

THE NEW YORKER

Luigi Ghirri

Media was the muse of this Italian photographer, who died in 1992, at the age of forty-nine. “Luigi Ghirri: The Idea of Building,” at the Matthew Marks gallery, attests to the continued allure of his eccentric, conceptual approach. In his signature faded color palette, Ghirri captured signage, murals, and ads layered onto the surfaces of a city; his frontal, symmetrical compositions often flatten three-dimensional space, an effect that might be described as *trompe l’oeil* in reverse. In the dreamy, sunlit factory scene “Ferrari Automobili,” from 1985-88, an upright, glossy-red car hood recedes on an assembly-line track—but the view is oddly cropped by a metal archway. Some of Ghirri’s works might be easily mistaken for photomontage. The American abstract painter Matt Connors, who organized the exhibition, writes that these photographs “are built rather than composed, *things* rather than *images*.” Indeed, Ghirri’s uncanny ability to establish an equivalence between objects and pictures makes his work feel as fresh as ever.—*Johanna Fateman (matthewmarks.com)*