

## Early Works and Rare Prints

A rediscovered box. Inside, *work prints* of unreleased projects and some rare images from *War Souvenir*. The surprising content is at the origin of the exhibition *Early Works and Rare Prints* which opens to the public on February 11th in the Galleria del Cembalo, Rome.

The first section is dedicated to objects found by chance or even unearthed, taken side by side as to imagine a relationship between them: suggesting individual drama or collective tragedies.

Here Paolo Ventura describes these works:

“The first work absolutely ‘mine’, out of the previous fashion projects, is called *Violence holes* and it is a research I made on traces left by episodes of violence. There are *close up* views of any kind of holes, lightened by a ring flash, which lets you light up everything and enables to go and look really close.

Twenty years ago I had casually started to find objects pierced by bullets and I begun to take pictures of them; for instance, the street lights in *Piazza della Repubblica* (Milan), showing the holes caused by splinters of a bomb during the Second World War. They are impressive, because the diameter of the lamp’s pole made of cast iron measures about one meter, but the slivers went clean through the metal as if it was butter, you can clearly see the entrance and the exit punch, opening like a flower. They are still there.

Then, a friend of mine who is also a collector found the uniform of a young soldier killed in the Carso area (north-east in Italy), with traces of blood around the hole still visible today. Later on I went to Redipuglia (a military memorial monument) where personal belongings of soldiers are exposed and I took a picture of a wallet showing the punch of a bullet, and the bullet had made a hole also on a letter and on the snapshot of the soldier’s fiancée. I took photos of everything.

I also found capes hit by bayonets, helmets, a painting from a pub in Udine, damaged by a gunfight.

In the same period I met a guy from Bologna, who had a suitcase filled with books from a typography that had been set on fire by a group of fascists, where his grand father used to print the leaflets of the Avanti (historical Socialist daily newspaper), The books where all half burned. I took photos of those pages again and again: they are sculptures.

## Galleria del Cembalo

Moreover, there's a minor work regarding objects from the Second World War that I came across in the countryside, around Anghiari. I used to dig them up and as soon as they were hardly appearing from the ground I used to take pictures of everything. Emerging images that looked like phantoms."

The clues of real tragedies characterizing these early works are fully represented in the real fiction of the images of the project *War Souvenir* (2005), which provided an international reputation to the author. A selection of work prints from this series is shown in the second part of the exhibition. Some of them are absolutely seen here for the first time.

Episodes from the German occupation in northern Italy are turned into small theaters of History, where the artifice of the reconstruction doesn't diminish the dimension of the tragedy.

Paolo Ventura was born in Milan in 1968.

His work has been exposed in public museums as well as in private galleries all over the world.

His photos are in some important collections as: the MART, Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art of Rovereto and Trento, the Museum of Fine Arts of Boston, the Library of Congress in Washington, the MACRO, Museo of Contemporary Art of Rome and the MEP, Maison Européenne de la Photographie in Paris.