

SERGIO VEGA
hashish in Naples

Exhibition space: Galleria Umberto Di Marino, Via Alabardieri 1, 80121, Naples Italy

Opening: Thursday 10th December 2009 – 7:00 pm – 10:00 pm

Duration: 10th December 2009 – 4th February 2010

Opening times: Monday – Saturday 3.00 pm/8.00 pm – by appointment in the morning

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Press office in collaboration with 

The [Umberto Di Marino Gallery](#) is pleased to present the latest solo exhibition of [Sergio Vega](#)'s work entitled *hashish in Naples* on Thursday 10th December 2009.

The project is inspired by [Walter Benjamin](#)'s essays from the 1920's titled *Hashish in Marseille* and *Naples*. Looking for a particular kind of "profane enlightenment", the German philosopher traveled across Europe writing his critical reflections on the cities he visited. In addition, he wrote about his intimate perceptual explorations under the effect of hashish. For this exhibition [Vega](#) has combined both essays, employing passages from *Hashish in Marseille* as a insight into his own experiences, and from *Naples* as a tool to map the city in the philosopher's eyes.

In the video also entitled *hashish in Naples*, the voice over narrates [Benjamin](#)'s own words while the artist wanders around Napoli witnessing how the boundaries between reality and the imaginary vanish at every step, as if lost in a Dantesque circle. Mount Vesuvius is portrayed from multiple points of view and occupies a symbolic role in the project. The latent danger of the volcano's eruption over Naples is cast against quotidian scenes of the city's domestic life. These scenes become what the artist calls "still-lives", providing an insightful reflection on the nature of photography as an objectifying medium, and on the relationship between the still photograph and the moving image. "Pompei was covered by lava in an instant, thus preserved frozen in time as if it were a giant photograph"- says the artist.

Naples was for [Benjamin](#) a "porous city" where privacy is constantly permeated by streams of communal life, and "where nothing is concluded because the passion for improvisation demands that space and opportunity be preserved at any price". In the artworks of this exhibition porosity is often symbolized by the presence of volcanic stone, reiterated at different stages to build an overarching metaphor that appears embodied in the architecture, the traffic, the city's lifestyle, and its ancient past.

While walking through someone's steps, [Vega](#) has constructed a critical, yet celebratory characterization of southern Italy. This portrayal represents Naples in continuous metamorphosis, marked by porosity and inter-penetration, a theater where the northern european intellect loses its authority driven by the sensorial spectacle of the streets.