

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Olivo Barbieri: *Adriatic Sea (staged) Dancing People*

February 4 – March 19, 2016

Opening Reception Thursday, February 4th, 2016 6-8pm

Yancey Richardson Gallery is pleased to present *Adriatic Sea (staged) Dancing People*, the sixth solo exhibition at the gallery by Italian artist Olivo Barbieri. Internationally known for *site_specific*, a ten-year series investigating contemporary urban spaces, along with *The Waterfall Project 2006/7*, *Dolomites 2010*, and *Alps - Geographies and People 2012*, projects which investigate man's behavior in relation to the spectacle of nature, Barbieri has now shifted his focus to the Italian coastline of the Adriatic Sea.

In August 2015, while creating *LA CITTA PERFETTA* (The Perfect City), a new film commissioned by MAXXI, Rome, and exhibited concurrently with the artist's mid-career retrospective *Immagini 1978-2014*, Barbieri once again chose a helicopter as his main platform from which to shoot. While traversing 400 kilometers along the coast from Vasto to Ravenna, Barbieri discovered groups of people standing in shallow water in distinct and unlikely arrangements, performing what appeared to be a sort of joyful ritualistic dance led by instructors.

The historic Adriatic coastline presents a continuous stretch of industrial, commercial, residential, and recreational activity. A mix of affluent urban living, tourism, congestion and environmental waste, Barbieri sees the area as a "perfect" example of the complexity and paradox of contemporary urbanization. He describes the dancing figures on the beach as "a manifestation of the genius loci of those places where folk dance is extremely popular and historically regarded by the old and new generations and where still the big disco clubs stand like cathedrals in the desert."

Barbieri envisioned the shoreline and sea as a film or stage set where people on vacation dance to imaginary choreography, isolated against a digitally created blue heightened by the artist to suggest the blue of one's imagination when remembering a day at the beach. The resulting photographs evoke both the ritualistic joyfulness of Matisse's figures in the painting *La Danse* and stills from a Technicolor Busby Berkeley film. In addition, Barbieri has created ghostlike twins of the photographs where the same dancing figures are reduced to simple white silhouettes, like in an architectural rendering, becoming simultaneously more comprehensible yet more enigmatic.

In addition to his photographic work, Barbieri has also directed critically acclaimed films, such as *site specific_ROMA 04*, *site specific_SHANGHAI 04*, and *site specific_LAS VEGAS 05*, which he has exhibited at the MOMA, New York, the Tate Modern, London, the Wexner Center for the Arts, and the Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, among other venues. His films have been featured in the 2005 Toronto Film Festival and the 2006 Sundance Film Festival. He has also exhibited his photographs internationally at the Centre Pompidou, Paris, the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, the Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, the Cleveland Museum of Contemporary Art, and the International Center of Photography, New York. He has participated in the Venice Biennial (1993, 1995, 1997, 2011, 2013), the Prague Biennial (2009), the Seville Biennial (2006) and was the subject of a major retrospective including over 70 photographs at the MAXXI in Rome. Born in 1954, Olivo Barbieri lives and works in Modena, Italy.

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