



## **G. Paolini, *Ancora un libro*, Rome: Editrice Inonia, 1987.**

A selection of texts and interviews published between 1983 and 1986, followed by twelve unpublished pieces.

### PAINTING ABANDONED

Allow me, this once, to state the whole truth: art is imitation of course, but *not of any given* model. Art is an imitation of art, and it does not say what it wishes to adhere to, because it does not know what in fact is the model to reveal.

But permit me also to elude the labyrinth of interpretations and to entrust to the work of art the subject matter, still secret and intact, of its becoming, and to describe instead the impatient and anxious unproductiveness that presides over the definition of such – indefinable – mimesis.

Right now for example I am haunted by the suspicion that my latest work, taken as finished and presently being exhibited, lacks a minimal but essential detail. The precise consideration that time lost can never be regained (the vision that visitors to the exhibition will never be able to imagine in retrospect) would seem to me to confirm that not only does the artist seek something *as soon* as a work has been completed but, even more, he demands of that work an endless repetition.

That minimal, irrelevant detail becomes in my eyes the burning question that has to be clarified: and to whom if not to myself? Does this dilemma, already taken for granted even before it has been posed, make any sense? How can I hand over to the philologists of yesterday the “mistakes” of tomorrow?

This is why (just as the duellist *abandons* his sword – and it’s the latter, not he, that strikes the target – not wanting to see and even less ascertain what he’s done) the artist increasingly distances himself, no longer looks at a work which will be looked at by others. In the timeless moment that decrees the distance from what is no longer merely imagined but rendered visible, the break is made, as here, between that thing which is no more – because it is – and that other which is still given me to describe.

[p. 57]

Revised version of Lesley Fagan’s English translation published in *Markus Lüpertz, Giulio Paolini: figure, colonne, finestre*, exh. cat., Rivoli: Castello di Rivoli, 1986, p. 112.

### THE AUTHOR? AN ACTOR!

There are things in life that you happen *not* to have to do but from which, precisely because you can abstain from them, you can draw greater involvement in the experience that the missed event would have ended up supplying.

“Everything is written”, we sometimes say, when a curious premonition provides a foretaste of things not directly experienced but already activated by an awareness that comes from who knows where.

An example: for an artist (but is his a “life”?) we might call this an institutional condition that is reflected in the work, or more precisely in what the work conceals.

To wonder (sooner or later is of no importance) who will be the consignee of what one does or is about to do; to establish a relationship between the “that’s all” of the work and the demand for an answer; to require, in substance, an attentive interlocutor to share in a gratuitous, intransitive act... When has art ever fed on the need for comparison, given that the response is already *its own*, that it precedes the question?

To precede does not mean to anticipate (the avant-gardes have done this) but to proceed before knowing, without wanting to demonstrate.... How, in short, can you claim to oppose something you want available, because only in this way will it be possible to give voice to your own opposition?

This something does not exist, no longer exists, and perhaps never existed. The artist believes he exists because he is called an artist by another who is himself saved from – or replaced by – the necessity to make the void that we all inhabit converge beyond himself.

Then when artists (an embarrassing expression in the plural) compare (a truly unreliable hypothesis) their own convictions (how can we have any?) with regard to the context (sometimes there is also the sun, though) in which they find themselves working (but the work is there, let's not change it into a verb)...

We have gone from the interpretation of History to the History of interpretations; the sum of versions of truth now hands us over to the truth of versions. The author, a nameless signature, is nothing other than the bearer – or the actor if you like – of the work, the *chance* of the *thing*\*.

\* Two puns in Italian: "l'attore" (bearer) and "l'attore" (actor), "caso" (chance) and "cosa" (thing). (T. N.)

[pp. 66-67]

Translation by Paul Blanchard published in *Contemplator enim*, Florence: Hopefulmonster Editore, 1991, in the enclosure with English text. A different English translation was published in *Markus Lüpertz, Giulio Paolini: figure, colonne, finestra*, exh. cat., Rivoli: Castello di Rivoli, 1986, pp. 113-114.

## SOME DAY

It took me almost twenty years, it was September 1960, to reach the point where I succeeded in drawing two red diagonals that determined four points, and from those the other four necessary for squaring the portion of space I was to call *Disegno geometrico* [*Geometric Drawing*].

I thus transformed a portion into "proportions", recollections into "duration". I now realise that I didn't realise it at the time.

Maybe I'll take another twenty years to make that step backwards to the recollections of today (26th May 1986) here and yesterday.

I'm now living in the country near Siena. In front of me the *Gorse* is in full bloom, just a little nearer than the cypresses dotted among the irises.

Might "this" be the "thing" I can't mention (but I've already drawn attention to it with italics), the urgent and unexpected complement to the picture I referred to in the first paragraph: a further version, this time in the form of words?

Might it be this, so distinctly beautiful and transparent, with an inimitable light shining through, origin and theatre of itself, pure truth and self-description, that "afterwards" which can only be awaited on the secret stage of the mind's eye?

If in the end this piece of writing isn't a picture, then it cannot anticipate the vision of one but only its intention.

If this isn't enough then there's nothing else for it but to step back and let time take its course so that what is beyond our vision, something likely or evident, may coincide with something improbable if not absent.

[p. 71]

Revised version of Lesley Fagan's English translation published in *Markus Lüpertz, Giulio Paolini: figure, colonne, finestra*, exh. cat., Rivoli: Castello di Rivoli, 1986, p. 113.

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