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GIULIO PAOLINI

IL MONDO NUOVO

Massimo De Carlo is pleased to present *Il mondo nuovo*, Giulio Paolini's first solo show in our gallery space in Piazza Belgioioso in Milan. The exhibition presents a new body of work created by the artist for the occasion.

The show is part of a two-episode project for which the artist will be working in Milan during 2020; in September Christian Stein Gallery will host *Qui dove sono* a solo show by Giulio Paolini in Corso Monforte.

Il mondo nuovo, the exhibition's title, is inspired by the homonymous fresco by the Venetian artist Giandomenico Tiepolo (1727-1804): it represents a crowd of onlookers waiting to light some sort of magic lantern, that projects imaginative images of exotic places inside. As in Tiepolo's fresco it is the curiosity for the unknown and for a mysterious future, that characterizes the scene, in Paolini's works that are on display the temporal dimension is the protagonist. The obsession with the passing of time in the artist's life, in the history of art, or in the succession of hours, runs through all of the artworks.

Upon entering the first room of the gallery the visitor is welcomed by the artwork *Il mondo di prima*, 2020, composed of an antique table on which are arranged, in scattered order, seven portrait frames with the same number of photomontages. The figure of the artist as a child is a recurring figure, we find him caught in different imaginary circumstances - artists' ateliers, theatre stages, exhibition rooms, in contemplation of ancient paintings or female nudes. The random arrangement of the portrait frames forms a sort of labyrinth, while the round table on which they are placed underlines the work's belonging to a domestic, intimate dimension. Next to the table, on a chair, a framed photomontage reproduces Giulio as a child waiting for us on the threshold of the same room where we are, in a sudden return to the present. As in an imaginary photo reportage, today's artist portrays himself in his favourite environments that belong to past eras. With a game of time-shifts Paolini brings together ideal situations with the use of a few images, a series of "predictions to the past" of today's artist and of "promises of the future" of yesterday's child.

The artwork *Expositio*, 2019-20 - at the centre of the hall - is divided into four bases of different heights placed at the top of the square floor frieze. The whole suggests a "sound stage", where each of the four bases presents a different object, thus creating an "elected place" for the exhibition. The plaster cast of Venus of Phidias, the one of Aphrodite's head, an image of the night sky printed on fabric, a set of paper materials referring to the artist's installation projects and a halogen lamp virtually create the place where the work can take shape. *Expositio* calls into question the visibility of a subject that, though openly "exhibited", is hidden from our gaze. We look at the casts of a classical sculpture and other objects, and yet, in the here and now of their exhibition the final vision dissolves in the very instant in which it is announced.

Sotto le stelle (Sculptor), 2020, composed of a medallion with gilded hooks, presents the reproduction of a male face by the neoclassical sculptor Lorenzo Bartolini (1777-1850), surrounded by fragments of a star map. On the upper edge of the frame there is a golden card diadem, while a fragment of the map highlights the name of the constellation "Sculptor". The diadem - an attribute of dignity and virtue - idealistically encircles the male face, here called to evoke the very idea of sculpture. As the title says, the artwork pays homage to sculptural practice through a symbolic nocturnal setting.

Giorno e notte, 2020 is composed of three elements with a white, grey and black background respectively, combined to form a perspective layout. The vanishing point of the central element reduces the scale of the image of the triptych itself; the diagonals of the perspective also are the hosts of four valets, recurrent figures in Paolini's repertoire, servants of the stage and discreet witnesses of the rite of representation. The entire composition is animated by the flow of celestial bodies and astral elements in a symmetrical contrast between light and darkness, day and night.

The end wall hosts *Il mondo nuovo*, 2020 with a title taken from the homonymous fresco by Tiepolo; twenty-three collages in golden frames are freely set up around a central, larger, gilded frame that frames a virgin sheet. Each collage shows a fragment taken from the artist's recent works on paper, inspired by Tiepolo's fresco. Just as the spectators of the baroque

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fresco are not given to know the object of the gaze of the figures represented – the first projections of magic lanterns, exotic dioramas of unknown worlds – so Paolini’s “new world” is focused and exhausted in the empty central frame, which always renews an expectation of discovery punctually disappointed by the facts.

The small room next to the salon hosts *Fuori tempo*, 2020 where, on a plinth, paper elements with different origins and decreasing sizes overlap: a grey card supports an edition of the artist’s work depicting multi-coloured brushstrokes on which, in turn, is laid the photographic reproduction of an empty golden frame. The sheets serve as support surface for an antique palette found among the family mementoes and an empty hourglass in a lying position. *Fuori tempo* shows a coexistence of elements that are extraneous to each other by their material nature and yet similar in evoking moments from the past and leading us to a temporal dimension that is irremediably outdated.

GIULIO PAOLINI

Giulio Paolini was born in Genoa in 1940.

In 1942 his family moves to Bergamo owing to his father’s job. In 1952, the family settles down in Turin. Paolini studies graphic art and he grows familiar with art by visiting exhibitions and galleries. After several attempts at experimentation, in 1960 he makes “Geometric Drawing,” a full-fledged statement of intentions; the work will forever remain the charter for all his artistic explorations.

His early friendships in the art world lead to the debut of his career, which begins in 1964 with his first solo show at Galleria La Salita in Rome. In the second half of the 1960s, he consolidates his conceptual assumptions and his position of total independence from the effervescent atmosphere that dominates the period. Germano Celant, whom he had met through Carla Lonzi, writes the catalogue essay for his solo show at Galleria del Leone in Venice in 1967, and gets him involved in the nascent Arte Povera scene. Celant invites the artist to participate in the events he curates from 1967 to 1971. In the early 1970s, Paolini forges international ties and holds numerous gallery and museum exhibitions. Major retrospectives of his work are held at Palazzo della Pilotta in Parma (1976), Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam (1980), Nouveau Musée in Villeurbanne (1984), Staatsgalerie in Stuttgart (1986), Galleria Nazionale d’Arte Moderna in Rome (1988), Neue Galerie am Landesmuseum Joanneum in Graz (1998), Fondazione Prada in Milan (2003), Kunstmuseum Winterthur (2005), MACRO Museo d’Arte contemporanea in Rome (2013) and Whitechapel Gallery in London (2014), and Fondazione Carriero in Milan (2018). On several occasions he is invited to participate at Documenta Kassel (1972, 1977, 1982, 1992) and at the Venice Biennale (1970, 1976, 1978, 1980, 1984, 1986, 1993, 1995, 1997, 2013).

Declaring his intimate belonging to art history from the outset, Paolini has deliberately stayed inside rooms where art is made, interrogating the very actors of the artistic experience: the author, the viewer, the gaze, the space of the representation. From the analytical studies he performs in the 1960s, Paolini gradually develops toward installations that are formally more complex, and since 2000, he has mainly focused his attention on the act of exhibiting and the artist’s studio. From the start of his career, Paolini has always accompanied his works with notes and writings, collected in several books.

Hard Facts:

Massimo De Carlo, Milan
Piazza Belgioioso, 2 - 20121 Milan, Italy
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For further information and materials:

Press Office, Massimo De Carlo
T. +39 02 70003987
press@massimodecarlo.com
Instagram: massimodecarlogallery

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