

A PALAZZO GALLERY

GIORGIO CIAM – *Sulla pelle*

Curated by Elena Re

ESTATE OF GIORGIO CIAM

On 9th May 2013 A Palazzo Gallery, in collaboration with the Estate of Giorgio Ciam, will present the solo show **GIORGIO CIAM – *Sulla pelle***, curated by Elena Re.

The idea behind the exhibition is to highlight some essential moments in the career of Giorgio Ciam, an artist who used photography to delve into his own existential dimension, starting with work on the skin, the face and his own body. The exhibition presents a wide selection of works from the Giorgio Ciam archives that focus on the expressive research of an author who was involved in international Body Art in the 1970s and continued in the '80s and '90s to experiment with photography, analysing his own identity, with highly topical and anticipatory results. To this end, on display are important photographic works forming the heart of this research, as well as hitherto unseen works in which the photographic medium gives way to drawing, collage and sculpture. It is an excellent opportunity to discover the wealth and novelty of an entire expressive journey, viewed in its many facets.

As the title of one of his early works of transformation, *Sulla pelle* is the starting point of Giorgio Ciam's inner journey, and yet is also the place from which to set off again to retrace his own steps today. Ciam uses his own body as a screen, as a changing plane of projection. What he offers with his work is a faithful reflection of a complex, labyrinthine identity that is continually fathomed, reprocessed, yet never fully determined. Placing himself in front of the lens, though working within the framework of Behaviour, Ciam depicts a particular situation – a performance without an audience. Because he will only assume relations with his audience through photographic work. So, by using the technique of photomontage, he can thus transform himself and become another. Similarly, by blurring the image, he can annul himself to reappear in the figure of his son. Or, by stratifying numerous images within the same photograph or cropping, deleting and using collage or décollage, he can see and re-see himself, formulating the story of himself and his identity. Caught up in a similar vortex, at times drawing and sculpture too appear as opportunities for assessment and analysis, expressions of a multi-faceted and endless research. Giorgio Ciam's work thus displays multiple content, since what the author delivers to his audience is a written report of his own self-analysis. On closer inspection, however, this operation is only apparently self-reflexive since what Ciam calls into play is the human condition, the awareness of time – his own life history as a vehicle for other possible stories. So much so that his experimenting with the body is revealed as a clear expression of post-modern thought, staging and debating still open philosophical issues.

GIORGIO CIAM was born in 1941 in Pont-Saint-Martin, near Aosta. After studying at the Academy of Fine Arts in Turin, he conducted anthropological research using photography that does not disdain a certain performative-theatrical aspect, which is evident in his early years, especially with his creation of *Sculture Ambiente* and *Teatri Scultura*. In the 1970s he was part of the international Body Art and maintained frequent exchanges and relations with other European artists, while pursuing his analysis of the use of photography. He developed his research into Behaviour, focusing on the human figure – in particular the face – and analysing his own identity as a means for relating to the *other*. In 1974 his expressive research was presented in the book by Lea Vergine *Il corpo come linguaggio (La "Body-art" e storie simili)*, published by Prearo Editore. In 1975 Giancarlo Politi included him in a special issue (no. 52-53) of *Flash Art* dedicated to artists who used the medium of photography. His works have featured in numerous public displays in Italy and abroad. In 1995 he held a vast anthological exhibition at Bard Fort, Aosta. He published numerous artist's books and exhibition catalogues. He died in Turin in 1996. In 2007 Gli Ori published *GIORGIO CIAM – Dentro il sogno 1969-1995*, by Elena Re, as part of its *Progettosettanta* collection. In 2010, Ciam's work was included in the group exhibition *GEOGRAFIA SENZA PUNTI CARDINALI – La fotografia nell'arte degli anni '70 in Italia*, curated by Elena Re, at the Giorgio Persano Gallery in Turin. In 2012 P420 Contemporary Art dedicated a booth to him at MIA – Milan Image Art Fair – and included him in the group exhibition *Un'opera × un libro d'artista* at their gallery in Bologna. The same year Mummery+Schnelle, which had presented him in 2011 at Artissima 18 – *Back to the Future*, organised a solo show in London, curated by Elena Re. In 2013 A Palazzo Gallery presented him at Miart, Dallas Art Fair and Art Brussels, and announced the *GIORGIO CIAM – Sulla pelle* exhibition in Brescia, thus starting an international project in collaboration with the Estate of Giorgio Ciam.

Opening 9th May from 6.30 pm
9 May – 15 July