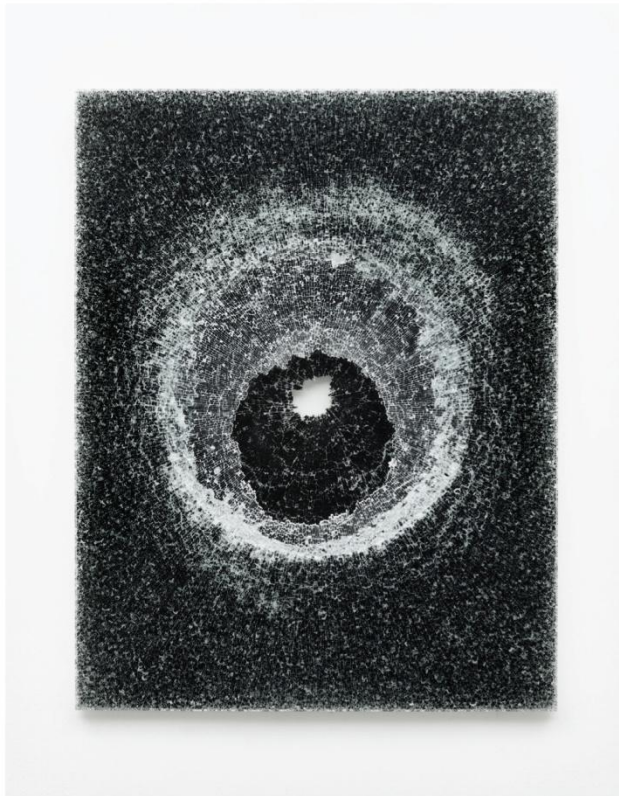


Claudio Parmigianni. Portrait by Todd-White Art Photography. Courtesy of the artist and Simon Lee Gallery.
Opposite: Claudio Parmigianni, *Senza Titolo*, 2017, glass, 35.37 x 27.5 in. Courtesy of Simon Lee Gallery.





CLAUDIO PARMIGGIANI

SIMON LEE GALLERY

Amidst the hustle and bustle of the Dallas Art Fair one will find the artistic embodiment of absence, stillness, and silence. Made by Italian artist Claudio Parmiggiani, the pieces are comprised of soot-laden boards and shattered glass panes, remnants of processes designed to erode physical barriers, exposing the nothingness in between.

Born in Luzzara, Italy in 1943, Parmiggiani studied at the Istituto di Belle Arti di Modena, where he met famed painter and printmaker Giorgio Morandi, whose still lifes of bottles and vases continue to have a profound effect on Parmiggiani's work. Associated throughout his career with both the Arte Povera and Conceptual Art movements, Parmiggiani resists substantial connection with either, preferring to retain a singularity about his work rather than categorical associations.

In 1970 Parmiggiani began his well-known *Delocazione* (de-location) series. Inspired by dusty silhouettes created by objects set on shelves and placed against walls, the works are meditations on the voids left behind in the wake of loss, and our desire to retain some sense of presence in the face of absence. "*Delocazione* is a work born from the observation of an abandoned place inside a museum, where the only presences were the footprints of the objects I had removed," he explains. "An environment of shadows: shadows of canvases removed from the walls, shadows

of shadows, like seeing another veiled reality behind a veil and another reality behind it and other veils, and so on, getting lost indefinitely, looking for an image and through that image the desire to glimpse oneself." In order to create these pieces, Parmiggiani places objects in front of large boards, and fills the sealed room with smoke from burning tires. The thick, acrid air deposits smoke and soot across the surface, leaving ghostly traces of the objects—books, bottles (a nod to Morandi), small objects, window drapes—as if one is viewing the walls of a home after a fire, when only the shadowy figures of the past remain.

Juxtaposing the smoky lushness of these panels is a series of "black mirror" works, featuring panels of black glass shattered in the middle, as if struck by a fist or a rock. Whereas fire can be seen as cleansing and sensual, jagged flecks of glass speak to fear and violence, the shattering of protective barriers against unknown predators. One thinks of windows, gunshots, robberies—all violations of personal safety and security. Yet the glass harkens back to the basic elements of creation, and the cyclicity of fire as a creator and destructor, as a force of life and death. And this is where Claudio Parmiggiani wants to situate his viewers, in the quiet stillness in between moments, when the embers take their last breaths and the smoke disappears into the ether, leaving only the scent behind. —Danielle Avram