**DAN GRAHAM & GABRIELE BASILICO**

***Unidentified Modern City. Globalized Brescia***

**Curated by Maurizio Bortolotti**

**Exhibition on from Saturday 2 April to 21 May**

A rather unexpected book entitled *Walker Evans & Dan Graham* was published a few years back. A bridge over the decades of American art, with two quite different artists who have something in common.

I talked about it to Dan, a long-time friend of mine, who described the book as an editorial adventure independent of his will – the two never actually met. Yet the old master’s influence on the conceptual young man was clearly there. I recently came across a 1967 photo of Dan Graham that was very reminiscent of Evans’ style.

The idea was liked and I developed it with Maurizio Bortolotti. Together we came up with the idea of asking Dan to do a new publication containing new pictures with a living photographer with whom to dialogue. Portraying my home town, Brescia, and offering this parallel to Gabriele Basilico was one and the same thing.

Basilico is the top Italian photographer of towns, architecture and factory buildings. Dan knew his work, but not the person. Their meetings in Brescia were productive and enabled them to exchange different points of view. They each took pictures using their own equipment and their own methods.

Basilico with his rostrum shots on August bank holiday: few people around, the town virtually empty, large buildings, suburbs, vast views, tall office blocks and supermarkets. Dan Graham, on the other hand, works like an American tourist from the Bronx: automatic camera, spontaneous shots, shop windows and inside McDonald’s.

I asked Dan where he got this outlook from, and this is what he said:

“The focal point of my pictures of the suburban outskirts of post-war Brescia was undoubtedly influenced by my childhood experience in the suburbs of New York. The landscape of my childhood was shopping centres, the first McDonald’s, a few production units and sheds that acted as offices. They were all located in the new expansion of peripheral suburbs, then still with very few highways. I photographed the homes of the working-class families in New Jersey and Brescia, who were moving towards the low middle-classes, represented by building façades in imitation neoclassic style, with connotations of false luxury in their decorative detail.”

It was basically an uneven match, a professional photographer against an amateur.

A European eye versus an American one.

An inhabitant of famous town centres and a street kid from the American suburbs.

Two opposing views, which strangely enough, found in Italy and in Brescia a recomposition not in the history of the old city but in its more recent emergence of suburban architecture, middle-class suburbs, non-places.

Images, often details, that stop daily life, not history.

The gallery is open Monday to Friday from 10am to 7.30pm, and on Saturday from 3.30 to 7.30pm.