

**Project documentation**

# **Il Boom Remake**

**Bruno Di Lecce  
Claudia Olendrowicz**

**curated by  
Valentina Ricciuti**

**FRANKFURTER  
KUNSTVEREIN**

**Deutsche Börse Residency Program 2013**

Valentina Ricciuti



Some time ago, writing about the work that Bruno Di Lecce had been producing following his move from Rome to Berlin, I observed that his work was gradually undergoing a process of metaphorical simplification: its content increasingly reduced to a mere handful of significant elements – almost as though the artist’s new-found physical and cultural distance from his homeland’s typically elaborate patterns of thought were the principle factor now defining a new way of viewing the world and a new way of presenting this vision. However, looking at some of his recent pieces – being shown for the first time at the Kunstverein in Frankfurt, alongside Claudia Olendrowicz’s work – some degree of reassessment seems in order, not only reflecting the evolution currently in act in his research, but above all in order to acknowledge the results of what has been, to all effects and purposes, a duet between cultures. In fact in this cycle of works Italian and German cultural approaches and identities alternate – without ever been juxtaposed – and a narrative is set in train, a chain of elements to which no hierarchy is attributed but which seem held together by a ‘vibration’ that courses between two different expressive

Fahre. The infinite present of Bruno Di Lecce and Claudia Olendrowicz

wavelengths, but always remains aware and respectful of the singularity of the two cultural frequencies that inform it. It is a wide-reaching and complex form of reflection on the idea of the city as a product of a series of choices (choices which are almost invariably both debatable and political in nature) and as a product of a *modus operandi* the guiding principle of which is widely acknowledged to be the maximizing of the economic returns offered by land speculation. The narrative plot that forms the basis for this work is provided by the Italian film director Vittorio De Sica’s “*Il Boom*”, a movie dating from the early 1960s and which Di Lecce and Olendrowicz use as a ready-drawn canvas on which to intervene, juxtaposing or substituting new signs and different content. For this reason, despite the fact that the artists have chosen to give the work a title that includes the term “*remake*”, I prefer to think of this dual-authored polyptych as shouldering its way into the dimension of the ready-made; as a work permeated with a Duchampian interest in the intrinsic promptness of certain objects, products or given concepts to acquire a new sense and significance as a result of external interventions – one unrelated

to their original functions. In Di Lecce and Olendrowicz's *Boom* the theme of Italy's post-war 'economic miracle' is brought up-to-date and re-proposed, offering the contemporary viewer a very particular interpretation of the parallel phenomenon experienced more recently in Germany, and of which the city of Frankfurt offers one of the most complex manifestations. The so-called 'künstliche Rekonstruktion' still taking place in Germany's financial capital represents the most recent phase of a general development plan the objectives of which include the creation of an artificial 'old town' at the heart of this small European metropolis: an architectural 'cirque du soleil' capable of attracting tourists. Bruno Di Lecce and Claudia Olendrowicz dissect De Sica's neorealist masterpiece, proposing a sort of revised storyboard in the form of twelve artworks, of which four are videos, and whilst each piece is of great individual interest, they lend themselves to being read in terms of their mutual correspondences. In Di Lecce's work, as I will later explain in greater detail, there is a lingering predilection for addressing the urban scale, and for the overview. The artist confronts us with his subjects' mobility, his own, and a shifting viewpoint, and even when he chooses to frame a scene so that it is seen from close-to, he

is fond of compensating for the resulting reduction in the number of elements by introducing a surprising or disturbing action, a gestural metaphor that reintroduces a certain complexity in his images. In a linguistic counterpart to this, Olendrowicz always prefers simply to demonstrate the details of the world, and it is these that lie at the heart of her work. She gives, for example, an identity to the gaps or the spaces between things, suggesting that the interest of objects lies in their borders, in the margins of their significance, rather than at the centre. Bruno Di Lecce is not fond of manipulation. His relationship with surfaces, spaces, architecture and nature is one of pure observation. His interventions always consist of actions that draw attention to certain significant pieces of data: measurements, forms, consistencies or visual patterns, using one material to describe another and adding new visual/tactile information to the images. In contrast Claudia Olendrowicz believes that manipulation is a necessary key to understanding, as is the removal of any element that might render the image too complex. She therefore carefully selects what will be seen, thus achieving a reassuring clarity in terms of content, but without sacrificing metaphor, allusions or the suggestion of alternative interpretations waiting to be explored. Di Lecce is fascinated

by unexpected signs or forms, and by the arbitrariness of their possible interpretations. The graphemes that he collects from the street like samples, establishing a physical relationship with certain objets trouvés (objects that have either been abandoned or are waiting to be used and which he gives new dignity and attention), only emphasize his need to work on a large scale, extending his own range of action out into the landscape, beyond the edge of the city itself. In fact the artist compresses images of far-flung places into a mere few metres of paper, drawing a condensed map that contains the information necessary to describe a vast area, thus attempting to represent much more than is possible in the panoramic views offered by his videos. The continual transitions that we therefore witness in the rhythmic unfolding of Bruno Di Lecce and Claudia Olendrowicz's *Boom*, create a concordantia oppositorum of rare harmony, furnishing an exemplary self-referential duet that is always conscious of its own margins; a duet in which it is not only the content and the metaphorical allusions offered by the individual artworks that hold the overall project together, but also, and above all, the musicality of the visual transitions with which the sequence has been composed – a symphony redolent of the poetry of the streets of Mediterranean medi-

nas and their eternally alternating opposites: broad and narrow, empty and cluttered, open and closed, brightly-lit and dark-with-shadows. Here, I believe, it would be helpful to accompany this brief consideration of Bruno Di Lecce and Claudia Olendrowicz's cycle of artworks based on De Sica's celebrated film with a few general observations regarding the two artists' work. The extent to which their fields of interest intersect turns out to be much greater than an initial analysis of their work might suggest. Both artists are fascinated by the idea of the stratification of contents, and therefore both employ an anti-Michelangelo process of addition, but they then follow diverging paths in terms of the ways in which this content is visualized in their finished works. In a tribute to his training as an architect at the University of Rome, Di Lecce makes frequent recourse to the use of traces, to the signs indicating that which is present and visible, but which most of us experience only via what Rosalind Krauss would call "the optical unconscious". The artist measures and reveals, for example, the proxemic distance between things, between people, and between city buildings, creating a geography of relationships which is metrical only in appearance. In reality, perhaps without even admitting it to himself, what he is striving

to represent is nothing less than a distilled version of the topology of the world itself, captured via the conduit of his own visual/tactile experience; an inner matrix of relationships that his own sense of identity has constructed and which regulates his interactions with the outside world. It is no accident that, when vision and the gaze seem not to suffice, he makes use of touch, often portraying his own hands in the act of making, experimenting and, of course, touching. I find myself wondering if he has ever asked himself (as I would suggest he do) how far the pieces in which he films or photographs his own hands differ from those in which he prefers to ask someone else to offer their help in setting up the *mise-en-scène*. And not only because his direct personal intervention inevitably establishes a physical and metaphorical continuum between idea and action, but above all because his own hands and, when present, his own body, convey a personal message that is a great deal more eloquent and interesting than that declared by all the rest. The marks on his skin, the colour and form of his fingers and nails and the choreography of the poses that he adopts during the performances conceal within them the “real truth” of his work. I remember, some time back, showing some of Bruno Di Lecce’s videos to a doctor who is an expert

in body language and who, to my great surprise, was able to describe aspects of Di Lecce’s character with such precision that in the space of a few minutes he had clarified and summarized his entire artistic career, identifying in Di Lecce a very evident cognitive/behavioural equivalence. I have no doubt that, in his insistent proposals of systems of “relationships between things”, Di Lecce is coming ever closer to achieving the intensity and self-awareness that characterise the work of the most important and authoritative of contemporary artists. If Bruno Di Lecce is fond of tracing the outlines and making a negative of his work’s content, providing us with proof that it has an existence independent of its presence within the frame that defines the artwork, Claudia Olendrowicz takes that trace as her starting point. She uses it actively and dynamically, presenting it as the vehicle for a declamatory “(Ich) Fahre”, underpinned by an uncommonly wide variety of interests. Certainly, at this point it would be possible to begin a discussion, albeit a superficial one, of the question of the gender of art, pointing, for example, to the obvious degree to which Olendrowicz’s work expresses her very female ability to “see and include all parts of the whole”. Like Di Lecce she has an evident predilection for stratifications, but at the same time her rela-

tionship with reality is more associative, and more complex. Woman and artist, she resolves the intrinsic complexity of a woman’s gaze by simplifying reality, by rearranging its elements into a hierarchical order that her work presents as something innate and absolute. Olendrowicz seems to have realised, right from the start of her career, that there is nothing more lyrical and complex than reality itself. In other words, she demonstrates that she has clearly understood that the only way of rendering a thing or an image of that thing more eloquent than it already is, is to dissect it and offer a selected view of it or, at any rate, to present it in the form of a series or summary of clearly recognisable elements. For this reason Claudia Olendrowicz is fond of using everyday objects, collecting them, assembling them, underlining their conventional functions, or giving them new functions. Should she ever decide to explore the potential of digital technology, she would doubtless be fascinated by the possibilities of “augmented reality”, which is, effectively, simply the digital version of what she has already achieved via other means. Her relationship with the external world, with the images that come from the world outside her own mind, is sophisticated and selective, and seems to proclaim the impossibility of dedicating herself to the large-scale, to that overview so

beloved of Di Lecce and many other male artists – impossible precisely because of the metaphorical plurality of her gaze. It is as though she were constantly presenting us with a photographic enlargement of what surrounds us, inviting us to feel as we look, and to exercise perceptiveness in the act of receiving visual information.

And reflecting on precisely these kinds of “active meditation”, these forms of privileged access to the interior world, guiding principles and related self-image that inevitably characterise artists’ work, I have recently found myself asking if artists are more awake to and interested in self-awareness than the rest of us, or if, perhaps, what drives them is, rather, the need for others to attribute a significance and meaning to the self-image reflected in their works.

My passionate hope for both Bruno Di Lecce and Claudia Olendrowicz is that both of them will rapidly realise that, in reality, no such necessity exists.

Rome, February 2014

Vittorio de Sica's 1963 film "Il Boom" confronts the theme of the Italian "economic miracle", which lasted from the 1950s to the beginning of the 1970s. The film's protagonist is heavily in debt, and hoping to remedy this situation and maintain his high standard of living, he agrees to a peculiar deal, selling one of his eyes to a rich industrialist. In "Il Boom Remake" the story recounted in the film is transposed to the city of Frankfurt, the financial centre of contemporary Europe. The camera films the screen of a computer whilst a search is being done regarding the city of Frankfurt, and these shots are intermingled with sections of de Sica's film. The result is a film in which the boundaries between fiction and reality are compromised; in fact the act of "clicking" the mouse, the sound of which is continuously present in our film, marks the process of switching from one condition (fiction) to the other (reality).

Bruno Di Lecce  
Claudia Olendrowicz

Il Boom Remake  
Video found-footage, 8 minutes  
[www.vimeo.com/66642188](http://www.vimeo.com/66642188)



A bookmark represents the process of reading and marks the space that currently divides / unites the reader and what is read. It links the informative facts and the present in which the reader is located. Here the bookmark is conceived as a space between the past and present events.

Claudia Olendrowicz

Knowledge  
Photograph, 25 x 30 cm



Here an enormous building site in the heart of Frankfurt, symbol of the “künstliche Rekonstruktion” of the old city centre, becomes the viewpoint from which we look out over the modern city. A video camera is attached to a crane being used for one phase of the building work, and as the crane rotates the camera films a bird’s eye view of the city’s architecture. Vision and construction fuse together in the form of a single instrument – the camera/crane. Architecture creates the space through which our fictional gaze moves.

Bruno Di Lecce

Kran Blick  
Video, 7.40 minutes  
[www.vimeo.com/70276315](http://www.vimeo.com/70276315)



This work was made on location at the building site once occupied by the “Technische Rathaus”, which housed the city council’s technical department from 1972–1974 and has now been demolished as part of the new city plan. With marking chalk and the tracing paper normally used for architectural drawings, the artist has made a frottage of the construction materials found on-site. These building materials mark the period of time separating demolition and construction. The frottage gives them a form of permanent location. So the frottage functions as an inventory of the current – impermanent – state of things. Registered on the tracing paper, this interim condition becomes a kind of ideal plan/design.

Bruno Di Lecce

1:1

Frottage, marking chalk, transparent paper, 33 x 500 cm

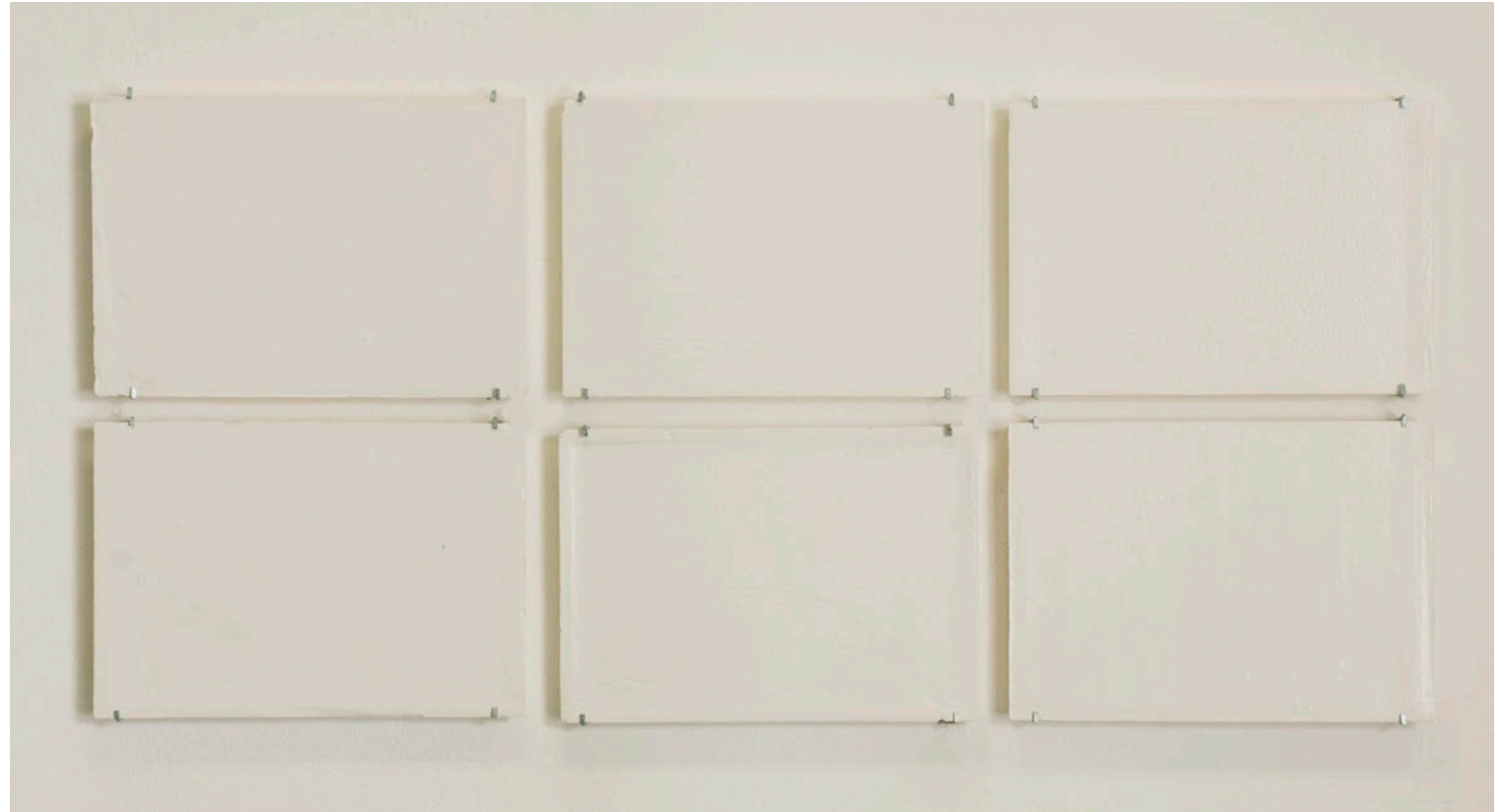




People's reactions to the spaces that have been created for them leave traces, for example in the gaps between the tiles that line the urban spaces of the metro. Here paint and dirt often accumulate, and an alternative space gradually reveals itself: a kind of knowledge lies trapped in these stains. For this piece tiles have been formed using the grout that usually fills the gaps between them (a paradox), and a picture frame has been used to mould them, alluding on a conceptual level to this visionary space formed of accrued experience.

Claudia Olendrowicz

Wirtlichkeit II  
Tiles made of grout, moulded with a picture frame, each 21 x 30 cm



Rebuilt in the aftermath of the Second World War, the city of Frankfurt oscillates between two principle paradigms. The first is that of the verticality of its steel and glass skyscrapers; the second is the horizontality of the earth - the level of history and of identity. The building that has come to symbolize this skyline, Foster's Commerzbank Tower, becomes the terrain upon which the layers of this history rise, and a line up and around which identities climb and grow.

Bruno Di Lecce

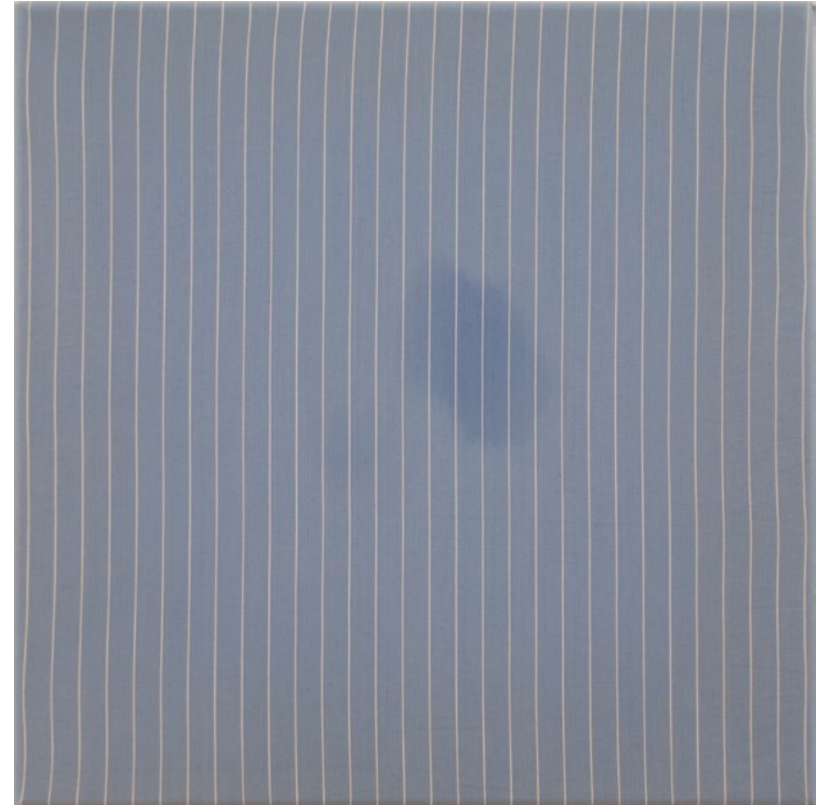
Frankfurter Skyline  
Oil on canvas, 30 x 30 cm



In 1798 Johann August Mouson founded a soap and perfume factory in Frankfurt am Main. The factory was enlarged in 1924/1925 with the addition of a tower, thought to have been Frankfurt's first high-rise building. One of Mouson's perfumes, "Mouson Lavendel mit der Postkutsche", had a stagecoach as its logo – at the time a symbol commonly used to represent the idea of communications. More recently the Albrecht perfumery have dedicated a perfume of their own to the same idea, calling it "069", which is the area code for Frankfurt – a name intended to suggest modernity and technology. The smell of the perfume therefore represents an entire city, which here "emerges" on a canvas made of shirt fabric, the pin-stripes of the material forming, in a figurative sense, the geographical site of this olfactory "city".

Claudia Olendrowicz

Frankfurt am Main  
"069" perfume, shirt fabric  
30 x 30 cm



Touching the city with our fingertips is an action that involves all our senses; it activates both haptic and visual perception. In Italian “rilievo” means “surveying, relief, relevance”, and the word provides the title of this work, realised in Frankfurt am Main. The material used is a roll of sketching paper, which is often used by architects to represent reality on different scales. The roll of paper acquires different identities, becoming a screen, a convertible sculpture or a space “between” the subject and the reality. The paper renders visible the duality of tactile experience: when touching an object, the object necessarily touches us in turn. This reciprocal relationship creates a condition of continuity linking subject and space, and shifts the body, as the primary interface, to the centre of attention.

Bruno Di Lecce

Rilievo 4

Video, 6 minutes

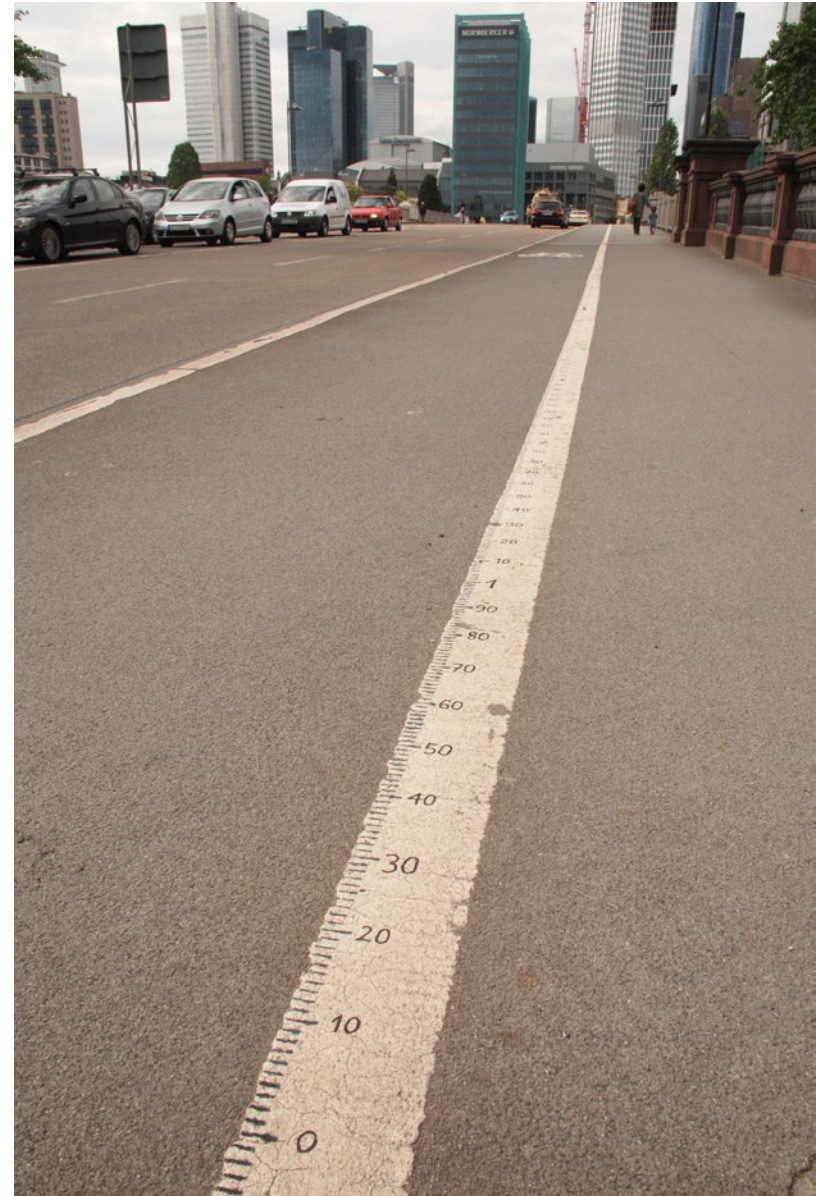
[www.vimeo.com/70277883](http://www.vimeo.com/70277883)



The intervention took place on the city's main bridge. The entire length of the line separating the cycle lane and the pedestrian area (which runs the entire length of the bridge) was measured with a wooden ruler, and a black mark was made every 1cm and every 5cm. The work took two days to perform. The line itself becomes a measurement, and comes to resemble the instrument with which it was measured. In its excessive detail the action renders measurement superfluous, emptying the act of measuring of its conventional purpose and suggesting a new significance.

Bruno Di Lecce

Main Bridge  
Pen on bicycle lane, 229 m



## Curator Biography

Valentina Ricciuti (1979 - 2014 Rome, Italy) graduated in architecture in Rome and Seville, later attaining a PhD in Architectural and Urban Design from the prestigious University of Florence. Valentina co-founded the architectural practice Medir Architetti, whose designs have featured in many influential trade publications. She is also a committed writer and researcher, working in the fields of architecture and contemporary art, contributing to major publications and to the work of associations and cultural institutions such as the Accademia Nazionale di San Luca and AAM Architettura Arte Moderna. In addition to two books on art and architecture, *Le scritture dell'arte* and *Splitterwerk*, she is also the author of a number of essays and critical contributions regarding major figures in Italian art and architecture, including Luigi Moretti, Carlo Aymonino, Aldo Rossi, Alessandro Mendini, Franco Purini and Gabriele Basilico.

## Colophon

This project is made on the occasion of the Deutsche Börse Residency Program 2013

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Bruno Di Lecce  
Claudia Olendrowicz

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