

From an essay by Giorgio Verzotti on the occasion of the participation of Fotografia Italiana arte contemporanea, Milan, in the third edition (2008) of Mint (Milano International Antiques and Modern Art Fair).

Artists participating: Francesco Pignatelli, Silvio Wolf.

Works by Pignatelli on display: *Metamorphosis*, *Handle with Care 4*, *Handle with Care 7*

...Pignatelli's images become entirely matter, with palpable weight and substance. A series of large oblong sheets of photographic paper depicting flowers are piled up. The paper has been manipulated, its surface crumpled up and the photographs piled on top of each other to form a disorderly heap, as happens with amorphous matter. This work takes Pignatelli's photographic discourse to its extreme consequences: to put it simply, for some time now the artist has printed directly from the negative of a colour photograph, so that whatever we see – flowers, views of cities, Renaissance masterpieces or woods – has false colours. So also the large flowers we see here have unnatural colours and the black grounds were originally white. In the photographs of nature, this alteration of the colour values took on a negative connotation, one of alarm.

A similar sense of alarm is evidently stronger in this heap of destroyed flowers and ruined paper, and one's thoughts inevitably turn to death. The light here has been converted into its opposite, total darkness, the black of the chromatically converted photographic paper. A solution is to use the real ambient light: Pignatelli brings into play the effective phenomenology of the space and hence its light, whether this be natural or artificial. On the heap with its battered yet beautiful sheets of paper, resembling a bulky *memento mori*, there is the flickering of a thousand little lights because the photographic paper is partially reflective.

Something survives this catastrophe: the real light here involves the idea of the life situated even within death, or, at least, of agitation of the amorphous matter. As if to confirm this possibility, another two flowers are displayed, however on the walls. The crumpled paper creates an effect that gives it plastic power, turning the work into a bas-relief, albeit a fragile one. Its fragility is protected by the large plexiglas showcase containing the flowers that in effect becomes an integral part of the work itself. The elevation present here in the verticality of the images in the showcases becomes salvation, and the process of destructuretion carried out by the hand that has treated the paper and images so harshly becomes a new way of 'bringing the world into the world'.

