

Sei illustrazioni per gli scritti sull'arte antica di Johann J. Winckelmann [Six Illustrations for the Writings on Ancient Art by Johann J. Winckelmann], 1977

Bound volume with six plates printed in lithography and silkscreen

50 x 35 cm

Edition of 33 in Arabic numerals plus 7 in Roman numerals

Franco Mello and Giorgio Persano, Genoa

The volume presents six “illustrations” inspired by the essay of Johann J. Winckelmann, *The Ideal of Beauty*, an object of interest to Paolini by virtue of its treatment, during the Neoclassical period, of the autonomy of beauty. The first illustration represents the staggered juxtaposition of a double-page of Winckelmann’s book, which presents, to the left, a text, and to the right, the statue of the Borghese Gladiator. The Gladiator, bends, his arm outstretched, seemingly pushing himself out of the page; as if, with a dynamic movement, he wanted to distance himself from his own representation. In the second illustration the statue of the Apollo Belvedere (mid-2nd century AD), against a black background, holds up Winckelmann’s book open to the page where he himself is documented, as if to announce his own historicization. An image within an image, where the duplication of the subject is the protagonist, in a representative vertigo.

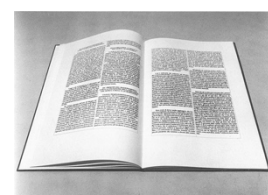
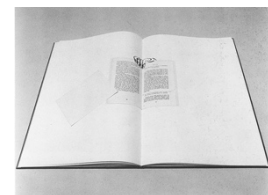
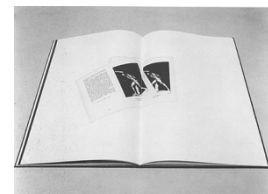
The third illustration presents an open book held by a hand in such a way that it hides the face of the person holding it. The imagined reader of the book cannot be captured by our gaze; nonetheless, his face is manifested through the diaphragm of the printed paper, outlined by dark black eyelashes, his eyes focused on the text.

Similarly, in the fourth illustration, appearing beyond the visible presence of the open book is the hand that is holding it out, as if inviting the viewer to read it.

In the fifth illustration, the sculptor Alcamenes, viewed from the side and seated on a high-backed chair, holds and peers at the bust of his son and, through it, sees himself in the mimesis that is characteristic of Paolini’s language.

The sixth and final illustration simply presents a double-page spread of the text by Winckelmann, with short chapters in which the themes of Paolini’s poetics resound.

The tearing of the paper material along with the photographic, serigraphic, and lithographic treatment contribute to a dissimilar elaboration of the original text, showing at the same time adherence to and distance from





the source chosen. For Paolini the volume has the value of a theatrical space where events take place in between the pages, as if the figures were to emerge from them and move about in the scenic space of the double-page.

Bibliographical references

Impressions graphiques. L'opera grafica 1967-1992 di Giulio Paolini (Turin: Marco Noire Editore, 1992), cat. no. 29.

Entry by Bettina Della Casa