

PAOLO SIMONAZZI | SO NEAR, SO FAR

The photos of Paolo Simonazzi on view in this exhibition bring into sharp focus and illustrate the subject matter and themes that are clearly dear to him and characterize his style. [...] derive their power and meaning from the quotidian as well as the shared consciousness and experiences of the viewer. To engage with these images is to journey between real, remembered, and imagined places and states of mind.

[...] Simonazzi draws out a great connection with the essence and spirit of place that is *La Via Emilia*. He then injects and fuses this spirit with a foreign element that is straight from his own soul: his love for the romance of the American road culture. The interesting key of the photos in the exhibition is Simonazzi's ability to capture our imagination by weaving together two traditions and their emblems: the deep, rich history of the Via Emilia, and the mythology of the American road.

[...] For Simonazzi, the road is a muse. The artist's straightforward deadpan, ironic portrayal of the subject matter, is the hallmark of the visual vocabulary that is the history and tradition of American road photography.

[...] Simonazzi composes his subjects squarely, usually in the fore or middle ground of the photo, not allowing the eye to wander from the center. The subject is treated as a still life, although the arrangements of the objects can often seem to be jumbled and chaotic. Simonazzi does not get in the way of his subjects, but rather allows them to penetrate into and speak directly to us as we engage head-on with the narrative. The power of his photos lies in their directness and ability to illuminate the easily overlooked, by elevating the mundane to the extraordinary and the quirky to the humorous.

[...] These photographs can be seen as small self-portraits of the artist as well as intimate portraits of the people and land of his upbringing. His, is a thoughtful and considered approach to the subject matter and composition that is guided by meaning and significance.

Simonazzi's images strike a chord with all, no matter the nationality, and evoke memories of time and place that are universally shared.

[...] The result is a collective visual diary of images that bridge nationalities and cultures. The photos create an intimate love song that resonates with all who live on the road, regardless of time or country.

"there's nothing that the road cannot heal" - Connor Oberst

Gina Costa