

Milton Keynes Gallery

Press Release

Gilberto Zorio

18 October 2008 – 18 January 2009

Gilberto Zorio belongs to a generation of Italian artists who in the mid 1960s pioneered a radical and distinguished artistic movement which later became known as *Arte Povera*. Through the use of often modest and humble materials, these artists posed profound questions about the very nature of human existence.

This will be Zorio's first solo exhibition in the UK and will include new installations made specifically for Milton Keynes Gallery's spaces combined with works that trace the historical points of his practice. A large star made from a tower of bricks will fill the central gallery; Zorio regularly constructs such stars, each one is unique to the space in which it is sited. To the viewer the construction of the star only reveals itself as they navigate the towering elevations. Inside these structures is a 'secret place' – the viewer can peer through gaps in the bricks to a space filled with flickering light and florescent phosphorus spatterings. Historical work will include *Pelli con resistenza* (1968) which Zorio regards as his first artwork, *Cerchio di Terracotta* (1969), *Fluidità radicale* (1970) and *Stella di giavellotti* (1974).

Energy, through the use of elemental forces, is essential to Zorio's work and is addressed in many ways, from the near invisibility of oxidisation and its effect on copper to the ferocious heat of metal welding. Zorio's use of different metals such as lead, copper and steel connects his work to a lineage of historical and primordial forms of creative expression. "*Metalworking is something that is profoundly related to the history of art and to human history. Copper is a conductor – it is the metal of Venus – Iron is strength and is the metal of Mars*". (Gilberto Zorio)

In his work, Zorio takes on the role of the alchemist, physically transforming materials through chemical and mechanical processes. In Zorio's art these processes are not only exposed to the viewer – there is no hidden magic – but the viewer becomes participant in the choreography that he creates.

Zorio's constant is the ancient symbol of the five pointed star, which he has etched into concrete, constructed in steel and clay and formed in glass and Perspex. Through his appropriation of the star, Zorio moves beyond the conventional associations of material, elevating his work to a cosmic status. He offers the viewer a passage taking one from the laws of physics and rationality to that of otherworldliness.

The exhibition will be accompanied by an illustrated catalogue and a related events programme. A limited edition print will also be available.

Exhibition supported by The Henry Moore Foundation, the Italian Cultural Institute, Kemco and Tarmac.

Please be aware there will be strobe lighting during this exhibition.

Gilberto Zorio Talks & Events

In Conversation: Gilberto Zorio, Germano Celant and Mark Godfrey

Wednesday 26 November, 7–8.30 pm, free

A unique opportunity to hear Gilberto Zorio discuss his work and practice with Germano Celant and Mark Godfrey. Celant is a curator and art critic and is currently Senior Curator of Contemporary Art at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum in New York. Celant is well known for his theory on *Arte Povera* (introduced at the Bertesca-Masnata Gallery, Genoa, 1967). He has regularly contributed to the magazines *Artforum* and *Interview*. Mark Godfrey is a former Lecturer in Art History and Theory at the Slade School of Art, London and is a curator at Tate Modern. Booking is essential on 01908 676 900.

Talkback

Saturday 1 November, 1–2pm, free

Join a member of the Gallery's education team for an informal discussion-based tour of the Gilberto Zorio exhibition. There is no need to book.

The Big Draw in the Park

25 October, 2–9pm, free

This year with the support of The Parks Trust, Milton Keynes Gallery's Big Draw event will take place in Campbell Park as a drawing festival. Inside marquees on Campbell Park's Events Plateau, families can work with artists, scientists and staff from Milton Keynes Gallery to explore different ways to draw, inspired by the Gilberto Zorio exhibition. The Big Draw will continue into the early evening with a performance of drawing with fire and activities making works of art using light. There will also be live music to draw to. We recommend attendees wear suitable clothing. Admission is free and there is no need to book.

There are also October half term workshops associated with this exhibition available for children. The free drop-in Saturday Art Trolley for families is also running during exhibition dates. Please call the Gallery for further details.

Gallery Open: Tues – Sat 10am–5pm, Sun 11am–5pm, Thurs open late until 8pm.

Milton Keynes Gallery: 900 Midsummer Boulevard, Central Milton Keynes, MK9 3QA

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For further information please contact Rosie Jackson on **01908 558 302** or email r.jackson@mk-g.org

Ends

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