

DIGITAL POLAROIDS OF ITALY, 1986 – 2010



PHOTOGRAPHS BY
FRANC PALAIA

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OF ITALY, 1986 – 2010**

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**CATALOGUE FOR AN EXHIBITION
AT THE JOHN D. CALANDRA
ITALIAN AMERICAN INSTITUTE**

JANUARY 20 – APRIL 1, 2011

COVER PHOTO: "Red Oreste, Lazio," 1986, digital print from scanned oil crayon and collage on SX-70 Polaroid, 8"x10"

ARTIST'S STATEMENT

My family immigrated to the United States from Girifalco (Catanzaro province), Calabria, in 1949-50, and I was born in New Rochelle, New York. From an early age, I planned to travel to Italy, and I have been fortunate that I have had many opportunities to do so over the years. During my Rome Prize Fellowship at the American Academy in Rome (1985-86), I was afforded a year to research and produce artwork inspired by the frescoes, sculpture, and architecture of Rome and Italy at large. I traveled extensively and took hundreds of Polaroids concentrating on classical ruins, antiquities, derelict and geometric structures, landscapes, urban walls, and visual oddities.

I began using the SX-70 Polaroid Land camera in 1973 shortly after the model was introduced. Ingeniously designed, the camera was compact and collapsible, and I particularly liked its small 3"x3" print format and the film's brilliant colors. I carried it everywhere, especially during my Italian sojourns.

In 1981, I began experimenting with the Polaroids by hand-coloring the acetate surfaces of the photographs with *Caran D'Asche* refined oil crayons, sometimes covering the entire print. This process enables me to blend, eradicate, and heighten the color and add visual and tactile texture to the image surfaces making them look like miniature oil paintings. I also hand-work the imagery by scraping, cutting, and adding elements to create a collage. I continue the transformation process by scanning the Polaroids and enlarging them into digital color prints in sizes up to 36"x36" and finally into Duratrans (durable transparencies) that are displayed in illuminated 4'x4' light boxes.

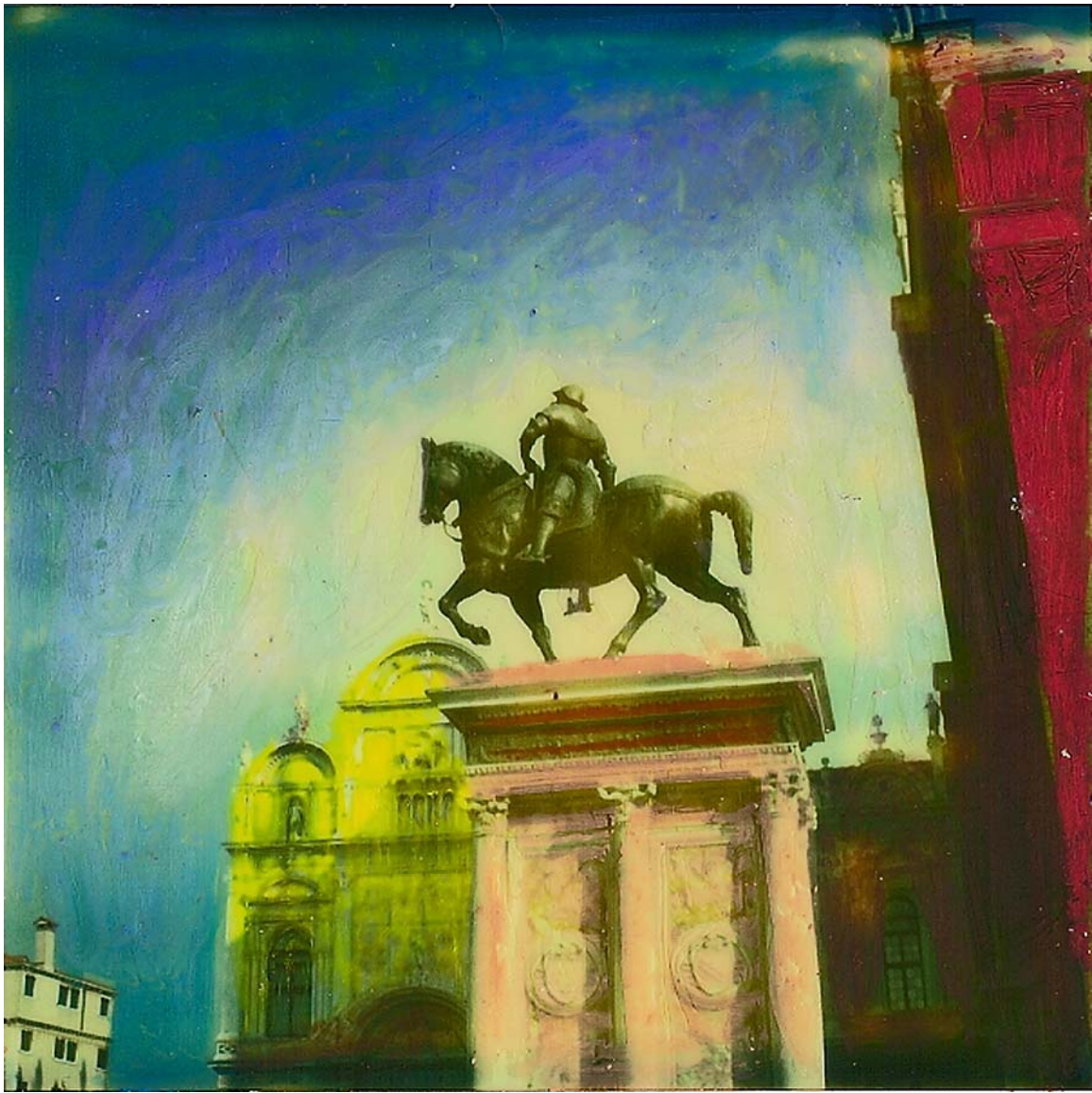
I presented my manipulated SX-70s to the Polaroid Corporation in 1981 and was awarded two sponsorships from 1984 to 1987 based on my unique hand-coloring technique. Polaroid supplied me with film and cameras as well as a one-day fellowship to use their 20"x24" Polacolor studio camera in New York City, where I produced a series of limited prints, several of which are in Polaroid's permanent collection.

I approach photography as a painter, and I use photography as a drawing tool for my paintings. This exhibit, which includes original hand-colored Polaroids as well as a large selection of 8"x10" digital photographs, demonstrates the blending of the two media.

—FRANC PALAIA, 2011



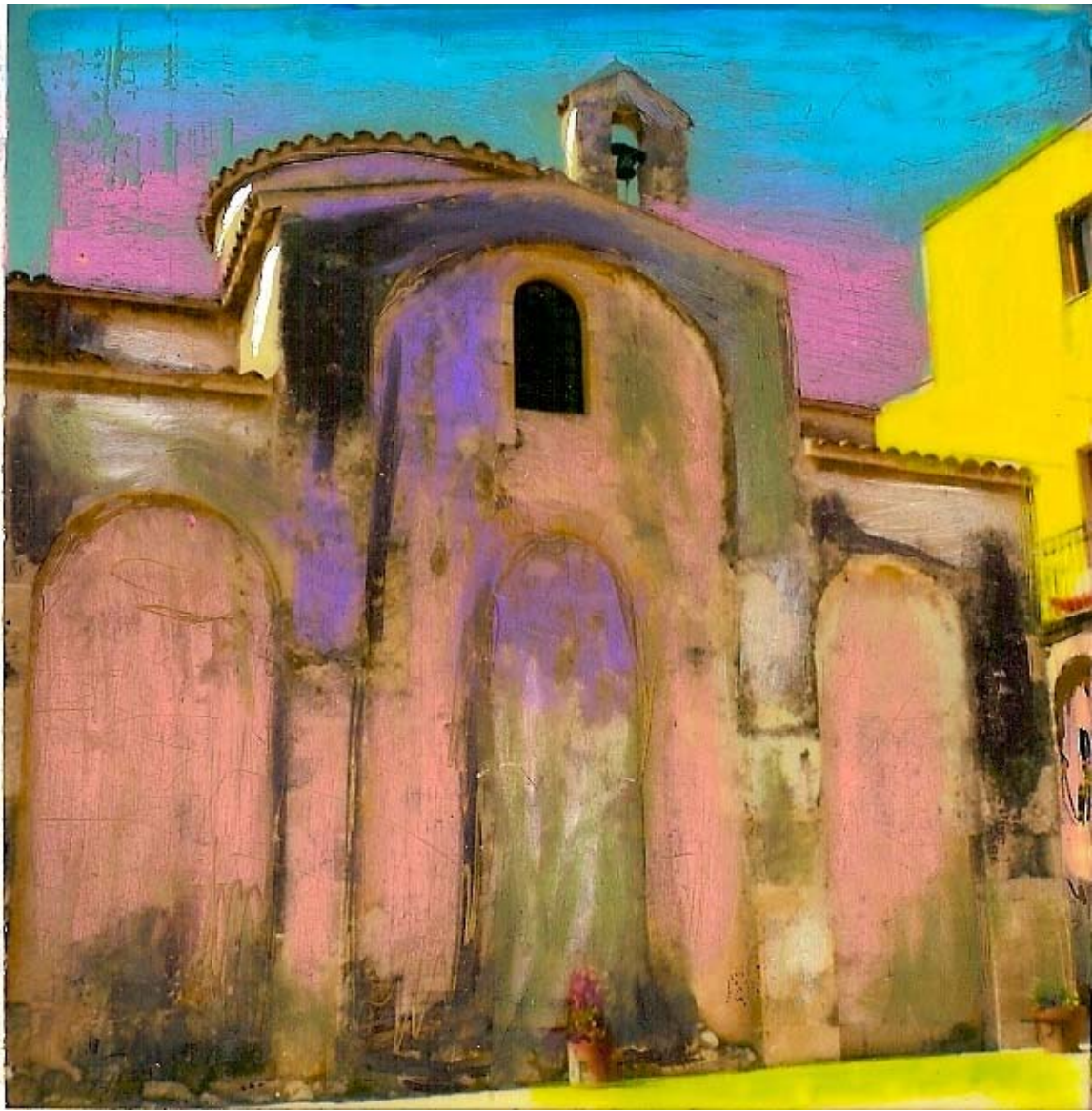
“Yellow Building, Otranto, Italy,” 1991-2000, digital print from scanned oil crayon on SX-70 Polaroid, 8”x10”



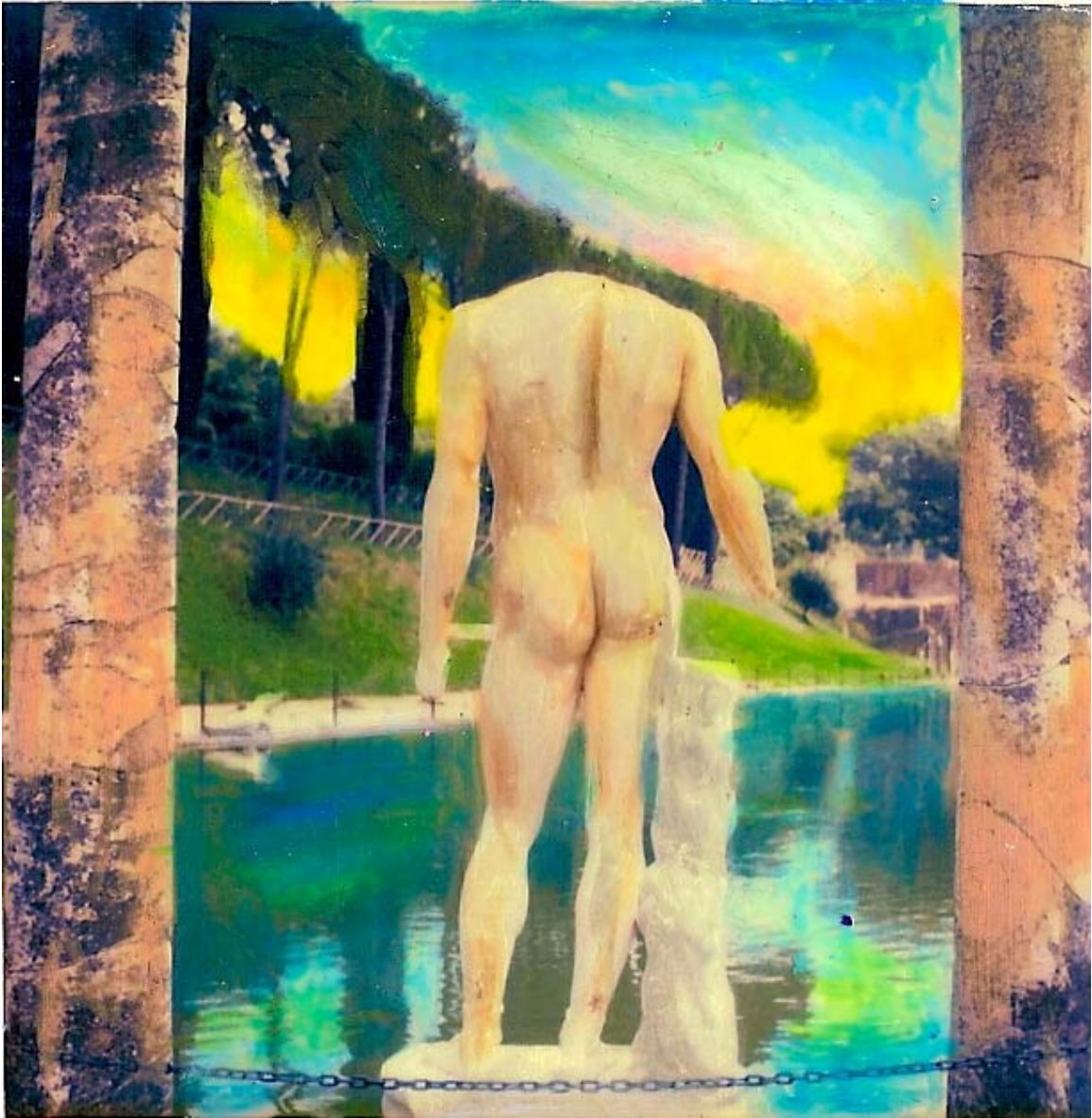
"Colleoni by Verrocchio, Venice," 2009, digital print from scanned oil crayon on SX-70 Polaroid, 8"x10"



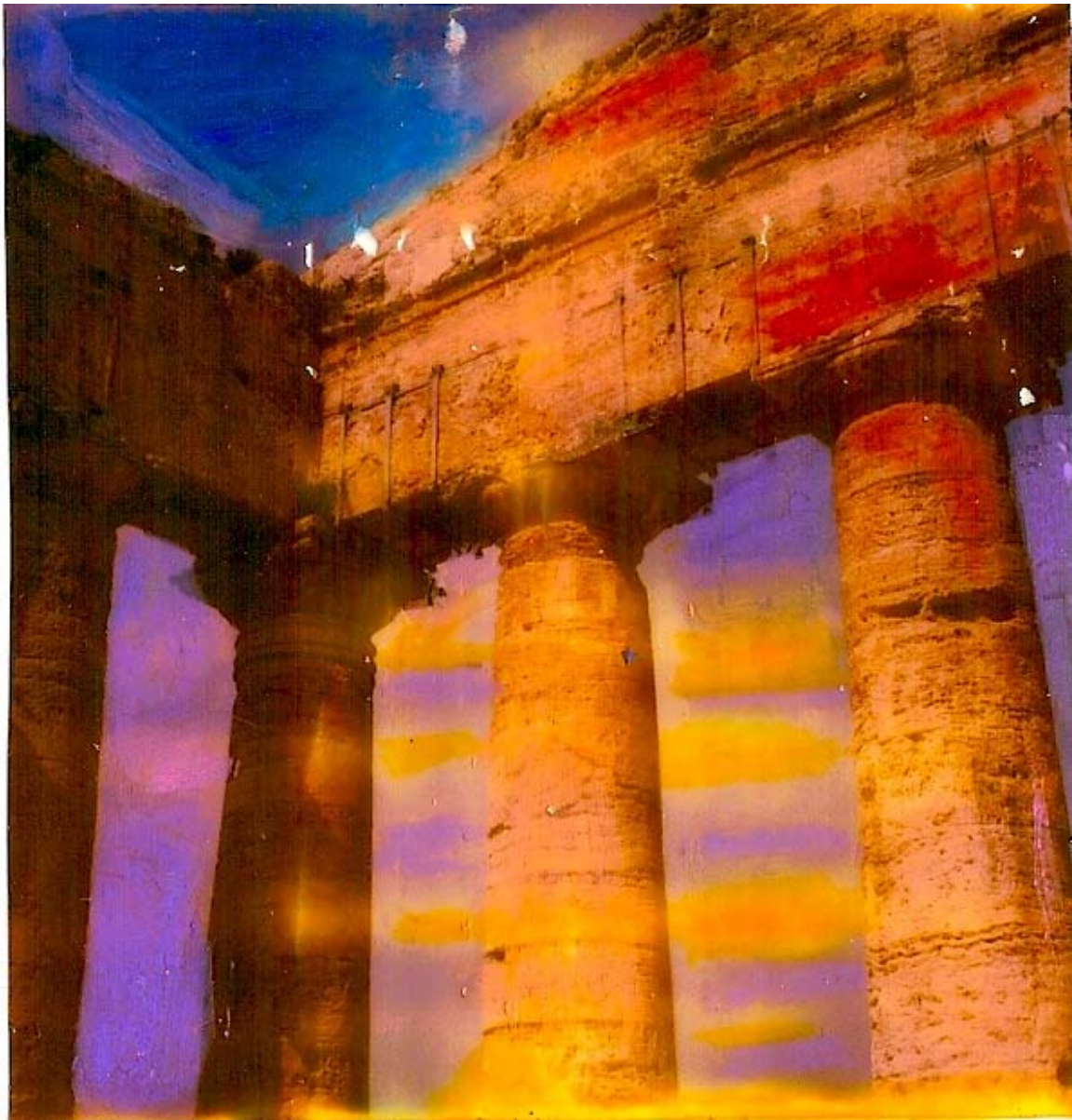
"Carbon Monk," 1986-2004, digital print from scanned oil crayon and collage on SX-70 Polaroid, 8"x10"



"Little Stucco Church," 1991-2000, digital print from scanned oil crayon on SX-70 Polaroid, 8"x10"



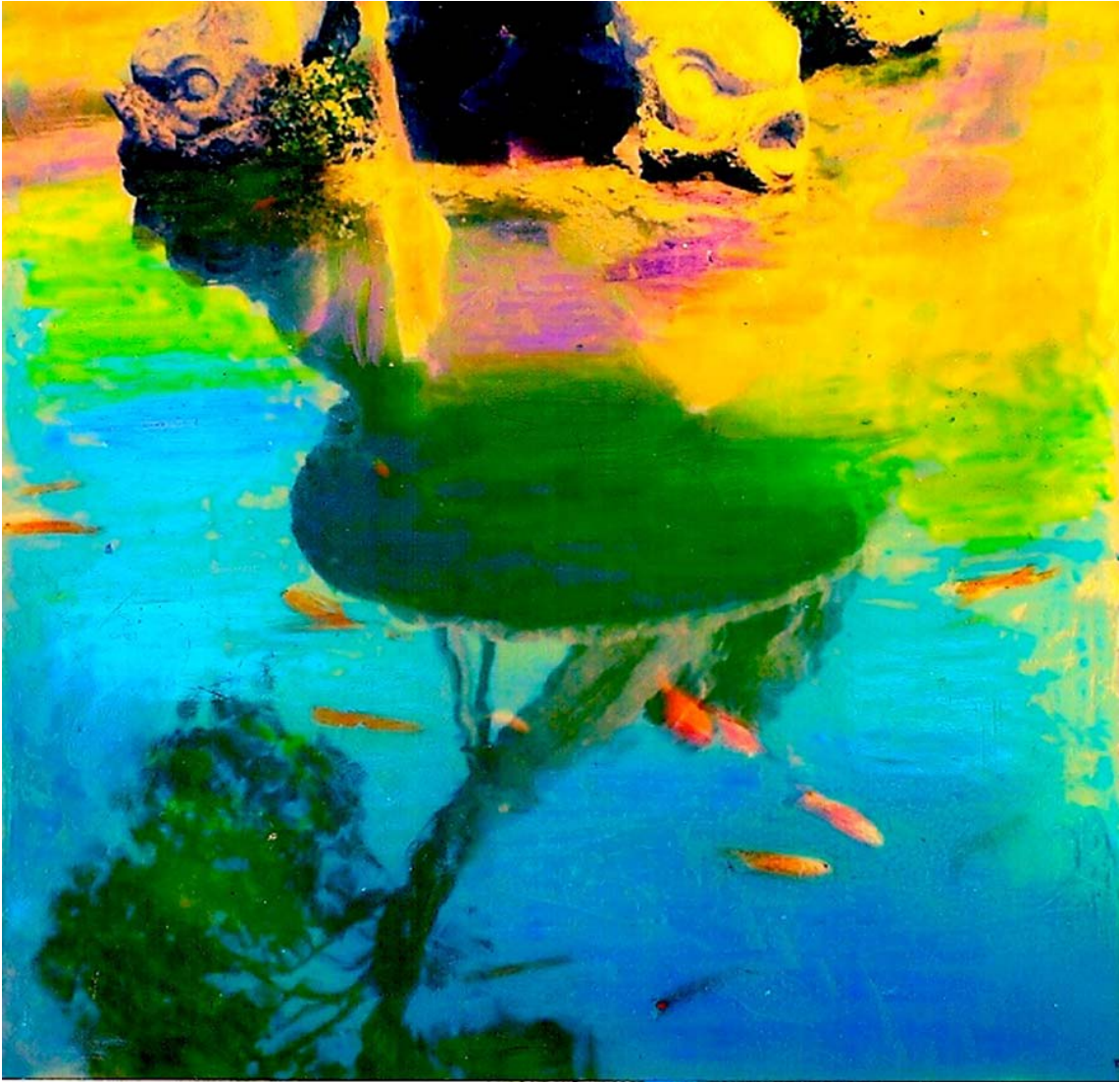
"Hadrian's Villa, Back View," 2000-2007, digital print from scanned oil crayon on SX-70 Polaroid, 8"x10"



“Columns, Segesta, Sicily,” 1994-2005, digital print from scanned oil crayon on expired SX-70 Polaroid, 8”x10”



"De Chirico Wall, Rome," 1986, digital print from scanned oil crayon on SX-70 Polaroid, 8"x10"



“Gold Fish Fountain, A.A. in Rome,” 2005, digital print from scanned oil crayon on SX-70 Polaroid, 8”x10”



“Big Palm, Monreale, Sicily,” 1994-2002, digital print from scanned oil crayon on expired SX-70 Polaroid, 8”x10”



“Roman Urn,” 2005, digital print from scanned oil crayon on SX-70 Polaroid, 8”x10”

BIOGRAPHY

Franc Palaia is a versatile multi-media artist. He is a painter, photographer, muralist, sculptor, book artist, and lamp designer. He has exhibited in over three hundred group shows nationally and internationally, with over forty solo shows. Among many other venues, he has exhibited at Exit Art, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Museum of Neon Art, the New Museum, the Newark Museum, O.K. Harris Works of Art, the Smithsonian Institute, and the Whitney Museum of American Art Annex. This year, Palaia will exhibit photographs in an exhibition at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Los Angeles.

Since 1982, he has curated over eighteen group photography exhibitions in the United States and in Italy. Venues include the Alternative Museum, Collaborative Concepts in Beacon, the Newark Museum, the American Academy in Rome, and Velan Centro d'Arte Contemporanea in Turin.

Palaia has received over eighteen grants, fellowships, and residencies including the Rome Prize Fellowship, the Louis Comfort Tiffany grant, a Polaroid Sponsorship, and grants from the New Jersey State Council on the Arts.

As a muralist, Palaia has painted numerous outdoor and indoor murals, including one of the largest murals (350 feet long) on the East Coast in Jersey City. His 136-foot "olde Main Street Mural" in downtown Poughkeepsie was painted in 2002. Since 1996, Palaia has received four commissions from New Jersey Transit to paint a mural and design five etched-glass windscreens for the Woodbridge Train Station and the Hudson-Bergen Light Rail in Bayonne.

Palaia has a B.A from Kean University and an M.F.A. in painting and photography from the University of Cincinnati. He lives with his wife and daughter in Poughkeepsie and in Jersey City.



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