

ITALIAN HOURS

JESSICA WARBOYS

curated by Rita Selvaggio

Conceived as an itinerary, a sort of ritual promenade, Italian Hours presents a deposit of images, a collage of signs, entrances and exits in which each point is nodal, a beginning and simultaneous setting the seal. Taking as its starting point a book of travel writing in which Henry James collected essays on Italy penned over a span of about forty years, from 1872 to 1909 and, in particular, the pages devoted to Florence, the exhibition oscillates between forms of detachment and the desire for possession.

A visual aspect of a typically painterly kind is imposed where the past, understood as reappropriation, seems to overwhelm the reality of the rigid Florentine geometry.

The simple tonality of the atmosphere, the bluish undulations of a certain distance, the yellow of the river as well as the colour of the hills, or the worn frescoes – where the fading remaining pigments disappear into the texture of the wall – become 'lines of investigation'. Along with the patinated stone and marble inlays, the stained glass of the rose windows and the painted ceilings all these impressions tied together give substance. Shadows and imago persist physiologically in the visual images, binding closely time, memory and make-believe, obliging the gaze to wait.

The scenography of Italian Hours transforms and recomposes the immobility of the iconographic theme. Each instant, each image, each presence anticipates virtually its future development and at the same time recalls its preceding actions.

Boboli: illustrious example of an alchemical garden and fruit of its patron's hermetic wisdom. An open-air museum, an oasis with a name of obscure origin enclosed, with its worn grace, within the city. An enchanted and neglected circle, in which the mixture of ingenuity, design and chance, ability and error, has produced a magic harmony.

'Something was once done in this charmed and forsaken circle – done or meant to be done; what was it dumb statues, who saw it with your own blank eyes?

'Opposite stands the huge flat-roofed palace, putting forward two great rectangular arms and looking, with its closed windows and its foundations of almost unreduced rock, like some ghost of a sample of a ruder Babylon,' wrote Henry James, describing its amphitheatre.

A faint sigh of breeze and the ineffability of the trace left by experience.
Or rather, the eternal return of the same.

galleria gentili

JESSICA WARBOYS (b. 1977 Newport, Wales) is based in Suffolk, UK and Berlin, Germany where she works with film, painting and sculpture.

Warboys's selected group exhibitions include: *dOCUMENTA 13* Kassel, Germany, *Artists Film International* Whitechapel Art Gallery, London (2012), the *9ª Bienal do Mercosul* Porto Alegre, Brazil (2013) the *British Art Show 8* (2016) and *Surface Work* Victoria Miro, London (2018). Selected solo exhibitions include: *Ab Ovo* Spike Island, Bristol, UK, (2013) *Glade* Museum M, Leuven, Belgium and *Ad Lib* State of Concept, Athens (2015), *Angle Poise* Kunstverein Amsterdam, *Allotropes* Casa Masaccio, Italy and *Topo Scenic* Kunsthall Stavanger, Norway (2016), *Hill of Dreams* Tate St Ives, Cornwall, UK, *Body Sleep*, Gaudel de Stampa, Paris (2017) and *Echogap* Towner, Eastbourne, UK (2017). Selected Film and Performance events include: *Prospectif Cinema* Centre Pompidou, Paris (2015) *Hill of Dreams* Tate Britain, London (2016) and *Hoop Eye Dance Trance* CAPC, Bordeaux, France (2017).