

**P** **T** *ime*  
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a project by Laurent Grasso

# Time Perspective

*A project by Laurent Grasso*

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Concurrent to his solo exhibition at Sean Kelly, Laurent Grasso presents *Time Perspective*, a special collaboration with Bernard and Stéphane Clavreuil, exhibiting an exceptional selection of rare books related to the theme of perspective alongside his artworks.

At the crossroads of heterogeneous temporalities, geographies and realities, Grasso's neon works, films, sculptures, paintings and photographs immerse the viewer in an uncanny world of uncertainty. The artist creates mysterious atmospheres in which the boundaries of what we perceive and know are challenged.

For this special project, also conceived as a retrospective incursion into his work, Grasso focused on the question of time and traveling through time, which constitutes one of the guiding principles of his research, alongside a permanent reflection on the forms of political or scientific power. The artist's use of time as a subject, both in the past and future, has been taking shape for several years, notably through the series *Studies into the Past*, a vast conceptual project consisting of recreating works which closely resemble Renaissance paintings. Painted in current time, these works borrow motifs originating in the artist's video works, becoming *de facto*, fake historical documents that could appear to be sources of inspiration.

On several occasions, Grasso has also combined his work with other historical or contemporary works, choosing to upend the classic codes of museography to create a particular framework of immersion that forms a whole, in which the boundaries are blurred for the viewer (*The Panoptes Project*, Olivier Malingue, London, 2017 ; *Paramuseum*, Palais Fesch-Musée des Beaux-Arts, Ajaccio, 2016 ; *Purkinje Effect*, Galerie 1900-2000, Paris, 2013 ; *Portrait of a Young Man*, Bass Museum of Art, Miami, 2012; *Memories of the Future*, Sean Kelly, New York, 2010).

Grasso has worked with Librairie Clavreuil several times, including for his major retrospective *Uraniborg* in 2012 at Jeu de Paume, Paris. This special project will be on view in Sean Kelly's lower gallery from October 25 – 26, 2019.



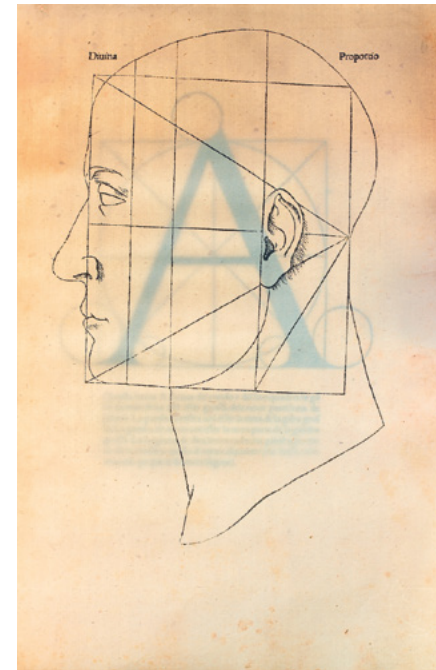
**Laurent Grasso**

*Studies into the Past* (diptych)

Oil on wood

Framed: 34 3/4 x 16 7/8 inches (88.3 x 42.9 cm) (each)

Painted in the style of the Flemish Masters, this diptych belongs to a series of paintings entitled *Studies into the Past*. Next to the portrait of a man whose attributes are borrowed from the *vanitas* genre, the painting also features a depiction of a solar eclipse, rarely seen in Renaissance paintings. This motif is a reference to one of the artist's first films, *Eclipse*, 2006.



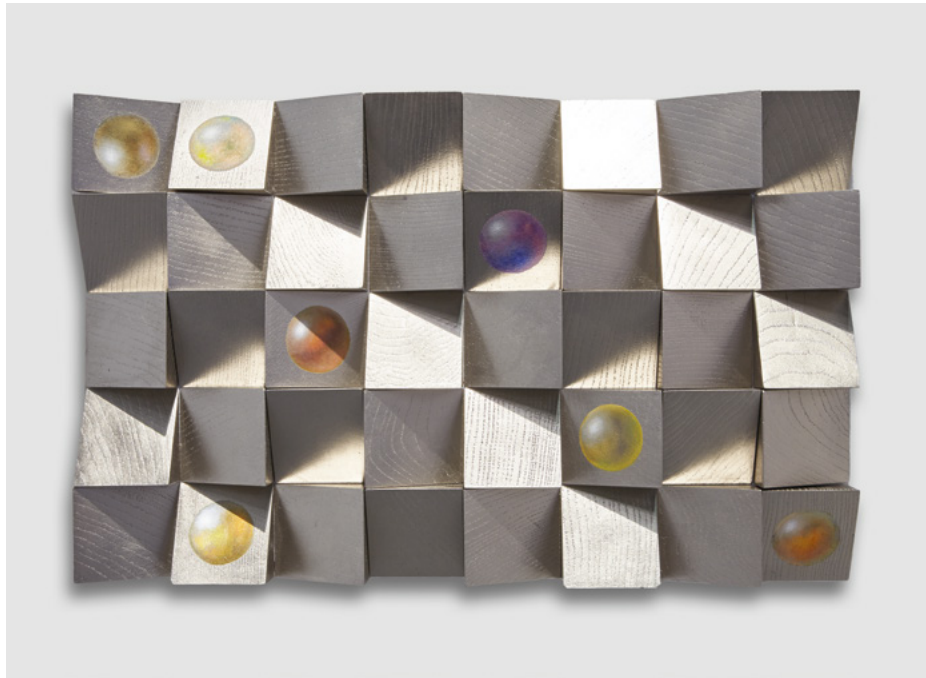
**PACIOLI, Luca.** *Divina Proportione.* 1509.

The first and only edition of one of the richest resources for studying the interplay of mathematics, art and architectural theory and typography during the High Renaissance by the mathematician Luca Pacioli, with illustrations designed by Leonardo da Vinci.



**LAUTENSACK, Heinrich.** *Des Cirkels und Richtscheyt's, auch der Perspectiva und Proportion der Menschen...* 1564.

First edition of this beautiful Germanic woodcut book presenting linear geometry, perspective and human proportion ; the last section includes unusual woodcuts illustrating the human body with lines and cubes.



**Laurent Grasso**

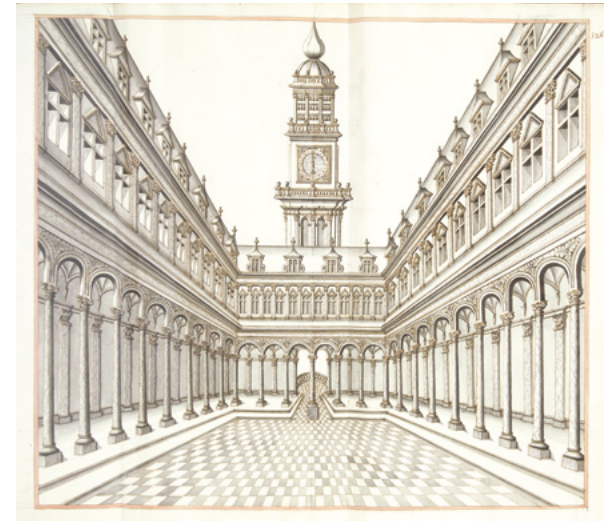
*Anechoic Wall*

2018

Oil and white gold leaf on wood

13 3/4 x 22 1/16 x 1 9/16 inches (35 x 56 x 4 cm)

Adopting the form of anechoic walls used in recording studios, this wall made of old wood and coated with white gold leaf echoes past research on the gold backgrounds of the Italian Primitives as well as the aesthetics of power. The motif of the colored spheres is inspired by Grasso's film *OttO* (2018).



**GARCIA HIDALGO, José dit le Castillan.**

*Principios para estudiar el nobilissimo, y real arte de la Pintura...* [1693].

The most complete available copy of this extraordinary drawing manual. The present copy comprises, in addition to an engraved portrait of the author, 136 engravings.

**COPPENS, Franciscus Bernardus.**

*Den derden Boeck ofte appendix daer in verthoont woort de la haude aecomste van de vijf ordens der aechitecture...* ca. 1725-1750.

Magnificent manuscript of an extensive work on architecture, apparently never published, which includes 105 original watercolors, by the master cabinetmaker Franciscus Bernardus Coppens from Ghent.



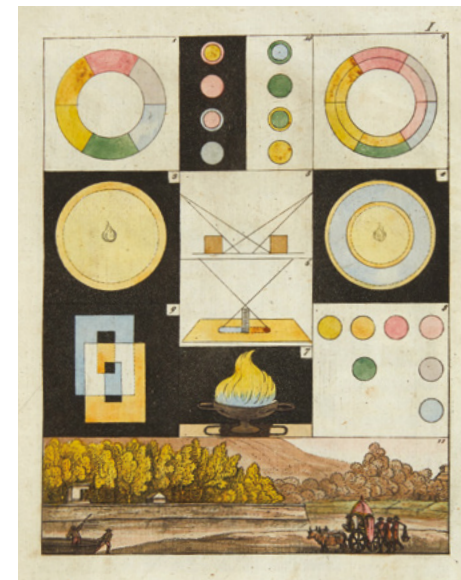
**Laurent Grasso**

*Studies into the Past*

Oil on wood

30 13/16 x 39 5/8 x 2 3/8 inches (78.3 x 100.6 x 6 cm)

This artwork is part of the artist's *Studies into the Past* series developed over several years that explores anachronic motifs. Initially inspired by the work of Giovanni Bellini and Andrea Mantegna, the subject of this grisaille disappears to reveal silent yellow spheres that recall the diaphanous presences floating above the landscape in the film *Otto* (2018).



**CHEVREUL, Eugène.** De la loi du contraste simultané des couleurs et de l'assortiment des objets colorés. 1839.  
First edition of Chevreul's monumental and extremely influential study on color. It formulates for the first time the general principles and effects of simultaneous contrast.

**GOETHE, Johann Wolfgang von.** Zur Farbenlehre. 1810.  
First edition of this highly important work on colour theory. "He published *Zur Farbenlehre*, his masterwork on color, in his 61<sup>st</sup> year. Of all his writings, he considered it to be his best work." (Burchett)



**Laurent Grasso**

*Specola Vaticana* ("John G. Hagen, S. J. at the telescope, Specola Vaticana, 1910")  
2014

Fresson print on silver paper mounted on aluminum, walnut wood frame  
Framed: 32 1/4 x 43 x 3 1/8 inches (81.9 x 109.2 x 7.9 cm)

This silver bromide print from the *Specola Vaticana* series depicts historical photographs of the pope looking through a telescope – an instrument that symbolizes observation and knowledge and ultimately control – installed in the Vatican observatory, originally established by the Holy See in the late 1700s.



**EUCLIDE. [Elementa Geometria].**

Preclarissimus liber elementorum Euclidis...  
1482.

First edition of the oldest mathematical textbook still in common use today, a masterpiece of early printing and a book which determined the format of scientific books for the following centuries.



**DÜRER, Albrecht.**

Underweysung der Messung... 1525.  
Dürer's first book on the theory of art, written and illustrated by the artist himself, used by practitioners on a regular basis for centuries.



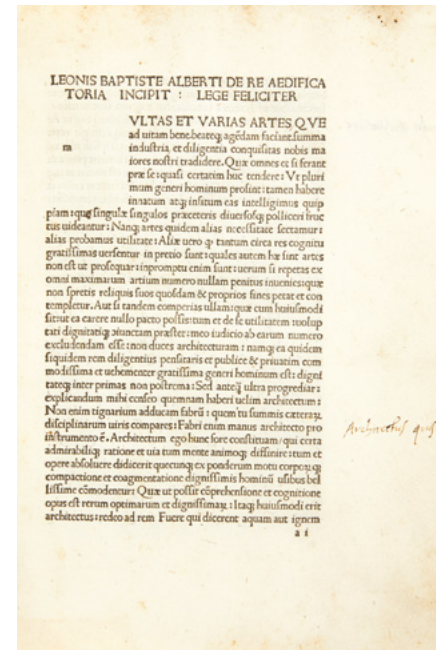
**Laurent Grasso**

*Studies into the Past*

Oil on wood

Framed: 46 7/8 x 35 inches (119.1 x 88.9 cm)

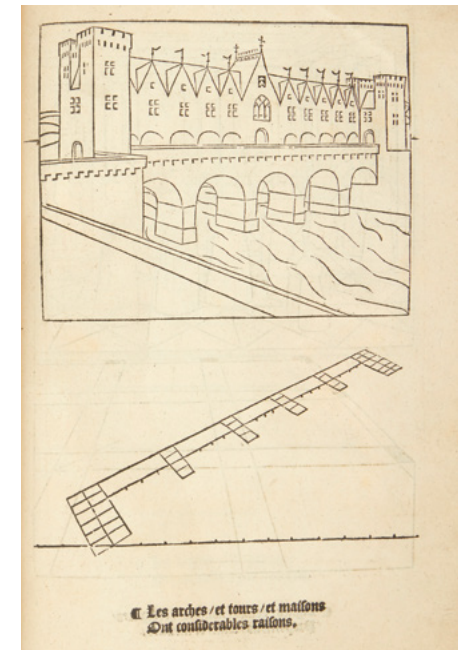
The style and execution of this painting is inspired by the Italian Masters, and is part of the *Studies into the Past* series. Horsemen observe a strange diamond-pointed sphere, directly inspired from a drawing by Paolo Uccello. The image of a levitating object refers to the subject of a film by the artist (*Psychokinesis*, 2008) in which a volcanic rock slowly rises in the sky before landing again.



**ALBERTI, Leon Battista.**

*De re aedificatoria*. 1485.

First edition of the first printed and dated book on architecture in Western Europe, and one of the first truly modern books on a technical subject.



**PELERIN, Jean dit VIATOR.**

*Artificiale Perspectiva*. Viator Secundo. 1509

Second edition and possibly the only obtainable copy of what is not only the first book on artists' perspective from the North of the Alps, but also the first to be illustrated with applied examples of perspective in actions, illustrated by an astonishing series of full page woodcuts.



**Laurent Grasso**

*Studies into the Past*

Oil on wood

Framed: 29 3/4 x 22 3/8 x 1 1/4 inches (75.6 x 56.8 x 3.2 cm)

Painted in the style of the Old Masters, this painting from the *Studies into the Past* series depicts several horsemen enthralled by the celestial sight of an *aurora borealis*. The anachronistic representation of this natural phenomenon echoes one of the artist's earliest films, *1619*, *2007*.



**BACHOT, Ambroise.** Le Gouvernail lequel conduira le curieux de géométrie en perspective dedans l'architecture des fortifications, machine de guerre & plusieurs autres particularitez y contenues. 1598.

First edition of one of the rarest books on machinery

**RÜXNER, Georg & RODLER, Hieronimus.** Anfang, Ursprung und Herkommen des Thurniers inn Teutscher Nation. 1532.

Second edition of this important illustrated book on tournaments, employing the same woodcuts of the first of 1530. The woodcuts were hand-colored at the time, some with gold and silver highlights.





**Laurent Grasso**

*1619, Galileo Galilei invents the term "aurora borealis"*

2014

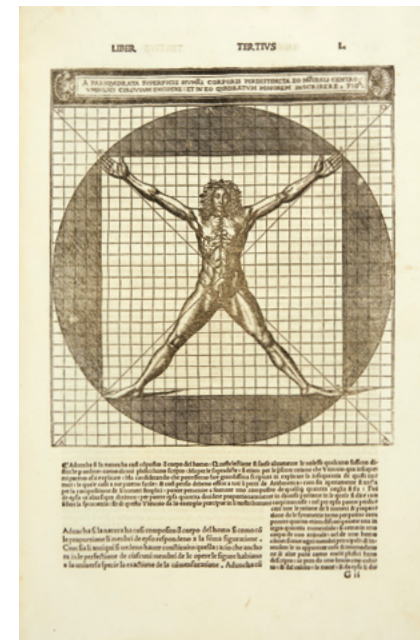
Cabinet in walnut wood, brass frame, neon, oil on wood

25 1/4 x 31 1/2 x 7 1/2 inches (64 x 80 x 19.2 cm)

This work demonstrates the artist's long-standing interest in astronomical questions, observation and the relationship between knowledge and power. This small wooden cabinet associates a picture of the *Studies into the Past* series with a neon, 1619, the date on which Galileo is said to have invented the term *aurora borealis*, meaning northern lights.



**CHEVREUL, Eugène.** Exposé d'un moyen de définir et de nommer les couleurs d'après une méthode précise et expérimentale... 1861. The first edition of Chevreul's definitive application of his color theory, written when he was 75. This work systematizes his earlier discoveries of the properties of colors and the principles of color contrast.



**VITRUVÉ.** De Architectura libri dece. 1521. Rare first Italian language edition of Vitruvius, considered by many the best and most beautiful edition of all. The translator, editor and illustrator, Cesare Cesariano (1483-1543) was a painter and architect himself, and = studied with Leonardo da Vinci in Milan. This edition contains the first printed view of the Milanese Dome.



**Laurent Grasso**

*Soleil Double*

Bas-relief in marble

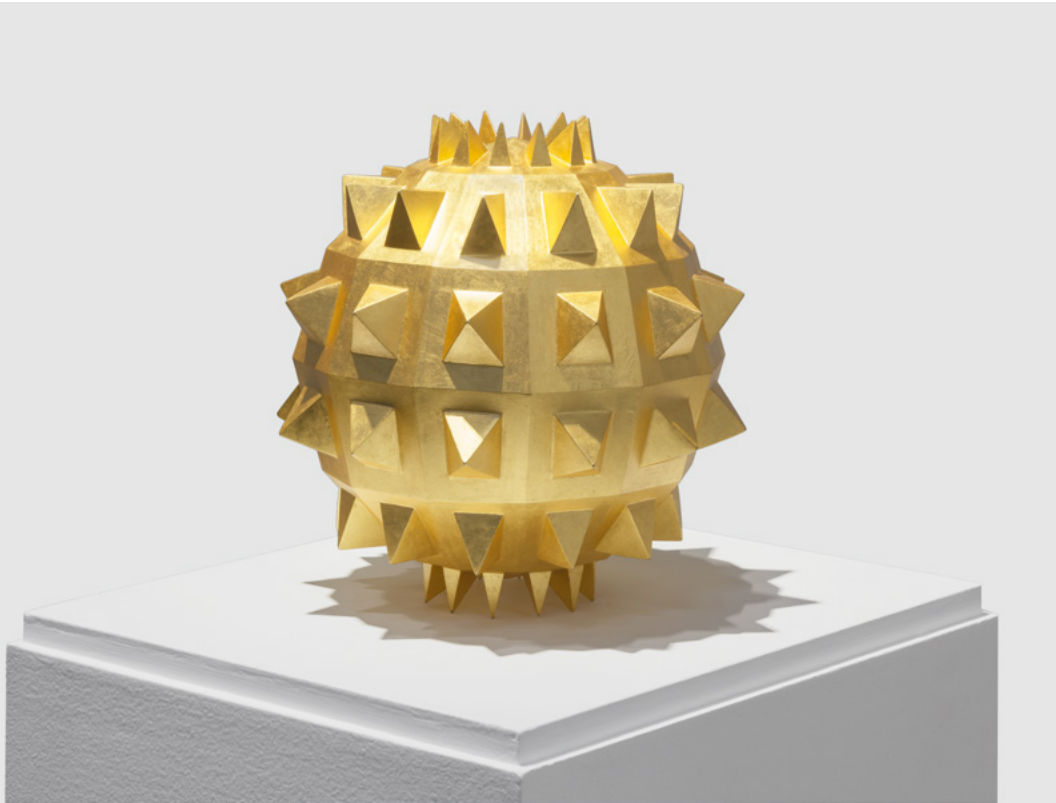
16 13/16 x 14 13/16 x 1 1/8 inches (42.7 x 37.6 x 2.9 cm)

With this bas-relief sculpture, the artist continues his *Studies into the Past* series. The unusual motif of the double sun, in a scene that bears similarities to the representations of the ideal city of the Renaissance, draws inspiration from the artist's film *Soleil Double* (2014), shot in the EUR neighborhood of Rome and features the disturbing presence of two suns in the sky.



**STOER, Lorenz.** *Geometria et Perspectiva*. 1567.

An extremely rare and first complete edition of the model book of imaginary ruins by the Nuremberg painter. His woodcuts contain brilliant constructions of abstract geometrical figures, both set in landscapes in a three-dimensional manner.



**Laurent Grasso**

*Sphère à pointes de diamant*

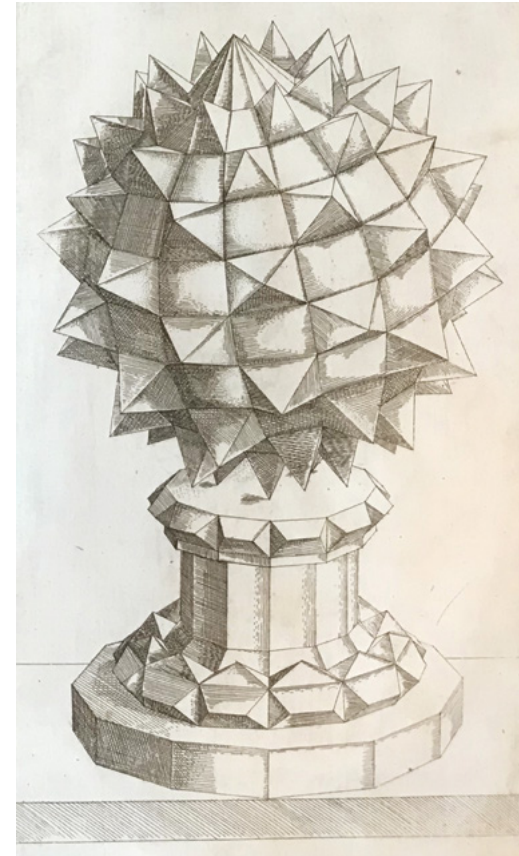
2016

Gold leaf on wood

10 1/4 x 10 1/4 inches (26 x 26 cm)

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The motif of the diamond-pointed sphere, derived from a perspectivist drawing of Paolo Uccello, assumes the shape of a gold-leaf coated sculpture. The representation of the sphere is associated with gilding, which has recently appeared in the work of the artist. It echoes the ostentatiousness of palatial gilding and former research on the aesthetics of power.



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**LENCKER, Hans.** *Perspectiva Literaria*. 1567.

A very rare first edition of two of the most important German 16<sup>th</sup> century treatises on perspective. Richly illustrated, the *Perspectiva Literaria* contains a complete alphabet with complex copper engravings.



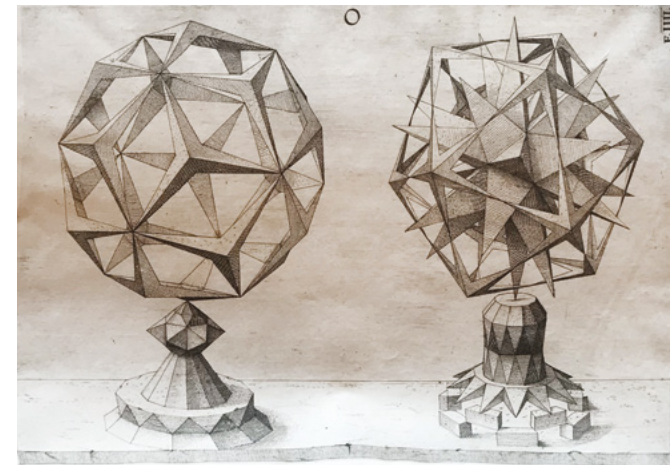
**Laurent Grasso**

*Studies into the Past*

Oil on wood

Framed: 39 7/16 x 29 1/2 inches (100.2 x 75 cm)

This painting from the *Studies into the Past* series represents the fictitious sighting of a meteorite above the castle of astronomer Tycho Brahé, built in the 16<sup>th</sup> century on the island of Ven in Uraniborg, Denmark (in what is currently Sweden). The work refers to the artist's eponymous film *Uraniborg*, 2012, dedicated to the research of this astronomer as well as the extraordinary observation device he implemented.



**KEPLER, Johannes.** Harmonices Mundi libri V. 1619.

A First edition and first issue of this epochal book containing Kepler's discovery of the third law of planetary motion.

**JAMNITZER, Wenzel.** Perspectiva Corporum Regularium... 1568.

An extremely rare first edition of one of the greatest rarities in constructivist art. The book is of prime importance in art theory and philosophy, and the source of inspiration for the ingenious art of M.C. Escher.

future archeology

**Laurent Grasso**

*Future archeology*

2012

Neon, Plexiglas box, transformer

20 7/8 x 31 1/2 x 15 3/4 inches (53 x 80 x 40 cm)

This oxymoronic phrase refers to the idea of temporal manipulation and traveling through time as well as the conceptual framework of the series *Studies into the Past*, resulting in a 'false memory' of the work, one that would be impossible to situate in time.



**PIRANESI, Giovanni Battista.** *Opere varie di Architettura, Prospettive, Grotteschi, Antichita sul gusto degli Antichi Romani.* 1750.

A wonderful copy of this collection of 84 plates by Piranesi including *Carceri*, *Grotteschi*, and *Alcune Vedute*, among others. Fine strong impressions, in a binding made by the Roman Salvioni workshop.

## About Laurent Grasso

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Laurent Grasso lives and works between Paris (France) and New York (USA).

Graduated from the École nationale supérieure des Beaux-Arts of Paris, Laurent Grasso was laureate of the Marcel Duchamp Prize (2008) and a member of the French Academy in Rome - Villa Médicis (2004-2005.) He is the recipient of the Meru Art\*Science in Bergamo, Italy, and was awarded the esteemed Order of Arts and Letters by the French Ministry of Culture in 2015.

He presented his work in many solo exhibitions conceived in immersive or labyrinthine measures: Palais Fesch, Beaux-Arts museum, Ajaccio (*PARAMUSEUM*, 2016); Fondation Hermès, Tokyo (*Soleil Noir*, 2015); Kunsthaus Baselland, Muttenz, Switzerland (*Disasters and Miracles*, 2013); Contemporary Art Museum of Montreal (*Uraniborg*, 2013); Jeu de Paume, Paris (*Uraniborg*, 2012); Hirschhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington, D.C. (*The Black Box*, 2011); Palais de Tokyo, Paris (*Gakona*, 2009); Kunstverein, Arnsberg, Germany (*Reflections Belong the Past*, 2009); Centre Pompidou, 315 Espace, Paris (*The Horn Perspective*, 2009); the regional contemporary art museum of Rochechouart (*Neurocinema*, 2008); IAC, Institut d'art contemporain of Villeurbanne (*Magnetic Palace*, 2007); and at MIT's List Visual Arts Center, Cambridge, USA (*L'Éclipse*, 2006.)

Grasso has also been invited to make art installations in public space: *Revolving History* (2018) on the bay windows of the Couvent des Jacobins in Rennes; *Solar Wind* (2016), a permanent artwork placed on the Calcia silo's wall in the suburbs of the 13<sup>th</sup> arrondissement of Paris; *Du Soleil dans la Nuit* (2012), a 25-meter neon presented during the 11<sup>th</sup> edition of the Nuit Blanche in Paris, installed on the roof of the Samaritaine; *Memories of the Future* (2010), a permanent neon installation on the wall of the Leeum Samsung Museum in Seoul, South Korea; *Nomiya* (2009-2011), a micro-architecture put on the roof of the Palais de Tokyo in Paris which remained on display for two years; and the neon *Infinite Light* (2008), an installation on the pedestrian footbridge of Hunter College on Lexington Avenue in New York.

Grasso's works can be found in many public collections such as the Centre Pompidou in Paris, the Mori Art Museum in Tokyo, the Pérez Art Museum in Miami and the National Gallery of Canada in Ottawa. His artworks are also present in prestigious private collections throughout the world: the Louis Vuitton Foundation in Paris, the Samsung Museum in Seoul and the Sharjah Art Foundation in Sharjah, United Arab Emirates.

His work is the object of several important monographs: *Paramuseum* (Silvana Editoriale / Palais Fesch, 2016), *Soleil Double* (Dilecta / Perrotin, 2015), *Uraniborg* (Flammarion / Jeu de Paume, 2012), *The Black-Body Radiation* (les presses du réel, 2009).

In parallel to this special project,  
Laurent Grasso presents at Sean Kelly a solo exhibition,  
*OttO*, October 25 - December 7, 2019.

**For any information about the Thomas Vroom collection, please contact :**

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**PHOTOS CREDITS**

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