

News Release from Milton Keynes Gallery

Giuseppe Penone: The Imprint of Drawing

27 Mar – 9 May 2004

Admission free

Private View Fri 30 Jan 17.30 – 20.00 All press & media welcome

Giuseppe Penone: The Imprint of Drawing is the first solo exhibition in a British public gallery for fifteen years by the Italian artist Giuseppe Penone. Born in Italy in 1947, Penone was first recognised for his work associated with the Arte Povera movement in Italy in the 1960s, in which artists emphasised the importance of everyday experience, undercutting the idea of art as a precious object. They sought to start from nothing, creating a new “zero point.” Like many in the group, Penone used simple materials from daily life such as sand, earth, stones, fabric and newspapers to unsettle the boundaries between art and nature, and show the interdependence of all organic life forms. Penone’s work from the 1970s to the present continues to take its inspiration from nature, the quiet slowness of growth in the natural world, and also from the forms and surfaces of the human body.

The Imprint of Drawing focuses on the artist’s contributions to the medium of drawing over his 35-year career, and features several of Penone’s impressive new large-scale drawings and previous major works. Their common starting point is an exploration of the body’s senses. In particular, Penone’s work investigates the complex connections, both practical and metaphorical, between the senses of touch and vision, also referred to as the “haptic”. His ambitious yet understated drawings magnify the delicate sensory surfaces of our eyelids and fingerprints to large, landscape-like proportions. They invite the viewer both to reflect upon the body’s relationship to physical space, and to connect the visual with the tactile. In works such as *Eyelid* (1989-91) and *Acacia Thorns (Forehead)* (2002), displayed in the Long Gallery, Penone uses the surface and textures of his own skin as a representation of direct physical contact with the world. The artist has also created a new series of ten large and intricate drawings of his fingerprints, *The Imprint of Drawing* (2002-03), conveying a memory of human presence and providing a record of the exact points where the exterior environment exacted pressure on the skin. These works are presented in the Cube Gallery.

This exhibition also includes *Nails* (1997/2002), a site-specific work made by the artist for The Drawing Center, New York, over ten days in early January 2004, re-made here for MK G in the Middle Gallery. It consists of small repetitive marks and tears on paper, filled with plaster nail imprints, creating a subtle relief that links drawing and sculpture, which like his other large-scale works is minimal in means but monumental in scale.

The exhibition has been curated by Catherine de Zegher, Director of The Drawing Center, New York, and organised by The Drawing Center in collaboration with Milton Keynes Gallery.

Catalogue

The Imprint of Drawing exhibition is accompanied by a 125 page illustrated catalogue of the same name with nearly 100 illustrations, including images of all the works in the show, several essays and a conversation with the artist. Price to be confirmed.

Related Events

Artists' Tour

Sat 27 Mar | 12.00 | Entry free with pre-booked tickets

A unique opportunity to hear Giuseppe Penone talk about his work with art historian, Elizabetta Fabrizi. Numbers are limited, please call 01908 676 900 to book your place.

In Conversation with Joy Sleeman

Wed 5 May | 19.30 | Tickets £5 (£3 concs) to include a glass of wine

Dr Joy Sleeman, Senior lecturer in the History and Theory of Art at The Slade School of Fine Art, will discuss the relationship between art and nature with members of the audience, focusing on Penone's work. Doors open at 19.00 for pre-talk viewing.

Listings Information

Giuseppe Penone: The Imprint of Drawing - at Milton Keynes Gallery, 900 Midsummer Boulevard, Central Milton Keynes, MK9 3QA. Tel: 01908 676 900. Admission free. Open Tues-Sat 10.00-17.00, Sun 11.00-17.00. Closed Mondays and for exhibition changeovers.

Press Information, Images & Interviews

For further information, image or interview requests please contact Katharine Sorensen or Lorna Gemmell on 01908 558 302 or email k.sorensen@mk-g.org

Ends

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