

# AMERICAN ACADEMY IN ROME

***Paolo Gioli: Anthropolaroid***  
Curated by Peter Benson Miller  
Opening October 11, 2018, 6:00-9:00pm  
American Academy in Rome - Gallery

The American Academy in Rome presents ***Paolo Gioli: Anthropolaroid***, a solo exhibition by **Paolo Gioli** curated by **Peter Benson Miller**.

Opening **October 11**, the exhibition presents thirty Polaroid works, executed between 1978 and 2010, demonstrating not only the artist's technical virtuosity with the medium, but also his profound meditations upon the human form and the fractured body politic.

To inaugurate the exhibition the artist will speak about his work in conversation with photography critic and historian **Roberta Valtorta**. One of the most respected specialists in Italian photography, Valtorta has collaborated with Gioli for many years. In 1996, Valtorta curated the retrospective dedicated to Gioli's work held at the Palazzo degli Esposizioni in Rome. Most recently, she contributed an essay to the volume *Paolo Gioli, Etruschi Polaroid 1984*, published this year by Humboldt Books.

Since studying painting and the nude at the Accademia delle Belle Arti in Venice, Gioli has long been preoccupied with the human body. Like his experimental films, which establish "an essential analogy between celluloid and skin as the sensitive interface between the self and the outside world" (in Patrick Rumble's phrase), Gioli's Polaroid transfers use the body and its fragments as a means to interrogate photography's history and theoretical foundations, as well as its dialogue with cinema, printmaking, sculpture, and painting.

After spending a year in New York in the late 1960s, Gioli was among the first artists to master Polaroid transfers following the introduction of SX-70 instant film in 1972. Since then, he has produced a wide range of formally complex works with the gelatin and dye layers of Polaroid emulsion. Using handmade pinhole cameras and alternative paper and silk supports, Gioli marries the most elemental procedures of early photography to a sophisticated use of the one-step film created by Edwin Land, co-founder of the Polaroid Corporation. Among the many fruitful paradoxes of Gioli's work is the way he creates timeless images by condensing a vast iconography into a spontaneous set of dexterous operations with instant film.

Like many great photographers and artists, particularly Americans, who explored the capabilities of Land's instant films, Gioli's experimentation pushed the material beyond the limits of what was considered possible. While Gioli may not have been fully embraced by Polaroid's artist support program due to his unorthodox manipulation of the medium, his work has acquired new value and relevance in the digital age.

The accompanying, fully illustrated catalogue includes a text informed by a new interview with Gioli about his work and aspects of his process, as well as the artist's essay "Anthropolaroid," published in Italian in 1979 and translated into English here for the first time.

On **October 23rd**, in conjunction with the **VIDEOCITTA'** festival, Paolo Gioli's experimental films will be screened in the Lecture Room at the American Academy. **Patrick Rumble**, professor of Italian and Visual Culture at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, will present a

selection of the artist's films ranging in date from 1979 to 2013,  
and discuss the relationship between photography and cinema in Gioli's work.

## **Paolo Gioli: *Anthropolaroid***

Opening October 11, 2018, 6:00-9:00pm

Paolo Gioli and Roberta Valtorta in conversation, 6:00pm

On view Friday through Sunday, 4:00-7:00pm, until December 9, 2018

American Academy in Rome – Gallery, Via Angelo Masina, 5 Rome

Collateral event in conjunction with VIDEOCITTA'

**Patrick Rumble - *Free Films Made Freely: I film sperimentali di Paolo Gioli***, October 23, 6:00pm

American Academy in Rome – Lecture Room, Via Angelo Masina, 5 Rome

For more information:

Italy: Maddalena Bonicelli, +39 335 6857707, [m.bonicelli.ext@aarome.org](mailto:m.bonicelli.ext@aarome.org)

USA - Marques McClary +1 646 2622776, [m.mcclary@aarome.org](mailto:m.mcclary@aarome.org)

[www.aarome.org](http://www.aarome.org)

## **American Academy in Rome: The Body**

This exhibition is part of a series of public events at the American Academy in Rome during 2018–19 that will explore the body as a site of subjectivity and meaning, from antiquity to the present, through an interdisciplinary approach typical of the Academy.

Since the origins of representation, the human body has been a locus of meaning and a vehicle for differing approaches to artistic expression. As a way of imagining the divine, as a site of ideal beauty, and ruminations on mortality, or as the contested ground between nature and culture, bodies—and representations of bodies—are a record of culture's ideas about itself and a locus for the questioning and contestation of the human form.

Recently, the body has emerged as a work in progress, a canvas to be altered, whether to conform to changing canons of beauty or brought into line with constantly evolving constructed gender roles. In this capacity, the body as a malleable form and a lightning rod has once again taken center stage in cultural debate and artistic expression. As battlegrounds for contemporary social issues—including the violence committed against the marginalized, the recognition of transgender individuals, and the replacement of workers by robotics, to name only a few examples—bodies lie at the heart of discussions around social value and political rights.

In a series of events featuring leading scholars and artists from a variety of disciplines, the American Academy in Rome tracks the different ways in which the body has been interrogated and transformed since the founding of the institution in 1894. At the time, the body was enshrined as central to an Academic practice adhering to the standards set by classical sculpture. As modernism challenged the canon over the course of the twentieth century, the body was removed from its august pedestal; artists looked less to the body as the privileged subject, choosing instead to dismember it, or ignore it altogether, in works ranging across a variety of media. Given its transformation since 1950 from a stalwart of Academic artistic practice to a laboratory for cutting-edge dialogue between critical theory and creative endeavor, the American Academy in Rome is uniquely qualified to host an exhibition of this kind. Tracing the changing representation of the body also enables the institution to look critically at its own trajectory.

## **The American Academy in Rome**

Founded in 1894, the American Academy in Rome is the oldest American overseas center for independent study and advanced research in the arts and humanities. A not-for-profit, privately funded institution, the Academy awards the Rome Prize to a select group of artists and scholars annually, after an application process that begins each fall. The winners, selected by independent juries through a national competition process, are invited to Rome the following year to pursue their work in an atmosphere conducive to intellectual and artistic experimentation and interdisciplinary exchange. Awards are offered in the following categories: Literature, Music Composition, Visual Arts, Architecture, Landscape Architecture, Design, and Historic Preservation and Conservation, as well as Ancient, Medieval, Renaissance and Early Modern, and Modern Italian Studies. The Academy also offers a wide-range of interdisciplinary public programming in the arts and humanities that is free and open to the public.