

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MICHELANGELO PISTOLETTO: *ORIGINS AND CONSEQUENCES*

Curated by Alberto Fiz

27 September – 15 December 2018

Private View – Wednesday, 26 September 6 – 8pm

Mazzoleni is pleased to announce the exhibition *Michelangelo Pistoletto: Origins and Consequences* curated by Alberto Fiz, which will open to the public on 27 September 2018 and continue until the 15 December. Collating artworks from various private collections, this exhibition will focus on a selection of works spanning from 1958 to 2012, and will feature early figurative paintings, drawings in charcoal on paper, sculptures in different materials, alongside silkscreens on stainless steel - the renowned *mirror paintings* that defines his oeuvre.

Pistoletto is one of the most distinguished figures within the Arte Povera movement. The exhibition will examine Pistoletto's early experimental period and elucidate the techniques that led to his mature work. It will feature three rare oil paintings on canvas depicting male portraits, including *L'uomo nero*, 1959. These seminal works should be viewed as the hereditary seat of Pistoletto's visual language; an arresting exploration of portraiture as well as an important precursor to the artist's series of self-portraits on a reflective black background – his first works to explore the reflective device.

Pistoletto presented his first solo show in 1960 at Galleria Galatea in Turin. That same year he made several life-sized self-portraits on gold, silver and copper monochrome backgrounds. In 1962, he initiated the use of reflective materials by applying painted and later photographic-silkscreened images to highly-polished stainless steel, the *mirror paintings* that have earned him an enduring international artistic reputation. What animates the *mirror paintings* is the duality of a fixed photo image placed on the surface of a reflective steel plate and the moving images produced by reflections of the viewer and their environment. The performative element of the works is completed by the observer who becomes the central protagonist.

Pistoletto comments of his work, 'It suggested a double projection, into the wall and out into the space of the viewer. In a way it integrated painting and sculpture'. This is true of *Dono di Mercurio allo Specchio* (Mercury's Gift to the Mirror), 1971, where a bronze statue of Hebe is strategically placed by a mirror. Pistoletto forces the viewer to stand alongside Hebe, deemed to be the goddess of youth in the classical world and enter into a visual dialogue. The poetry of the mundane is once more elevated, echoing Pistoletto's renowned Art Povera work, *Venus of Rags*, 1967. However, in this case it is the viewer who is installed in its place. In *Donna con lampada*, 1974, a silkscreen of a photographic image on stainless steel, a technique perfected in 1971, the drama of the piece is heightened by an image of photographer's assistant (his wife) holding a lamp. The work is from a series produced with photographer Paolo Mussat Sartor, Pistoletto's long-term collaborator in Turin, where the photographer and his wife became Pistoletto's subjects – a photography shoot within a photography shoot.

Further works from the 80s, 90s and from last two decades will also be presented, including 'black' works such as *Specchio Nero*, (Black Mirror), 1989, a wood and glass work, where the artist explores the 'dark' reflection and contrasts the light with the void.

The exhibition will be accompanied by a fully illustrated catalogue with an essay in English and Italian by Alberto Fiz.

About Michelangelo Pistoletto

Michelangelo Pistoletto was born in Biella in 1933. He began to exhibit his work in 1955 and in 1960 had his first solo show at Galleria Galatea in Turin. In the two-year period 1961-1962, he made the first 'Mirror Paintings', works that quickly brought Pistoletto international acclaim, leading in the sixties, to one-man shows in important galleries and museums in Europe and the United States. In 1965 and 1966 he produced a set of works entitled Minus Objects, considered fundamental to the birth of Arte Povera, an art movement of which Pistoletto was a leading figure. In 1967 he began to work outside traditional exhibition spaces. In 1975-76 he presented a cycle of twelve consecutive exhibitions, *Le Stanze*, at the Stein Gallery in Turin. Others are *White Year* (1989) and *Happy Turtle* (1993). 1998 witnessed the establishment of Cittadellarte-Fondazione Pistoletto in a former mill in Biella, Italy, acquired by the artist in 1991. Here the goals expressed in Project Art are still being developed and accomplished. In 2003, Pistoletto received the Venice Biennale's Golden Lion for Lifelong Achievement. In 2013 the Louvre, Paris hosted a solo exhibition Michelangelo Pistoletto, année un – le paradis sur terre. In this same year he received the Praemium Imperiale for painting, in Tokyo. Over the past 50 years Pistoletto has been the subject of numerous solo exhibitions at major institutions and cultural centres, including Philadelphia Museum of Art, Philadelphia, PA, USA (2010); Serpentine Gallery, London, UK (2011); MAXXI, Rome, Italy (2011); Musée du Louvre, Paris, France (2013); Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes, Havana, Cuba (2016); Blenheim Palace, Woodstock, UK (2016). He has been included in the Venice Biennale on twelve separate occasions, and four iterations of Documenta. His work can be found in significant international museum collections, including the Museum of Modern Art, New York, NY; National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.; Tate, London, UK; Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris and Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid, Spain. Michelangelo Pistoletto will be honoured with the Roswitha Haftmann Prize on September 28, 2018 at Kunsthaus Zurich. Inaugurated in 2001, the prize has been awarded annually to a living artist in recognition of their outstanding contribution to the visual arts.

About MAZZOLENI

Mazzoleni was founded in Turin in 1986 and opened a Mayfair-based London gallery in October 2014. Over the past three decades Mazzoleni has organised solo and group exhibitions of more than 150 prominent Italian and international artists from across the 20th century. Recent critically acclaimed exhibitions have included the major Alberto Burri solo exhibition in 2015, "Piero Manzoni. Achromes: Linea Infinita", curated by Gaspare Luigi Marcone in collaboration with the Piero Manzoni Foundation, "Fontana/Melotti. Angelic Spaces and Infinite Geometries", curated by Daniela Ferrari, "Pittura Analitica": Then and Now, curated by Alberto Fiz, "Colour in Contextual Play, an installation by Joseph Kosuth", curated by Cornelia Lauf and Joseph Kosuth, "UnComfort Zone" with Dimore Gallery, "Light in motion: Balla Dorazio Zappettini", curated by Elena Gigli and "MORE THAN WORDS" curated by Daniela Ferrari.

All exhibitions are accompanied by fully illustrated monographs, often featuring newly commissioned research contributing to current critical and art historical discourse. Mazzoleni is present at international art fairs, across London, Basel, Hong Kong, New York and Miami.

NOTES TO EDITORS

Exhibition: Michelangelo Pistoletto: *Origins and Consequences*

Date: 27 September – 15 December 2018

Address: MAZZOLENI, 27 Albemarle Street, London W1S 4HZ

Gallery Hours: Mon – Fri 10am – 6pm, Sat 11am – 5pm

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Admission: Free

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