



## Giulio Paolini's Catalogue Raisonné

### Timeline

- 2000-08 In 2000, the Castello di Rivoli Museo d'Arte Contemporanea, Rivoli (Turin), directed by Ida Gianelli, invited Giulio Paolini to take part in a project to create a Catalogue Raisonné of the works and archive materials of contemporary Italian artists in the museum's collection. Maddalena Disch, an art historian and Paolini's assistant since 1995, was tasked with compiling the Catalogue Raisonné of paintings, sculptures and installations created between 1960 and 1999. The two-volume Catalogue came out in 2008, published by the Fondazione Giulio e Anna Paolini in collaboration with the Castello di Rivoli and the Milanese publishing house Skira.
- 2009-20 The Fondazione continued and expanded its work on cataloguing Paolini's works, alongside the systematic inventorying of the artist's archival legacy. The cataloguing was carried out by means of two databases. The first covered the production of paintings, sculptures and installations, starting with the materials published in the 2008 paper Catalogue, revised and extended to include works from subsequent decades. The second database covered works on paper, never previously archived. The databases were added to and reviewed over the years, as well as supplemented with an English version.
- 2021 The Fondazione made a new Catalogue Raisonné of Giulio Paolini's works available on its website, in Italian and English, specifically developed for digital use. The Catalogue was divided into two sections – corresponding to the two databases managed by the Fondazione – one documenting paintings, sculptures and installations, the other recording works on paper.
- 2023-24 The Catalogue Raisonné of Paolini's works was extended to include print editions and multiples, through the creation of a third database that also made it possible to supplement the online Catalogue Raisonné with a new corresponding section.

### The Choice to Go Digital

The Fondazione's need for a complete overhaul of its website in 2020 provided the ideal opportunity to include a digital Catalogue Raisonné of Giulio Paolini's works in the project. Mindful of the recent international debate on the advantages and disadvantages of choosing digital over paper, and based on the experience gained through the use of databases, the Fondazione worked with two professionals in the sector to create a bilingual Catalogue Raisonné, which has a simple structure, an uncomplicated layout and is easy to consult.

Depending on the required degree of detail, consultation is possible on three main levels:

- browsing through the Catalogue pages and scrolling through the artist's production by images, in chronological order or by decade
- viewing the annotated entry on the individual works, including basic information and an iconographic description
- carrying out targeted searches with the help of search filters, which allow simple or combined searches (by title, year, technique, category, format, sources, exhibitions, bibliography), as well as thematic searches through a selection of keywords.



It is precisely this latter level of use, characteristic of the digital sphere, that reveals one of the most interesting features of the online Catalogue, namely navigating through unknown routes that open up new visual horizons and fresh interpretations. The digital journey into the artist's world allows us to trace his stylistic features and visual language, as well as to explore the development of a particular theme, or simply to delve into the implications of his poetics.

Other features of the digital Catalogue, which make it incomparably more comprehensive and compelling than the printed publication, include:

- real-time content updates: corrections, additions and new content can be inserted, added or replaced at any time
- its flexibility and freedom to be extended: the structure of the Catalogue can be adapted to new requirements and content; the entries on the individual works can be freely supplemented with additional material and references; the search filters can be modified and extended
- global accessibility: open-access consultation in two languages generates a significant expansion of the user base and unprecedented knowledge sharing
- the transformation of the very concept of the Catalogue Raisonné: innovative use, constantly evolving content and extended sharing transform a traditional working tool into an original and surprising experience. From the tendentially static inventory to the manifestly dynamic organism, the identity of the Catalogue Raisonné is evolving, adapting to new technologies, new requirements and usage, confirming its role as an unlimited resource.

In order to be credible and reliable, as well as attractive and interesting, the Catalogue Raisonné must be up to date in all respects: not only in its content, but also in the way it is used and its accessibility. From paper to digital, the transition is revolutionary: digital does not simply mean digitising images and documents, but rather developing new ways of managing, presenting and raising awareness of an artist's work. It also means rethinking private archiving and its public sharing: direct archiving through the online Catalogue is a complex decision, based on painstaking choices, but one that is undoubtedly constructive and profitable in every respect.

## Contents

Each of the three sections of the online Catalogue Raisonné documents all the works in the respective field known to date, attested by autograph inscriptions and/or an authentication issued by the artist, or by original documentation materials deemed valid by the artist or the Fondazione Giulio e Anna Paolini. Only *ad personam* tributes, designed as such and bearing explicit references to the recipient on the recto, are excluded.

The Catalogue Raisonné features an image of the work and a descriptive entry that includes the following items:

- title and year
- archive number
- technique
- dimensions
- inscriptions by the artist (when present)
- collection
- description
- iconographic sources
- exhibitions
- writings by the artist
- bibliography



Depending on the type of artwork, the entry will also include other supplementary information:

- details on the edition number (e.g., in the case of sculptures with plaster casts)
- information on the acquisition of a work (in the case of works in public collections)
- display notes (in the case of specific instructions given by the artist).

The Catalogue Faisonné of print editions and multiples contains a greater wealth of information, linked to the very nature of the works. Unlike other works, prints are characterised by the edition size, sometimes with specific features; they are usually commissioned by a publisher within a specific context (an exhibition, an anniversary, a publishing project); they are often packaged in folders or other containers and are accompanied by text notes, as well as a colophon. Each annotated entry therefore includes the following details (visible only when the relative information is available):

- publisher
- printer
- context of production
- case/folder
- texts
- book
- colophon

In contrast to the entries in the other two online Catalogues, the entries on the prints and multiples do not provide information on the location of the works. In view of the sometimes high number of copies (the highest edition size is 500 copies) and the rather limited information on known collections, the Fondazione prefers to share such information only on request.

For reasons of confidentiality, the entries in the online Catalogue Raisonné of Giulio Paolini do not include information on the provenance of the works. The Fondazione can provide this information in the case of requests for study purposes or other specific reasons.

### **Reporting works and archiving requests**

Anyone wishing to report information, errors, oversights, ownership of works or simply to share details and materials relating to individual works by Giulio Paolini should contact Maddalena Disch, editor of the Catalogue Raisonné: [maddalena.disch@ticino.com](mailto:maddalena.disch@ticino.com).