

Emilio Prini

Magnete, 1968

Magnet

Emilio Prini's work materializes while disappearing, as he constantly transformed it. The artist had a profound understanding of the problems of the post-industrial era and the "society of the spectacle," particularly the alienating and oppressive aspect of its model of production and reproduction. This reflection is evident in works in which he overused "reproduction" machines, such as cameras and televisions, to the point of destroying them or when he produced series of works using a typewriter, often in a performative manner, forming liminal text-images. Around 1968-69, Prini started a series of investigations on electronic devices such as recorders, camera's, televisions and film camera's, exploring their exhaustion from prolonged use. *Magnete/Proiezione Tv/ Programmazione di elementi a proiezione miniaturizzata con cancellazione alterna del quadro, Film TV and Magnete*, 5 min. explored the waning of the mechanisms present within an Exakta camera, photographed and later reproduced in the form of 18,915 off-set prints, printed and arranged in piles in the space. A member of the Arte Povera movement in the 1960s who was less media-savvy than many other members of the movement, Prini always remained deliberately on the sidelines. After participating in iconic exhibitions such as "When Attitudes Become Form" at the Kunsthalle in Bern in 1969, he almost disappeared from the scene in the mid-1970s. He made his comeback in 1995 with the solo exhibition "Emilio Prini: Fermi in Dogana" at the Ancienne Douane in Strasbourg at the invitation of Friedemann Malsch and the Museums of the City of Strasbourg. He was invited by Catherine David in 1997 to participate in Documenta X in Kassel. "I don't have a plan, I proceed through trial and error" declared the artist. He considered his oeuvre to be a unique path made up of constant re-writing, in which works function almost like the proof of an empirical and aesthetic verification of some postulates or concepts, such as the idea of the standard or of the void, through a series of data drawn from reality and subsequently put together.