

The Istituto Svizzero di Roma is pleased to announce the inauguration of Tobias Kaspar's THE STREET at large and the exhibition THE STREET (Est1863) at the Villa Maraini in Rome - on view till September 19, 2015 and accompanied by several (off-site) extensions such as THE STREET (Chinatown) and THE STREET (NY1995).

THE STREET (Est1863) is the first scene of Tobias Kaspar's THE STREET, a fiction, a theme park, a performance, a staging, a hyper-artificial construction which unfolds itself in different venues and contexts until accumulating in 2016 at the Cinecittà Film Studios in Rome.

Starting from the remains of a block on Lower Broadway designed in the studios of Cinecittà – the so-called “Broadway set” – by the Academy Award winner Oscar Dante Ferretti for Gangs of New York by Martin Scorsese (2002), Tobias Kaspar began his own personal immersion between reality and artifice, Pop imaginary and the theatricalization of the global art world, between social struggles and the culture of consumption, mimetism, syncretism and appropriationism, wit and ironic self-critique, acting on the razor's edge between staging of the world of mass production and the extreme fiction of international contemporary art.

The film Gangs of New York, set during the struggles against the Enrollment Act of 1863 in New York, and its set at Cinecittà – subjected to repeated modifications to adapt to subsequent productions – offer the artist a series of hypotheses, explorations, leaps and gaps (backwards and forwards) in a wide range of directions in time and space. THE STREET is a restaurant, a bookstore, a jeans shop, action, dialogue, actors, extras, an art exhibition: Tobias Kaspar positions things and situations that take precise details into account, where gestures and exchanges are staged and presented with extreme dramaturgical care. Objects and images always lead to an elsewhere, where reality and fiction become inseparable. The set, like the city of Rome, is a place where history and representation are unavoidably confused. For THE STREET (Est1863) the garden of Villa Maraini is the setting of a complex dramaturgy. Sculptural, performative and immaterial interventions, directed by Tobias Kaspar, take the audience in a fiction, open to variations, from a western set to New York of the mid 90s, including Est1863, a new jeans edition designed by the artist in collaboration with Fabio Quaranta and THE STREET TIMES, a periodical which will be continued in the next steps of the project. The audience is invited for cocktails at THE ODEON, installed especially in the garden of Villa Maraini. Est1863 is after 20122TK1JEANS and Holiday the third jeans edition by Tobias Kaspar and references in its tailoring elements of the very first jeans — by claiming the year 1863 as its year of establishment, it positions itself ten years before the first jeans received a trademark, in 1873, while quoting the year of the New York Draft Riots (1863) - the key year for the film Gangs of New York (2002).

Before and after travelling to Basel mid June works and props from THE STREET (NY1995) and

THE STREET (Chinatown) are on view at Villa Maraini. For THE STREET (NY1995) at the ART Basel Parcours (presented by gallery Peter Kilchmann) a shopping passage / cinema entrance is being transformed with among others trash and it's bronze replica into a highly artificial mid 1990's Manhattan scenery. This setting builds the stage for three coming-of-age kids to hang out for the duration of the fair. Mix-tapes recorded in the 90's by Tobias Kaspar are being played. The kids are bugging passers-by, asking for cigarettes, flirting, smoking: killing time. One of the boys reads to the others from his diary in which he addresses the influence of mainstream culture, his feelings, how he is supposed to behave and act, or respond, and reflects in general upon how they struggle finding a place in the society while growing up in a drug and crime surrounded neighbourhood.

As part of THE STREET produced by the Istituto Svizzero di Roma Tobias Kaspar is presenting THE STREET (Chinatown) at the Swiss Art Awards in Basel which includes two chinatown gate elements, removed cinema props from the Cinecittà Film Studios. The Chinatown Gate remind the viewer of their original function: as a welcome sign for a Chinatown, which could be about everywhere at anytime. While the works on view at Tobias Kaspar's booth aren't directly related to an actual Chinatown or the Broadway-Set, they do continue to emphasise and question the relationship between fine arts and the entertainment industry, between art works, merchandising, edition and print making as well between art and fashion.

THE STREET (Est1863) with Mikael D. Brkic, Julia Sippel and Gerry Bibby in Est1863 Jeans and Edgars Gluhovs as The Odeon barkeeper, Styling: Alma Libera Uggeri

THE STREET (NY1995) with Ardit Ademi as Justin, Mirco Mukuna as Nicky, Roberto Ronzani as Donnie, Outfits: Nelly Hoffmann, Styling: Joy Ahoulou

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