

PRESS RELEASE

Giorgio Ciam

Curated by Elena Re

Mummary + Schnelle
In collaboration with the Archivio Giorgio Ciam

19 January – 3 March 2012

Private view:
Wednesday 18 January, 6-8pm

Mummary + Schnelle is delighted to present the first UK exhibition of the work of Italian artist Giorgio Ciam.



Autoritratto, 1976, black and white photograph, 45.6 x 45.8 cm

The curatorial premise of this retrospective exhibition is to highlight essential moments in Giorgio Ciam's artistic practice, which used photography as a means for reflecting on questions of personal and artistic identity, and as a documentation of the artist's own self-analysis. The exhibition will feature important works from throughout Ciam's career selected from the artist's archives and focusing on some important aspects of the existential poetics that characterized his work. Beginning with works that reflect the cultural milieu of the 1970s, especially the 'events' or 'happenings' associated with the international Body Art movement, the exhibition continues through the 1980s and into the 1990s, decades during which Ciam continued to pursue an idiosyncratic research of his fragmented Self, anticipating much contemporary photographic work that addresses questions of identity.

Working within the field of behavioural studies, Giorgio Ciam focused on his own body and on his own face. His identity is endlessly investigated and revised. Putting himself in front of the camera lens, Ciam staged events, performances without spectators, in which he imagined his relationship with his audience through the photographic work itself. By making use of both photomontage and collage techniques, Ciam could transform himself and become "another". He would create stratified depictions by cutting out, overlaying, and collaging numerous photographic fragments from his performances in order to re-see and revise himself. He would also blur his features in long-exposure camera shots, erasing himself completely, or project images onto himself of his own works, or those of others.

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Autoritratti, 1980, black and white photograph, 50 x 50 cm

Giorgio Ciam was born in Pont-Saint-Martin (Aosta) in 1941. After pursuing his studies at the Academy of Fine Arts in Turin, he devoted himself to anthropological research conducted by means of the photographic medium. This also involved a theatrical-performative element, which in the early years of his career mainly took the form of *Sculture Ambiente* and *Teatri Scultura*. During the 1970s, he was involved in international Body Art and had frequent dealings with other European exponents of the movement, pursuing work that explored the expressive potential of photography. Focusing his studies in the field of Behaviour, he concentrated upon the human figure – chiefly on the face – examining his own identity as an intermediary for a relation with the *other*. In 1974 his work was presented in Lea Vergine's book entitled *Il corpo come linguaggio (La "Body-art" e storie simili)*, published by Prearo. In 1975 Giancarlo Politi included him in a special issue of *Flash Art* (nos. 52-53) about Italian and foreign artists working with photography. Ciam's works have been exhibited in many public venues, both national and international. In 1995 Giorgio Ciam staged an anthological exhibition at Forte di Bard (Aosta). He produced a large number of artist's books, and his exhibitions were often accompanied by publications. He died in Turin in 1996. In 2007 the publishing house Gli Ori published the book *GIORGIO CIAM – Dentro il sogno 1969-1995*, edited by Elena Re, in the series *PROGETTOSETTANTA – Art and photography from the '70s in Italy*. In 2010 Ciam's works were included in the group exhibition *GEOGRAFIA SENZA PUNTI CARDINALI – La fotografia nell'arte degli anni '70 in Italia*, curated by Elena Re and staged at the Giorgio Persano Gallery in Turin. In 2011, Mummery+Schnelle presented a solo exhibiton held at Artissima 18 in Turin, also curated by Elena Re.

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