

Kunsthhaus Baselland



(1) Piero Golia, *The Painter*, 2016/2017. Courtesy of the artist, Bortolami Gallery, Galleria Fonti, Gagosian Gallery. (2) Markus Amm, Kunsthhaus Baselland, installation view, 2017. Photo: Serge Hasenböhler. Courtesy of the artist, Herald St, London; and David Kordansky Gallery, Los Angeles.

**Kunsthhaus Baselland**

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Los Angeles-based **Piero Golia** (b.1974, Italy) kicks off three solo exhibitions. Golia counts among the most idiosyncratic contemporary conceptual artists, consistently challenging dominant systems and conditions—not only in art. In 2005 he co-founded the Mountain School of Arts in Los Angeles, where students can learn and take classes without having to pay any fees. In 2013 he set up Chalet Hollywood—a form of club with loans and works by artist friends—to enable an experience of art through conversations, shared meals and exchanges, etc., in one place. Now in the Kunsthaut Baselland Golia skilfully deals with the expectations placed upon artists and how they appear in public, but equally considers their ability to generate a social fabric. Golia calls his work *The Painter*; it consists of a huge robot that moves along lengthy tracks appear in public, but equally considers their ability to generate a social fabric. Golia calls his work *The Painter*; it consists of a huge robot that moves along lengthy tracks which—in response to visitors entering—begins to act somewhat strangely and, specifically, to paint. “In my opinion” says Golia, “we should seek open models in which the viewer has the possibility of forming their own narrative.” This is exactly what is possible by interacting with the painting robot. (A catalogue with an interview between Piero Golia and Jonathan Monk and a text by Ines Goldbach accompanies the exhibition. Publisher: NERO, ISBN: 978-88-8056-003-6)

New works by artist **Markus Amm** (b.1967, Germany) who lives in Geneva are shown in the spaces of the Kunsthaut upper storey, creating a clear connection to Golia’s *Painter*. His fascinating and sometimes enigmatic abstract painting allows viewers a distinct, unusual visual experience. Amm pours thinned oil paint onto the surface of gesso-coated boards which he has painstakingly prepared. The colours flow together in varying formations, partly controlled and partly left to chance. The result is painting which seems to develop bit by bit before your eyes almost like a polaroid image, and which, through its astonishing effect of depth, creates its own spaces as well as a new spatial structure in combination with the surrounding architecture. (A catalogue with an interview between Markus Amm and Ines Goldbach and a text by Jan Verwoert accompanies the exhibition. Publisher: Karma, New York, ISBN: 978-1-

Finally, with the exhibition from **Itziar Okariz** (b.1965, Spain), which occupies the whole lower floor of the Kunsthhaus, the first survey of the extensive work by the Basque performance artist is possible. The discovery of how identity is constructed is key to her practice. In recent works Okariz focusses on dealing with language and the possibility of shifts of meaning through language. In fragments, repetitions, elisions and new combinations words and sentences are tested to see if new correlations of meaning can be created. The exhibition was made in cooperation with partner institutions in Madrid (CA2M. Centro de Arte Dos de Mayo) and San Sebastián (Tabakalera. Centro Internacional de Cultura Contemporánea). A comprehensive catalogue of Okariz' work will be produced in collaboration with these venues.

Curator: Ines Goldbach, Director Kunsthhaus Baselland

For further information and image requests, please

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Related events

June 15, 10–11am

Book launch of the Markus Amm and Piero Golia catalogues

Kunsthhaus Baselland

The artists will be present.

June 16, 10–11am

Artist's talk

Itziar Okariz talks with artist Lara Almarcegui

Kunsthhaus Baselland

June 17

Performance

Itziar Okariz will participate in Art Basel Parours Night with a live performance.

Coming soon

Marcia Hafif, Maja Rieder

September 15–November 12, 2017

Opening: September 14, 6:30pm

More information: www.kunsthhausbaselland.ch

Conversation Piece (Part 3) at Fondazione Memmo

February 22, 2017

IMG_1126_HighRes

Artists: Jonathan Baldock, Piero Golia, Magali Reus, Claudia Wieser

Exhibition title: Conversation Piece (Part 3)

Curated by: Marcello Smarrelli

Venue: Fondazione Memmo, Rome, Italy

Date: December 17, 2016 – April 2, 2017

Photography: all images copyright and courtesy of the artists and Fondazione Memmo, Rome

The Fondazione Memmo Arte Contemporanea is proud to present *Conversation Piece | Part 3*, the third exhibition in a series curated by Marcello Smarrelli, and intended to chart the presence of Italian and foreign artists currently living in Rome or particularly attached to the city. The artists invited to this third exhibition are: Jonathan Baldock, Piero Golia, Magali Reus (Dutch fellow at the American Academy in Rome), Claudia Wieser (fellow at the Accademia Tedesca di Roma Casa Baldi).

The project was conceived with the aim of continually reviewing the contemporary art scene in Rome which is difficult to understand for the general public, but is a surprisingly active panorama dominated by the continuous activity of galleries, foundations, Academies and foreign cultural institutes where new generations of artists from all over the world, traditionally complete their education. Through these exhibitions and other activities, such as talks, workshops and performances, the Fondazione Memmo aims to support these institutions, which are considered vital in the maintenance and development of the contemporary visual arts and culture in Rome.

The project's title is inspired by one of the most famous movies by Luchino Visconti: *Gruppo di Famiglia in un interno* (*Conversation Piece*, 1974). In turn the film's title referred to a specific genre of Dutch painting – became popular in the XVII and XVIII centuries – showing scenes of genteel conversation and everyday domestic life. This exhibition is an opportunity to discuss on the work of different artists, who offer a great variation in research, poetry, and techniques, but it is also a moment of dialogue with Rome and its ancient and contemporary history.

As for the previous editions, also for *Conversation Piece | Part 3* artists have been asked to reflect on a specific suggestion, linked to the nature of objects and their specific use in the artistic practice. «Perhaps the immobility of the things that surround us – noted Marcel Proust – is forced upon them by our conviction that they are themselves, and not anything else, and by the immobility of our conception of them», so if we would approach things from other points of view, we should learn different and new answers that would otherwise remain unknown. This is one of the main themes of the most radical avant-garde movements of the twentieth century, such as Cubism, Dadaism, Surrealism, up to the end of the fifties to the New Dada, actually based on a new interest in the everyday object that the *junk culture*, revived through a process of *détournement*, leaving this interest as an inheritance to the movements born soon after: Pop Art, Minimalism, Conceptual Art.

It is about that principle of defamiliarization of an object proposed again by Jasper Johns in the early sixties with the statement: "Take an object / Do something to it / Do something else to it", that gave birth to a phenomenon that will be the *leitmotiv* of an entire generation of artists and critics.

The use of items borrowed directly from the everyday life reopens an ever-present issue within the discussion on the contemporary, revitalized by philosopher Arthur Danto in 1964 when, visiting the exhibition where Andy Warhol was exhibiting for the first time the series of Brillo Boxes, concluded that arts have – by that time – reached the maximum point of self-consciousness, because the work of art was no longer distinguishable from a commercial product: any object can be a work of art, even if not every work is separable from its time and if its "value" does not exclusively depend on the intrinsic or observable properties. The works presented in this exhibition, want to give their opinion within this historical and complex debate by expressing, each one with its own language, the amazing and unexpected power of an everyday object that, thanks to the artist, enters into the "other" dimension of an exhibition space.

The exhibition itinerary starts with the project by artist Jonathan Baldock (United Kingdom, 1980) [1], whose multidisciplinary practice uses, painting, sculpture and evocative installations. He finds inspiration in the magical worlds of mythology, masks, tribal rituals and folkloristic traditions.

In the sculptures-objects, as in the embroideries, the artist seems to recall classical motifs of the past, contaminated by particular disturbing elements, that are able to transform the figure into uncanny artefacts that remind us of distant cultures. On the occasion of *Conversation Piece | Part 3*, Baldock decided to focus on transforming elements of the human body into objects, leaving out the symbolic dimension of the fragmented body in the era of objectification. The eyes and mouth are metaphorical doors capable of communicating with the inner parts of the body to the outside world, these being the main channels through which man feeds his mind and his body, but something dramatically appears and, as in a fairy tale, a forest of branches grows around the works preventing these vital organs to properly perform their functions.

Following, the room dedicated to Magali Reus (The Netherlands, 1981) [2], whose sculptural *Leaves* series, act as smaller moments of specific architecture, which might become means of classical organisation. As deeply mechanized objects which act as metaphors for content that is just out of reach, the lock (or padlock) could be considered a signifier for concealed information,

Following, the room dedicated to Magali Reus (The Netherlands, 1981) [2], whose sculptural

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TELEFONO PER INFORMAZIONI: +39.06.4208.6498

—Piero Golia

Nel gennaio del 2006 scomparve da New York senza lasciare traccia o informazioni sui suoi spostamenti, per poi riapparire tre settimane dopo alla Royal Academy of Arts a Copenhagen per una conferenza sulla sua sparizione. Nel 2008 contestò le direttive standardizzate degli striminziti stand delle fiere d'arte compattando un autobus di linea fino a farlo stare all'interno dello spazio assegnato di 6 metri di larghezza. Luminous Sphere (2010), una misteriosa sfera luminosa installata sul tetto dello Standard Hotel a Sunset Boulevard a Los Angeles, si illumina solo quando lui è in città, come una specie di presenza sacra che si palesa a L.A. In alcuni lavori recenti presenta i suoi colleghi e le sue opere come miniature di bronzo inserite all'interno di plastici, vere e proprie Boite-en-valises contemporanee. Gli Intermession Paintings di Golia (2014), in un certo senso, derivano dalla prima fase della sua trilogia Comedy of Craft, una performance scultorea in tre atti concepita e diretta dall'artista. (Si può intuire il suo legame con la famosa novella di Gogol "Il Naso", che offre uno sguardo satirico sul complesso di castrazione). Durante il primo atto, che si è svolto all'Hammer Museum in occasione della mostra "Made in L.A." 2014, Golia ha realizzato in polistirolo espanso una replica a grandezza naturale del naso di George Washington scolpito nel Monte Rushmore in Sud Dakota. Il secondo atto ha avuto luogo durante la Biennale "Prospect 3" a New Orleans più tardi nello stesso anno e ha visto una squadra di studenti d'arte locale creare uno stampo in gesso dalla replica in polistirolo, associando per sempre il primo Presidente degli Stati Uniti d'America al simbolo dell'originaria paura maschile. Per gli Intermession Paintings—realizzati durante un intervallo tra il primo e il secondo atto della trilogia-performativa—Golia ha raccolto gli avanzi di polistirolo usato per la realizzazione del naso di Washington, li ha poi ricoperti di un duro strato di polimero, per dipingerli successivamente con nano-pigmenti iridescenti utilizzati nell'inchostro di sicurezza per la stampa delle banconote. Importanti testimonianze di un'azione irriverente, scarti casuali vengono trasformati quindi in vivaci manufatti. I pannelli, dalla genesi fortuita, evocano fossili fratturati e screziati; lo loro storia si rivela tra abrasioni e margini irregolari, risaltati da colori straordinari che cambiano rispetto al punto di vista dell'osservatore—dal rosso all'oro, o dall'argento al verde. Nella poetica autoriflessiva di Golia, gli Intermession Paintings rappresentano un ritorno allo studio d'artista e un nuovo approccio alla pittura nata da diverse vicissitudini. Trasformando la storia, la performance e il destino in mutevoli reperti, Golia continua a carpire un significato alle noncuranti leggi del caso.

Piero Golia è nato a Napoli, nel 1974. Ha partecipato ad importanti mostre negli Stati Uniti e in Europa, come "Uncertain States of America—American Art in the 3rd Millennium", Serpentine Gallery, Londra (2006); "The Gold Standard", P.S. 1 Contemporary Art Center, New York (2007); "Vesuvius", Moderna Museet, Stoccolma (2007); "The Nothing and the Being", Museo Jumex, Città del Messico (2009); "California Biennial", Orange County Museum of Art (2010); "Artist's Museum", Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles (2010–11); "Premio Italia", Museo MAXXI, Roma (2011); e "Made in L.A.", Hammer Museum, Los Angeles (2014). Nel 2010 si è tenuta ad Amsterdam, presso lo Stedelijk Museum, la mostra personale "Double Tumble or the Awesome Twins". Il lavoro di Golia è stato incluso nella 55esima Biennale di Venezia (2013). Nel 2005 ha co-fondato la Mountain School of Arts a Los Angeles.

The Comedy of Craft (Intermission)

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PIERO GOLIA

The Comedy of Craft (Intermission)

Almine Rech Gallery Brussels

20 rue de l'Abbaye

1050 Brussels

Belgium

9th October 2014 - 12th November 2014

Opening: 9th October 2014 17.00 - 20.00

DESCRIPTION

"Conceptual artists are mystics rather than rationalists. They leap to conclusions that logic cannot reach."

—Sol Lewitt, "Sentences on Conceptual Art," Art-Language, 1969

The healthy doubt you feel about any new artist unexhibited in your city is welcome. Faith requires doubt. Boetti declared the artist in-between a shaman and a showman. With the levity of astonished delight and the gravity of spiritual action, the artist bridges this gap through the metamorphosis of material into meaning. As a shaman channels mystical powers, all results are infused with their magic, simple objects transform into relics infused with the significance of the ritual.

On evidence here are a few relics.

At the Hammer Museum in Los Angeles, the artist Piero Golia carved from foam a one-to-one replica of George Washington's nose from the face of Mt. Rushmore in the Black Hills of South Dakota, a colossal unfinished 60-foot tall sculpture by Gutzon Borglum and son of four popular American president's busts made between 1925 and 1941. The nose takes up 21-feet.

Like the Dakota original, Golia hand-carved his Washington's nose, the performance of which played out on the Hammer's terrace over the course of their biennial. This carving makes the first of the three acts in the artist's opera, The Comedy of Craft.

The second act, to be played out during the Prospect biennial in New Orleans will involve the making of a mold from the carving, whilst the third act involves the pouring of bronze to solidify the series in a final sublime action. All three acts to be done in public as a performance. The subtle and unobtrusive import of hand-craft as well as political stagecraft are deftly alluded to, but their exact import allusively elusive. The institutions the artist moves through become stages to be overcome, a theatre is just a building and a museum an expensive warehouse if it's dull thinginess is not overthrown by the spell cast by the artists who move across them.

Here we have an intermission between acts one and two.

The monochrome paintings on view are relics leftover from the carving of Washington's nose. Preserved under a protective coating, the foam relics will always bear the mark of the process of their creation, the process of material being transformed into meaning. These objects surge with incidental beauty, some soft comment on modernist purity, a wash of pure color like an a minimalist master, the prison of marble that Renaissance sculptures had to escape to come into their polished finality. Here they are made not with composition but the rigorous, methodological following of a premise made with a leap, made by the artist and us, together.

Andrew Berardini

"Les artistes conceptuels sont des mystiques plutôt que des rationalistes. Ils sautent à des conclusions que la logique ne peut atteindre."

—Sol Lewitt, « Sentences on Conceptual Art », Art-Language, 1969

Le doute salutaire que vous ressentiez à l'égard d'un nouvel artiste qui n'a pas été exposé dans votre ville est le bienvenu. Il n'y a pas de foi sans doute. Boetti voyait l'artiste comme étant entre un « chaman » (un prêtre-sorcier) et un « showman » (quelqu'un qui a le sens de la mise en scène). Avec la légèreté d'une joie stupéfaite et la gravité de l'action spirituelle, l'artiste comble ce fossé en donnant du sens à la matière. Comme un chaman canalise des pouvoirs mystiques, tous les résultats sont imprégnés de leur magie, et de simples objets se transforment en reliques imprégnées de la signification du rituel.

Pour preuve, voici quelques reliques.

C'est au Hammer Museum de Los Angeles que l'artiste Piero Golia a taillé dans la mousse une reproduction à l'échelle du nez de George Washington tel que représenté sur le Mont Rushmore, dans les Black Hills du Dakota du Sud. Restée inachevée, cette sculpture colossale de plus de 18 mètres de haut fut réalisée par Gutzon Borglum et représente les bustes de quatre des présidents américains les plus populaires. Elle a été créée entre 1925 et 1941, et le nez mesure plus de six mètres.

Comme le nez original dans le Dakota, Golia a taillé sa copie du nez de Washington à la main, au cours d'une performance qui s'est déroulée sur la terrasse du Hammer Museum pendant la biennale du musée. Cette action fut le premier des trois actes qui composent l'opéra de l'artiste intitulé « The Comedy of Craft ».

Le second acte, qui se déroulera durant la biennale Prospect à la Nouvelle-Orléans, verra la création d'un moule à partir de la sculpture, alors que le troisième acte comprendra le coulage du bronze pour concrétiser la série au cours d'une dernière action sublime. Les trois actes se dérouleront en public sous la forme de performances. L'importance à la fois subtile et directe du travail artisanal et l'art de la mise en scène politique sont adroitement évoqués, mais leur importance exacte n'est que suggérée et reste donc insaisissable. Les institutions à travers lesquelles l'artiste se déplace deviennent des scènes à franchir : un théâtre n'est qu'un bâtiment et un musée qu'un entrepôt coûteux si leur forme « chositude » n'est pas renversée par le sort jeté par les artistes qui les traversent.

Nous avons ici une pause entre les actes un et deux.

Les peintures monochromes exposées sont les reliques qui restent de la taille du nez de Washington. Préservées sous une couche protectrice, ces reliques en mousse porteront toujours la marque du processus créatif dont elles sont issues, le processus de transformation de la matière en sens. Une beauté fortuite déferle sur ces objets, un commentaire en douceur sur la pureté moderniste, un lavis de couleur pure comme l'œuvre d'un maître minimaliste, la prison de marbre dont les sculptures de la Renaissance ont dû s'échapper pour attendre leur irrévocable polie. Ici elles ne sont pas fabriquées selon une méthode de composition, mais selon le respect rigoureux et méthodologique d'une hypothèse faite avec un saut par l'artiste et nous-mêmes, ensemble.

"Conceptuele kunstenaars zijn eerder mystici dan rationalisten. Ze trekken conclusies die de logica niet kan bereiken."

—Sol Lewitt, "Sentences on Conceptual Art," Art-Language, 1969

De gezonde twijfel die je voelt bij elke nieuwe kunstenaar die niet in je stad wordt geëxposeerd is welkom. Vertrouwen vereist twijfel. Boetti zag de kunstenaar ergens tussen de sjamaan en de showman in. Met de lichtheid van verbaasde vreugde en de ernst van geestelijke actie overbrugt de kunstenaar deze kloof door de het transformeren van materiaal in betekenis. Wanneer een sjamaan mystieke krachten kanaliseert, worden alle resultaten doordrongen met hun magie, eenvoudige objecten veranderen relikwieën, doordrongen met de betekenis van het ritueel.

Als bewijs zijn hier een paar relikwieën.

In het Hammer Museum in Los Angeles sneed de kunstenaar Piero Golia uit schuim een replica op ware grootte van de neus van George Washington zoals die prijkt op de bergwand van Mount Rushmore in de Black Hills van South Dakota, een kolossale onvoltooide 60-meter hoge sculptuur van Gutzon Borglum en zoon van vier populaire bustes van Amerikaanse presidenten, gemaakt tussen 1925 en 1941. De neus is 6,4 meter hoog.

Niet als bij het origineel in Dakota, sneed Golia de neus van Washington met de hand, een performance die werd gebracht op het terras van het Hammer museum tijdens hun biënnale. Dit snijwerk is het eerste van drie bedrijven in de opera van de kunstenaar, The Comedy of Craft.

In het tweede bedrijf, dat zal worden opgevoerd tijdens de Prospect biënnale in New Orleans, zal een mal van het snijwerk gemaakt worden, terwijl in het derde bedrijf een bronze gegoten zal worden om de serie in een laatste sublieme actie vast te leggen. De drie bedrijven worden in het openbaar opgevoerd als performances. Er wordt behendig gezinspeeld op het subtiel en minder subtiel belang van handwerk en politiek schouwspel, maar hun exacte belang blijft allusief ongrijpbaar. De instellingen waar de kunstenaar zich door beweegt worden etappes die overwonnen moeten worden, een theater is slechts een gebouw en een museum een dure opslagplaats als zijn saaie ding-heid niet teniet wordt gedaan door de betovering van de kunstenaars die er doorheen bewegen.

Hier is er een pauze tussen het eerste en tweede bedrijf.

De monochrome schilderijen die worden getoond zijn relikwieën die zijn overgebleven na het snijden van de neus van Washington. De schuimrelikwieën, bewaard onder een beschermende coating, zullen altijd de merktekens van hun ontstaansproces dragen, het proces van het materiaal dat wordt omgezet in betekenis. Uit deze objecten straalt incidentele schoonheid, zacht commentaar op modernistische zuiverheid, een laag pure kleur als van een minimalistische meester, de marmere gevangenis waaruit Renaissance-sculpturen moesten ontsnappen om hun gepolijste finaliteit te bereiken. Hier zijn ze niet met compositie gemaakt, maar met het strenge, methodologische volgen van een premisse ontstaan vanuit een sprong, gemaakt door de kunstenaar en door ons, samen.

21/5/2013

Piero Golia

GALLERIA FONTI, NAPOLI



Finalmente Venezia. Golia presenta un lavoro intellettualmente distinto e raffinato, un gesto semplice che ci riporta ad un discorso teorico sul momento attraverso la pittura.

COMUNICATO STAMPA

La Galleria Fonti è lieta di presentare Finalmente Venezia, terza mostra personale in galleria di Piero Golia. Il titolo della mostra è un chiaro riferimento alla partecipazione dell'artista alla prossima edizione della Biennale di Venezia.

L'invito alla Biennale è da sempre un grande riconoscimento e motivo di prestigio; è un momento di consacrazione del percorso artistico ed è la possibilità di modificarlo e storicizzarlo.

Golia presenta in galleria un lavoro intellettualmente distinto e raffinato, un gesto semplice che ci riporta ad un discorso teorico sul momento attraverso la pittura; la frase FINALMENTE VENEZIA, realizzata a larghe pennellate su scarpe di seta che riproducono disegni esteticamente raffinati, determina un contrasto visivo e al tempo stesso esprime un messaggio. La "pittura" diviene così un modello di azione, un mezzo di comunicazione che ricorda quello utilizzato per i manifesti politici e sociali.



Piero Golia - Knives - veduta dell'installazione presso la Galleria Fonti, Napoli 2008

Finalmente Venezia cristallizza il momento dell'invito dell'artista alla Biennale e determina una sospensione nel tempo che ne permette la celebrazione all'infinito.

La galleria, il cui pavimento è stato rivestito di moquette, diviene teatro e mette in scena se stessa; resta bloccata in quei minuti che precedono un'inaugurazione, durante i quali l'addetto alle pulizie è occupato nelle ultime faccende prima dell'arrivo dei visitatori: spolvera e passa l'aspirapolvere sulla moquette, in una serie di gesti ripetuti all'infinito.

Piero Golia è uno scultore pragmatico scultore di tragicità. Il suo lavoro, per quanto a volte effimero, si inserisce nella realtà come monumento contemporaneo, ma sempre capace di immergerci nel dedalo della banalità, elevandolo ed elogiandone lo spessore. Attraverso una rigorosa osservazione della teatralità della realtà, nel lavoro di Golia l'espressione personale diviene così una sorta di manifesto politico e sociale.

Piero Golia è nato a Napoli nel 1974, vive e lavora a Los Angeles CA.

Mostre Personali Selezionate: 2011:

Concrete cakes and constellation paintings, Gagosian Gallery, Los Angeles; Double Tumble or the awesome twins, Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam; 2009: Oh My God That's So Awesome!, Bortolami, New York; 2008: Knives, Galleria Fonti, Naples; 2007: Postcards from the Edge, Cosmic Galerie, Paris; Bortolami, New York; 2005: Galleria Fonti, Naples; Let the devils do their job, Perry Rubenstein Gallery, New York; February 2005, Galleri Christina Wilson, Copenhagen; 2004: Killer Shrimps, 61.ma Mostra Internazionale D'Arte Cinematografica, Venice; The king is dead, (with C. Jankovski and G. Motti), Cosmic Galerie, Paris; 2003: Statements, Art Basel Miami Beach Art Fair, Miami Beach; Maybe not even a nation of millions, (with M. Simeone and M. Boggio Sella), Cosmic Galerie, Paris; 2002: Faccio sul serio, Studio Massimo De Carlo, Milan; Again, Maze Gallery, Turin; Ecart, Basel Art Fair, (with Laurent Pache), Basel; La Folie de la Villa Médicis, (with M. Boggio Sella), Académie de France à Rome; 2001: Tattoo, I-20 Gallery, New York; Voi non sapete chi mi credo di essere, Viafarini, Milan; 2000: Le mucche per Morra, Studio Morra, Naples; ...Forever..., Maze Gallery, Turin

Mostre Collettive Selezionate: 2013:

55.ma Biennale di Venezia, Italian Pavillion, Venice, 2012: The Mystery Spot, Fondation d'Entreprise Ricard, Paris; 2011: Home Show Revisited, CAF Santa Barbara; 2010: Premio Italia, Museo MaXXi, Rome; Artist's Museum, MoCA, Los Angeles; Sindrome Italiana, Le Magasin, Grenoble; La fin du monde tel que nous le connaissons / The end of the world as we know it, Kunsthalle Mulhouse; Power Alone, Witte de With, Rotterdam; 2009: Les Enfants Terribles, Eight Interpretation of la Collection Jumex, Fundación/Colección Jumex, Mexico City; Piero Golia / Fabian Marti - Ruins, Regrets and Visible Effects, Istituto Svizzero, Rome; 2008: California Biennial, Orange County Museum of Arts, Santa Fe; Retrospective, Gagosian Gallery, New York; 2007: Moscow Biennale of Contemporary Art, Moscow; Lara Favaretto, Francesco Gennari, Piero Golia, Massimo Grimaldi, Engholm Engelhorn Galerie, Wien; Vesuvius, Moderna Museet, Stockholm; Uncertain States of America, Le Musée de Sérignan, Galerie Rudolfinum, Prague; Dialogues méditerranéens, la Citadelle, Saint-Tropez; Space Oddity, Cosmic Galerie, Paris; Où? Scènes du Sud: Espagne, Italie, Portugal., Le Carré d'art, Nîmes; Looking Up, Mario Sequeira Gallery, Braga, Portugal; Substance & Surface, Bortolami, New York; 2006: Gold Standards, P.S.1, New York; When fathers fail, Daniel Reich Gallery, New York; Grey Flags, Sculpture Center, New York; Uncertain States of America- American Art in the 3rd Millennium, Serpentine Gallery, London and Bard College, New York; Survivor, Bortolami Dayan, New York; 2005: Uncertain States of America- American Art in the 3rd Millennium, Museum of Modern Art, Oslo; Performa Biennial 2, 24 hours accidental, Swiss Institute, New York; Arte all'arte X, Galleria Continua, San Gimignano; Closing Down, Bortolami Dayan, New York; ID Troubles- US Visit, NURTUREart INC., New York; 2004: I nuovi mostri, Fondazione Nicola Trussardi, Milan; Narcissus: new visions of self-representation, Crac Alsace, Altkirch

Inaugurazione: 22 maggio 2013 ore 19.30

Galleria Fonti

via Chiaia, 229 Napoli

Orari di apertura: dal martedì al sabato ore 12 - 19 o su appuntamento

Ingresso libero

Piero Golia

Lacrare (non) stanca
di Patrick Seefelt



Box: Universal, 2000. Box 242 x 410 x 322 cm. Country: Argentina. New York: Peter J. Schuch WFA.

«Non serve tutti se non si jump off the wall?», gli dice. «Non jump because you don't want to jump off it?». «No, maybe the artist is the one who's going to tell you that you jump, and maybe you're not going to die», spiega Gola. Dato, Dato, Dato, 43, BPK Roma, 2010.

Il salto è un'operazione di pura tecnica, un'operazione di pura matematica, un'operazione di non credere più in questo tirannico di conservazione, capace invece di preservare una certa pigrizia da parte di critici e intellettuali, e, di sua volta, più incline a discutere, piuttosto che a saltare, di suo. In fondo, è immagine della sua stessa opera sempre inclinata, è un riposto coerenza, è un'operazione di pura tecnica, un'operazione di pura matematica, un'operazione di non credere più di accettare prodotti, come dimostra nel recente e famoso *Dato Dato*.

L'opera di Gola è caratterizzata da un rigore estetico, non è mai casuale nella sua estetica, nel percorso e nella risoluzione dei problemi artistici. La sua è una ricerca che definisce una presenza, una presenza che si manifesta in una serie di opere che si manifestano in una serie di opere.

Fuoco nel cielo, 2002. Colazione con impiego che per certo vive la pigrizia con la rinfaccia che lui stesso sembra essere attento in tempi più recenti, con quel tipico compiacimento di chi si prende gioco di certe arti e in un'adornosa via di comodità/fanno di "sopraeleva"

Golia lo definisce invece uno scultore pragmatico della magia, e le sue opere, strumenti contemporanei — definizione che a lui piaceva molto — per quanto siano spesso inafferrabili e persino inesistenti, ma sempre capaci di immergersi nel delirio della banalità, eludendo, elogiandone lo spessore. La sua opera è sostanziale e lascia percepire un coinvolgimento che l'artista sembra volere definire sociale o politico, caratterizzato da una continua osservazione della realtà che lo circonda.

Nel 2001 Golia, che ha sempre fatto della necromanzia una virtù criminosa, convince una ragazza a lasciarsi curare la scritta "Piero My Mom" sulla schiena, eliminando una sorta di gigantopapira epidemica del suo viso che andr  a occupare gran parte del viso. In questo primo atto risolutivo, nell'apporto la propria effigie su di un corpo che diventa testimone volontario del gesto artistico, giace l'essenza del suo processo creativo. L'idea giungente il risultato, mentre come meno la sua realizzazione, eseguita, in questo caso, da un terzo, il tatuatore, e poi suggerita da immagini espone a testimoniare il buon esito dell'operazione (*Tatto (The Sequencer)*, 2001).

Disselhorst-Cliem, 2002. *Staphylini in Europa. Colletes Prunorum, Micon, Pter. Parvulus Antennalis*

Questo suo gesto è un'affermazione, un grido ideologico aggiunto, un doloroso messaggio di esistenza che è impossibile eludere. Anzi più tardi, immagino dai simboli della città nella quale risiede — Los Angeles — appare in città e un noto albergo una sorta di luna urbana che si accende o spegne secondo la sua presenza in loco (*Laminare Sphere*, 2010). In una realtà dove gli eroi sono le stelle del cinema e del gossip, Piero Golia si nomina unilateralmente ambasciatore della Città degli Angeli, con tanta ironia, utilizzando con disinvoltura e maestria il tessuto

che nasce come la prova all'ultima delle sue convinzioni, e che si rivelerà un'opera di una grandissima importanza, nel corso della quale il poeta sembra muoversi tra due grandi realtà, per le molte tentazioni, tra la creazione burlesca di fantasia distaccata, e quella di una vita, arduosa, con profonde implicazioni morali. Il risultato è un'opera di grande interesse, che si può considerare da letterati di ogni nazione. Tra i suoi più famosi, c'è *Il libro della farfalla* dell'autore e il romanzo *una vita*, nel quale si legge una volta la sua vita e la sua opera. Il libro *una vita* è una storia di un'intera giornata, di un personaggio. Da poco cominciata la sua carriera, si contrappone a una semplice retrospettiva che si attira il suo interesse. Il libro *una vita* è una storia di un'intera giornata, di un personaggio. Da poco cominciata la sua carriera, si contrappone a una semplice retrospettiva che si attira il suo interesse. Il libro *una vita* è una storia di un'intera giornata, di un personaggio. Da poco cominciata la sua carriera, si contrappone a una semplice retrospettiva che si attira il suo interesse.

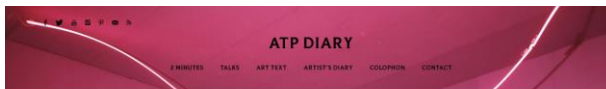
L'America riesce anche nell'impossibile, per esempio quando compiene un autobus all'interno dello spazio destinato a ospitare le opere della sua galleria a una fine d'arte (*Outsid* [Bae, 2008]). L'opera non lascia spazio a null'altro, s'impone da sé. Si muove e non si commuove, perché la sua essenza è la presenza medesima, indiscutibile, capace di trasformarsi in materia pesante e tangibile. Sembra di salire l'ennesimo e insuperabile bacano dei bulldozers che hanno pressato e deformato il bus, le lamine bianche che si connettono, la fregaglia che grida. *Golia riesce a dare sostanza alla quiete dopo la tempesta e la sua forza.*

Se la sua arte nasce da avvenimenti imperdibili, al contrario, tutto è misurato nei risultati. Dalla fusione della sua automobile dopo un incidente stradale, nasce un'unica e perfettamente levigata (*Autotile*, JYATSI 551029439, 2008). Anche "Concrete Cakes and Constellation Paintings", 2011, la sua recente personale, era lacerante e profuma nelle funzioni. Che siano state o meno che fanno male ai denti, come allo smacco, o quadri in vetroresina che evocano un ennesimo inconsueto infortunio della vita — in questo caso un tassista che termina la sua corsa, volutamente, contro la casa dell'artista —, l'arte di Goliz è sempre pensata fino al minimo dettaglio.



PEDRO SOLLA - CAKES AND CONSTELLATIONS June 23 - August 5, 2017 (Ephraïm Gallery)
SAGGIAN GALLERY 456 North Camden Drive, Beverly Hills, 90210
www.saggian.com

Velvet like warm Cake and Constellation presso Gagosian Gallery, Beverly Hills, 2011. Courtesy: Gagosian Gallery. Foto Douglas M. Parker Inc./a3

[illegible]

Piero Golia e l'enigma della narrazione

Secondo me gli anni '80 sono finiti, l'energia degli yuppies si è esaurita. E' l'epoca di tornarsene in campagna...

giugno 9, 2015
Elena Bordinon



Piero Golia Portrait Photo by Gilda Aloisi Courtesy of Gagosian Gallery



Piero Golia Intermession painting #5 red to gold 2014 EPS foam, hard coat and pigment 95 x 50 x 9 inches
(241.3 x 127 x 22.9 cm) Photo by Rob McKeever Courtesy of Gagolian Gallery



Piero Golia Intermission painting #6 cyan to purple 2014 EPS foam, hard coat and pigment 48 x 48 x 8 inches (121.9 x 121.9 x 20.3cm) Photo by Rob McKeever Courtesy of Gagolian Gallery

[Scroll down for English text](#)

Un'opera scritta a Roma, alla **Galleria degli Stessi**, la mostra personale di **Piero Gallea** che raccoglie una serie di suoi dipinti, intitolati **Penso** (2014). La mostra apre con una citazione che, nella bocca dell'artista – per chi lo conosca – suona un po' come una canzoncina: *"Non credo nell'arte come rappresentazione. Il mio lavoro appartiene alla realtà ed è influenzato dalla realtà".* Più che una realista in senso etimologico ed in altre parole, senza perdersi in discorsi sull'"oggetto della conoscenza come esistente in sé, indipendentemente dall'attività conoscitiva", Piero Gallea è realista in senso forte: conoscendo la semplicità degli oggetti, le preferenze raccontati dai familiari, affabulando, immaginando i principi e la finalità dei suoi lavori, da sempre, sono in grado di cogliere (e così) le cose, le persone, le situazioni, i sentimenti, i colori, le forme, i suoni, le luci, le ombre, le distanze, le proporzioni ed esprimere tutto liberamente l'artista. L'impostore dell'"oggetto" non, e non inteso, l'onesta dell'artista che prova stupore di fronte alle cose e alla vita. Tanto roboti come anche dell'artista.

Complesso nella sua disarmante ostentazione di "essere terra-terra", sincero nell'affermare di essere nato sotto una "buona stella", la più "grande" opera di Piero Golia è Piero Golia: il resto sono tutte storie da inventare e raccontare.

Alcune domande sulla sua ultima produzione, frutto del terzo atto di un processo che forse è ancora in divenire. L'inizio è decisamente semi-serio, ma non Elenco Golia sfida, anche il più serio degli interlocutori a non sciogliere dentro le ampie braccia dell'attista.

Per maggiori dettagli sulla mostra *PS Basso Gola. Intermissioni Paintings* - Gaussian Gallery.

Piero Golia: "Io sono povero ma re, nessuno mi dice cosa fare"

ATP: È un' citazione? Parliamo del tuo ultimo progetto alla Gagosian Gallery di Roma. Adirittura citi Gogol. Lo aveva citato anche William Kentridge in una sua grande mostra da Lia Rumma a Milano. In particolare, come te, citava il racconto del 1831 "Il naso", tratto dai Racconti di Pletchenburg. A questo naso è una storia che affascina molto gli artisti.

PG: La vuoi la verità? Gogol l'ho letto quando avevo ancora i capelli. Qualche intellettuale a New York ha scritto la press release e l'ha messa lì. Io, ormai, non cito più niente. Ricorda: siamo artisti che cerchiamo di eccitare, non di citare.

ATP: Si potrebbe dire, dunque, che c'è un prima e un dopo "la caduta". Anche riferito ai tuoi primissimi lavori

Fig. Ricasso aveva i colori per definire i vari periodi della sua carriera. Di Gola c'è ... il periodo pelato e quello non pelato.

ATP: Parlatemi un po' di questa mostra importante, la prima in Italia alla Galleria Gagosian. Hai la sensazione un po' di esserti tornato a casa?

PG: Ci fu Cesare che una volta disse: "È tempo di tornare al Colosseo". Non è tanto una questione di ritornare a casa... secondo me, gli ar-

ATP: Torniamo alla mostra che presentai a Roma.

Ho concepito questo progetto in un'istanza personale che mi ha toccato e che ho insistito a creare le persone (come Michelangelo) che opera intorno l'opera teatrale. La latitudine della cultura che oggi non ha più senso come riproduzione. Oggi, vivendo, ci può realizzare una struttura con la telefonata. Dunque la manualità, lo studio delle forme, ce lo permitti e si sta separato o esaurito. Con che interesse. In questo lavoro è ancora la scultura come processo pubblico. Nel senso che la puoi vedere quando la vedi e l'esperienza. L'idea di lavoro è di rivelare il quando ho inteso, neanche potessi immaginare che sarei arrivato a fare questo. Non mi sentivo. Non faccio i lavori. Ma mi sento. I lavori mi fanno sapere: "figgiro ti rendo conto perché mi consente di fare la vita a questi". Non insegno, non faccio i lavori. Sapevo che la mia camera-scuola aveva i lavori / parte. Lì in realtà, tutto cambia. Perché ha fatto quel lavoro? Per che dire molti che la "sta". Sta lì, e poi è certo che la mia camera che vivevo fuori da casa mia, non aveva la funzione apertamente interessante e necessaria, del mio lavoro. E poi, come si diceva, non c'era un lavoro che non fosse la cultura. Ma la cultura, come la vita, che momento esiste e arriva di pubblico, in molti casi che le persone possono vedere la cultura, e si può farla - come la vita in un'istanza per poi piacere di fatto.

ATP: Come è avvenuto il processo che ti ha portato alla realizzazione dei "Intermission Paintings"?

PG: Il primo atto si è svolto all'Hammer Museum in occasione della mostra "Made in L.A." 2014, in cui ho realizzato in polistirolo espanso una replica a grandezza naturale del naso di George Washington scolpito nel Monte Rushmore in Sud Dakota. Il secondo atto ha avuto

WELCOME TO THE LAND OF OPPORTUNITIES

Jared Davis



Piero Golia, *Infinity Fountain or Prototype for a Clockwise Swirling Flush in the Southern Hemisphere*, 2011, screenprint. Photo: Uplands Gallery.

I heard Piero Golia's first installation in Australia before I saw it. A steady whooshing sound that drew my attention to a section of Uplands Gallery near to the entrance. A toilet sat in the corner with its flusher taped down. After a while, it was noted that the toilet water was draining in a clockwise swirl, as opposed to the Southern Hemisphere's anti-clockwise motion. A common source of pop-cultural fascination for many, and in this case LA based Italian Piero Golia felt a desire to 'correct' this quirk of the upside-down world of Australia.

A humorous one-liner, to some Golia's quip might come across as cringe worthy. An Italian man living in the USA, seemingly so concerned by this difference to his cultural reference-point for how toilets should work that he decided to, through his own engineering, adjust the loo back to what he is familiar with. It's a simple work, but a big gesture. The effort no doubt required in order to execute this feat shows an almost stubborn level of commitment. Surely he is being tongue-in-cheek? It draws to mind the colonialists sailing down to what was to become Australia, who stubbornly yet with exhaustive effort, tried to adjust things to their own liking. Golia's biographies emphasise the artist's interest in myth making, seemingly the construction of myths around his own self by way of bold, ironic gestures. There is a sense of futility in them; in attempting to write his own mythology, Golia comes across as some sort of inconsiderate eccentric.

One of Golia's earlier works saw the artist convince a stranger to tattoo an image of him on her back, with the words 'PIERO MY IDOL' (*Tattoo*, 2001). Indeed a bizarre exploitation of her desire for 15 minutes of fame. Once again it is a humorous gag, until the repercussions on the other's life are considered. What would bring this stranger to permanently mark her body for this one man's art project? Was she in her right mind? Golia's reckless commentary on ego and identity here draws no line between lived experience and distanced critique, and it goes some way in explaining what his self-mythologising intentions may have been for his work at Uplands Gallery.

That Golia takes an interest in the idea of infinity is of no small note. In being fascinated with myth, Golia inevitably appears to wish for himself some sort of immortal, infinite status. Here at Uplands the infinite effect of a mythic gesture was at play, certainly hinted at in the title of the exhibited work: *Infinity Fountain or Prototype for a Clockwise Swirling Flush in the Southern Hemisphere*. Of course, the term 'fountain' cannot be applied to a toilet without an inevitable reference to Marcel Duchamp's own *Fountain* of 1917, so in this sense we get a little picture of where to place Golia's gestures: perhaps in the tradition of 20th century art's most prominent (mythologised) male trickster. Golia is reviving a Duchampian persona in the 21st century, however in an age in which the male myth is highly scrutinised, he might be met with a new reception; Golia's myths today can seem politically incorrect and certainly self-indulgent. Yet the fact that he undertakes them at all is futile, alarming and yet in some sense, poignant. As the subject of his own work, Golia treads the fine line between irony and seriousness. Without knowing his demeanour personally I am tempted to make the assumption that rather than keeping enough distance from the subjects of his art to be a critic himself, Golia seems to use the guise of art as a means to legitimate a somewhat socially destructive and megalomaniacal world view. In other words, he could just be a great big asshole.

Talking with curator Liv Barrett about the artist's work for Uplands, she guides me through the gallery to show me the piece's accompanying saleable edition. It is a print of the schematics for the Southern Hemisphere-adapted toilet, printed onto a tea towel of the famous 'Keep Calm and Carry On' World War II poster. I ask if Golia knows the difference between England and Australia. Liv laughs and explains that on an aside, Golia is rather interested in such wartime paraphernalia (perhaps the mythologies of war?). I begin to gauge that irrespective of whether separating Australia from England matters to Golia, it is more their cultural difference from himself that he grapples with, always tending to place himself as the orbital centre.

Piero Golia seems to embody a self-indulgent artist, yet his provocations are self-aware enough that he can grasp what he is able to get away with. He is perhaps that clever guy at a party who you laugh at before recounting his rude jokes to friends, only to receive scornful looks. His work, no less what was exhibited in *Welcome to the Land of Opportunities*, shows an intriguing artist-trickster toying with modern myth-making, perhaps more a part of our contemporary consciousness than we might be inclined to make out.

Piero Golia's *Welcome to the Land of Opportunities* was held at Uplands Gallery, Melbourne from 29 January to 30 January 2011.



Jared Davis is a writer and curator from Melbourne with an interest in independent music, sound culture and the politics of music distribution. He is...

ATP: Come è avvenuto il processo che ti ha portato alla realizzazione dei "Intermission Paintings"?

PG: Il primo atto si è svolto all'Hammer Museum in occasione della mostra "Made in L.A." 2014. In cui ho realizzato in polistirolo espanso una replica a grandezza naturale del naso di George Washington scolpito nel Monte Rushmore in Sud Dakota. Il secondo atto ha avuto luogo durante la Biennale "Prospect 3" a New Orleans e ha visto una squadra di studenti d'arte locali creare uno stampo in gesso della replica in polistirolo. In questo progetto i musei diventano una scenografia del lavoro. Il primo atto si sintetizza con il fare la forma del naso in polistirolo ed esporlo in un museo per tre mesi poi, per attuare il secondo atto ho fatto spedire il naso in un nuovo museo dove ho fatto realizzare lo stesso naso in una forma in gomma e in gesso... e poi il terzo atto si attua con la colata di bronzo. Penso alla suggestione di vedere il rivolo di bronzo infuocato che va a riempire la forma... Mi è venuto in mente Kant quando dice che l'arte non è mai sublime perché una persona può amare la Gioconda ma un'altra invece no, mentre l'unico vero sublime è la calamità naturale. Lui fa l'esempio dell'eruzione di un vulcano come la fonte del sublime, che suscita bellezza, stupore, meraviglia e terrore al tempo stesso.

ATP: Perché questo titolo: "Intermission Paintings"?

PG: "Intermission" è da intendere come intermezzo, quello che succede tra il primo, il secondo e il terzo atto. Dunque queste opere nascono dagli "scarti", da quel materiale che altrimenti si butterebbe via, però impreziositi da uno strato di colore... rendendoli "più belli". Il mio è un tentativo di arricchire uno scarto che condensa un'azione, un processo condiviso. Non credo di "abbellire", ma spero solo che siano dei resti che le persone conserveranno per custodire una memoria.

ATP: Ho sempre pensato, fin dai tuoi primi lavori, che tutte le tue opere contenessero delle storie. Non delle grandi storie, ma dei racconti anche minimi che tu "rivivessi" di una forma per renderli trasmissibili. Mi sbaglia?

PG: La narrativa diventa storia... gli oggetti muoiono.

ATP: Sì, avrò visto, sì e no, 4-5 tue opere in gallerie e musei. La maggior parte di quelle che hai prodotto le conosco come descrizioni in articoli e testi. Penso alla performance dove ti sei arrampicato su una palma, a quando sei sparito per settimane per comparire dall'altra parte dell'Oceano, alla sfera luminosa sopra i tetti di Los Angeles... ecc.

La narrazione vale più di un'immagine.

Sì, mi sento come l'uomo cieco che racconta una storia...



— Piero Golia Intermission painting #53 red to gold 2014 EPS foam, hard coat and pigment 26 x 41 x 9 inches (66 x 104.1 x 22.9 cm) Photo by Rob McKeever Courtesy of Gagolian Gallery

PIERO GOLIA: Intermission Paintings

Tuesday, 9 June–Thursday, 30 July 2015

Gagolian Rome presents an exhibition of recent paintings by Piero Golia.

I don't believe in art as representation. My work belongs to reality and it is affected by reality.

—Piero Golia

Golia constantly subverts the conventions of contemporary art through concept, form, and act. In January 2006, he vanished from New York City, leaving no trace of his plans or whereabouts, only to resurface three weeks later at the Royal Academy of Arts in Copenhagen to give a lecture on his own disappearance. In 2008 he responded to the standardized brief of art fair booths by compacting a full-size passenger bus down to the six-meter width of the assigned space. Luminous Sphere (2010), a mysterious glowing orb installed on the roof of the Standard Hotel on Sunset Boulevard, lights up only when he is in Los Angeles, like some sacred presence expressed in L.A. vernacular. In recent works, he presents his colleagues and artworks as miniature bronzes within studio maquettes, like modern-day Boite-en-valises.

Golia's Intermission Paintings (2014) are, to some extent, a byproduct of the first phase of his Comedy of Craft trilogy, a sculptural performance that he conceived in three acts and directed himself. (One can only speculate on the link to Diderot's famous story "The Nose," a satirical look at castration complex.) In the first act, produced during "Made in L.A." at the Hammer Museum in 2014, Golia had an exact-scale replica carved in foam block of George Washington's nose from Mount Rushmore in South Dakota. In the second act at "Prospect III New Orleans" later in the year, a team of local art students created a plaster mold from the foam replica. In the third and final performance, a bronze cast of the nose will be made from the plaster mold, forever associating America's first President with the psychoanalytical symbol of primal male fear.

For the Intermission Paintings—made during a break between the first and second acts of the performative trilogy—Golia took foam offcuts from the initial phase of the Washington nose, embedded them in a hard layer of polymer, then painted them with iridescent nano-pigments used in security ink for printing bank notes. Noble vestiges of an irrelevant action, incidental scraps are transformed into dynamic artifacts. The fortuitously formed panels evoke fractured, striated fossils: their story unfolds in rough edges and abrasions, which are preserved in remarkable colors that oscillate as the viewer moves around them—from red to gold, or silver to green. Within Golia's self-reflexive epic, the Intermission Paintings represent a return to the studio and a new approach to painting born out of vicissitudes. Cultivating history, performance, and chance into mercurial relics, Golia continues to elicit meaning from the indifferent laws of chance.

Piero Golia was born in Naples, Italy in 1974. His work has been shown in major exhibitions in the United States and Europe, including "Uncertain States of America—American Art in the 3rd Millennium," Serpentine Gallery, London (2006); "The Gold Standard," P.S. 1 Contemporary Art Center, New York (2007); "Vesivius," Moderna Museet, Stockholm (2007); "The Nothing and the Being," Museo Jumex, Mexico City (2009); California Biennial, Orange County Museum of Art (2010); "Artist's Museum," Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles (2010–11); "Premio Italia," Museo MAXXI, Rome (2011); and "Made in L.A.," Hammer Museum, Los Angeles (2014). Golia's work was included in the 55th Venice Biennale (2013). In 2010 he had a solo show at the Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam titled "Double Tumble or the Awesome Twins." He co-founded the Los Angeles-based Mountain School of Arts in 2005.



— Installation view Made in LA 2014 Hammer Museum, Los Angeles Foam Nose by Piero Golia in the background (first part of the Comedy of Craft) - foam pieces used to make Intermission Paintings by Piero Golia. Photo by Joshua White Courtesy of Gagolian Gallery

ARTE CONTEMPORANEA - MOSTRE ARTE

Oh My God that's so awesome! Mostra di Piero Golia

DI DIANA MARRONE

piero_golia New York e Napoli sono sullo stesso parallelo e hanno tanto in comune. Pensate ad un vulcano vero nel napoletano (la Solfatara, di Pozzuoli). In mezzo al vulcano, un bel giorno dello scorso autunno, e solo per una sera, compare un grande rettangolo nero. Sul quale, un gruppo di bikers in sella a moto da cross si lanciano e sgommano, incidendo la base nera con le ruote calde in tanti cerchi concentrici. Odore di frizione bruciata e fumo si mescolavano alle esalazioni sulfuree del cratere (ancora attivo!) e piano piano lasciavano intravedere il perché di questo gesto assai scenografico, dato il luogo in cui ci si trovava: un artista, Aaron Young, ha usato le moto per disegnare e dipingere perché la piattaforma scrostata dagli stuntman era in realtà un tavolaccio di colori ricoperto da una mano di nero.

La Bortolami Gallery, una nuova galleria newyorkese specializzata in pittura controcorrente e performativa, ha un'anima italiana (la proprietà) e spicca nel panorama dell'art dealing per la suggestione e per la scelta assai non convenzionale in fatto di produzioni. Era infatti dietro a quella performance napoletana. Ora, l'opening è fissato per il 6 marzo prossimo dalle 7 alle 9, Bortolami sceglie un artista napoletano, Piero Golia, che vive a Los Angeles, offrendogli una seconda bizzarra personale dal titolo *Oh My God that's so awesome!*. Napoli e New York ancora e sempre sullo stesso parallelo. In mostra un nuovo film di Piero Golia che sarà al centro della personale. Della durata di 1 minuto, in loop, è stato ottenuto lanciando una camera 35mm dall'altezza di 30.000 piedi (da un aereo). Si tratta di un'immagine ripetitiva e vertiginosa, quasi ipnotica, rimandata da un proiettore 35mm. Nel febbraio-marzo 2007, data della precedente personale di Piero Golia, la Bortolami Gallery era stata trasformata in un orologio. Nello spazio c'erano 3 differenti sculture: la prima sparava dischetti in grafite, la seconda, installata tra il soffitto e lo skylight, rilasciava una goccia di acqua ogni minuto e la terza, ruotava ogni secondo, come ci riferisce Simone Battisti, manager.

Piero Golia è nato a Napoli nel 1974. Vive e lavora a Los Angeles. Ha recentemente esposto in SITE, Santa Fe ed alla Moscow's Biennale of Contemporary Art (2007).

Il suo lavoro è stato mostrato nelle più importanti gallerie europee ed americane, incluse esibizioni come Gold Standards at P.S.1, New York nel 2006 ed Uncertain States of America - American Art in the 3rd Millenium alla Serpentine Gallery, Londra e Bard College, New York nel 2005.

Nel 2004 il suo primo docu-film, *Killer Shrimps*, è stato mostrato alla 61. Mostra del Cinema di Venezia. Nel 2005 Piero Golia ha aperto la Mountain School of Art con Eric Wesley.

©CultFrame 03/2009

IMMAGINE

Still dal video di Piero Golia

FINO AL 9.I.2009
PIERO GOLIA
NAPOLI, GALLERIA FONTI

Piero e Golia: 1:1. Il piccolo gigante torna a Napoli col coltello tra i denti, per misurarsi da pari a pari con la realtà. Una mostra artigianale, lapalissiana e tautologica. Una mostra da manuale, e senza alcun sospetto concettuale. Forse...

Anita Pepe



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I casi sono due: o è un bluff o è un genio. Chissà quanti l'hanno pensato o detto. Forse però nessuna delle due definizioni tangerebbe più di tanto **Piero Golia** (Napoli, 1974; vive a Los Angeles), perché lui ormai è - e sa di essere - *Piero Golia*. E scusate se è poco, in un mondo di artisti anonimi da consumarsi entro la data scritta sul retro. Del resto, sul culto della personalità lui ci ha costruito una carriera, da quando convinse una fanciulla a tatuarsi la sua effigie sulle terga a quando attraversò in canotto il Canale d'Otranto. Bazzecole, in confronto all'impresa che lo aspettava, seppur da *propheta*, in patria.

Mostra difficile per lui, che *"non c'entra in una stanza"*. Mostra difficile per il suo gallerista, che non avrebbe potuto assecondare una megalomania che manco quelli di Frieze hanno voluto/potuto soddisfare (beh, sborsare 250mila sterline per oscurare il cielo sopra Regent's Park con quattrocento elicotteri non sarebbe stato uno scherzetto...). Alla fine, la soluzione s'è trovata: *"Fare qualcosa in scala 1:1"*.

E così Golia, da prode cavaliere (e cultore del fantasy), ha apparecchiato un cimento all'armi bianche: coltelli, rigorosamente fatti a mano. Ma dove ha appreso a fare *pure* i coltelli Piero Golia? Ipse dixit: *"Sono uno dei pochi sfigati che impara ancora dai libri"*. E, pur ammettendo di aver esplorato le plaghe del web in cerca di materiali, s'è perfino costruito da sé i "ferri" del mestiere. E par di vederlo, il piccolo gigante, curvo sulla mola o sulla sega ad acqua come un vecchio arrotino, forgiare e sagomare lame e impugnature, impreziosite dalla confezione di lusso (teca e piedistallo) e dal contrassegno del *mastro*. Sugli affilati acciai è infatti punzonato il diamante che, in forma di neon, accoglie i visitatori in uno spazio espositivo trasformato in showroom patinata, dove ciascun pezzo è accompagnato dal suo bel cartellino con tutte le caratteristiche (tranne il prezzo...). Coltelli gioielli, insomma. *Memorabilia*.



Piero Golia - Knives - veduta dell'installazione presso la Galleria Fonti, Napoli 2008

Metafora? Denuncia sociale? Provocazione? L'interessato scuote la testa. Suvvia, a Napoli hai voglia a parlare di violenza, soprattutto se sei di Napoli. Un po' di dietrologia, un pizzico di antropologia da fila alle poste, due lacrime di cocodrillo, una manciata di anatemi ed è fatta. No: l'unico intento è l'1:1.

Eppure il timore, o l'aspettativa, è che non sia tutto qui. E che, quanto più insiste su Arts & Crafts, Piero Golia stia andando sul concettuale. Perché non si sa mai cosa c'è dietro l'angolo di Piero Golia. Che magari sta barando spudoratamente e un giorno sorprenderà pubblico e critica confessando di aver comprato i coltelli su e-bay. Tanto il loro valore non cambierà. Perché - è chiaro - il vero oggetto della mostra è *lui*. E la singola prova può non convincere - semplici coltelli: non è spiazzante? Allora è un'operazione concettuale?! - ma non può non piacere Piero Golia. Come se i suoi lavori fossero una cosa, e Piero Golia un'altra.



Piero Golia - Knives - 2008 - materiali vari - courtesy Galleria Fonti, Napoli

E ogni volta che si parla di una mostra di Piero Golia, non ci si può esimere dal ripercorrere l'epopea di Piero Golia. Il quale, confondendo le tracce tra *fake* e realtà nella sua mitopoietica, manifesta di aver capito tutto. Ha capito l'importanza di essere *Piero Golia*.

articoli correlati
Golia e il Neon

anita pepe
mostra visitata il 14 novembre 2008

ARTFORUM

Piero Golia

GAGOSIAN GALLERY | ROME

Via Francesco Crispi 16

June 9, 2015–July 30, 2015

Highly conceptual and provocative, with a particular penchant for mischief and irony, Piero Golia's work always ends up making a strong statement. It's fitting that in a city famous for the monument par excellence, visitors to "Piero Golia: Intermission Paintings" first encounter a small, irreverent, upside-down bronze cavalier (*Upside down equestrian figure as public sculpture*, 2013). The subversion of the equestrian sculpture alludes to, but doesn't fully yet reveal, the conceit of this show.

On the walls of the gallery's main space, a series of colored marble slabs stand out in archeological-seeming magnificence. Dazzling shapes, formed from ancient Rome's most precious and sturdy building material, strike viewers with their iridescent shades. Only at close glance does the weight of these relics become apparent:

The marble is in fact made up of perishable chunks of sparkly foam, offcuts of a giant replica of George Washington's nose from Mount Rushmore that Golia created for *Comedy of Craft*, 2014–15, his earlier sculptural-performance trilogy.

In the deceitful essence of this exhibition, the monumental, in Golia's hands, becomes ephemeral, and spectators find themselves face to face with an act of illusion. The key to the show lies in another work also titled *Comedy of Craft*, 2015, an architectural model of Gagosian Gallery's oval room that contains an exact replica of the exhibition. The tiny marble relics here, however, are made of real stone. The permanent manifestation of the show—the physical memory—stands within what seems to be a temporary maquette. Discussing ideas of endurance and ephemerality, time and immanence, "Intermission Paintings" renders history illusory. Even the eternal city can mislead.



View of "Piero Golia: Intermission Paintings," 2015.

— Ilaria Gianni

Artists at Work: Piero Golia Andrew Berardini

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Published 15.12.2008



Piero Golia, Bus (Untitled), 2008. Bus crashed to fit the size of the booth. 3 x 6 x 3m. Collection of Eugenio Lopez, Los Angeles. Installation: ART LA, 2008

Andrew Berardini: So I think we should talk about the-

Piero Golia: -revolution?

AB: Why don't we talk instead about the bus (*Untitled*, 2008) installed at ART LA earlier this year? In a way, this exhibition in the booth of a New York gallery, Bortolami, was your local debut. Do you consider yourself an L.A. artist?

PG: You are right. I'd never had a show in Los Angeles so I thought maybe it was the moment to do something. L.A. is not an open city. You can live here for ten years and you will never be an "L.A. artist." If you think about it, the only people who ever invited me to exhibit in an "American" show ("Uncertain States of America: American Art in the 3rd Millennium" at the Astrup Fearnley Museum of Modern Art in Oslo) were Hans Ulrich Obrist, Daniel Birnbaum and Gunnar Kvavan, who are all Europeans. It was easier for me to get a green card than to be considered an L.A. artist! But I like that. Bas Jan Ader lived in Los Angeles, but he is never considered an L.A. artist.

AB: So the art fair was a chance for a lot of people who knew you in L.A. to finally see your work?

PG: A lot of people here know me as an artist, but in the end, almost nobody has seen what I do. I was interested in doing a very cold, formal piece, but I was also interested in digging into the idea of the weird space of the art fair itself - in the end, it's not an exhibition space. I decided to focus on completely filling the booth. It was, in a way, a kind of territorial marking, to define the space with the physicality of a sculpture. I aspired to have the biggest space in the fair, so I bought this 10-foot by 35-foot passenger bus and I decided to compress it so that it would fit into the smaller booth that was assigned to me. Fuck, if this wasn't difficult! First, we had to torch cut and remove all of the safety armor that prevents the bus from collapsing during an accident. Then we used three bulldozers to compress it. Looking at the bus now, I still think you can feel all the energy we used to press it.

AB: How big is the bus now?

PG: Now, 10-by-20. The piece came out much differently than I'd expected, and that's typical of my work. Fortunately, I don't believe in expectations! I think art is all about the experience and the process: "Let's just compress it enough to fit it in the booth."

When I first met the guys at Zacher's Automotive, where we took the bus to be compressed, they asked me how I wanted it to look and I replied, "As it happens." And that's how it looks now. I think they did a perfect job. It is just as it should be. I don't believe in art as representation. My work belongs to reality and it is affected by reality.

AB: You recently completed a project for SITE Santa Fe. There was a long article on SITE Santa Fe by Jori Finkel in *The New York Times* saying that everyone complained about the exhibition design because all these big ramps had to be built, leaving no room for the art. Jori quotes you as saying, about the ramp design, "If I don't like it, I will simply pour concrete into the entire thing," to which she replies in her article, "It was not clear if he was joking."

[AB and PG laugh]

PG: I never joke.

[More laughter]

PG: Actually, the concrete idea sounds nice and I probably did say it. I think it would have been great, but they would never have let me bury their ramp in concrete. In the end, I decided to cut the ramp. In the center of a room it simply disappeared, and you could choose either to turn back or to jump onto a giant foam mattress. An intuitive and spontaneous decision on the part of the viewer - his or her decision made the piece.

AB: You seem to have an intuitive and spontaneous approach to art.

PG: I really believe that art is life, and that's how I live - if I don't like it, I try to change it. I think that's the exciting moment, when things shape up and it's not up to the artist to shape them. It's reality.

AB: Explain further what you mean when you say that you have an intuition and then reality shapes it. What do you consider to be an event that might shape your intuition?

PG: The people I find to fabricate a piece, and bureaucracy, and life, and physics and chemistry. In the SITE work this was evident in the title of the piece, *Manifest Destiny* (2008). The title is exactly how I dreamt it. And while we were fabricating the piece, we shifted away from my original vision. By shifting, we gave a shape to the work in reality.

In a way, everything pushes this matter to become something. When I say "matter," it could be a parade, it could be marble - it could be whatever. I just believe in evolution. And I'm also a Catholic. Isn't that funny?

AB: What is this work - an action, an addition, a gesture?

PG: There is never any addition, only what is necessary. This is typical of my work. It's more about the gesture. My favorite painter is Cy Twombly because of the feeling of the gesture, because you can feel the movement of his hand when you look at the work. Every real artist has a gesture: Koons, Beuys, Pierre Huyghe - you can feel that there is someone behind the work pushing it, moving it. Aristotle talks about the difference between man, who is a "builder," and God, who is the "creator," but then there is this weird figure of the artist who is a man but is also a creator.

If you notice, in my work you can feel that all of the creative action takes place intuitively, prior to the process of building the work. The intuition is an action and then the production starts and things happen. The surface, the external part of my art, the temporal shaping of the material, is carried out by reality...

AB: I heard about a second project at SITE...

PG: I also did a "secret" permanent project at SITE. I installed a stainless steel structural column in the center of the space. The column got included in the wall and will likely be forgotten. One day, if I get a show at SITE, I'll tear all the walls down and leave my column holding up the roof of the museum, which is another kind of leap.

AB: I've been teaching an art history class lately that covers cave paintings to cathedrals. "What makes someone an artist?" and "What makes something art?" are questions central to the study of art history. According to Anthony F. Janson, the art historian whose book I'm using, art making requires an imaginative leap, a jump. There's a moment of intuition...

PG: Cave graffiti satisfied a need for representation. Art began to satisfy a need for cultural memory, but the industrial revolution diminished this need. With the advent of photography, the need for painting as a means of representation profoundly decreased. The industrial revolution in art happened in the 1920s with Man Ray and Duchamp.

AB: People point to Futurism as the first 20th century avant-garde art movement, and the Futurists were obsessed with machinery.

PG: Futurist paintings captured the feeling of the movement of machines, but I've never been a big fan of the Futurists. I see them as more important in terms of the revolution that led to Man Ray and Duchamp, Kosuth and Weiner, and then all the art from the 1990s in which the image becomes dominant. Then, at the end of the 20th century, there was a new industrial revolution in communication. I remember when I first moved to America 10 years ago I would call my mother once a week on Sundays, and that three or four-minute call cost me \$10. Now you can talk to China for six hours for 15 cents, and you can send any image you need over the Internet at no cost. I think the revolution in communication created a massive exchange of images, making them more ubiquitous than ever. Again, we've reached a moment in which artists must reevaluate their role.

AB: What about the dematerialization of the art object in the 1960s?

PG: That wasn't a poetic choice; it was a political one. Nowadays, it's a different contest. We don't need representation anymore and we don't need images anymore. We need a new art in the scale of life. Art should match the astonishing casinos in Vegas!

AB: Are you talking about art as spectacle? Entertainment does it so much better than art ever could. Art has to astonish in a way that isn't purely physical.

PG: Like the Watts Towers, Dodger Stadium or the eruption of a volcano? I stole the volcano example from Kant. I'm talking about the sublime. The eruption of a volcano is the most absolute example of the sublime for Kant, in the same way that the crowd at Dodger Stadium is an example of the sublime, or self-made monuments like the Watts Towers exemplify the sublime. Perhaps the sublime is to reality what the masterpiece is to art. Art should be connected to an experience of ecstasy. But please don't think that I am so naive or so full of myself. Maybe "breathless" is the word I'm looking for? It's all about the moment you get into the room.

Don't you notice that in one second you instantly know whether it's good or bad? I've changed my opinion about art, whether I like something or I don't, but I've never had to change my opinion about whether it's good or bad - it's something you can smell. Francesco Clemente told me that once, when he was having dinner with Warhol and some other friends in Amalfi, the power went out, and he could feel where Warhol was in the room. That day he realized Warhol was the biggest of all of them, because he could feel his presence in the dark space. I know those guys were doing a lot of drugs, but I really believe that when I drive through New Mexico, I can feel Bruce Nauman!

AB: Did you hear he's going to be the next Venice Biennale artist for America?

PG: He deserves it.

AB: Did you like Gonzalez-Torres at the Biennale?



PG: I love the poster with the empty pillow that he made when his boyfriend died (*Untitled*, 1991). I think the two synchronized clocks they have at MoMA, *Untitled* (*Perfect Lovers*) (1991), is fantastic. You know I really don't normally get so excited by art. Fuck! But I remember that room at MoMA with *Perfect Lovers*, the chessboard by Orozco with all the horses, the white and gold Boetti embroidery of the thousand longest rivers in the world and a very good Matta-Clark. It's like the Michael Asher show that was up recently [at the Santa Monica Museum of Art]. It just seemed so seamless, like the transfer between art and life was almost nothing. There was no noise in the transfer. We owe a lot to artists like Asher, Beuys, James Lee Byars, Warhol and Allan Kaprow.

AB: Talking about art and life, I know you're planning to buy a gold mine with Pierre Huyghe. I also heard that you guys are going to produce a musical about it? I'm very curious about this project, especially the logistics and details.

PG: It's all about the experience. That is something that Pierre and I share. For a long time we've been talking about going to Alaska to look for gold. We postponed the trip for a year or two. Then, when Pierre was in L.A., we decided to buy our own gold mine here. After that, things shaped themselves. We thought, "Where the fuck are we going to get the money for this gold mine?" So we decided to produce a musical in Las Vegas about the story of the mine in order to fund the project. That's how everything started.

AB: Will you and Pierre write the songs?

PG: We have no idea what will happen. We'll start by opening an office for the mining company in Los Angeles and go from there.

AB: So opening an office is the first step. When is it going to open?

PG: Soon.

AB: When?

PG: We are trying to focus on "now."

AB: Where will it be located?

PG: We want a prime location, like a high-rise building. We're looking for something very specific, so it is not going to be easy to find the right place. We're considering Century City and downtown L.A. as possible search areas. It has to be magic.

AB: What's the musical going to be called?

PG: I don't know. What do you think about "Gold Diggers?"

AB: For Vegas, it can work! How much money will you need?

PG: Around \$6 million.

AB: When's the musical going to open?

PG: I don't know, and I'm very happy about that! It means we are still alive.

AB: \$6 million is a monumental amount of money.

PG: Yes, I agree! I'm very interested in the monumental.

AB: It's funny, because of the recent show at the New Museum called "Unmonumental." It seems that Rosalind Krauss sees the monument as a modernist gesture, feels that the last true monuments were modernist gestures.

PG: I've been thinking a lot about this. At the moment, many artists are making larger and larger works, but almost none are truly monumental. Monumentality has something to do with time and eternity. Art *should* be monumental.

AB: To me, the monumental artist currently *en vogue* is Richard Serra. In L.A., for example, I went to two openings at two different cultural spaces - one was at the Broad Art Center at UCLA and the other was at Segerstrom Hall in Orange County - and each

featured a *Torqued Ellipse*. The Broad Contemporary Art Museum spent almost their entire \$10 million acquisitions gift from Eli Broad on a single Richard Serra piece. It seems that every time they open a big building, and unsavory businessmen sit around the table to ask themselves, "What should we get for an art work in the plaza? What would be a real crowd pleaser?" they slap their hands together and exclaim "Richard Serra!"

PG: I love Richard Serra.

AB: Really?

PG: Yes. When they decided to rebuild the border wall between the U.S. and Mexico, I submitted a project to the Border Protection Agency. I wanted to build this Richard Serra-style steel wall with a series of passageways that randomly open once a month for only a few minutes! But I never got any answer. And remember, as I told you before, I also love Jeff Koons.

AB: If I were to associate you with other artists, Richard Serra and Jeff Koons wouldn't exactly jump to mind.

PG: That means I have to work harder.

AB: One last question: You mentioned earlier that it's reality that tempers the work of art for you, and that within that there is an element of chance, because letting reality shape the work means that reality can really fuck things up. Are you ever worried by this element of chance?

PG: Do you know that [French Enlightenment philosopher] Blaise Pascal considered faith to be a risk? He compared having faith to a kind of gambling.

When reality shapes things and chance is involved, anything can go wrong, but if that is what naturally happens, it will still be good. It's not really about chance - or, better, it is *only* about chance. It's the life of a gambler. If I make it, I'll make it big. But if I fuck up, I fuck up big, and it will be too embarrassing to be alive. It's true!

- Andrew Berardini

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ROME

Piero Golia and Fabian Marti

ISTITUTO SVIZZERO DI ROMA

Italian artist Piero Golia and Swiss artist Fabian Marti conceived of their collaboration "Ruins, Regrets and Visible Effects" in an ingenious way: an exhibition on two levels, where the main attraction was the membrane joining the inner and outer areas of an elaborate installation—a liminal space reminiscent of a "third landscape," a netherworld between natural environment and artificial construction, as formulated by landscape architect Gilles Clément. A twisting architecture of plywood arches, columns, and tunnels—designed by Marti in consultation with Golia—unraveled, like catacombs rising to the surface. The walls were colored in five different tones, reproducing the plays of shadow generally created by exhibition spotlights. The resulting environment was disorienting, not only in its initial impact, but even upon further observation.

The architectural structure became both support and container. The exterior of this armature displayed photographic works from Marti's series "To Be Titled under the Influence," 2009, as well as ceramics created in situ during his residency at the Swiss Institute in Rome. These are objects with defined but malleable forms—distorted vases, but also ashtrays and a large dog striking a pose (*TINMLO MZL IOM RF MJTJSM*, 2009). Foregrounding the originally soft material, the artist allows his process to remain apparent: Signs of manipulation are visible and any equilibrium appears precarious. The sculptures were scattered around the structure, covered in incomprehensible writing (the titles of the works), and thus attested to Marti's tenacious display of expressive freedom, an optimistic openness to free association. A duality based on the use of superimposition prevails in both the sculptures and the photographs. While the sculptures, with their black-and-white palette and glazed surfaces, become akin to images of the objects they represent, the photographs instead tend toward a sense of three-dimensionality. Combining found images or his own pictures into collages of unrelated scenes (their surfaces sometimes



Piero Golia and Fabian Marti, 2009.

covered in dust), Marti digitally scans the resulting arrangements to create photographic images of spatial ambiguity, playing with our sense of depth.

A roughly two-foot-wide opening in one of these photographs led inside the structure; crawling into the shadows amid the odor of wood, one came upon seven hidden works by Golia. The viewer unexpectedly confronted pieces such as *19 Mercedes Hood Stars Ring*, 2005, a framed, circular chain of Mercedes-Benz hood stars, and *Concrete Cube with Juicer*, 2007, a Philippe Starck fruit juicer set in concrete with its legs protruding, all created recently but rarely or never exhibited. The arrangement formed an atemporal passage through this artist's oeuvre, removed from the context of Marti's formal references to the early twentieth-century avant-gardes, with their allusions to the scientific and the subcultural. Rather, Golia's sequestered work turned inward, toward a personal past, one culled from the oxymorons and artifacts of American popular culture. Not only visible but also "invisible ruins, a kind of postindustrial melancholy, remained.

—Francesco Stocchi

Translated from Italian by Marguerite Shore.

NEW YORK TALES

CHAIN REACTIONS

Andrea Bellini

THE BODY

NEW YORK is a city that feeds on chain reactions, a place of excessive — and often directionless — energy. Take, for example, Performa 05, the first biennial dedicated to performance, conceived and curated by RoseLee Goldberg. From November 3rd to November 21st, performances, concerts, video projections, and conferences took place all around the city in close succession. It was a performance even for the audience itself, jostled back and forth in the hunt for secret dinners, converted churches and private studios. It was almost impossible to follow everything in the program, and perhaps not even necessary. Ultimately, this first edition of Performa succeeded through the vitality it was able to generate thanks to the dedication of a small team which not only organized the

program but also collected the funds needed to make it a reality. Performa's significant events could be counted on one hand — which isn't necessarily a critique: the most interesting works often must be discovered amidst chaos and quantity. Memorable events included Jasper Just's hyper-technological live performance at Stephan Weiss Studio; the group exhibit "24-Hour Incidental" at the Swiss Institute, featuring works by Peter Coffin, Piero Golia, Annika Eriksson, Yoko Ono, etc.; the experimental music inspired by Christian Marclay at Eyebeam; Gelatin's improbable object-copying machine at Leo Koenig; and the Bas Jan Ader film retrospective at Anthology Film Archives. But it was Marina Abramovic who literally sacrificed herself on the altar of Performa 05. For seven nights in a row at the Guggenheim Museum, from 5pm to midnight, the artist

realized seven different performances during which she put her physical and mental fortitude to the test. In the first five, she interpreted famed historical works by Bruce Nauman (*Body Pressure*, 1974), Vito Acconci (*Seedbed*, 1972), Valie Export (*Action Pants: Genital Panic*, 1969), Gina Pane (*The Conditioning, first of three phases in 'Self-Portrait(s)'*, 1973), and Joseph Beuys (*How to Explain Pictures to a Dead Hare*, 1965). On the sixth day, Abramovic chose instead to perform a dramatic, physically trying work of her own from 1975 (*Lips of Thomas*), and on the seventh she presented a new work, *Entering the Other Side* (2005). Abramovic's rigorous body art marathon confronted art history in a fascinating attempt to depersonalize acclaimed performances, associated from the outset with their authors, in order to assert them as true classics.



AMUSING ONESELF TO DEATH

While Abramovic rescued a few renowned works from the past, Mike Kelley, at Gagosian Gallery, chose instead to revive old, largely insignificant photographic images from which he extracted a genuine popular epic. The entire exhibition at Gagosian hinges on a gesture of appropriation: Kelley initially compiled and faithfully reproduced a series of photos of high school students engaged in extracurricular activity. From these images found in high school yearbooks he derived dozens of videos, complete with soundtracks and numerous sculptures-cum-stagesets. The resulting show is a kind of musical inspired by popular American rituals — a grandiose carnival which contains everything from Halloween to Satanic imagery, from religion to Goth culture. Kelley has created a Wagnerian epopee adapted for Midwestern culture: an unsettling world in which the line between fact and fiction, myth and reason, individual memory and collective illusion is often blurred. Kelley's complex theatrical machine is at once a colorful world bubbling with life and a desert of lost souls, dancing on the brink of the abyss.

Just down the block, an exhibit at Andrea Rosen Gallery examines the relationship between drawing and writing. The gallery is filled to the ceiling with works, and while some time is required to view them all, the effort is well worth it. Among drawings by Johns, Ruscha, Kline, etc., a few surprises emerge which make this exhibition one of the most refined in its category. For example, one notices a map on the wall by the Neapolitan Futurist Francesco Cangiullo, inventor of the 'humanized alphabet' and an acclaimed practitioner of 'words-in-freedom,' followed by a small drawing by Giacomo Balla and a work by Alighiero e Boetti from the 1970s. Memories from the 1970s are also to be seen at Sean Kelly, with Rebecca Horn's "Twilight Transit" exhibition. The show provides the perfect opportunity to see the videos documenting her first performances, in which she explored the relations between the body and the object. Wearing various strange prostheses, such as long fingers and butterfly wings, the artist experimented an evocative process of bodily transformation. The installation in the main space of the gallery proves less interesting, however: a series of mechanisms, skulls, mirrors and lights allude to the vanities, but the work is lacking in both conceptual and formal complexity.

HISTORY AS CHAOS

Tom Friedman at Feature Inc. continues to revive banal items through the use of cunning craftsmanship, transforming them into fragile and delicate sculptures. In his latest solo show, Friedman presents his trademark surreal inventions — and some



From top: REBECCA HORN, *Twilight Transit*, 2005. View of the exhibition. Courtesy of Sean Kelly; GABRIEL OROZCO, *Table*, 2005. Mixed media, 84 x 229 x 342 cm each table. Courtesy of Marian Goodman Gallery. Photo: John Berens; YAYOI KUSAMA, *Pumpkin Chess*, 2003. Hand-painted porcelain, leather and wood display case, 73 x 109 cm. Courtesy of Luhring Augustine. Opposite: MARINA ABRAMOVIC performing *Lips of Thomas* (1975) at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, 2005. Photo: Kathryn Carr. © The Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation, New York.

do indeed succeed in attaining a special state of grace, inventive beauty and lightness. The overall outcome, however, is unconvincing: when considered as an ensemble spread throughout the gallery's two rooms, his tinkerer's tricks leave a bitter aftertaste, more like the fruit of a pretentious, foolish game. The artist is at his best when he works in a limited space and follows precise reasoning, as evidenced by his chess set, featured in the "Art of Chess" exhibition at Luhring Augustine. Dealing with chess pieces, Friedman unleashes his imagination and conjures an efficient, internally coherent series of curious inventions. While his chess set comprises an ensemble of clever finds, Paul McCarthy's is the result of a more natural gesture. McCarthy produced a classically beautiful chessboard by simply gathering up everyday objects: an ashtray with a cigarette butt, a ketchup bottle, a jar of cream. Rachel Whiteread's chess set is unexpectedly playful in its allusions to modernism, while Maurizio Cattelan's — full of strange characters, from Che Guevara to Hitler — reveals a conception of 'history as chaos.'

Gabriel Orozco also proves capable of installing an entire show on a tabletop. Yet, rather than playing with the paroxystic transformation of the object, he proceeds

like a wizard, working with fresh combinations and chance events. At Marian Goodman Gallery, on the south side of the gallery, Orozco presents a generous sampling of small sculptures made during the last five years — from ceramic vases to found objects, like the series of seashells which he has delicately covered with odd, colorful geometric drawings — all arranged on two tables. Orozco's merit resides in the simplicity of his gestures, combined with a keen eye for materials and unexpected juxtapositions. But his strengths are not on display with the latest geometric abstracts paintings, which look all too familiar. Despite purported allusions to tantric and phenomenological models, the painting is static, diminishing the inventive scope and refined lightness typical of this Mexican artist.

UNCHARTED LANDS

The winner of the international competition for the new World Trade Center, Daniel Libeskind, is currently exhibiting an anthology of projects at Max Protech. While the architectural sketches have all the strengths of a visionary imagination, in more ambitious drawings Libeskind gives the impression of trying to play the artist. Uncharted lands naturally contain such

pitfalls, and Shirin Neshat falls into the same trap at Barbara Gladstone Gallery, with her film *Zarin*. The story, inspired by Shahrnush Parsipur's "Women Without Men," follows the gradual physical and mental deterioration of a young prostitute. By now, Neshat possesses all the professional equipment and know-how she could need — the photography is flawless, the directing shrewd — yet the final product is unoriginal. Venturing into narrative cinema can be risky, and the Iranian artist is most moving when the symbolic order to which she refers maintains an openness to interpretation. Among this season's young painters, it is worth mentioning David Kory at Greene Naftali Gallery. The Los Angeles artist employs a complex vocabulary — replete with references to Bonnard, Vuillard, and occasionally even Munch — yet manages to avoid getting bogged down in easy allusions. Kory transforms these diverse sources of inspiration into his own vocabulary of diaphanous landscapes and transfigured city views. ■

Andrea Bellini is U.S. editor for Flash Art.

PIERO GOLIA, Untitled (Time Travelling), 2005. Performance at the Swiss Institute (the artist sleeping in the exhibition space for twenty-four hours). Courtesy of the artist.



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In Los Angeles, Art That's Worth the Detour

By JORI FINKEL

LOS ANGELES

At night, it's bright enough to stop traffic. One minute cars are buzzing along Wilshire Boulevard between Fairfax and La Brea. The next they slow to a crawl, even though the stoplight is green. The attraction? An art installation consisting of some 200 salvaged cast-iron lampposts from the 1920s and '30s arranged in formation at the new entrance of the Los Angeles County Museum of Art. Come dusk, the lamps turn on and create a sort of flying carpet of light.



Photo: Stephanie Diani for The New York Times

Chris Burden, the artist who created the installation, "Urban Light," has compared his work to an open-air building, about the size of his studio. The museum's director, Michael Govan, has compared it to the Parthenon. It is, in any event, art on the scale of architecture. And since its introduction last year, it has become a leading example of a type of public art growing more prominent in Los Angeles: art you don't have to leave the comfort of your convertible to experience.

Although downtown Los Angeles still boasts the city's densest concentration of traditional public art — the sort of sculpture that dresses up corporate lobbies and courtyards — less likely spots in the greater metropolitan area have become home to what one could call drive-by art. A casual tour shows that this art takes many forms, going well beyond the celebrated mural tradition long associated with the city.

Two years ago, the Japanese artist Yayoi Kusama planted a bed of overgrown, colorful fiberglass and ceramic tulips in a Beverly Hills park, visible from Santa Monica Boulevard and Rodeo Drive. Last year, the American artists Cindy Sherman and Barbara Kruger infiltrated the Sunset Strip among other locations with billboards (in Ms. Kruger's case, a video billboard), temporarily inserting their works into a thicket of movie ads, marquees, placards and other signage. This winter, the New York artist Jacob Hashimoto unveiled an aluminum-tile, tapestrylike sculpture made for the facade of the Andaz Hotel in West Hollywood, while the ubiquitous street artist Shepard Fairey created a huge mural of Lance Armstrong on the side of the Montalban Theater in Los Angeles to kick off the cyclist's coming Nike-sponsored benefit project with various A-list artists.

And this month, the Italian-born, California-based artist Piero Golia is placing an aluminum sphere atop the Standard Hotel, also in West Hollywood. The sphere will light up whenever Mr. Golia is in town and go dark when he is not — providing, he said, “a secret communication code” for friends curious about his whereabouts and something of a cipher for passers-by. “Maybe a commuter who drives past it every day will decide that it lights up on sunny days, or on rainy days — it’s a form open to urban legend,” Mr. Golia added.



Photo: Photo simulation courtesy of the artist and Laxart Public Art Initiatives

The globe should, he said, be visible from several blocks away. “I think in a way more or less everybody will see it, but I don’t know who will notice it.”

The globe is not the only artwork here designed to make drivers do a double-take in their rear-view mirror. While some public artworks announce themselves prominently, in the spirit of the Hollywood sign perched high above the city or Simon Rodia’s soaring monuments of Watts Towers, others, like Mr. Golia’s, are in a sense camouflaged by their surroundings. They are artistic gestures that can blend into or complicate their environments, more along the lines of Tony DeLap’s powerful but often unnoticed steel beam from 1990 that arches over Wilshire Boulevard where Santa Monica borders Brentwood. Such artworks can be mistaken for architectural elements, city infrastructure, signage or advertising. (Or, as with Mr. Fairey’s new mural, which sports a small Nike logo, the projects can visibly bridge art and commerce from the start.)

This sort of ambiguity creates a challenge for anyone working on public art projects in the urban sprawl that is Los Angeles. “How do you insert contemporary art into a landscape already saturated with so many commercial signs?” asked Emi Fontana, a former Milan gallerist who commissioned the projects by Ms. Sherman and Ms. Kruger last year under the auspices of her nonprofit public art firm, West of Rome.

She compares today’s driver in Los Angeles to the flâneur in Baudelaire’s Paris — the poetic soul who strolls through a city in order to take it all in. “The difference with cars,” she said, “is that the speed changes the aesthetic experience of the city. Instead of Baudelaire’s city of modernity, L.A. is really a city of supermodernity.”

In the case of Ms. Sherman billboards, which featured Hollywood-inspired images from the artist’s celebrated “Untitled Film Stills” series and were placed near actual movie billboards, the line between art and entertainment was deliberately blurred. With Ms. Kruger’s video, which ended with a visual message to “please stop texting” (before the state passed a law to this effect), the artist co-opted a bold direct-address technique associated with advertising to make motorists sit up.

Lauri Firstenberg, the curator who facilitated Mr. Golia’s project through her nonprofit gallery LAX Art, has also worked with artists drawn to billboards “as a mode of public address; they’re interested in playing with the language of advertising,” she said. She has produced temporary billboards by Mark Bradford, Daniel Joseph Martinez, Ruben Ochoa and other artists who seek to reach beyond the typical gallery audience.

More recently, she produced a billboard by Raymond Pettibon, still up on Sunset Boulevard, featuring his 1989 drawing of a man walking, hunched over, away from the viewer. Above him the text reads, "I thought California would be different."

Ms. Firstenberg said that Los Angeles was only now finding its footing in terms of public art. "There is still so much that can be done here," she said. "I think aside from the muralist tradition, the history of public art here is just not as rich or ripe as New York, Chicago, Paris or London."

New York, for example, had a wealth of public art (mainly monuments commemorating civic leaders and Civil War heroes) before it had a wealth of museums. And the city now has two major nonprofit groups in this sphere, Public Art Fund and Creative Time. Founded in the 1970s, both have raised money for artists' projects, lobbied politicians and worked within municipal building codes for decades.

Los Angeles does not have equivalent organizations. But the city has a "one percent for art" program, overseen by the Department of Cultural Affairs, that requires developers of large projects to spend a fraction of their buildings' value on art. And it has a new crop of contemporary art curators like Ms. Firstenberg and Ms. Fontana who are willing to work within the system, however bureaucratic. It has, for instance, taken Mr. Golia's team of engineers and architects two years and several plan revisions to meet local building codes, turning Ms. Firstenberg, in her own estimation, from "an idealist into a realist."

Another major player is Merry Norris, an art consultant who says that her commissions can run over five years "with many starts and stops." She oversaw the Hashimoto sculpture for the Andaz hotel as well as a 2007 April Greiman mural (of a super-sized bowl of rice) on the facade of a building in Koreatown, typically working with developers under the "one percent" program. She credits this municipal fee with "raising the level of activity" and "opening up numerous possibilities" for public art in the city.

Meanwhile, For Your Art, an event producer and public relations firm, is busy plotting out public art offerings for a new online map (foryourart.com). Bettina Korek, the founder of For Your Art, said she favored an online, easy-to-update format because the public art landscape evolves so quickly. She also spoke of organizing an event in June at the Kusama tulip sculpture to coincide with the Gagosian Gallery's bicoastal show of the artist. "We should all think of these sites," she said, "as places to hold events, to gather, to meet."

Of course, for some working in this realm, getting Angelenos to leave their cars is the ultimate sign of success. By that measure, Mr. Burden's "Urban Light" installation could already be considered a blockbuster. Cyclists use it as a meeting point; tourists use it as a place to pose. The museum found so many images of it cropping up on Flickr that it organized its own amateur photography contest this winter.

But Mr. Burden shares credit for the work's appeal, surmising that viewers are drawn to the ornate lamppost designs from Los Angeles in the 1920s and '30s out of nostalgia for a more optimistic period in California history.

"There was just no need to put this much work into a fixture when a telephone pole and a wooden arm would have done the trick," he said. "To me the lamps are a form of public art in themselves, making the infrastructure of the city so rich with design and ornamentation."

Piero Golia

Dreamer, realist

By Holly Myers

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It's not easy to get a straight answer out of Piero Golia. A spry, wiry Neapolitan with a full brown beard and eyes that rarely stop laughing, he is a consummate talker, given to rambling, heavily accented anecdotes that tend to bypass a question altogether, only to swing round and pick it up again at some unlikely moment, or else veer into a sort of philosophizing that eventually serves

to illuminate the question's fundamental irrelevance. His talk weaves sincerity and irony, audacity and self-deprecation in unpredictable measure, such that one never knows quite where one stands. It would be irritating, perhaps, if it were not so thoroughly entertaining.

When I first met Golia, last fall, and asked about his background, he replied: "I'm a chemical engineer. And then for money I became an artist. Yeah, it's weird because everybody does the opposite, I don't know why. Because it's like — I'm a loser, I can't do nothing else, and you have to make money. You work from home, so why not? I mean, the alternative is phone sex or making, you know, little bead necklaces. But China destroyed the market for working at home. India destroyed customer service and phone sex, so in America you can just be an artist."

The funny thing is that most of what he says turns out to be true, and it's typically the most outlandish stories he's especially serious about. Like, say, rowing across the Adriatic Sea to become the first illegal Italian immigrant in Albania. Or disappearing from New York, where he was living at the time, with nothing but a tremendous quantity of cash and getting his assistant to pose as his mother and convince the Italian consulate to investigate his whereabouts, only to reappear in Copenhagen a month later. (When I ask how he managed to cross the Atlantic without a passport, he replies simply: "bribery.") Or smashing a 35-foot bus down to the dimensions of a 20-foot booth at Art LA in January. Or opening a phony Beverly Hills office from which to produce a lavish Las Vegas musical in order to finance the acquisition of a gold mine in Nevada. (This last project, a collaboration with French artist Pierre Huyghe, is currently in the works — they've gotten as far as the office.)

Golia, who was born in 1974 and moved to L.A. six years ago, is the sort of artist the nonart world tends to shake its head at in bewilderment. His work eschews traditional media, hinges largely on the force of his personality and tends to involve large quantities of money, necessitating a coterie of indulgent dealers (he currently has five) and thriving in the rarefied world of the biennial (SITE Santa Fe and the Orange County Museum's California Biennial are the most imminent). "Conceptual bullshit," he (ironically?) characterizes it. As is often the case in his conversation, however, the logic tends to sweep around and land you somewhere you might not have expected — closer to life, in many ways, than to the hermetic sphere of the art world.

"When I went to Santa Fe, I got very depressed," he says. (Imagine this in a rolling, lilting Neapolitan accent.) "I saw this couple, they went into a store and they bought a painting. A shitty painting. They weren't art collectors, they just saw it in a window, like you see a sweater — you go in, you buy it, you leave. And that

made me very depressed because I was, like, no one will never fucking do this with my work. Like, who the fuck is going to pass by and say, 'Oh, dear, what do you think about this? That's so cool, let's get it home!'

"Then something weird happened. This Mexican guy who bought the bus promised me that he didn't know who the artist was when he bought the piece. He didn't ask nothing — nothing! So that was, like, Oh, maybe I'm not completely wrong. And that's what I like about the mine, the musical — they are completely readable. Like if you say to your cousin who doesn't give a fuck, who doesn't even know Jeff Koons, he's going to say, Well, fuck, maybe I can come to work in the mine! It's like Vegas, it completely belongs to reality, it's so weird — when fiction becomes more real than art, you know?"