

# Henrik Strömberg



## **Henrik Strömberg - *Refraction of Lightness***

Fondazione Morra, Naples Italy

Palazzo Spinelli di Tarsia, October 12<sup>th</sup> 2019 - January 31<sup>st</sup> 2020

**Refraction of lightness - Fondazione Morra - Palazzo Spinelli di Tarsia**

by Chiara Valci Mazzara

***Accumulating, transforming,  
creating photographic images and volumes,  
materializing the action, I isolate the creative gesture as a moment fixed in time.***

**HENRIK STRÖMBERG**

The *Quartiere dell'Arte (Art District)*, program conceived by Fondazione Morra to foster a new awareness of contemporary art in the city of Naples, presents a new exhibition project created for Palazzo Spinelli Tarsia, home of Shōzō Shimamoto Foundation.

The space will host the show *Refraction of lightness*, displaying a site-specific installation of serigraphs and hand blown glass sculptures, volumes by the Swedish artist Henrik Strömberg.

The exhibition, curated by Chiara Valci Mazzara, (Berlin, Paris) and Loredana Troise, in collaboration with Fondazione Morra together with Laboratorio Avella Naples with Gianluigi Prencipe, is the result of the three-month residency of Henrik Strömberg.

In the historical spaces of Palazzo Tarsia, glass sculptures and serigraphs are presented as the two main areas of density of the installation, determining the core around which the presentation of further assembled elements, organized in an immersive landscape revolves.

The serigraphs are relocated as a unicum: a large-scale work mirrors (*refracts into*) the new series of glass sculptures conceived and created on the occasion of the exhibition.

The work of Henrik Strömberg is the result of a creative process of investigation about form and content, volume and concept, multiplication and *refraction* of meaning.

*Living* and recovered materials such as paper, glass, burned newspapers and pigments contribute to the creation of works that allow the viewer to immerse in a landscape organised as a self-sufficient ecosystem that, by suggesting new forms, creates new contents. Where every element becomes part of a whole.

The assembled prints creating a new system of references relating to the meanings and aesthetics they originally had, are now enriched with additional semantics, while, at the same time, the glass volumes reflect the complexity of the creative gesture. In the glass works, a transformation and the alteration of content, occur simultaneously.

Ultimately, the matter is shaped and transferred through different media, all the elements are commuting back and forth regularly concurring, and eventually, overlaying meanings. Nothing can be isolated, everything mutate as when volcanic magma erupts.

In the spaces dedicated to the master of the Gutai group, the Northern European artist approach the exhibition space through the system of references linked to the creative gesture. At the same time, the references to Surrealism, to the re-evaluation of the object-trouvee and the use of the form to act on the content are perceived as a characterizing elements of Strömberg's work.

*In the printed pieces the roots of the past meanings, and -for the sculptural volumes- the references to biological forms are perceived diving into an alternate drift of perspective: Strömberg reduces the source to polarise the content at the very core of the image perception. He doesn't settle down for clarity, rather he pursues the action of placing triggers to initiate a new existence of the subject. The clarity being left aside, it is consequential that the viewer is exposed to an unexpected outcome and to an ephemeral content.*

*While the installation of the volumes and the different components takes shape, a sub-ecosystem formed through the combination between seemingly disparate elements appears as a logical consequence. Photographic elements, negative cut outs, paper works and sculptural volumes are coexisting but their accumulation is not left to chance, rather to a multiplication of occasions. The various elements commit to deliver a wider perception of the different pieces, it's like a dance where every single element concur to a higher harmony.*

*The sequence of reflections, the portions of images and the verticality of the installation take form as an immersive landscape through which the viewer is moving, absorbing the complexity of the elements, never redundant and always cohesive. There's not a unique interpretation but rather a kaleidoscope given by the use of different media equally involved in the final result.*

## Artist Statement

I work with the idea of metamorphosis, decay and the transformation of materials; sculptural objects and their photographic documentation, as well as the deconstruction and transformation of the photographic image itself. Combining seemingly disparate images, adding pigment, paint and/or cutting out parts of the image I initiate a process in which the image is removed from its context, its referent and expected narrative; I further explored this through the arrangements and combination of works; with the intention to create ambiguous narrations, formations of details, or a kind of temporary entropy.

The subjects of my imagery, depicting scenes, spaces, elements, figures, or abstract shapes are less significant than my wish to prompt a deeper sense of reflection, a grasp of the intangible, or a glimpse of the other.

## CV

Henrik Strömberg  
born 1970 in Sweden  
lives and works in Berlin

1994–1997

Camberwell College of Art, London Institute – B.A. Fine Art 1997–1999  
FAMU, Academy of Performing Arts, Prag – M.A. Photography and History of Photography

## Solo Exhibitions

2009–2020

*refraction of lightness*, Fondazione Morra, Palazzo Tarsia Spinelli, Naples, Italy  
Vertical Matter, Dorothée Nilsson Gallery Berlin

*forward multiplications*, Ann Wolff prize presentation, Visby, Sweden

*echoes in dust*, Åplus, Berlin

*The Compost*, The Federal Foreign Office, Auswärtiges Amt, Berlin

*The door*, LOGE Berlin

*Unseen*, art fair, Amsterdam, Grundemark Nilsson

*Object Amnesic*, The Ephemeral Collection, Salonistes, Venice

*times new roman*, Grundemark Nilsson Gallery, Stockholm

*Mashti*, Grundemark Nilsson Gallery, Berlin

*to the letter*, Der Würfel, Neumeister Bar-Am, Berlin

*quarter of a kind*, Neumeister Bar-Am, Berlin

*second life – first place*, Konrad Fischer Galerie, Berlin

*Komplexraum #1*, General Public, Berlin (with Ivan Seal)

*Vanishing*, Galerie SAKS, Geneva

o.T. Raum für aktuelle Kunst, Lucerne (with Barbara Davi)

*Henrik Strömberg*, Hässleholms Konsthall, Hässleholm, Sweden

*DW*, CirkulationsCentralen, Malmö, Sweden

## **Selected Group Exhibitions**

2009–2019

*I MorphO | Isolation of (portable) pressure*, Daegu Photo Biennale, Rosa Luxemburg Kunstverein, Berlin  
*Vertikalwinkel*, Das Schau Fenster, Berlin  
*Symbiopoiesis*, with Diether Roth and Nam June Paik, Galerie Papillon, Paris  
*imagine a world where the opposite of light isn't dark*, Zona Sztuki Aktualnej, Szczecin, Poland  
*Intuitin to fill emptiness*, Vadim Zakharov, Freehome, Berlin  
*Victor Hugo - Herbstsalon*, curated by Christin Kaiser, Berlin.  
*fontaine b.* presentation together with Jannis Kounellis and Man Ray at Åplus, Berlin  
*Thirdness*, Künstlerhaus Kreuzberg / Bethanien, Berlin  
Art Brussels, Art fair, Neumeister Bar-Am  
*Aipad*, New York photography art fair  
*Lady Dada Kalam*, Kunsthau KuLe, Berlin  
*Market*, art fair Stockholm  
*NAK Benefiz Auktion*, Neuer Aachener Kunstverein  
*Kollision*, Künstlerhaus Kreuzberg / Bethanien, Berlin  
*Geheimnis*, Kunstverein Potsdam  
*Transient Material*, Haus am Lützowplatz, Berlin  
*Frames*, Centre for Contemporary Arts, Glasgow  
*DRAMA Salon*, O&C Antiques project space, Berlin  
*Bodybuilding*, Neumeister Bar-Am, Berlin  
*SUER GAZ*, Zagreus Project, Berlin  
*L'Age d'Or*, General Public, Berlin  
K3 Malmö photography Biennial, Malmö, Sweden

## **Artist Talks / Presentations**

Vertical Matter, Dorothée Nilsson Gallery Berlin - artist talk with Mark Gisbourne 2019  
The Federal Foreign Office, Auswärtiges Amt, Berlin, 2017  
Mashti, book presentation, TABS – The Artist Book Shop, Berlin 2016  
Panel discussion for Lucida Journal, Jarvis Dooney Galerie, Berlin 2015  
"Collectors Piece" Presentation – Research 'n Motion, DUVE, Berlin 2013  
work presentation, Picture Berlin residency program, Berlin 2012  
Artist Talk, o.T. Raum für aktuelle Kunst, Lucerne, 2010  
Artist Talk, Hässleholms Konsthall, Sweden, 2009

## **Bibliography**

Texte zur Kunst, "bildstrecke", sketches for the compost, 2018  
DOC! Photo Magazine - selected works in reference to Man Ray 2018  
VERK. Magazine - feature with text by Linda Bergman 2018  
Artipoeus, podcast by Susie Kahlich - "echoes in dust" 2017  
*Object Amnesic, The Compost*, artist "fanzine", together with writer Jens Soneryd 2016  
*Mashti*, monograph, published by Neumeister Bar-Am, Berlin 2016  
39 Null Magazine, feature / text by Felix Fiedler, Spring issue, 2016  
Blind Spot Magazine, 20 year anniversary issue, 2014  
LOFT Bookazine, feature / text by Saskia Neuman, 2013  
*Source*, Fanzine, design by Adi Ehrat, 2007  
*Source*, Artist Book, 2007  
*Einladung*, catalogue, published by Schloss Plüschow, 2006  
*7 Scenes*, catalogue, 2003  
*Places To Go People To See*, book, Gestalten Verlag, Berlin, 2001

## **Grants / Scholarships**

2019 Fondazione Morra, Naples Italy (residency)  
2017 Ann Wolff Prize, Visby, Sweden  
2017 AArtist residency, The Federal Foreign Office, Auswärtiges Amt, Berlin  
2016 Berlin Senat Research Grant for Statues project  
2010 Sitterwerk Foundation, St. Gallen, Switzerland (residency)  
2007 Konstnärnsnämnden, "Source", Malmö, Sweden (project grant)  
2007 Cité Internationale des Arts, Paris, France (residency)  
2006 Mecklenburgisches Künstlerhaus, Schloss Plüschow (residency)

## **Collections**

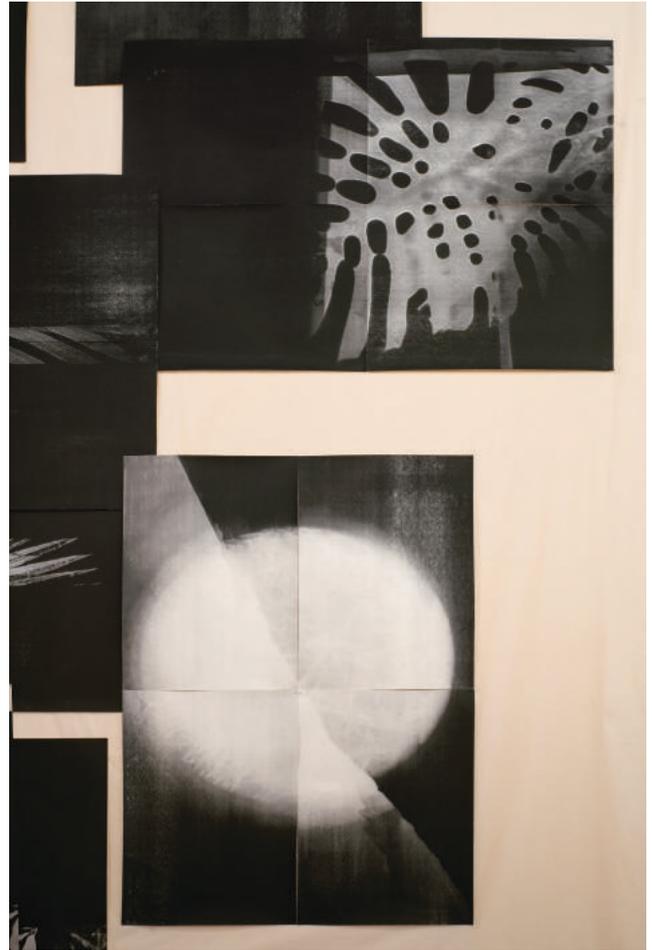
Alexander Tutsek-stiftung, Munich Germany  
Ann Wolff foundation, Sweden  
Christine Symchych Collection, USA  
Kultur Hässleholm, Sweden  
Mecklenburgisches Künstlerhaus, Schloss Plüschow  
Region Skane, Sweden  
La Luxembourgeoise SA, Luxemburg



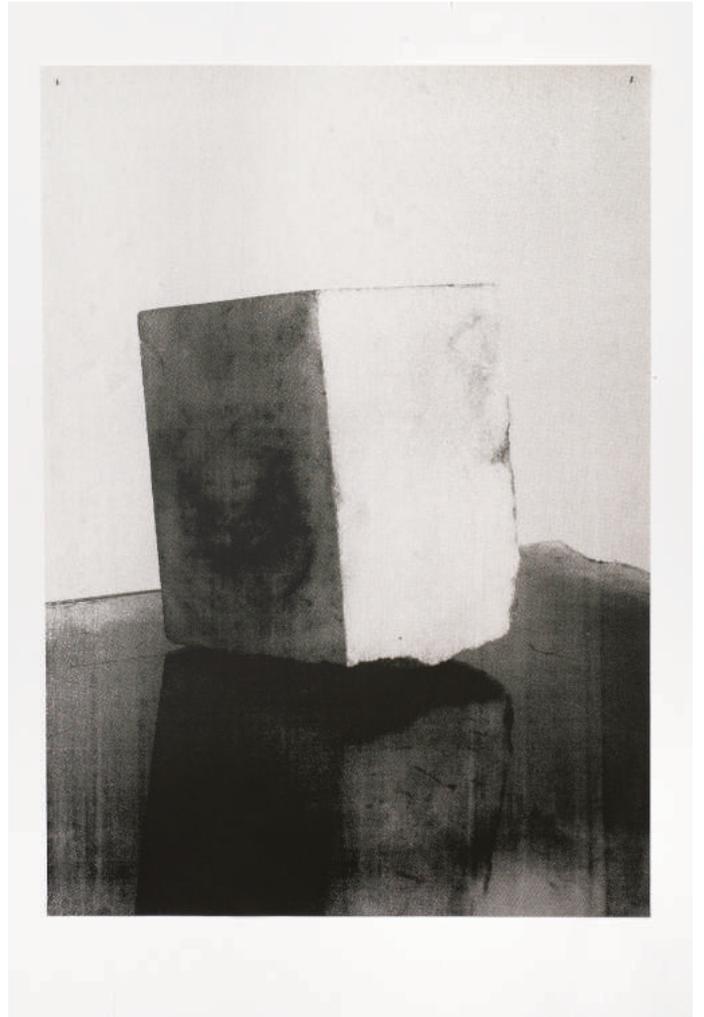
*Partly whole*, installation of serigraphs on canvas, 5m x 3m, 2019 - Composition of 9 images consisting each of 1 - 8 pieces



*Partly whole*, installation of serigraphs on canvas, 5m x 3m, 2019 - Composition of 9 images consisting each of 1 - 8 pieces - Close up, serigraph stack and hand blown glass objects, 2019



*Installation views - refraction of lightness, 2019*



*History of Self*, serigraph on paper 50x70, 2019

*Broken Corners*, serigraph on paper 50x70, 2019



*Strata Amnesic, 1-3*, handblown glass volumes, burned newspaper, sizes variable, 2019



*Strata Amnesic, 1-3*, handblown glass volumes, burned newspaper, sizes variable, 2019



*Hanging on a thread*, serigraph on paper on canvas, hand blown glass volume and thread 127x67cm, 2019



*Double Negative, Hanging on a thread - Refraction of Lightness, Installation view*



*Double Negative, While In-between, - Refraction of Lightness, Installation view*



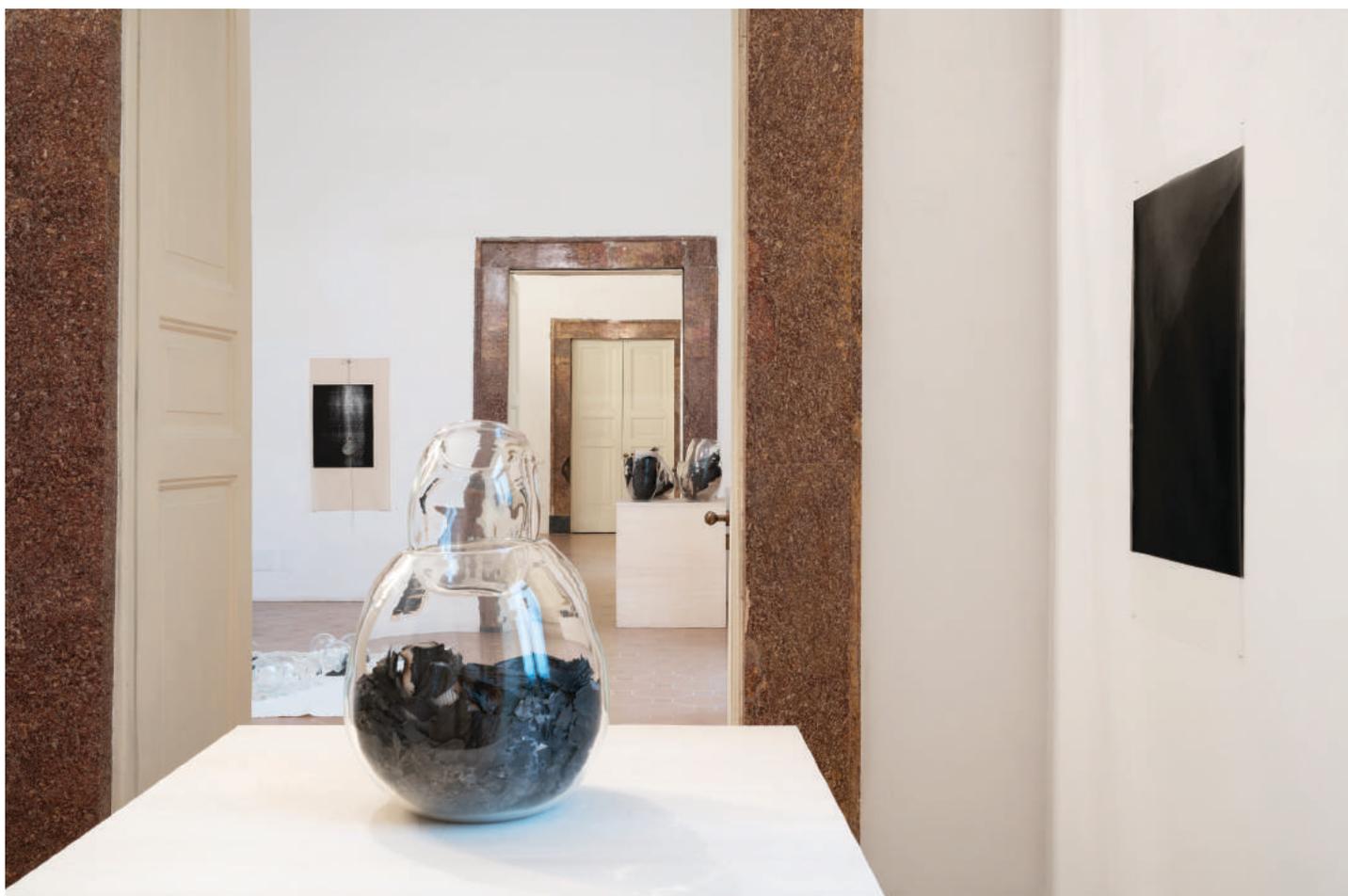
*While In-between*, serigraph on paper on canvas 140x94cm, 2019



*Double Negative* - serigraphs on paper 50x70 cm x 8, on canvas, stacks of serigraphs and hand blown glass volumes sizes variable, 2019



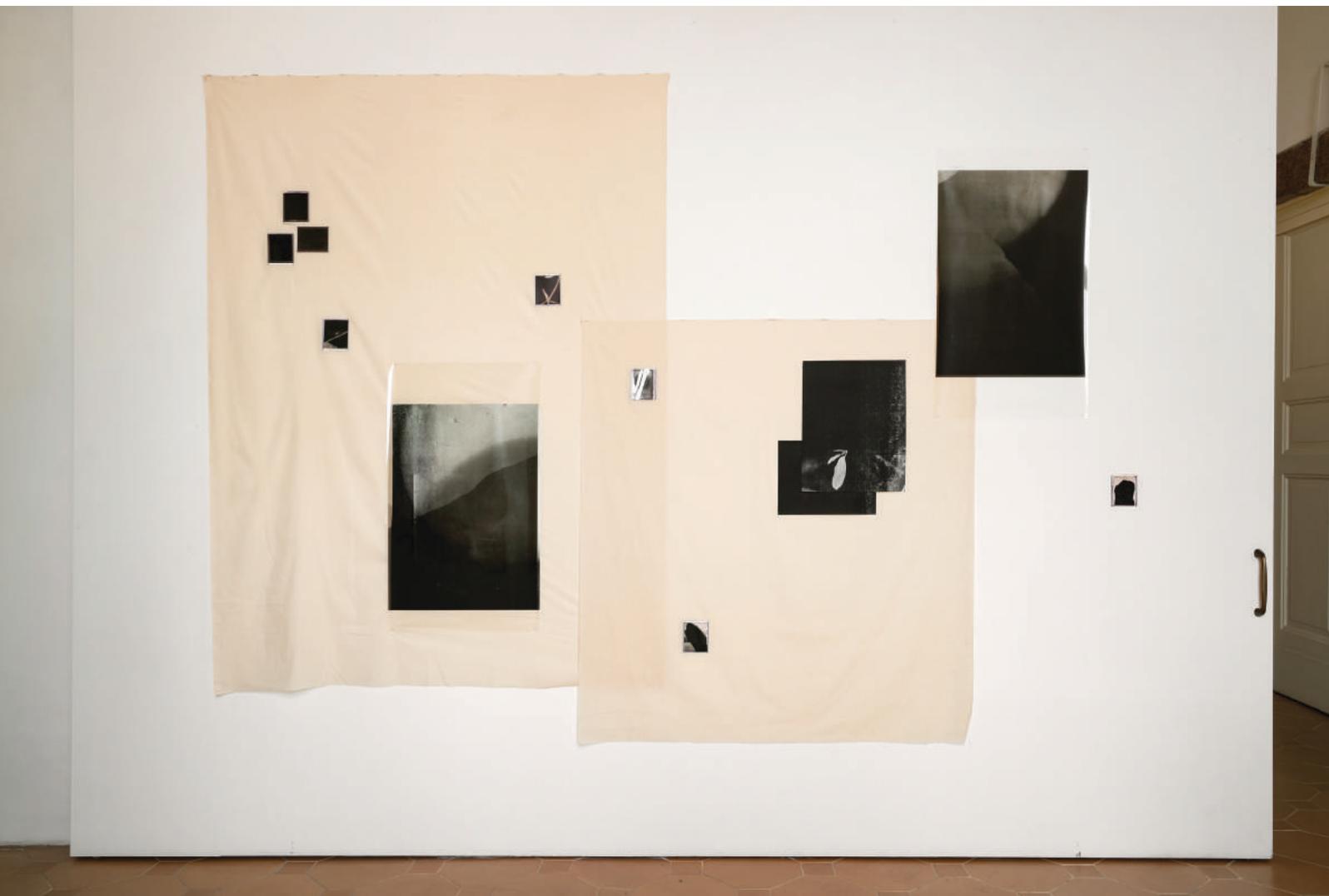
*Double Negative* - serigraphs on paper 50x70 cm x 8, on canvas, stacks of serigraphs and hand blown glass volumes sizes variable, 2019



*Installation view - refraction of lightness, 2019*



*Strata Amnesic 4*, 2 handblown glass volumes, burned newspaper, sizes variable, (behind installation detail from "*When and whereabouts*"), 2019



*When and whereabouts*, installation - serigraph on paper, films, Polaroid, pigment, canvas, 2019



*When and whereabouts*, installation detail - serigraph on paper, films, Polaroid, pigment, canvas, 2019



*When and whereabouts*, installation detail - serigraph on paper, films, Polaroid, pigment, canvas, 2019

## **Refraction of lightness - Fondazione Morra - Palazzo Spinelli di Tarsia, Naples, Italy**

by Loredana Troise

Henrik Strömberg's practice demands to move beyond.

First. We need to abandon abused mythologies, transgress stereotypes, violate consolidated icons. Learn to see otherwise. We need to outline landscapes that preserve a solemnity without patina and, at the same time, we need to engage in to alternative journeys towards different universes, apart from any utopian solace. Other moves. Between belonging and absence of belonging, we need to leave the tracks, to derail within that coral reef that is the language. Relying on a sequence of movements of the body, of the gaze, of various intentional and reactive gestures; linger on the volumes and lighten the weight of the architectures, including frontal, lateral, total perspectives. By suggesting distances. And, through the spaces, investigating the micro porosity of the surfaces.

*Refraction of lightness*, as a site-specific installation, which is been conceived on the occasion of the three-months residency at Morra Foundation, combines to the technical-compositional expertise, a speculative exercise. The result is the one of a fusion between ideas, techniques and materials used to shape a thought: we find ourselves, undoubtedly, facing a journey on search of the stinging knots of the aesthetic relationship. A speech that transforms the voice into a sign, into a drawing, into a printed body of works, in the shadows of something that has to do with the light, with the scenery given by the re-assembling act, with pigments, with drawing and the layering of collages.

Through the creation of a form, we gain access to new paths that take away their weight from things, and which surrounds and bend the space, inviting the viewer to immerse themselves in a range of chemical and alchemical processes: what is it, really, art, if not an alchemical code? A territory of conquer and production to decant and distill things?

Able to cross over the usual disciplinary boundaries, Henrik Strömberg composes a setting in which, around extraordinary hand blown glass sculptures, precious serigraphs, created in collaboration with the laboratory of Vittorio Avella (Casa Morra), vibrate dialectically above the complexity of the creative gesture. And then photographs, negatives, burned newspapers, and materials that the artist selected with indefatigable attentiveness among the workshops populating our historical center.

The compositions are perfectly symmetrical and, at the same time, are open, placed beyond constraints and dikes, revealing an intimate taxonomic attitude that is not given as a petrified structure, but as an intimate elaboration of consciousness. It follows a narrative in progress that outlines a geography of connections between icons, an embodied meaning that coincides with an unmistakable metonymic linguistic-expressive interweaving: the content and the form, the inside and the outside, the signified and the signifier, the oscillation and the becoming, the obsolescence and the metamorphosis, are concurring to build a hyper-historical stronghold, in which Strömberg sets his personal, aesthetic and cultural path: open freely to the viewer, who becomes an actor of his own intimate landscape, of his silent abstractions, but also of wider and markedly random latitudes.

We are witnessing the migration of patterns in which the order of things and the space are redefined: first the artist outlines a space specific. Then, he leads us from one point to another, through different perspectives, multiplying the points of view, gradually spreading them over the different angles. Eventually, his pieces are transformed into a pivotal body that moves to touch the urban space outside, in a play of assonances and differences, interpenetrating the icon of Naples, to the extent of a re-evaluation of its symphony. The magic of this *mis en scène* is, indeed, consisting in making its different parts work perfectly as for a clockwork device, with the awareness, however, that it will always be impossible to cage it within rigid rules.