

MATTHEW MARKS GALLERY

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PRESS RELEASE

Luigi Ghirri: The Impossible Landscape

February 26 – April 30, 2016

Opening: Thursday, February 25, 6:00 to 8:00 PM

Matthew Marks is pleased to announce **Luigi Ghirri: The Impossible Landscape**, the next exhibition in his gallery at 526 West 22nd Street. Featuring thirty-four vintage color photographs made between 1970 and 1989, the exhibition includes landscapes from Italy, where the artist was born and spent most of his life, as well as from Austria and France.

The exhibition takes its title from his 1989 artist's statement about the way photographs "become our impossible landscape, without scale, without a geographic order to orient us; a tangle of monuments, lights, thoughts, objects, moments, analogies from our landscape of the mind, which we seek out, even unconsciously, every time we look out a window, into the openness of the outside world, as if they were the points of an imaginary compass that indicates a possible direction."

From the beginning of his career, Ghirri used his camera to render the familiar strange. A 1973–75 photograph from Modena, for example, shows a building facade illuminated by warm sunshine. Only on close inspection does it reveal itself to be a reflection in a puddle. The rich color of this image was unusual for early-1970s art photography, which was still almost exclusively black and white. Ghirri's pioneering use of color was just one way he grounded his imagery in the visual language of everyday reality.

Early in his career Ghirri worked as a land surveyor, and later he would use topographic metaphors, like "imprecise cartography" and "sentimental geography," to describe his art. Much of his work examines this disjunction between the world and its depictions. But his photography is also rooted in a deep fondness for his homeland. Of the *Paessagio Italiano* (Italian Landscape) photographs, several of which are included in the exhibition, Ghirri wrote, "I have viewed these places with a gaze full of affection and love, in an attempt to perceive a simple and astonished feeling of belonging."

Born in 1942, Luigi Ghirri spent his working life in the Emilia-Romagna region of Italy. Although he exhibited extensively during his lifetime, his work did not receive international recognition until after his untimely death in 1992. In 2008, Aperture published the first English-language monograph on Ghirri, and his work was featured at the Venice Biennale in 2011 and 2013. Since 2012 he has had exhibitions at Castello di Rivoli in Turin, the MAXXI Museum in Rome, and the Douglas Hyde Gallery in Dublin. A major European touring retrospective is scheduled to open in 2018.

Luigi Ghirri: The Impossible Landscape is on view at 526 West 22nd Street from February 26 to April 30, 2016, Tuesday through Saturday, from 10:00 AM to 6:00 PM.

For additional information, please contact Jacqueline Tran at 212-243-0200 or jacqueline@matthewmarks.com.