

Paolo Gioli

*The Nude in the work of Paolo Gioli*

24 November 2018 - 26 January 2019

This exhibition explores Paolo Gioli's depiction of the nude and his use of the body to experiment with different mediums. Gioli attended the Accademia delle Belle Arti in Venice, where he studied painting. The drawings included here, from 1963, offer an early example of his depiction of the body, a dispersed tracery of body parts that can barely be drawn together to form a whole. In these works, Gioli is exploring gestural mark-making rather than attempting any exacting bodily image.

On his return from a visit to New York, where he discovered the underground film scene in the late 1960s, he began making his now legendary films, testing the limits of cinematic experimentation at the time. *Quando la pellicola è calda*, ['When the film is hot'] 1974, was made using found footage from pornographic films, which are rendered grotesque rather than erotic due to a mirroring process Gioli invents, the figures in the film contorting and merging into each other. The film's title, *Quando la pellicola è calda*, is a metaphor: *calda*, 'hot', alludes not only to the sexual nature of the imagery and to the heat of the body, but also to the film stock itself, which heats up under the light of the lamp as it being projected. It is as if the erotic act is consummated first of all inside the machine that will then make it visible. The body-to-body contact we see on-screen, produced by means of a 'mirror-effect' or by multiple exposure, is the performative manifestation of a self-reflexive cinema, a prisoner of its own closed circuit. As Patrick Rumble has noted, Gioli's films propose 'an essential analogy between celluloid and skin as the sensitive interface between the self and the outside world'.

In 1977 Gioli began working with the Polaroid SX-70, testing the possibilities of the Polaroid medium so radically that the manufacturer eventually rewrote instruction manuals to acknowledge the expanded potential he had revealed. Gioli stripped the Polaroid emulsion from the sealed capsule containing the chemicals required to develop the image and applied them instead to alternative supports, such as paper and silk. He compared the strata of coloured gelatinous dyes that constitute the Polaroid emulsion to the layers of human epidermis, and characterised his delicate transfers of these layers from one support to another as similar to a 'surgical operation enacted upon the body'. This exhibition presents Polaroid works from the 1970s up to 2007 (when the polaroid stock was depleted), epitomising Gioli's depiction of the body using his unique technical experimentations with the photographic process.

Gioli has a current exhibition, *Anthrapolariod* at the American Academy in Rome, curated by Peter Benson Miller which runs to 11 December 2018. Recent exhibitions include *Paolo Gioli: Transfer di volti nell'arte*, Museo Poldi Pezzoli, Milan and *Paolo Gioli: Cuerpos evocados por la noch*, Istituto Italiano di Cultura, Madrid. His work is included in the touring exhibition *The Polaroid Project*, which travels to Amon Carter Museum of American Art, Fort Worth (TX); WestLicht Museum for Photography, Vienna; Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe Hamburg, Hamburg; C/O Berlin, Berlin; National Museum of Singapore, Singapore; Musée McCord, Montreal; MIT Museum, Cambridge (MA).