

Elisabetta Benassi
It starts with the firing



Title: *Elisabetta Benassi. It starts with the firing*

Publisher: NERO, Roma

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Number of pages: 120

Dimension: 20 x 32 cm

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The book can be also purchased on the website: www.neromagazine.it

The inspiration behind *It starts with the firing* –the exhibition and namesake book by Elisabetta Benassi– is the controversy triggered by a 1966 work by American artist Carl Andre. Titled *Equivalent VIII*, the work is composed of one hundred and twenty bricks placed on two overlapping rows to form a rectangular shape.

In 1972 London's Tate Gallery purchased it for several thousand pounds (the museum never disclosed the exact price). *Equivalent VIII* was then featured in two special displays of recent acquisitions, respectively in January-April 1974 and in January 1975, before it attracted any adverse publicity. On 15 February 1976, the *Sunday Times Business News* featured an article about the Tate's purchases of the previous years illustrated with a photograph of the work. Intense press scrutiny poured ridicule on the museum's acquisition choice with articles and cartoons. The work was exhibited in February 1976, owing to public interest, and has since been in show a number of times. *Equivalent VIII* is now housed in London's Tate Modern. Elisabetta Benassi has referred back to the traces of these press materials, now held in the Tate Archives (put together by Carl Andre himself and donated to the museum), to open up and activate the controversy by extrapolating headlines from the original newspaper cuttings. Some of these headlines are assembled in the present artist's book, and also turned into billboards positioned around the town of Reggio Emilia in occasion of her exhibition at Collezione Maramotti.