

# MICHELANGELO PISTOLETTO

IN CONVERSATION WITH CHIARA MESSINEO



21st February 2018  
paintingresearch

at WIMBLEDON COLLEGE OF ARTS

# Michelangelo Pistoletto

IN CONVERSATION WITH FILMMAKER, CHIARA MESSINEO

*This event has been organised by Dr Zoë Mendelson*

**Michelangelo Pistoletto** (b.1933, Biella, Italy) is widely recognised as one of the most influential contemporary artists of his generation and a leading proponent of the Arte Povera movement. Since the 1960s his work has followed two profoundly linked paths, a body of conceptual sculpture grounded in the tenets of Arte Povera and an ongoing series of Mirror Paintings, comprising figurative, graphic or sculptural images applied to the surface of polished stainless steel. Representing his dual interest in conceptualism and figurative representation, together these bodies of work have earned Pistoletto enduring international recognition.

Alongside this practice, Pistoletto is the founder of the Cittadellarte in Biella, an interdisciplinary laboratory that promotes the use of art to foster social change. Its primary mission is centred upon The Third Paradise, conceived in 2003 as the promise of a future realm in which nature and society will coexist in harmony.

The mirrored surface is instrumental to Pistoletto's practice. The reflective plane of his paintings draws the viewer and their environment into the work, altering the fiction of the painted image as a frozen moment. An ardent advocate of the performative in art, Pistoletto's work emphasises interactivity, spontaneity, the multiplicity of imaginative worlds and an active relationship between artwork and spectator. The mirror creates a gateway for the viewer into the virtual space of the work, creating a portal between art and life. 'The true protagonist', he wrote of his mirror paintings in 1966, 'was the relationship of instantaneousness that was created between the spectator, his own reflection, and the painted figure, in an ever-present movement that concentrated the past and the figure in itself to such an extent as to cause one to call their very existence into doubt: it was the dimension of time itself'.

# IN CONVERSATION

Assistance & Lecture Theatre curation has been invaluabley provided by  
Oliver Offord, Stage 2, Painting student.  
Oliver will be working on a hand drawn response to the event with Erin Adderley,  
George Jackson and Ash Zhang

## CHIARA MESSINEO

is an experienced specialist factual  
Producer/Director with credits ranging from  
documentaries on fine art, history and religion for  
major TV broadcasters. A storyteller with a strong  
visual flair, she has a knack for gaining access to  
the inaccessible: from sites closed to the public,  
such as the Vatican, to restricted sections of world  
class museums.

Messineo has set up complex shoots, including  
filming at archeological digs and at groundbreaking  
historical discoveries as they unfolded. She was  
responsible for building a full-scale Roman lift in  
the Coliseum and releasing a wolf in the arena  
after 1500 years for an American TV documentary.  
Messineo loves finding the overlooked angle that  
leads to an unexpected discovery, such as a set of  
lost Picassos drawn on restaurant napkins. Chiara  
Messineo first worked with Pistoletto on a  
documentary for Bloomberg which can be found on  
the event page at [www.paintingresearch.net](http://www.paintingresearch.net)

## PAINTING AS TECHNOLOGY

This year's paintingresearch thematic is Painting As  
Technology. This emerged via an assumption that painting  
acts in response to the mechanical or digital rather being  
mechanical - and in etymological terms digital in itself.

Via this thematic we are looking specifically at:

Painting as a mechanical pursuit engaging the brush/stylus  
as a prosthetic.

Painting as a mode of enhancing the optical and lenticular.  
In this way, it becomes a form of human extension, driving  
forms of supra-production or a supra-visual.

Painting as a critical envoy from history - its longevity  
allowing commentary and critical distance on newer media  
and allowing for their reflection and deflection into  
supposedly 'known' terrain, reimagined.

Links between the mechanical-gestural in autographic  
work and the surface-ground relationships in digitised  
forms are altering both. We see the evolution of the  
technological as intrinsic to our medium. We also use the  
medium to critique progress and check up on it.

## PAINTINGRESEARCH AT WIMBLEDON COLLEGE OF ARTS

is co-curated by Geraint Evans and Zoë Mendelson. As a  
community of practitioners and researchers we are  
committed to conversation and exposition of painting led  
research.



Michelangelo Pistoletto *Scaffali - calzature* (Shelves – footwear), 2015. Silkscreen on super mirror polished stainless steel 250 x 150 cm (98 3/8 x 59 1/8 in.)

Michelangelo Pistoletto's show 'Scaffali' opens at Simon Lee gallery on 23 February and runs until 7 April. This is his fourth solo exhibition with the gallery. Here Pistoletto draws the viewer into busier spaces, laden with tools and apparatus particular to different professions and evoking the presence of labour. The images function between stasis and activity, which are in turn initiated by the presence of the viewer.

paintingresearch would like to thank Margherita Cugini at Cittadellarte and Simon Lee Gallery