



Versailles, R.d.C., Corps Central, 1ère Antichambre, Portrait of Marie-Antoinette de Lorraine-Habsbourg, by Jean-Baptiste Charpentier. Fujicolour crystal archive print. 152.4 x 127cm

Robert Polidori Versailles: Transitional States

7 January - 6 February 2010

Book Signing with the artist
Wednesday 3 February, 6 - 8pm

What does it mean to restore something? It means to make something old, new again. It's a temporal paradox, especially in a place like Versailles that went through so many changes. So when you choose to restore a certain room as it was in a certain period, the period you choose is based on your contemporary worldview. What we are looking at in these museum restorations is historical revisionism and the society's superego.

Robert Polidori

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FOR GENERAL RELEASE

A project that has spanned over twenty-five years, Robert Polidori *Versailles: Transitional States* documents the transformation of the royal palace from symbol and heart of Ancien Régime France to a monument to modern day museumification. Polidori's images reveal the ambiguity involved in any restoration project: what happens to a room or structure when the old is made new? Versailles crystallises a very contemporary nostalgia complex. An 18th century palace restored by a modern society attempting to imagine itself as it once was, it is a visual citation of both past and present, a powerful invocation of history and modernity within the confines of a single frame.

For Polidori, rooms play a role as 'memory theaters' and receptacles for meaning. The paintings, sculptures and decorative elements that embellish the crumbling walls of the palace are symbols of historical displacement, players in the perpetual re-enactment of a simulated past.

Robert Polidori was born in Montreal in 1951 and lives in New York City. His photographic series include Chernobyl, Versailles, Havana and New Orleans, which he photographed in the wake of Hurricane Katrina. His work features in the permanent collections of the Museum of Modern Art, New York, the Los Angeles

The exhibition will be accompanied by a new publication, *Parcours Muséologique Revisitée*, three hardcover books including 480 colour plates housed in a slipcase, published by Steidl. The artist will be signing copies of the book at the gallery on Wednesday 3 February, from 6-8pm.

For further information and images, please contact Chris Littlewood on 020 7920 7777 or email chris@flowersgalleries.com

