

PRESS RELEASE FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CLAUDIO PARMIGGIANI



16 MARCH - 12 APRIL 2017
PRIVATE VIEW: WEDNESDAY 15 MARCH

FINASSAGE: SATURDAY 8 MARCH 3PM

Simon Lee Gallery is pleased to announce the fourth exhibition by renowned Italian artist Claudio Parmiggiani.

Over the course of his career, Parmiggiani has maintained a radical stance and singular vision, utilising recurring motifs such as dust, emptiness, fire, glass, bells and shadows to interrogate the dual nature of time. His overarching investigation is his search for an image, object or assemblage that transcends time and individual experience to evoke a universally existential and perceptual truth. It is a search that is at the heart of his practice, an excavation of history and mythology that is rendered still, silent and impervious to time.

The works in the exhibition reflect Parmiggiani's ongoing commitment to investigating the human condition and the footprints we leave behind, the communication between the intimate and the exterior, and themes such as memory, absence, fragmentation, silence and uncertainty. His new works exhibited over two floors at the London gallery exemplify this vision and invite us to reflect on the vitality of creativity, our quest for knowledge and legacy, in the context of an increasingly violent and unstable world.

At the centre of the exhibition will be a series of 'black mirror' wall based works - smashed black glass that resemble telescopic windows onto the cosmos. Jewel-like, cracked, shimmering surfaces reveal hypnotic voids and galaxies, embodying the act of violence in their own creation. Evoking a tension between the man-made and the natural world, between matter and thought, these shimmering worlds promise a fractured eternity.

The second floor gallery plays host to a monumental 'Delocazione' work, depicting a ghostly library, immortalised in soot. Here the figurative silhouettes of books stand to attention like soldiers or a choir about to project a collective song, their simultaneous presence and absence reflecting the cycles of life and inevitability. Parmiggiani's works in the exhibition situate us in the echoes of history whilst urging us to forge new connections, dreams, possibilities.

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For over 40 years Claudio Parmiggiani has made fire and earth sing alongside air and smoke, wood and stone. His works are shadow sculptures, as Georges Didi-Huberman called them: figurations in which bodies and objects, the whole universe of life, is evoked in absentia. It is an art of subtraction, of ascetical rarefaction, engaged in explicit dispute with the deafening worldliness of today's narcissistic "art world". The disappearance staged by Parmiggiani always has something traumatic about it, often alluding to the piercing loss of people and things that have "emigrated" – swept away by the waves, burned by the fire of history. It is an exquisitely, sometimes brutally, material form of art, but one which still retains a longing for a transcendent dimension, for something beyond this world, for the "spirituality of art". It is, then, definitely a religious art, yet one that cannot be reduced to orthodoxies of any kind: a faith in nothing, but a total faith, is precisely how the artist describes himself.¹

NOTES TO EDITORS

Claudio Parmiggiani was born in Luzzara, Italy in 1943 and lives and works in Parma, Italy. Parmiggiani's work has been widely exhibited in international museums and collections. His work has been shown six times at the Biennale di Venezia, Venice, Italy (1972, 1982, 1984, 1986, 1995 and 2015). A retrospective of his practice between 1960 and 1995 was held at the Musée d'Art Moderne et Contemporain, Geneva, Switzerland (1995). Recent solo exhibitions have been held at Accademia di Francia Villa Medici, Roma, Italy (2015), Ex Oratorio di San Lupo, Bergamo, Italy (2014), Chiesa San Fedele, Milan, Italy (2014), Palais des Beaux Arts - BOZAR, Brussels, Belgium (2013), Palazzo del Governatore, Parma, Italy (2010), Collège des Bernardins, Paris, France (2008), Palazzo Fabroni Arti Visive Contemporanee, Pistoia, Italy (2007), The Musée des Beaux-arts de Nantes, Nantes, France (2007), The Grand Palais, Paris, France (2005), Galleria d'Arte Moderna di Bologna, Bologna (2003), Museum of Art, Tel-Aviv, Israel (2003) and Musée Fabre, Montpellier, France (2002). His work is part of the collections of Centre Pompidou, Paris, France, Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam, Amsterdam, The Netherlands, Museo de Bellas Artes of Havana, Havana, Cuba, The National Gallery of Iceland, Reykjavík, Iceland, Mamco - musée d'art moderne et contemporain, Geneva, Switzerland, Fondation Cartier pour l'art contemporain, Paris, France and Francois Pinault Foundation, Venice, Italy, Museo del Novecento, Milan, Italy.

FINASSAGE: 3PM SATURDAY 8 APRIL, SIMON LEE GALLERY, LONDON

Join us for a tour of the exhibition on the ground and first floor galleries with Neil Powell, Pro Vice-Chancellor at Norwich University of the Arts.

Neil Powell has written and exhibited extensively internationally, with past projects including presenting a major show of Art & Language at MoMA PS1, New York, (with Professor Michael Corris) and exhibitions with Michael Craig-Martin, Jake and Dinos Chapman, Avis Newman, Coracle Press, Alfredo Jaar, John Craske, Roger Ackling, Ana Maria Pacheco and Ian Hamilton Finlay. He participated in the curator selection for the Hayward Open Curatorial 2014-15 and the latest edition of the national touring exhibition, British Art Show 8. In 2016 Powell was appointed to the Board of the Museum of Contemporary Art, Beijing, China. He writes a monthly column on arts and culture for Wall Street International and has made recent appearances on BBC television and BBC Radio 4's Front Row. Amongst other projects, he is currently working on *Contested Territories: Art and Science*, an anthology of critical essays for Ridinghouse.

Image: Claudio Parmiggiani, *Senza Titolo*, 2016, Glass, 50 x 33 cm (19 3/4 x 13 in.).

For further press information, images and interview requests please contact Julia Kelly Kennedy: julia@simonleegallery.com / 020 7491 0100.

¹ A. Cortellesa, 'The Shadow, the Work', in *Claudio Parmiggiani: Naufragio con spettatore* (Silvana Editoriale: 2010).