Two hundred years have passed since what we consider to be the first photograph in history - or rather, the first surviving example that has reached us. That heliograph by Niépce which, from the window of his studio in Le Gras, impressed a rectangle of the world, made of roofs and sky, onto a small pewter plate coated with bitumen of Judea. It was 1826, or perhaps '27: two hundred years of the history of the image, of that technological unconscious that still questions our lives, our stories.

Therefore, proposing a retrospective exhibition of Massimiliano Camellini at this temporal juncture means depositing a memory, immersing it into a broader history to distill a *synthesis*, pursuing a possible narrative coherence. And to undertake this process of systematization, we must inevitably look to the origins of his work, to that first project *Oltre le gabbie* (2000), which looks at the conditions of imprisonment of animals kept in captivity in zoological gardens. Camellini approaches the body, almost transforming the perimeter of the photographic rectangle into a sort of additional cage, emphasizing that denied freedom that becomes a claustrophobic space, a prison, a negation. It is a work of subtraction that suggests at least two recurring aspects in Camellini's project design. First of all, the focus on a filtered gaze: through the cages of a zoo, through the window of a tram (*Tram Frame*, 2008), the mask of a fencer (*Duel*, 2006), or the modeling of a special effect for cinema that transfigures the face and body (*Laboratory Obsession*, 2010). In this way, the human being or the animal is mediated or protected by a barrier, by a metaphor that conceals and perhaps distances. Yet, it is a subtraction that actually reveals that desire for freedom, that dream of Icarus that we stubbornly continue to pursue. A filter that, in some cases, translates into a complete negation of the body in favor of relics that can allude to its presence. This is the case with *6 p.m., working time is over* (2013), *Al di là dell'acqua* (2017), and *a ribbon and a prayer* (ongoing). Works in which objects and the residues of lost worlds take upon themselves a sense of absence, of that human element that seems to have momentarily vanished, leaving his artifacts with the task of evoking him and speaking to us. However, this condition often implies another: namely, the choice of enclosed places in which to circumscribe the narrative - cages, circus tents, cargo ships, abandoned factories, sports arenas, places of worship. Ever-changing forms that the human being inhabits, leaving on the ground traces and clues for anonymous biographies. And in this regard, perhaps a special mention is due to the project *a ribbon and a prayer*, dedicated to the transformation of spaces originally intended for work, housing, commerce, and leisure into places of worship. In this case, the memories and the textures seem to overlap each other without ever canceling out the previous one; ghosts whom we coexist with and we should take care of.