



FAI – Fondo Ambiente Italiano
presents

“WIM WENDERS. AMERICA”

from 16 January to 29 March 2015

Villa Panza & the Panza Collection, Varese

From 16 January to 29 March 2015, FAI - Fondo Ambiente Italiano (Italy's National Trust) is staging "Wim Wenders. AMERICA" at Villa Panza in Varese, home to the Panza collection. This exhibition of photographs taken by the renowned film director and photographer **Wim Wenders** is an **homage to the friend Dennis Hopper and the artist Edward Hopper**, and is the first in a programme scheduled for the Villa showcasing the current photography scene. The exhibition is being held in the year in which acolytes around the world are celebrating the 70th birthday of this master of the New German Cinema, upon whom the Honorary Golden Bear lifetime achievement award will be bestowed at the 2015 Berlin International Film Festival.

“Landscapes give form to our lives, they mould our character, they define our human condition and if you pay attention and sharpen your sensitivity towards them, you'll discover that they have stories to tell and that they are far more than simple places.” This is how **Wenders** describes his approach, which is based on using a **panoramic camera** that is capable of reproducing **visions that overturn our normal perception of the landscape**, opening up moments of exceptional visual richness.

The **works on display were created in the United States** between the **end of the 1970s and 2003**, and they document **environments, landscapes, architecture and roads**, all captured by Wenders' lens with **an acute, far-reaching perspective that is geared towards contemplating the immensity of nature and the power of light**. The shots encapsulate the experience of a European encountering, hearing, seeing and recording American culture from the 1970s onwards; in what was an analogous experience, during the same period **Giuseppe Panza di Biumo** visited, perceived and came to understand the American spirit through art, and began to put together his own collection. As Panza himself put it: *“My interest in this art came about in the wake of a long trip to America in 1954...At that time, I was not yet a collector, but I felt that a new culture was in the offing – one that was different from the culture of Europe, driven forward by new influences, energies and situations”*.

At Villa Panza, **Wenders** is exhibiting **34 photographs**, some on a large scale, that have been arranged on the basis of a chronological and thematic progression. The images will enter into a dialogue with the surroundings of the Villa, in the spaces on the ground floor and first floor, and in the stable block. A common thread will run through the exhibition to help visitors discover the German director's **personal interpretation of America**.

Wim Wenders the *nomad*, the *itinerant European*, equipped himself with a trusty Leica to **explore new backdrops that he could then immortalise in his movies**, but he switched to a Makina-Plaubel with Eastman negative film in order to **“look at things”** (*regarder*) and **“conserve them”** (*garder*). One

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example is *Entire Family* from 1983, which is one of his favourite shots, where the empty blue-and-red storefront in Las Vegas, New Mexico, perfectly embodies Wenders' desire to “capture things before they disappear”. The city did not fit the bill for the director's *Paris, Texas* because it was too far away from the main setting of the film, but at the same time it was crucial to record that site, those signs, those names – all traces of lives that had moved on elsewhere – in order to rescue “things” from the ravages of time. The same applies to the *Drive-in* in Marfa, the *Safeway* supermarket in Corpus Christi, Texas, the futuristic architecture of the Houston parking garage depicted in *Entrance*, and numerous other shots that exemplify this necessity to eternalise. On the exhibition route, visitors will come face-to-face with the subject matter selected by Wim Wenders' clear, profound vision, including *Cowboy Bar* from 2001, which is being shown here for the first time, and *Western World Development, Near Four Corners* from 1986, which combines the desire to see with the desire to tell stories. Indeed, Wenders places great value on the literary and narrative function of the image as the visual repository of one or more stories. The exhibition route comes to an end in the villa's stable block, which has been given a makeover to resemble a chapel and plays host to the spectacular work in five “acts” entitled *Ground Zero*: a prayer in the form of strong, moving images that leads the viewer to meditate on violence and on collective tragedy.

Several different dynamics converge in the framing of Wenders' photographs, not least the requirement to **focus on the “centre”** because everything that is outside the viewfinder will be lost, as well as his dedication to achieving at all times the **perfect rendering of the image**. It is in this sense that **Wenders calls himself a craftsman who uses light**; indeed, it is not by chance that in his latest film, *The Salt of the Earth* (2014), which is about the photographer Sebastião Salgado, the voice-over provides a definition, right at the start of the documentary, of the term “photography”: photo- (from the Greek *φῶς*, -*φωτός*, meaning “light”) and -graphy (from the Greek *γραφία*, meaning “drawing”).

The exhibition is curated by **Anna Bernardini**, Director of Villa Panza & the Panza Collection.

Wim Wenders. AMERICA is accompanied by a book of the same name published by Silvana Editoriale, which contains an interview with Wenders by Francesco Zanot.

While the exhibition is running, there will be a number of **associated events, film screenings and ad hoc workshops for schools**.

The exhibition project has been made possible thanks to **JTI (Japan Tobacco International)**, an institutional partner of Villa Panza & the Panza Collection, with which FAI (Italy's National Trust) has signed a multi-year agreement targeted at enhancing and promoting the cultural activities of this extraordinary property, ensuring access to it by the widest and most diverse user base possible.

The event is being staged under the patronage of the **Italian Ministry of Culture & Tourism, Lombardy Region, the Province of Varese and Varese City Council**. Villa Panza & the Panza Collection has been granted museum status by Lombardy Region.

Wim Wenders. AMERICA

From 16 January to 29 March 2015

Villa Panza & the Panza Collection, Piazza Litta 1, Varese, Italy

For information: www.wimwendersvillapanza.it

Opening hours: every day, except Mondays (open on public holiday Mondays), **from 10am to 6pm**.

Entry fee: Adults **€12.50** (Tuesdays and Wednesdays **reduced entry fee of €10**); FAI members and Children (4-14 years) **€6** Students (up to 26 years) **€8** on working days and **€10** on Saturdays, Sundays and public holidays; Family (2 adults + 2 children) **€30**

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