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**GABRIELE BASILICO**  
**Milan. Portraits of Factories, 1978-1980**

**September 17 - October 25 2008**

Studio Dabbeni is presenting a personal exhibition by photographer Gabriele Basilico for the second time. The exhibition re-proposes the artist's corpus entitled "*Milan. Portraits of Factories, 1978-1980*", an important document for fully understanding architectural photography in Italy.

In reality, the photographs in the show represent Basilico's debut as an architectural photographer after a brief initial period in which he dedicated himself to photo reportage. In these images the artist has chosen to emphasise the industrial identity of Milan, his city. According to the photographer's definition, they are true "portraits". In fact, the artist often compares the city with a living organism: "...There are buildings that, thanks to the talent of their designers and to the vision of the person photographing them, reveal an anthropomorphic form. Hidden within the architecture, eyes, noses, ears, lips, and entire faces that await the faculty of the word can be found..." (1985). Moreover, he feels that he is part of this organism: "...The city is an organism that breathes and expands above us like a protective cape that embraces us and confounds us at the same time. This city belongs to me and I belong to it, almost as if I were a fragment of it fluctuating inside its immense body..." (1999). In directing his lens towards these industrial subjects, the artist emphasises their silence: lacking the presence of people, they exist in a state of suspended time.

His intention is to create a portrait of this corpus—the contemporary landscape—which in the photographer's mind has a life of its own, a landscape that is capable above all of provoking in the viewer an intense emotion, real attachment. Basilico travels through this terrain through the rigorous eye of the photographic lens: in so doing he tries to understand it and at the same time to test its limits. He photographs a city in which the architecture presents itself, filtered by the light, in a scenographic and monumental way. The images are created through "an operation of abstraction, of isolation, of absence" (1992). A connection to Berndt and Hilla Becher is recognisable, in the essential quality, in the objective description, in the reuse of industrial architecture, and in the attribution of aesthetic dignity to the world of production. But, ultimately Basilico is not totally seduced by the seriality and the systematic cataloguing found in the works of the great German masters. The photographer maintains that for him the placement of the single images comes about mostly due to a principle of "familiarity". Looking a reference with regard to the purity of the form and light that emphasises the plasticity of the buildings, the period of Metaphysical painting, and specifically the work of Mario Sironi are recalled. In "*Portraits of Factories*" an affectionate relationship with the industrial culture that dominated the Twentieth Century and that is now coming to an end is perceived, which Basilico experiences with the emotions and the consciousness of something now lost.



**Opening: Wednesday September 17 - 18.00**

**Opening Hours: Tuesday - Friday**

**09.30 - 12.00 14.30 - 18.30**

**Saturday**

**09.30 - 12.00 14.30 - 17.00**

**Sunday/Monday Closed**