

## ROBERT POLIDORI FRA ANGELICO/ OPUS OPERANTIS

21 Cork Street  
London W1S 3LZ

T: +44 (0)20 7439 7766

4 September - 12 October, 2019  
Private View Tuesday 3 September, 6-8PM

press@flowersgallery.com  
www.flowersgallery.com

Flowers Gallery is delighted to present a solo exhibition of Robert Polidori's photographs of the frescos of Fra Angelico in the Dominican priory of San Marco in Florence, on view for the first time in the UK.

Robert Polidori is an acclaimed photographer of human habitats, interior spaces and urban environments. Creating highly detailed, large-format colour photographs of places marked by the imprint of lives past and present, Polidori's images reflect on notions of memory and history embedded within architecture.

The series of photographs *Fra Angelico/Opus Operantis* centres on the restored frescoed interiors in the 15th Century San Marco Convent by Italian painter Fra Angelico, Dominican friar and one of the principle painters of the Early Renaissance. Polidori's photographs excavate the psychological structure of the rooms, exploring a connection between the calm interior spaces of the monk's cells and the spiritual charge of Fra Angelico's striking masterworks depicting the life of Christ, which were designed to augment meditation and prayer.

Throughout his career of four decades, Polidori has returned to the subject of the room as a container of memory or metaphor for inner emotional states. Referring to the phenomenological writings of Gaston Bachelard, Polidori's rooms are both a poetic encounter with the history of interior spaces, and a portrait of contemporary society. Considering the design of the interior as an exteriorization of identity, Polidori refers both to the psychic signature of former inhabitants and to broader museological themes of value, conservation and re-construction – of what is saved, and what is made new.

Polidori began his career in avant-garde film assisting Jonas Mekas at the Anthology Film Archives in New York, an experience that critically shaped his approach to photography, based on ideas of temporality and stillness. While living in Paris in the early 1980s, he began documenting the restoration of Versailles, and has continued over a 30-year period to photograph the ongoing changes to its interior. He has gone on to photograph the crumbling majesty of mansions in Havana, Cuba; the deserted ruins of the 1986 Chernobyl nuclear disaster in Pripjat and Chernobyl; and in 2005, travelled to New Orleans to record the abandoned homes and devastation caused by Hurricane Katrina.

Created with long exposures and using natural light, Polidori's photographs present what he has described as an idealized view of time and place as it exists in the mind's eye, delivering images that invoke stillness and contemplation through their detailed command of colour, texture, light and shade.

For more information and images please contact Hannah Hughes +44 (0)207 920 7777 / hannah@flowersgallery.com.



*Crucifixion with the Virgin and Saints Cosmas, John the Evangelist and Peter Martyr by Fra Angelico, Florence, Italy, 2010*  
Archival pigment print



Clockwise from top left: *Crucifixion with the Virgin and Saints Cosmas, John the Evangelist and Peter Martyr* by Fra Angelico, 2010, archival pigment print; *Adoration of the Magi and Man of Sorrows* by Fra Angelico, Cell 39, Museum of San Marco Convent, Florence, Italy, 2010, archival pigment print; *The Capture of Christ* by Fra Angelico, Cell 33, Museum of San Marco Convent, Florence, Italy, 2010, archival pigment print.

## ABOUT ROBERT POLIDORI

Robert Polidori was born in Montreal in 1951 and moved to the United States as a child. His work has been presented in major solo exhibitions throughout the world, including the record-breaking show, *New Orleans After the Flood*, at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York in 2006; and an exhibition of 20 photographs at the Getty Museum, Los Angeles, in 2018, organized to celebrate the twentieth anniversary of the Getty Center. Polidori's photographs are held in numerous public collections including the Bibliothèque National, Paris; the Victoria and Albert Museum, London; the Los Angeles County Museum of Art; the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Museum of Modern Art, New York.

Polidori has published over fifteen monographs, including *After The Flood*, *Havana*, *Hotel Petra*, *60 Feet Road*, *Bhatiya Nagar Facades* (Steidl); and *Versailles*, (Éditions Place des Victoires). Polidori has received the World Press Award (1998) and is a two-time winner of the Alfred Eisenstaedt Award for Magazine Photography (1999 and 2000). He lives and works in California.

All images (c) Robert Polidori Courtesy of Flowers Gallery.

Exhibition opening hours: Monday - Saturday 10am - 6pm.