

Luigi Ghirri: It's Beautiful Here, Isn't It...

By Germano Celant

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Luigi Ghirri was an extraordinary photographer, as well as a writer and curator whose career was so rich and varied that it seems like a lesson in the contemporary history of the medium. Although well known in his native Italy, Ghirri does not yet have the international audience his work merits--perhaps because he died so young. *It's Beautiful Here, Isn't It...*--the first book published on Ghirri in the U.S.--will establish him as the seminal artist he was. Uncannily prescient, Ghirri shared the sensibility of what became known in the U.S. as the New Color and the New Topographics movements before they had even been named. Like his counterparts in Italian cinema, Ghirri believed that the local and the universal were inseparable and that life's polarities--love and hate, present and past--were equally compelling. Not surprisingly, his interests encompassed all the arts: he worked in Giorgio Morandi's studio and with architect Aldo Rossi, while influencing a generation of photographers, including Olivo Barbieri and Martin Parr. This dynamic new book includes a selection of Ghirri's essays published in English for the first time, as well as a selected chronology.

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Editorial Review

Review
"Very much in tune with the conceptual art of the 1970s, his photography was a means for expressing this metaphysical vision rather than for capturing Cartier-Bresson's 'decisive moment.' His approach transformed Italian photography of that era, and his use of color influenced a generation of photographers such as Martin Parr and William Eggleston." -- John Lavine --Color Magazine: For Collectors of Fine Photography

"[Ghirri has] a restless and playful imagination--one that regarded photography as 'a great adventure in thinking and looking.' Ghirri teases the idea of landscape with images of toy houses in a net bag, a building in a snow globe, and a woman looming over a scale-model city. But no matter how intellectual, his pictures about pictures project pleasure, amusement, and an openness to the unexpected." --The New Yorker

"His landscapes' flat, white sunlight and washed-out palette of stone, sand, and sky; his obvious love for the cities and people of Emilia-Romagna; and his metaphysical concern with the constructed reality of the image locate him indelibly within Italy as both place and art-historical precedent." -- Brian Sholis --ARTFORUM

"Subverting traditional landscape photography's heroic impulse, Ghirri prized representational antics over the mere grandeur of volcanoes and dizzying cliffs... Ghirri sparks the moment with storytelling, and the tabeleau grows large even as it shrinks within his viewfinder." -- Albert Mobilio --BOOKFORUM

"Ghirri frames his images of maps, street signs, posters, and houses (and sometimes posters of houses), in a way that makes you chuckle, but he can also provoke loftier reactions like surprise and wonder." --The New Yorker: The Book Bench, Loose Leafs from the New Yorker Books Department

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