

RUINATION
PHOTOGRAPHS
OF ROME





Fiona Crisp (b. 1966 Derbyshire)

Born in 1966, Fiona Crisp completed a postgraduate degree at the Slade School of Fine Art, London in 1993 and since this time has exhibited both nationally and internationally. During her Wingate Rome Scholarship at the British School at Rome, 2001-2, Crisp exhibited at Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Moderna, Rome, and works from this period formed the commissioned installation, *Santa Maria at Aspek Gallery*, Portsmouth in 2003. Recent exhibitions include *You Shall Know Our Velocity* at BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art, Gateshead, *Phantasm* at Market Gallery, Glasgow, and *Abteilung* at The Gallery, St Peter Port Guernsey. Forthcoming projects include *Subterranea*, a solo touring exhibition due to begin at Newlyn Art Gallery in September 2008. Accompanying the exhibition will be the monograph, *Hyper Passive*, published by Newlyn Art Gallery and Matt's Gallery, London. Crisp currently lives and works in Northumberland and is a Senior Lecturer at Northumbria University. Her work is represented by Matt's Gallery, London. www.mattsgallery.org www.fionacrisp.com

It was perhaps a perverse act, in a spectacular city of blinding light, to have spent so much time working in catacombs – it had certainly not been my intention to do so when I had arrived in Rome. I had gone there with a fascination for how the spaces of the city had, across time, been used to both mediate and manipulate human presence. More particularly, I was interested in a relationship between the visual and the physical in such encounters because Rome is undoubtedly a city 'built of spectacle'.

About half-way through my time in the city, I happened to visit one of Rome's many catacomb sites and was greatly moved, not only by the phenomenological power of the architecture but also by its inverse sculptural presence – a result of excavated matter being literally replaced by space.

Following this first visit, I made many more journeys underground, slowly building images of the subterranean spaces through the making of three-hour pinhole exposures. What became overwhelming during this extraordinary experience was the complete and utter silence. It was this, along with the absolute stability of climate, that brought about one's removal from any sense of location in space or time – all phenomena that I hope persist in the images. (Fiona Crisp)

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Catacombe #18 2001/2005

Archival inkjet print from b&w pinhole negative
95 x 119 x 5 cm (framed) Ed 1/3
Image courtesy Matt's Gallery, London

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Catacombe #15 2001/2008

Archival inkjet print from b&w pinhole negative
95 x 119 x 5 cm (framed) Ed 1/3
Image courtesy Matt's Gallery, London