



Les fausses confidences, 1983

Slide, projector, primed canvases

Three canvases 40 x 60 cm each, three canvases 60 x 90 cm each, three canvases 90 x 120 cm each, one canvas 200 x 120 cm, overall dimensions variable

Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York (Gift of the Ermenegildo Zegna Corporation, 1984, inv. no. 84.3249)

In a dark room a large primed canvas (200 x 120 cm) hanging on the wall is used as a screen for the projection of one slide, while nine other variously sized canvases, seen from both the recto and the verso, lie on the floor or else are propped up precariously against the wall. The collage projected on the canvas reproduces the cut-out figure of Jean-Antoine Watteau's *L'Indifférent* (1717), whose upper body is reversed in the quadrangle (mirror or canvas) that the figure seems to be holding before him. "Watteau's 'Indifférent' is the detached and 'inexpressive' figure that tries to evoke the themes of some of my other unfinished works".¹

The *mise-en-scène* of an anonymous character, who observes or presents a painting that is still unknown, or else listens to the echo of paintings already "seen", adds to the repertoire of author-viewer counter-figures in costume introduced as of the mid-1970s. The actor is also part of the deliberately theatrical dimension that distinguishes Paolini's works from the early 1980s. This taste for acting can be seen in the title itself, which cites that of the play written by Marivaux in 1737.

The character used by Watteau, which in *Les fausses confidences* enters the scene in a large-scale work for the first time, reappears in a number of works from the 1980s and 1990s.²

¹ The artist in a handwritten note dated to 1984 (Archivio Giulio Paolini).

² Cf. the work *L'Indifférent* (1988) documented in the "Works/Public Collections/France/Grenoble" section in this website. *L'Indifférent* first appeared in a graphic edition produced in 1980 (cf. *Impressions graphiques. L'opera grafica 1967-1992 di Giulio Paolini*, Turin: Marco Noire Editore, 1992, cat. no. 38).

Exhibition chronology and bibliography cf. M. Disch, *Giulio Paolini. Catalogo ragionato 1960-1999*, Milan: Skira editore, 2008, vol. 2, p. 983, cat. no. 506.

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