ANTONIO BIASIUCCI

Codex

20 April – 21 May 2017
Private View, 6:30pm, Thursday 20 April

Magazzino is proud to present **Antonio Biasiucci**'s fourth solo show at the gallery. The exhibition focuses on his recently-made *Codex* series, exhibited in 2016 at the Museo Archeologico Nazionale in Naples in a show curated by Gianluca Riccio. La Fondazione Banco di Napoli invited Biasiucci to use his eye to tell the story of the materials conserved in its historical archive – the oldest and largest collection of banking documents in the world.

Spread over 330 rooms, the archive houses more than 60,000 meticulously-catalogued binders, each of which bears an apparently indecipherable numerical code. Adopting an anthropologist's approach, Biasiucci spent three months going back through the silent history laid to rest within each folder, encompassing a chronology of Naples and the Mediterranean from the mid-1500s to the present-day. These archives tell the stories of families and individuals; of cities and communities. Like fossils from the past, Biasiucci profoundly unearths once-forgotten collective memories. The archetypes Biasiucci portrays evoke an ancestral view of what it is to be alive.

The artist instills voice and dignity to each individual subject in this plethora of archived materials. The stylistic cipher that is the hallmark of his black-and-white rendering perfectly restores the solemnity of the elements he has captured to present us with a primordial memory.

As Gianluca Riccio writes: "In so doing, the containers used to store the manuscripts are laid bare, transforming into narratives of universal stories that arouse feelings in the beholder. Enchanted by the effect of the images and their layout, the highly visible numeric codes – their dates – offer up the beauty of their brush-penned writing and the possibility of multiple readings."

As a place of memory and the transmission of memory, the Archive – and indeed the city where it is housed – becomes a theatre of the public dimension of everyday living, apparently reconciling a vision that embraces the intimate dimension of the individual identities concealed within the archive documents with the collective experience of history that is safeguarded and evoked by the archive.

Antonio Biasiucci was born in Dragoni (Caserta) in 1961. In 1980 he moved to Naples starting a project focused on urban suburbs together with a research on personal memory, taking photos of rituals and settings of his native village. In 1984 he has started a collaboration with Vesuvius Observatory investigating the activity of the vulcanos in Italy. In 1987 he met Antonio Neiwiller, theatre director and actor starting a collaboration that will last till 1993, year of his death. Since the earliest years of his artistic career, Biasiucci has focused on issues concerning the culture of Southern Italy; in recent years, he has embarked on a journey into the primary elements of what it is to be alive. He has won many top accolades, including in 1992, the "European Kodak Panorama" prize at Arles, and in 2005 the "Kraszna/Krausz Photography Book Awards" for his book Res. Lo stato delle cose (2004); that same year he also won the "Premio Bastianelli", and in 2016 Sorrento Culture Award.

He has had countless one-man shows and taken part in group shows, festivals and national and international exhibitions. Biasiucci has worked on a number of book projects, he has also taken part in major socially-motivated cultural initiatives. Biasiucci has been invited to partecipate to Venice Biennale 2015 amongst the artists of the Italian Pavillon. His works feature in the permanent collections of museums and institutions in Italy and abroad. These include: the Istituto nazionale per la grafica, Rome; MAXXI, Rome; PAN Palazzo delle Arti, Naples; MADRE-Museo d'Arte Contemporanea Donna Regina, Naples; Metropolitana di Napoli; Galleria Civica di Modena; Museo di fotografia contemporanea Villa Ghirlanda, Cinisello Balsamo (Milan); Fondazione Sandretto Re Rebaudengo per l'Arte Contemporanea, Guarene (Cuneo); Fondazione Banco di Napoli; Collezione Banca Unicredit, Bologna; Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris; Maison Européenne de la Photographie, Paris; Château d'Eau, Toulouse; Musée de l'Elysée, Lausanne; Centre de la Photographie, Geneva; Fondazione Banca del Gottardo, Lugano; Centre Méditerranéen de la Photographie, Bastia; Galerie Freihausgasse, Villach (Austria); Departamento de investigación y documentación de la Cultura Audiovisual, Puebla (Mexico); and Mart, Rovereto, Pio Monte della Misericordia, Napoli; Fondazione Modena per la fotografia.