

## Luigi Ghirri\*

(Scandiano, 1943 – Roncoesi, 1992)

The numerous works by Ghirri in the CRT Collection include one that depicts a glass snow globe containing a model of Piazza San Marco, seen from the Grand Canal, the same way that travelers arriving there once saw it for the first time, entirely reflected in the expanse of the lagoon's waters. This work is a door that opens between an "interior" and an "exterior" of the city, to use terms favored by Ghirri, which perhaps could best symbolize the idea of horizon and landscape, in the way he intended when he wrote that taking photographs signifies finding oneself at the boundary between the known and the unknown, which is not a question of a gesture of melancholic nostalgia, but the beginning of a voyage toward an unknown territory. That glass sphere, somewhat like a globe, somewhat like an eyeball, immersed in the surrounding darkness, recalls photographs of the earth shot in 1969 from the space ship traveling toward the moon, which, for Ghirri was "the image that man had pursued for centuries . . . presented for our view; it held within itself all previous, incomplete images, all books that had been written, all signs, those that had been deciphered and those that had not..." (Ghirri, Luigi, *Kodachrome*, 1978. English translation in *It's Beautiful Here, Isn't It...* Exhibition catalogue. New York: Aperture Foundation, 2008, p. 111). This was finally photography capable of illustrating that passage in a story by Calvino, which Ghirri himself recalled, saying that it is the world that looks at the world, a step already echoed thousands of times in the many works where he used the presence of a mirror, not to reveal the presence of himself in the image, as in the case of artists who had triumphantly positioned their glance at the starting point for perspectival lines and the formation of the possible horizon, but rather to reveal the entire world behind the observation of the world, to merge, superimpose and add his photographer's eye and its "interior" to the multiple glances present "outside." In the same way that the image of the world that observes itself is present in all his photographs, where people are portrayed from the back, often in pairs or in groups, intently observing views of maps and atlases, or other allegorical duplications of reality, such as paintings on the walls of museums or, again, like the open expanse of the sea that reflects both our glance and infinity on the horizon line, are present.

Ten years after the dissemination of that epochal photograph, in 1979, Ghirri was able to write: "Within me, instead, there is the conviction that in this theater my role as photographer is also a role identical with that of those who are photographed." (Ghirri, L., "1/125 luce naturale (1970-79)," in *Diaframma*, Milan, 1979). (EV)

## Additional Works in the Collection

*Modena*, 1970, reprint from original negative, 9.46 × 13.79 inches

*Modena*, 1971, reprint from original negative, 9.46 × 13.79 inches

*Modena*, 1972, reprint from original negative, 6.70 × 8.27 inches

*Brest*, 1972, reprint from original negative, 9.46 × 13.79 inches

*Modena (Shutter)*, 1972, reprint from original negative 9.46 × 13.79 inches

*Modena (Shutter)*, 1972, reprint from original negative, 9.46 × 13.79 inches

*Brest*, 1972, reprint from original negative, 9.46 × 13.79 inches

*Marina di Ravenna*, 1972, reprint from original negative, 9.46 × 13.79 inches

*Modena, from the Series "Breakfast on the Lawn"*, 1973, vintage print, 6.90 × 4.85 inches

*Naples*, 1980, reprint from original negative, 9.46 × 13.79 inches

*Ferrara (Walled-up Door)*, 1981, reprint from original negative, 9.46 × 13.79 inches

*Trani*, 1982, reprint from original negative, 9.46 × 13.79 inches

*Grostè Alpine Shelter*, 1984, reprint from original negative, 9.46 × 13.79 inches

*Colorno*, 1985, vintage print, 6.11 × 9.06 inches

*Parma*, 1985, reprint from original negative, 10.24 × 13.08 inches

*Via Emilia*, 1985, reprint from original negative, 9.46 × 13.79 inches

*Solara*, 1985, vintage print, 6.50 × 9.85 inches

*Scandiano*, 1985, vintage print, 12.21 × 9.46 inches

*Scandiano*, 1985, vintage print, 11.82 × 15.76 inches

*Scandiano*, 1985, vintage print, 10.95 × 14.42 inches

*Scandiano (from Italian Landscape)*, 1985, vintage print, 11.82 × 15.76 inches

*Fidenza (from The Shapes of Clouds)*, 1985, vintage print, 4.53 × 9.06 inches

*Tremi Islands*, 1985 (from Italian Landscape), 1985, vintage print, 6.90 × 9.26 inches

*New York*, 1986 (from The Places of Music), 1986, three vintage prints, 8.87 × 12.21 inches

*New York*, 1986, 1986, three vintage prints, 8.67 × 10.84 inches

*New York*, 1986, 1986, vintage print, 9.65 × 12.02 inches

*Rimini*, 1986, vintage print, 6.11 × 8.47 inches

Untitled (Unidentified Location), 1986, vintage print, 6.11 × 11.23 inches

Bologna, from (from The Shapes of Clouds), 1987, vintage print, 4.53 × 8.47 inches

Argine Argenta (from The Shapes of Clouds), 1989, vintage print, 7.09 × 9.46 inches

Study of Aldo Rossi, 1989, reprint from original negative, 9.46 × 13.79 inches

Doccia, Pontassieve, Vittorio Savi's House, 1989, reprint from original negative, 9.46 × 13.79 inches

Bitonto, 1991, reprint from original negative, 9.46 × 13.79 inches

Roncoesi, 1991, reprint from original negative, 9.46 × 13.79 inches

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