11  
*Et Voilà*, 2000  
digital video and sound, 4'02"

11  
*Tavolo #2*, 2018  
polaroid montage on paper  
160×90 cm

## Room 2



1  
*Plate 51, 35, 61 (Cacti and other succulents)*, 2017  
gelatin silver print on baryta paper  
28×19 cm each, ed.3+2ap

2  
*Piatto di porcellana (L'insieme è nero)*, 2017  
gelatin silver print on baryta paper  
39,5×26 cm, ed.3+2ap

3  
*Tre bicchieri (L'insieme è nero)*, 2018  
gelatin silver print on baryta paper  
26×39,5 cm, ed.3+2ap

4  
*La donna barbuta #1*, 2000  
black and white photograph  
26×38 cm, ed.5+2ap

5  
*Maniera di imballare una bottiglia (L'insieme è nero)*, 2016  
gelatin silver print on baryta paper  
81×55,5 cm, ed.3+2ap

6  
*Sul tavolo #93, #106, #91, #97, #113, #105, #110, #107, #83, #101*, 2014–2018  
c-print on aluminium  
30×41 cm each, ed.3+2ap

7  
*Buch der Rosen #41, #30, #37, #39*, 2017  
4 collages  
22,5×15 cm each

8  
*Nero come il carbone #4, #1*, 2018  
collage on carbon paper  
31×21 cm each

9  
*Foliage pagina 335, 339, 277, 267, 332, 327, 342*, 2017  
oil on book paper  
24,8×18,5 cm each

10  
*Sesto continente (Uccelli in movimento)*, 1996  
9 gelatin silver print on baryta paper  
26×38 cm each, ed.5+2ap

11  
*Cavallo che corre verso destra 30, Cavallo che corre verso sinistra 31 (L'insieme è nero)*, 2017  
gelatin silver print on baryta paper, diptych  
28×37,5 cm each, ed.3+2ap

12  
*Ragazzo con prototipo (L'insieme è nero)*, 2016  
gelatin silver print on baryta paper  
80×51 cm, ed.3+2ap

13  
*Ein Tisch (Un Tavolo)*, 2018  
color digital video and sound, 4'10"

14  
*Tavolo #1*, 2018  
works on paper, polaroids, black and white photographs  
and collages  
180×90 cm

*Mani che imbrogliano* is the second solo exhibition by Alessandra Spranzi at Galleria P420, after *Maraviglia* (2014) and the group exhibition *Lumpenfotografie, Towards a photography without vainglory* curated by Simone Menegoi (2013, with Hans-Peter Feldmann, Peter Piller, Joachim Schmid and Franco Vaccari). The new exhibition features recent works and others dating back to 1995, in a sort of punctuation of thought, or vision, that is always in the present but develops over a wider time span.

Alessandra Spranzi works in different ways and forms with the photographic image: she takes photographs of things, photographs of photographs, finding them, cutting them, indicating and erasing them. She intervenes when images and things reach a certain distance from their uses and become, so to speak, unaware of themselves, their possibilities, their beauty.

For *Mani che imbrogliano* the artist has prepared a grand magic show made with limited – very limited – means. Images from manuals, of objects found or gathered in the street, together with others that have always been there in the wings in our homes, gestures that demonstrate, that try to explain something. Like Harry Houdini, who for 50 cents offered to teach you “how to read folded messages in the dark.” Papers folded in the dark, perhaps with an image inside.

Alessandra Spranzi was born in Milan in 1962, where she still resides.

She studied at the Scuola Politecnica di Design and the Brera Academy of Fine Arts, where she now teaches photography. Since 1992 she has had many solo and group exhibitions: P420, Bologna; Fondazione Sandretto Re Rebaudengo, Turin; Centre National de la Photographie, Ile de France; Arcade, London; Fondazione del Monte, Bologna; MAMbo, Bologna; Galleria Martano, Turin; MAGA, Gallarate; Galleria Nicoletta Rusconi, Milan;

Fotografia Europea, Reggio Emilia; Museo di Fotografia Contemporanea, Cinisello Balsamo; Galleria Fotografia Italiana, Milan; MAN, Nuoro; GAMEC, Bergamo; Museo Marino Marini, Florence; Galleria Emi Fontana, Milan; Museo Pecci, Prato; Le Magasin, Grenoble; Careof, Cusano Milanino. Since 1997 she has created many publications and artist's books.

Her latest book *Uova, posate e altri oggetti* has been published in coordination with the exhibition *Mani che imbrogliano*.

**P420**