

Giulio Paolini

(Genoa, 1940)

Giulio Paolini's works are like mirrors through which art reflects on itself. Since the mid-1960s, the artist has consistently focused on the basic materials of making art, the studio and the exhibition occasion as the conditions through which art is created and presented. Paolini often employs citations, both utilizing fragments extracted from the catalogue of art history and repositioning his own works in new contexts. In his analysis, the act of seeing is considered as the cognitive moment whose truth, however, is constantly called into question. Each new installation can provide the inspiration for subsequent works, in an inexhaustible series that is self-nurturing.

Untitled, 1964, belongs to a series of works created on the occasion of Paolini's first solo exhibition. It is made from a plywood board, at the center of which another smaller board is suspended. A substitute for a possible painting, the work questions the idea of the exhibition and announces the advent of a thematic path that the artist continues to pursue today.

1/25, 1965, instead, evokes a painting. A photograph printed on canvas, its title refers to the exposure time that was employed; it is an image of Paolini carrying a painting, the front of which is not visible, thus suggesting a work that is only presumed, an infinite number of possible images. The concept of "infinity" also underlies *Apoteosi di Omero (Apotheosis of Homer)*, 1970-1971. In this case, in homage to the painting by Ingres cited in the title, Paolini presents an assemblage of characters from different eras, from Greek philosophers to poets from the modern era. Photos of actors impersonating these figures rest on lecterns, in an installation whose openly theatrical layout underscores the idea of interpretation, and, in turn, transforms the viewers into other possible interpreters.

Although never autobiographical, Paolini's art frequently involves the figure and role of the author. In *Requiem*, 2003-2004, the author is absent, but the scattered images, papers and frames seem to await his arrival. (MB)