

TUCCI RUSSO STUDIO PER L'ARTE CONTEMPORANEA

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JAN VERCRUYSSSE *PLACES [LOST] (2)*

**Opening Sunday October 9, 2011 from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Until January 31, 2012**

This is the sixth solo exhibition of Jan Vercruyssen at Tucci Russo Studio per l'Arte Contemporanea. *PLACES [LOST] (2)* is closely related to the previous ones *LUOGHI (PLACES) - 2009* and *PLACES (LIEUX, LUOGHI, ORTE) - 2006*.

PLACES [LOST] 2010

In 2005 Jan Vercruyssen initiated a new group of works, named *PLACES*. The artist situated the *PLACES* works vis-à-vis the previous *TOMBEAUX* works, based on the idea and practice of *memory*. Where the *TOMBEAUX* are *places for memory* – empty, by definition full of the faculty of memory –, the *PLACES* are *places of memory* – more conclusive, concentrating "meanings", things that happened, parts of lives. They allow and support a "fullness".

A first group of works, *PLACES (I)* – the image of which refers to *ex votos* – is composed of the hands of the five cards of the poker game. Configurations are installed using the four suites – spades, hearts, diamonds and clubs –, made of rusted or coloured thin steel sheets.

A second group, *PLACES (II)*, is based on the image of commemorative plaques, often embedded in the floor of churches or found in archaeological sites and where the traditional inscriptions are replaced with the shapes of the four suits of the playing cards, cut out in heavy rusted corten steel sheets. These works focus on how to define a space / a place through purely visual elements and (rhetorical) strategies.

The works from *PLACES (III)* have text. The characters of the Roman alphabet are transcribed into a new alphabet, based on a permutation system using the four shapes (suits) of the playing cards. In a first series of these works, the texts have a rather poetic or philosophic content (the way an artist would formulate it) – without any reference to an existing "place".

In a second series, *PLACES (III.8)* – in which the shapes which form the text are cut out in marble slabs – the names of "real" places appear, each of them preceded by the sentence "*mist obscured ...*" (e.g. "*mist obscured ... Palermo*"). Through this *reflective manoeuvre*, the initial attention to the memory of a real, existing place, can be guided towards an understanding of the "existence" of the *PLACES* works: they are their *own place*.

The works which Jan Vercruyssen now exhibits, are parts of a new series: *PLACES [LOST]*.

How to initiate a first introduction, a narrative on these new works?

A limited set of selected objects constitutes the base for the compositions of these works: a few wooden wine crates – of different shapes and dimensions – two wooden pallets and a pair of billiard cues. These objects are artefacts and they served a specific purpose; they have a "human" history. While a single wine crate, a single pallet or a single pair of billiard cues would be just that, it is in their combination – their compositions – that these objects "transcend" their primary physical characteristics: they become the remains of a *journey*, the silent keepers of "parts of lives". In order to enhance the distance with these primary characteristics, the original artefacts are cast in bronze; these bronzes are thereafter painted with a chalklike white colour or sometimes patinated in the classic way. While the *PLACES [LOST]* acquire a sculptural quality - in fact, they even *are* sculptures - they are their *own place*.