

R  di Martino & Laura Pugno

Fondazione Sandretto Re Rebaudengo

For its third annual 'Greater Torino' exhibition, the Fondazione Sandretto Re Rebaudengo again organized two solo shows, drawing on Turin's rich pool of creative talent. This year the curators – Irene Calderoni and Maria Teresa Roberto – selected the artists R  di Martino and Laura Pugno, presenting a coherent examination of the landscape as a cultural icon embedded in the collective consciousness.

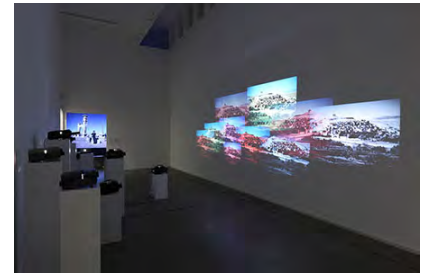
Photographs taken by Di Martino of abandoned film sets in the deserts of Tunisia (*Every World's a Stage*, 2011) and a series of works entitled 'Esistando' (Existing, 2011) – digital photographs of mountainous landscapes with sections erased from them – were displayed alongside one another in the main space at the far end of the foundation's five galleries. In adjacent rooms, two of Di Martino's major recent works were on display. *Copies r centes de paysages anciens* (Recent Copies of Ancient Landscapes, 2012), a six-minute video of various abandoned film sets in Morocco that signal the intrusion of Western filmmaking – and, by extension, commerce – onto what would otherwise be an unspoilt landscape. In a sense, there is something comic and absurd about the leftovers of film sets designed to appear like different countries or even different planets (cue *Star Wars*) occupying sparsely populated areas of the Moroccan desert. In one scene filmed by Di Martino, the camera pans around a film set built in the image of Mecca and the Kaaba, the famous pilgrimage site that Muslims turn to face during daily prayer. This decaying wooden and plaster structure, which only partially reconstructs the central mosque of the Muslim faith, highlights the fact that, although we may be subject to the illusory capacity of film and other media, some locations maintain a sanctity that the Hollywood treatment cannot match or surpass. The decaying copy of Mecca in Di Martino's video merely serves to reinforce the importance to Islam of the original.

In an adjacent room, Di Martino's *The Stand-in* (2011) developed this line of inquiry: ten slide projectors displayed the same overlapping image of Ait Ben Haddou, a Moroccan fortified hilltop town and UNESCO world heritage site that has been the backdrop for films as diverse as *Lawrence of Arabia* (1962), *The Jewel of the Nile* (1985), *The Last Temptation of Christ* (1988) and *Prince of Persia* (2010), amongst many others. Due to light exposure, the images faded over the duration of the exhibition, conveying the

About this review

Published on 27/09/12

By *Mike Watson*



R  di Martino *The Stand-in*, 2011

[Back to the main site](#)