

## PRESS RELEASE

### Luigi Ghirri *Project Prints*

Curated by Elena Re

Mummery + Schnelle. Fondo di Luigi Ghirri  
In collaboration with Galleria Massimo Minini

14 September – 29 October 2011

*Private view:*  
Wednesday 14 September, 6-8pm



Bologna – Atelier di Giorgio Morandi, 1989-90  
Project Print  
8 x 10 cm

*come pensare per immagini* <sup>1</sup>

Luigi Ghirri was a pioneer of contemporary colour photography. His work from the early 1970s until his death in 1992 forms part of a conceptual photographic tradition that shifted attention away from the manual processes involved in creating an object onto an examination of the nature of that object and its relation to the reality recorded by photography.

A key to Ghirri's artistic vision is provided by a passage he wrote in response to the first photograph taken of the Earth from Space by the Apollo 11 space craft in 1969 ...*it held within it all previous, incomplete images, all books that had been written, all signs, those that had been deciphered and those that had not. It was not only the image of the entire world, but the only image that contained all other images of the world: graffiti, frescoes, paintings, writings, photographs, books, films. It was at once the representation of the world and all representations of the world.*

The meaning that Ghirri sought in his work was a verification of the continued possibility to desire and look for a path of knowledge; a way through a forest of images of man, things and life in order to arrive at the precise identity of man, things and life. The multiplicity of images incorporated in Ghirri's work needs to be viewed in this way. They were for him hieroglyphs to be deciphered and interpreted on the way to an understanding of reality.

In the early 1980s Ghirri started to use a medium format camera producing larger negatives, clearly not for the sake of technique itself, but as if to "get inside" the subject more intensely. The centrality of thought and the sense of the project continued to be the necessary conditions for his work during those years, to such an extent that these negatives actually turned out to be another project tool he could resort to. Thanks to these matrices Ghirri was able to produce excellent contact prints, small photographs that he could cut out, file and line up in order to see each image, plan his series, organize his own view, even leaving them loose and then bringing them together again in endless combinations. These small photographs that enabled Luigi Ghirri to organize his own view from the early 1980s until 1992 were the *Project Prints*.

Mummary + Schnelle is pleased to present Luigi Ghirri's *Project Prints* for the first time in the UK, in collaboration with Galleria Massimo Minini. The exhibition has been curated by Elena Re from the body of work held in the archives of the Fondo di Luigi Ghirri. Elena Re has been engaged for a number of years in the study and investigation of Ghirri's work, starting from his archives, and is preparing a book and a museum exhibition on the *Project Prints* and on Luigi Ghirri's project vision.

Luigi Ghirri *Project Prints* will be both a journey through Ghirri's work and through Italy. During the 1980s the concept of landscape became increasingly important for Ghirri. He sought to create a new iconography of the Italian landscape, one that could incorporate both tradition and modernity. In the important series *Paesaggio Italiano*, many images from which are included in this exhibition, Ghirri looked to evoke a particular sense of place. He wrote, "I would like this work on the Italian landscape to seem more about the perception of a place than its cataloguing or description." Alongside *Paesaggio Italiano*, the work on show at Mummary + Schnelle will include images from other important series by Ghirri, including *Atelier di Giorgio Morandi*, *Architetture di Aldo Rossi*, *Versailles* and *Il Palazzo dell'arte*.

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Luigi Ghirri (b. Scandiano, Reggio Emilia, 1943 – d. Roncocesi, Reggio Emilia, 1992) worked as a photographer for over twenty years, from 1970 to 1992. One of the most important and influential figures in contemporary photography, he first started working in the ambit of conceptual art, and his research soon attracted international attention. In 1975 *Time-Life* included him among the "discoveries" of its *Photography Year*, and he showed at the *Art as Photography – Photography as Art* exhibition at Kassel. In 1982 he was presented at the Photokina in Cologne as one of the most significant artists in the history of 20th-century photography. His works are held in various institutions around the world, including the Stedelijk Museum (Amsterdam), Musée-Château (Annecy), Musée de la Photographie Réattu (Arles), Polaroid Collection (Cambridge, Massachusetts), Musée Nicéphore Niépce (Chalon-sur-Saône), Museum of Fine Arts (Houston), Museo di Fotografia Contemporanea (Cinisello Balsamo, Milan), Archivio dello Spazio – Amministrazione Provinciale (Milan), Galleria Civica (Modena), Canadian Centre for Architecture – Centre Canadien d'Architecture (Montréal), Museum of Modern Art (New York), Cabinets des estampes – Bibliothèque Nationale de France (Paris), Centre Pompidou (Paris), Fond National d'Art Contemporain (Paris), Centro Studi e Archivio della Comunicazione (Parma), Biblioteca Panizzi – Fototeca (Reggio Emilia), Palazzo Braschi – Archivio Fotografico Comunale (Rome), Fondazione Sandretto Re Rebaudengo (Turin), Galleria d'Arte Moderna (Turin), Fotomuseum (Winterthur). In 2010 a large selection of his works was included in the group exhibition *La carte d'après nature*, curated by Thomas Demand, at the Nouveau Musée National de Monaco. In summer 2011 this exhibition was presented in New York by Matthew Marks Gallery. Bice Curiger has selected him for her exhibition ILLUMInations at the 54th Biennale di Venezia.

<sup>1</sup> *come pensare per immagini* (how to think through images) A phrase in a newspaper crumpled on the pavement that appeared in a photograph by Ghirri that he chose in 1979 to be the final image of his series *Kodachrome*.