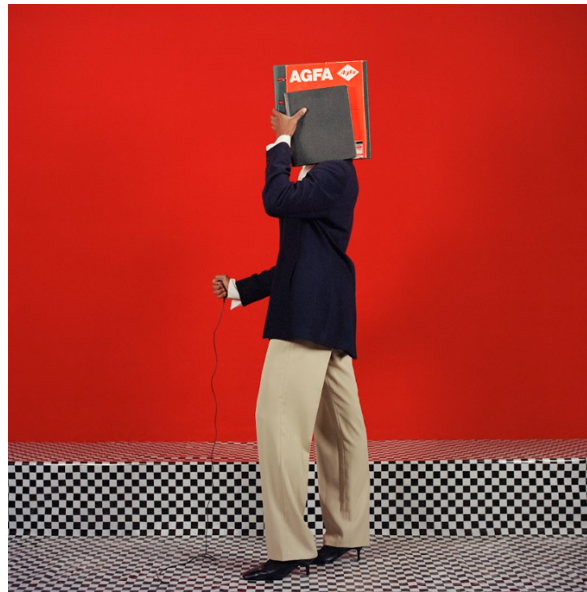


PRESS RELEASE

Silvia Rosi
Disintegrata

28 April – 28 July 2024



In conjunction with the 19th Fotografia Europea festival, centered on the concept *Nature loves to hide*, Collezione Maramotti is presenting the first solo show in an Italian art institution by Silvia Rosi, *Disintegrata*.

Conceived specifically for this space, the exhibition includes twenty new photographic works, several moving images and a group of archival photos that the artist collected in Italy – primarily in Emilia-Romagna – between 2023 and 2024.

Aided by Mistura Allison, Theophilus Imani and Ifeoma Nneka Emelurumonye, Rosi travelled across the area to gather hundreds of ordinary photographs, family snapshots that capture the everyday experience of people who came to Italy from Africa before the 2000s, and who over the years have taken pictures of themselves and their lives in various contexts.

This exhibition is a starting point for Rosi's broader project: an extensive community-building operation aimed at creating a network of Afro-Italian citizens and forming a family archive of the African diaspora in Italy, to explore new ways of passing on visual knowledge through vernacular images.

These photos perform complex social functions for both their subjects and their viewers, becoming a means of affirming or addressing questions of personal identity, family ties, gender identification, class status, national affiliation or membership in a community, sometimes obedience to social norms, sometimes in contrast with them.

Vernacular photos play a significant role in self-portrayal and in shaping how we are seen; they are a tool for dealing with, or challenging, negative stereotypes about people of African descent, offering an alternative picture of individual identity and of what it can become.

The African diaspora in Italy has constantly produced images of itself, but they can be difficult to track down; one can imagine a collective visual archive binding these communities together, but it still seems instable, scattered, *dis-integrated*. It is only by coming out of the family circle where it originated, and receiving outside recognition, that an image can truly enter the vernacular domain.

Rosi's exhibition probes the relationship in photography between private and public, between found image and studio shot, playing on the shifts in meaning and interpretation generated by different viewing contexts.

Inspired by the practice of artists like Cindy Sherman and Gillian Wearing, as well as by the studio work of West African photographers (Seydou Keïta, Malik Sidibé and above all Samuel Fosso), Rosi has chosen self-portraiture as a key stratagem to highlight the different facets that coexist in each individual, turning personal stories into collective ones.

Her family's night tables, a bonnet hairdryer, geometrically patterned African fabrics, suitcases, wigs, and her mother's clothing are just some of the narrative accessories inserted into the settings of the extra-ordinary figures that the artist impersonates. In a similar way, though with different intentions, 1970s cars, a hilly natural environment, city streets, pigeons, and the buildings in a square take on supporting roles – unconsciously, at times – in everyday self-portrayals.

Moving through different creative realms—from the family album, as a private space outlining the past, to the landscape inhabited by Black bodies—this exhibition explores, restores, and presents, with wry humour, an imaginary of “Italianness” in our land today.

A catalogue will be published to accompany the exhibition, featuring an essay by Pelumi Odubanjo, curator, writer and PhD researcher in History of Art at the University of Glasgow, and a conversation between Silvia Rosi and Ilaria Campioli, curator of the Photography section of the Musei Civici of Reggio Emilia and of Giovane Fotografia Italiana/Premio Luigi Ghirri.

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Free admission during the opening hours of the permanent collection.

Thursday and Friday, 2:30 pm – 6:30 pm

Saturday and Sunday, 10:30 am – 6:30 pm

Closed: 1 May

Info

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Artist bio

Silvia Rosi (b. 1992 in Scandiano, Reggio Emilia) lives in San Cesario sul Panaro (near Modena); Lomé, Togo; and London.
After earning her degree in Photography at the London College of Communication, Rosi embarked on an artistic investigation that has often drawn on her family's Togolese heritage and addressed the concept of "roots".
Her work has been shown in numerous galleries and museums in Italy and abroad, including: Brooklyn Museum, Brooklyn, NY (2024); Camera, Turin; Casino Luxembourg, Luxembourg (2023); Paris Photo - Ncontemporary, Paris; Centrale Fies, Dro (Trento); MAXXI, Rome; MA*GA, Gallarate (Varese); Le Centquatre, Paris (2022); LACMA, Los Angeles; CCC Strozzi, Florence; Les Rencontres D'Arles, Arles; Piccadilly Screen – CIRCA, London (2021); National Portrait Gallery, London; Jerwood Arts, London (2020).