Matteo Lucchetti (ed.), *Marzia Migliora. Forza lavoro*, catalogue of the solo exhibition (Milano, Galleria Lia Rumma), Arti Grafiche Bianca e Volta 2016.

Galleria Lia Rumma is pleased to present Forza lavoro (Work Force), a solo exhibition by Marzia Migliora, opening at the gallery in Milan at 7 p.m. on 18 February 2016, with a critical essay by Matteo Lucchetti. The project takes its inspiration from the history of the Palazzo del Lavoro in Turin, which was designed by Pier Luigi Nervi to celebrate the 1961 centenary of the Unifcation of Italy. It was part of an international exhibition dedicated to work, curated by Gio Ponti, with works by Lucio Fontana and Bruno Munari, among others. This glorious beginning was followed by years of neglect and decay, ultimately leading to the 47,000-square-metre building being abandoned. The “work force” is both that used by the artist in her real and symbolic journey into the defenceless material of the building, in her attempt to bring back to life the spirit that made it possible, and as a refection on the work potential of a community that is fully aware of its own past.

In a period of transition for the building, which included a serious fre in August 2015 and the imminent transformation of the building into a luxury shopping mall, Marzia Migliora has chosen to frequent the Palazzo in a number of different ways. These range from the construction of pinhole machines, using scrap she found, to the creation of sounds using the percussion of the building. The exhibition recreates these various visions and organically unravels the events that have involved the building in Turin ever since it was built almost ffty-fve years ago. This is a symptomatic biography of a time gone by, starting with the celebration of the modernisation of Italy though the advance of industry. It retraces the unsustainability of that model of development, which was based on the mindless exploitation of – mainly human – resources. In order to view the architectural work as a fallen body, it interprets the work that the building celebrated as a biological process in which growth, metabolism and decay – to paraphrase Hannah Arendt in Vita Activa – are aspects of the human condition and thus essential elements in any conception of production. The building that was designed to celebrate industrialised labour and its applications has become, in its gradual decline, a metaphor for the failure of entire political classes that have proved incapable of safeguarding the added value generated by the work of its active population. Marzia Migliora has given body and word to the building, turning it into a privileged observer of an era, and her individual works link it to many of the recurring themes in her artistic research: memory as a tool for articulating the present and an analysis of work as a statement of participation in society.

The three foors of the gallery are entirely devoted to the latest works by the artist, who has concentrated one particular aspect of her study of the Palazzo on each foor. At the entrance, we fnd the installation entitled L’ideazione di un sistema resistente è atto creativo (“The design of a resistant system is a creative act”), which introduces a more tangible defnition of a workforce. On a scale of 1:1, a great structure of coal briquettes on the foor recreates the pattern of isostatic ribs that form the ceiling designed by Nervi, who intended to give shape to what occurs statically in matter, through the distribution of force lines on the surface.
The title of the work a quote from Nervi, and it is echoed in Marzia Migliora’s modus operandi. The choice of coal is a reference to the fossil fuels that are still being used to generate energy and that are responsible for the deaths of two people every minute in Europe (according to a study by the University of Stuttgart in 2010, which points to the loss of 117,000 working days a year in Italy alone).
Going upstairs we come to a series of photos called In the Country of Last Things, with fve impressions obtained using pinhole devices made by the artist, who assembled various

fragments of the past lives of the Palazzo, leaving them to expose for a long time in the disused spaces. The images obtained like this bring with them a sort of hiatus flled with meaning, like involuntary still lifes, evoking compositions of simple things on a horizon that is always that of Giorgio Morandi.

Next to the prints and the pinhole machines there are a number of black monochromes obtained by processing the combustion residues left by the recent fre and other dark powders obtained as waste from metalworking. The act of blending them together in a pictorial manner renders their presence in our lives both visible and tangible: the so-called volatile organic compounds of man- made origin, which are harmful to the health. These are as imperceptible as they are ubiquitous in our everyday lives, which depend so much on derivatives of petroleum and on their countless processed forms.

The exhibition ends on the top foor with Vita Activa. Pier Luigi Nervi, Palazzo del Lavoro, Turin, 1961- 2016, a video in which the artist asks the musician Francesco Dillon to create sounds by interacting with the premises and debris of the Palazzo, and then including them in his cello performance of excerpts from Mozart's Requiem in D minor, K626. The clash between the funerary commemoration of the piece and attempts to listen to the space as an expression of its most recent potential for creating meaning, ends in a visual tension that makes manifest the parable of life and death on which Forza lavoro is built.

Critical essay by Matteo Lucchetti

Thanks go to Francesca Comisso and Liliana Dematteis of the Archivio Gallizio for their assistance and support in making the Vita Activa video, which frst arose from an invitation to create a project that would interact with the work by Pinot Gallizio.

Marzia Migliora (Alessandria, 1972), lives and works in Turin. Marzia Migliora's work is expressed through a wide range of artistic forms, including photography, video, sound, performance, installations and drawing. Her works are the result of close attention to the individual and their everyday world. She has exhibited at the Venice Biennale (2015) and in solo shows in Italy and abroad, including Museo d'Arte Contemporanea Castello di Rivoli (2012), MAXXI in Rome (2012), Museo del Novecento in Milan (2011), Fondazione Merz in Turin (2006), FACT in Liverpool (2005), MART in Rovereto (2004), and Fondazione Sandretto Re Rebaudengo in Turin (2004). The artist's works are in public and private collections in Italy and abroad, including the Biedermann Museum (Donaueschingen), The National Museum of Women in the Arts (Washington), Fundaciò Sorigué (Lleida), Museo Castello di Rivoli (Turin), Museo del Novecento (Milan), Sandretto Re Rebaudengo (Turin), Fondazione Merz (Turin), La Triennale (Milan), Collezione ACACIA (Milan), Collezione La Gaia (Cuneo), and the Videoinsight Collection (Turin).