

News Release from Milton Keynes Gallery

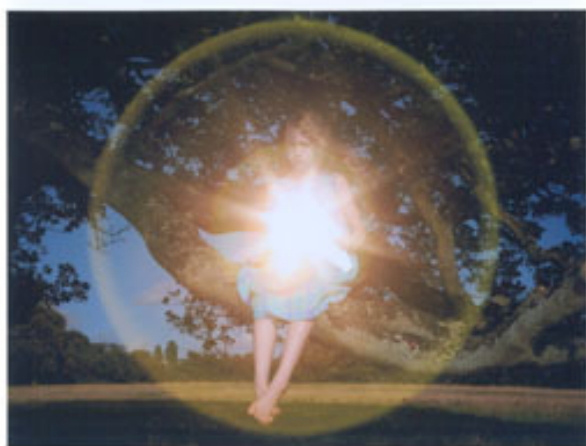
4 April – 13 May 2007

Adrian Paci: *per speculum*

Admission free

Exhibition supported by The Henry Moore Foundation

Preview: 3 April, 5:30pm-8pm. All press and media welcome.



Adrian Paci, production still from *per speculum*, 2006
Image © Jerry Hardman-Jones

Adrian Paci has become internationally recognised as an artist whose work addresses themes of exile, dislocation and loss. This April, Milton Keynes Gallery presents his first solo exhibition in the UK, to reveal the depth of his work, in film, sculpture, painting and drawing.

Paci sought exile from his native Albania in the mid 1990s and since settling in Italy his films have addressed the political and personal changes that have taken place in Albania and his own experiences. Many of his films have involved his family and friends, and men from the town in which he grew up, providing insight into the adjustments that they have had to make in coming to terms with their new situation. Art and life have until recently been interchangeable, as Paci has used his practice to understand his own role in society and what might be expected of him as an artist. Rather than providing the viewer with a nostalgic glance at the life that was left behind, Paci presents people that are trying to come to terms with how it is now.

The short film *per speculum* (2006) to be shown at Milton Keynes Gallery, represents a marked shift from the preoccupations of Paci's earlier films. Commissioned and produced by Milton Keynes Gallery and francesca kaufmann, Milan, *per speculum*, instead of being based on real circumstance, has a fictional, lyrical, slow moving plot. It brings together a number of strands that have surfaced in earlier films, including childhood, human knowledge and light.

Filmed on location in the Northamptonshire countryside, *per speculum* sees a group of children playing with a mirror. Shattered into pieces, it is then used to reflect the sun as the children sit in the boughs of an enormous tree, so that it glistens with sparks of light. The

shimmering light alludes to a passage from St Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians (13:12), (providing the source for the film's title) 'videmus nunc per speculum in aenigmate tunc autem face ad faciem' – *At present we see indistinctly, as in a mirror, but then face to face. At present I know partially; then I shall know fully, as I am fully known.* As the light is reflected back onto the viewer, Paci invites us to consider the possibilities and limits of knowledge and the way that we use it.

Religion has been significant in other areas of Paci's practice. *The Pasolini Chapel* (2005) which will be part of the exhibition, is dedicated to the filmmaker Pier Paolo Pasolini. Painted film stills (gouache on wood) from Pasolini's films *The Gospel According to St Matthew* (1964) and *Mamma Roma* (1962) adorn the inner and outer walls of a small hut placed in the middle of the gallery. *The Gospel According to St Matthew* was highly controversial and showed Christ as a young revolutionary while *Mamma Roma* was full of allusions to religious stories. The sepia-like paintings depict important silent scenes from each film, and this work, shown alongside paintings of scenes in Pasolini's *The Decameron* (1971) reveal Paci's avid fascination in the relationship between painting, photography and the cinematic tradition.

Paci also captures photographs from his films and exhibits them alongside the films. Again, the significance of light in Paci's work is brought into focus, as visitors will have the opportunity to see images from *Turn On* (2004) which features a group of men from Paci's home town Shkodra, playing with the effects of light and dark, as they consider their changed lives. The images will be accompanied by photographs from other works, including images taken on the set of *per speculum*.

The exhibition is accompanied by a full colour catalogue, with contributions from Christy Lange, Assistant Editor of *Frieze* and Michael Stanley, Director of Milton Keynes Gallery.

Artist in Conversation

Thursday 5 April, 7-8pm, £5 (£3)

Paci discusses themes and influences in his practice with writer and curator Teresa Gleadowe.

Panel Discussion: In Context - Art and Film

Wednesday 18 April, 7-8pm

A new media curator, an advertising executive, a cameraman and a film critic will consider the crossovers between fine art film making and commercial film and advertising.

Look Who's Talking

Saturday 5 May, 1-1:30pm

See local children and their families who were involved in the making of Paci's *per speculum* interviewed in a short film about their experiences of working with Paci and their impressions of the completed film, followed by a short question and answer session.

Milton Keynes Gallery, 900 Midsummer Boulevard, Central Milton Keynes, MK9 3QA.
Tel: 01908 676900. Recorded information 01908 558308. Website www.mk-g.org.

Exhibition Open Tuesday –Saturday 10am-5pm (Thursdays until 8pm), Sundays 11am – 5pm. Closed Mondays. Easter closed 6, 8 & 9 April. Admission free.

Press Information Please contact Giselle Richardson in the Milton Keynes Gallery Press Office on 01908 558 318 or by email: g.richardson@mk-g.org.

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