

F_AIR – Florence Artist in Residence

The School of Fine Arts of Florence University of the Arts

The Reading Room by Maria Raponi

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F_AIR – Florence Artist in Residence, the first artist residency program in the center of Florence, presents *The Reading Room* by Maria Raponi. The exhibition is the final stage of the project that she has developed as the second artist in residence at F_AIR.

Throughout her stay at F_AIR, Maria Raponi has been collecting newspapers from around Florence. These are the basis of the works in *The Reading Room*: five sewn newspaper pieces lie on their respective fragile tables of thick white board (carte legno), each illuminated by a single lightbulb. The latter, lined up to form a slight arc, are white; the newspapers are sewn white on white. One has to get very close to them in order to see the subtle index of the original photographic image. The exhibition is punctuated by three small sculptural scenes, nestled into various corners, low to the ground. One must kneel down to get the correct perspective.

The sewn newspapers and the miniature sculptures are at the same time structured yet deconstructed. From above the works are raw – the mechanisms are exposed, and one can see wires, light bulbs, plugs, gears of a clock. From the correct angle everything comes together: delicate works, made with meticulous precision. The newspaper works show a trace of Raponi's process. By tracing the newspaper images the artist has made them something permanent, she has captured the essence of their fleeting existence, and the transience of information. She has slowed down the quick flow of information; the physical punctures in the paper have penetrated through the banality of images – staying in one's mind for a moment – in order to leave a more lasting impression of the world we live in.

F_AIR – Florence Artist in Residence works in conjunction with FUA – Florence University of the Arts and is strongly grounded in the city of Florence; working to integrate contemporary art in this Renaissance city. The residency program, for which Maria Raponi selected to participate, is open to artists between 25 and 38 years old. The aim for the participant in the residency is not only to attain human and artistic growth but also to give academic and professional training to the students enrolled in the consortium of school buildings part of Florence University of the Arts, to which F_AIR also belongs. In addition, the residency proposes a scheduled exhibition of the artist's work that will be presented at F_AIR.

The artist selected is offered the opportunity to live in the apartment housed within the structure F_AIR, via San Gallo 45/R in Florence, and use of the studios also located within the same building.

BIO

Maria Raponi is a Toronto-based artist who works across many platforms including film, photography, digital media, installation and sculpture. She is a graduate of the combined MFA program between the School of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston and Tufts University, in addition to the BFA program at the School of Image Arts at Ryerson University. Her works have been exhibited in North America, Europe and Asia, and she has worked on site-specific projects presented in Toronto, Montreal and Dortmund (Germany).

Title: *The Reading Room*

Artist: Maria Raponi

Curator: Lucia Giardino

