



Presence of Absence

January 2-18, 2002

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LOS ANGELES Luigia Martelloni: *Presence of Absence*. An impromptu show, conceived in the wake of the terrorist attacks on America and the conflict in Afghanistan, includes installations and photo-assemblages that bear a cumulative emotional weight in their message for peace. It opens on December 11, 2001 at Spazio Italia, Italian Cultural Institute, located at 1023 Hilgard Avenue in Westwood. The exhibition will close on January 4, 2002. One of the most poignant works in the exhibition is a 1992 cybochrome photographic collage of an architectural interplay of three sets of twin towers. Entitled *2+2=3*, it shows, side by side, two tower-like eroded rock formations; two monastically austere towers of the Medieval Italian town of San Gimignano; and the World Trade Center in N.Y., soaring dynamically into the sky. The prehistoric creation of nature, the centuries-old stone structures, and the forever lost Twin Towers—a visual symbol of modern urban life—here create a cohesive monument to the history of mankind, beckoning the viewer to reflect. In *What Appears, What Disappears*, the artist makes a dramatic use of ambiguity between the horrors of men's ever-raging wars and the timeless beauty of the natural world. Four dark wooden rods, posed against a background mirror, rise menacingly suggesting hostility and aggression. Seen through the mirror, fragmented images of a tropical forest glued on the back of the rods metamorphose the violent mood into a lyrical celebration of nature. Seven small canvases compose *The Map is not the Territory*: fluid abstract shapes, as if melting into one another, speak of spiritual transcendence asserting the artist's absolute freedom from bounds and constraints, whatever form they may take. In the installation *Songs of Innocence*, an all-embracing white is the key to the significance of the work and enhances the meditative intensity of the narrative. These compelling images will quietly linger with us giving the disquieting perspective of war through which we now view our lives in the aftermath of September 11. The work of Roman-born Luigia Martelloni in multiple media, from painting and photography to video and performance, has been presented in solo exhibition at the Museo Laboratorio di Arte Contemporanea—University of Rome, Arco di Alibert and Ferro di Cavallo galleries in Rome. Group shows include *Moving toward the Millennium*, L.A. International, Watts Towers Center (1999); *Rassegna Roma Arte*, Municipal Gallery of Contemporary Art, Rome (1997); *Artists for Opening*, American Academy, Rome (1996); *Italia 1970-1990. Ultime Generazioni*, XII Quadriennale Nazionale di Arte, Palazzo delle Esposizioni Rome (1996); *French and Italian Artists*, Salander O'Reilly Gallery, Los Angeles (1992). Living and working in Los Angeles since 1992, Martelloni has produced a documentary on tap dancing for the Italian Television *This is Tap* (1999-2000) and directed the very recent documentary *Bocca della Verità* (*Journey into Sex Slavery*). The Italian Cultural Institute's Spazio Italia is a non-profit exhibition space dedicated to promoting the work of Italian art, architecture, and design through exhibitions, lectures, and other events. It is open Monday through Friday from 9:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. # # # # #