

MARAVIGLIA

Alessandra Spranzi

November 22, 2014 —
January 31, 2015

—
Opening
Saturday November 22, from 6 pm
the artist will be present

at P420, Piazza dei Martiri 5/2
40121 Bologna

Though she shows photographs, Alessandra Spranzi is not a photographer, but an artist who uses photography. This distinction might seem cavillous, or even obsolete: it dates back to the 1970s and has gradually lost its aptness to describe the evolution of the photographic language. But in Spranzi's case, and that of this exhibition, in particular, it can be useful. Most of the works in the show, created over the last two years, do not feature original images shot by Spranzi, but recycle images of others taken from practical manuals, science books, classified ads. They are photographs Spranzi has collected over the years, selected and then reutilized in a different way: rephotographing them, cutting, enlarging, printing with techniques that differ from those used to make the original image, or at times using them as the starting materials for a collage. What interests her is to point out a beauty that was already lurking, unseen, in existing images: anonymous photographs, not made by professionals, or in any case made without artistic ends. The artist writes:

For years I have been thinking about the often latent or exhausted potential that exists in images, returning to observe and use anachronistic or humble materials in projects that are always different, that bring to light, or reveal, the hidden, irrational side of things and images. To collect, put together and interface as a way of reorganizing, or surprising, sight and thought, to call the enigmatic nature of the photographic image that continually questions us back into play.

Spranzi shares this attitude with other artist-photographers who from the 1960s to the present have appropriated the images of others. Last year, Galleria P420 offered an overview of this approach in the group show *Lumpenfotografie*. What sets Spranzi apart from most of her colleagues is the pursuit of a specific aesthetic that is often recognizable at first glance: whether she rephotographs an old illustrated do-it-yourself manual, or creates an original image (like the Polaroids of small compositions of found objects in the recent series *Obsoleto*), Spranzi always offers the viewer silent, suspended images in which things, in the absence of human beings (or reducing them to the role of an off-screen assistant, of which we can glimpse only a hand), always seem to be on the verge of revealing a secret. It is a poetic universe for which the word "metaphysical" is not out of place, just as it is not inappropriate for certain still lifes of the painter De Pisis (1896–1956) or certain photographs by Luigi Ghirri, authors who like Spranzi, and before her, have cultivated the ability to be amazed by the most ordinary things, as if seeing them for the very first time. In the end, the idea is to rediscover a form of wonder, of *meraviglia* or even "*maraviglia*," to use the obsolete spelling of the word Spranzi has chosen as the title of the exhibition:

Maraviglia, the repetition of the letter a, like a repeated marvel, the awe of the second glance. I close my eyes, I open them again, I look again or rediscover something that seems unexpectedly new.

The exhibition includes works from the following cycles: *Io?* (1992-93), *Vendesi* (For Sale, starting in 2007), *Dizionario Moderno* (Modern Dictionary, 2012-14), *Sortilegio* (Sorcery, starting in 2012), *Obsoleto* (Obsolete, starting in 2012).

Alessandra Spranzi was born in 1962 in Milan, where she lives and works.

She has shown her work in many exhibitions in Italy and abroad, among them: Centre Photographique Ile de France (2015), *2004-2014 Opere e Progetti del Museo di Fotografia Contemporanea*, Triennale di Milano (2014), *Così Accade*, Fondazione Sandretto Re Rebaudengo (2014), Arcade gallery, Londra (2014), *Highlights*, Studio Dabbeni, Lugano (2014), Galleria Martano, Torino (2014), *Lumpenfotografie*, P420, Bologna, *Autoritratti. Iscrizioni al femminile nell'arte italiana contemporanea*, Mambo, Bologna (2014), *Richard Wentworth, Alessandra Spranzi*, galleria Nicoletta Rusconi, Milano (2012), *Cosa fa la mia anima quando sto lavorando?*, Maga, Gallarate (2010), *Alessandra Spranzi, Riti del caso imperfetto: l'incanto. Festival della fotografia europea, Reggio Emilia* (2010), *Storie immaginate in luoghi reali*, Museo

di Fotografia, Cinisello Balsamo (2007), *Cose che accadono*, galleria Fotografia Italiana, Milano (2005), *Lo sguardo ostinato*, Man, Nuoro (2004), *Nel bosco*, Galleria Monica De Cardenas, Milano (2002), *Da Guarene all'Etna*, Fondazione Re Rebaudengo Sandretto, Torino (2002), *La donna barbata*, Galerie Drantmann, Brussels e Galleria Emi Fontana, Milano (2000-2001), *Museo Entr'acte*, Museo Marino Marini, Firenze (2000), *Futurama, Arte in Italia 2000*, Museo Pecci, Prato (2000), *Animals animaux tiere animali*, Galleria Continua, S. Gimignano (1999), *Dove sei?*, Galleria Emi Fontana, Milano (1999).

She has published a number of books, including *Vendesi* (2013), *Una casa su misura* (2011), *Selvatico o colui che si salva* (2008), *Cose che accadono* (2005), *La donna barbata* (2000) and *Tornando a casa* (1997).

She teaches Photography at the Brera Fine Arts Academy in Milan.