

LEILA HELLER GALLERY.

invites

GALLERIA CONTINUA

SAN GIMIGNANO BEIJING LES MOULINS HABANA

to organize a solo show of

MICHELANGELO PISTOLETTO

March 14th— April 25th, 2016



Suspended Perimeter—Love Difference (1975-2011)

Alserkal Avenue Warehouse 55
Al Quoz 1, Dubai, UAE

Dubai, UAE— Leila Heller Gallery invites Galleria Continua to organize a solo show of Michelangelo Pistoletto in an exclusive exhibition from March 14th to April 25th at Alserkal Avenue. Beginning with explorations of portraiture in his early career, Pistoletto, also known as the founder of the Arte Povera movement, employs a conception of the space of art as the space of action. For nearly half a century, Michelangelo Pistoletto has merged art and its environment through performance, sculptural installation and, most famously, his iconic mirror paintings. Comprised of photo-silkscreened images on steel, these signature works were developed in 1962 and represent the artist's interest in not only conceptualism and figuration, but also in an intrinsically socially engaged politics of viewing which is, for Pistoletto, the purpose and potential of artistic practice.

Central to the structural and aesthetic conceit of the mirror paintings is the inclusion of the spectator as a form of dialogical exchange, each as much experiential as environmental; the artist uses the concept and phenomenon of reflection as a means to demand that the viewer is also called into the position of participant in the contingent experience of the work of art. This emphasis on contingency, participation, and experience—from the very inception of the mirror paintings in the early 1960s to the present day—can be seen as intrinsically related to Pistoletto's interest in performance, beginning with solo works and developing into large collaborative installation 'interventions', otherwise

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understood as 'happenings'. As the artist suggested in 1969, "The mirror paintings could not live without an audience.... The step from mirror paintings to theater—seems simply natural...It is less a matter of involving the audience, of letting it participate, as to act on its freedom and on its imagination, to trigger similar liberation mechanisms in people."

Art as an act of intervention, liberation, and social exchange is nowhere more evident than in Pistoletto's circular performative mirror installation *Suspended Perimeter—Love Difference* (1975-2011). As the artist wrote in 2002, in his *Love Difference Manifesto*, "Politics and the economy need to be inspired by a new way of thinking. The formative space for this thinking is the creative laboratory for socially-engaged art. *Love Difference* is a movement arising out of this laboratory." Written four years after Pistoletto's founding of Cittadellarte, a collaborative creative project space in his native Biella, Italy, this manifesto, and attendant work, are exponents of the artist's desire to propose new inhabited spatial possibilities—unmooring the spectator's passive experience—that "through creative engagement... work towards responsible social transformation."

Also included in this exhibition, Pistoletto's *Black and Light Flux* series from 2008 render the artist's mirrors in their ultimate role as an image of the world, both of humans and society, and even of transcendental space. "It seems clear to me that the space in which this reflection takes place is neither limited nor exclusively individual, but is the cosmic space of totality and therefore of everyone." Breaking the mirrors is equivalent for the artist to altering the prolongation of space and time, that is, of reality. In these works, the alternation between light and darkness is perfectly balanced. As in chaos theory, the apparent disorder is actually organized according to a hidden, more creative, order.

Michelangelo Pistoletto will be in conversation with Tairone Bastien, Programming Director at Alserkal Avenue, followed by an exhibition tour, March 14th from 5pm, The Yard at Alserkal Avenue.

About the Artist

Michelangelo Pistoletto was born in Biella in 1933. He began to exhibit his work in 1955 and in 1960 he had his first solo show at Galleria Galatea in Turin. An inquiry into self-portraiture characterizes his early work. In the two-year period 1961-1962 made the first *Mirror Paintings*, which directly include the viewer and real time in the work, and open up perspective, reversing the Renaissance perspective that had been closed by the twentieth-century avant-gardes. These works quickly brought Pistoletto international acclaim, leading, in the sixties, to one-man shows in important galleries and museums in Europe and the United States. The *Mirror Paintings* are the foundation of his subsequent artistic output and theoretical thought.

During the nineties, with *Project Art* and with the creation in Biella of *Cittadellarte- Fondazione Pistoletto* and the *University of Ideas*, he brought art into active relation with diverse spheres of society with the aim of inspiring and producing responsible social change. In 2012 he started promoting the *Rebirth-day*, first worldwide day of rebirth, celebrated every year on 21st December with initiatives taking place all around the world. In 2013 the Louvre in Paris hosted his personal exhibition Michelangelo Pistoletto, *année un – le paradis sur terre*. In this same year he received the *Praemium Imperiale* for painting, in Tokyo.

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About the Gallery:

Since its establishment over three decades ago in New York, Leila Heller Gallery has gained worldwide recognition as a pioneer in promoting creative dialogue and exchange between Western artists and Middle Eastern, Central and Southeast Asian artists. It has garnered a reputation for identifying and cultivating the careers of artists leaving a lasting impact on contemporary art and culture. Currently representing a diverse roster of Western and Middle Eastern artists, the gallery is also active in the American, European and Middle Eastern secondary art markets.

In November 2015, Leila Heller Gallery opened its first international location in Dubai's Alserkal Avenue. At 14,000 square feet, the state of the art gallery features three exhibition spaces, making it the largest gallery in the UAE. Showcasing leading regional and international artists, many of whom will be presenting their work in the Middle East for the first time, the gallery is dedicated to the evolving practice of established artists.

For Press Inquiries

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