

Antonio Rovaldi

THE GOMA

Calle del Fúcar 12

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Two years ago, after the opening of his first solo exhibition at this gallery, artist Antonio Rovaldi bought a small ten-inch plaster statue of an armless man in Madrid's popular flea market, El Rastro. Back in Milan, where he currently lives and works, Rovaldi found a ramshackle foundry where he melted the statue in order to make a new one with arms. A compelling video in the back room of the gallery depicts this process. As the process of casting the sculpture develops on screen, Rovaldi is seen fixing the bicycle that would take him to Madrid after riding some five hundred miles from Genoa for his second solo show here, all the while carrying the small statue in the compact trunk of his bicycle.

But Rovaldi did not show up to the opening in Madrid; rather just the miniature plaster man, titled *Domani pensami in battaglia* (Tomorrow in the Battle, Think of Me), 2013, made it, as did the bicycle that got him there. Standing on a small plinth, the sculpture stretches his arms out to us in a gesture of offering. Empty handed, he offers not a physical object but instead a signifier of commemoration. Returning the statue, newly whole, to the city where he first encountered it, Rovaldi truly squares off the relational circle that is present between art and life in an arresting and deeply moving show, sentiments perhaps not as easily communicable by the artist in any other way. Brightening a red painted corner, the neon work *I'll Tell You Why*, 2013, presumably about the artist's motivation for making it, never really does.

— Javier Hontoria



Antonio Rovaldi, *Domani pensami in battaglia* (Tomorrow in the Battle, Think of Me), 2013, bronze, plinth, 15 3/4 x 4 x 15 3/4".