

## Jacopo Miliani

(Florence, Italy, 1979)

Jacopo Miliani works on the formation of images. He investigates their latent power, in constant rebirth, and their emergence as mirages amid both the silence of the mind and the noise of mass culture. His work is conceptually close to that of iconologists and through different artistic languages, he presents the symbolic resurgences of certain elements in time. For Miliani, the history of visual culture, whether exquisitely artistic, of the theater or related to pop icons, is like a great castle of mirrors: in every glance the image is eternally reestablished.

*Knowledge is Good*, 2012, in the CRT collection, consists of a screening of John Landis's film *National Lampoon's Animal House* and a book of images. Landis's film, which came out in 1978, marked an era, inaugurating a prolific stream of college movies and giving a picture of American youth that seemed definitively disengaged from the period of social and political commitment that had characterized university campuses for over a decade, giving way to a fun-loving, carefree student body, focused on sex, alcohol, and drugs, which were no longer seen as part of a process of discovery and knowledge, but rather as a soporific, masking any self-interrogation.

Jacopo Miliani began with this B cult movie but then brought his research to bear on images and their subtle and ambiguous nature. He removed the soundtrack from the film with the exception of only two minutes of song and music. In this way he preserved only the visual structure of film, only its continuous flow of frames, even more than narration and plot. And in that continuous flow, almost as if it were a dream, he has recorded the possible recognition of images taken from contemporary art, as if they were citations and involuntary anticipations of Landis, but above all oneiric projections of the viewer.

He used a now historical comedy, turning it into the terrain for his own mirages and scenes, as if they were Rorschach tests, where the unconscious of contemporary art can emerge. The book is the manual for decoding these images and citations that the frames have suggested: in its pages, alongside selected still frames from the film, are works of art that each frame has suggested, through chromatic assonance, visual composition, the visibility of an object, or the quality of the light.

*Knowledge is Good* shifts the root of figurative creation from books and museums to the continuum of visual experience in its totality. Indeed, the title ends up being satirical in terms of both the American college students and the most sophisticated use of citations: the life of images, their springing forth, changing from one into another, knows no separations between contexts or cultural levels. Everything is in free movement and metamorphosis. (EV)