

GAGOSIAN GALLERY

PHAIDON

Piero Golia's models, monuments and sculptures



Studio (4/13/2013) 2013 - Piero Golia Courtesy of the artist and Gagosian Gallery

LA-based Italian artist who sat up a tree until someone purchased his art, sailed to Albania 'the wrong way', tattooed his face on a woman's back and disappeared for weeks has a show of new work at Paris Gagosian.

The Naples born artist Piero Golia has been referred to as a grain of sand in the oyster shell of contemporary art - whether the description makes you flinch or not, there's no denying he's one of the more story worthy artists currently working in the field of conceptual art.

He sprang to a kind of fame in 2001 after encouraging an unknown woman to have his face tattooed on her back above the caption "Piero, My Idol". By accepting the permanent artistic gesture the willing participant became more living canvas than witness. According to Golia, the tattoo artist both "sealed and confused the intimacy of the action".

Accepting an invitation to the Tirana Biennale the same year, he rowed across the Adriatic in the opposite direction to migratory movement, eventually becoming the first Italian illegal immigrant in Albania.



Tattoo (2001) - Piero Golia

His 2002 work *I Am Serious* consists of three dimensional metal letters carrying enough electrical current to instantly kill anyone who succumbs to the invitation to touch them.

At a Turin Art Fair he climbed up a palm tree and refused to come down until somebody bought his work *On The Edge*. He was up there for eight hours before a collector made the purchase. *Luminous Sphere*, meanwhile, is a large white light that glows atop the Standard Hotel in Los Angeles whenever he's in town. He describes it as an appropriation of the sign language of LA – the billboards of Sunset Strip and the iconic Hollywood sign.

In 2006 he effectively vanished for a number of weeks, surfacing in Copenhagen to give a lecture on his disappearance. Two years later he questioned the standardized booth sizes of global art fairs by compacting an LA bus to the exact size of one.



Untitled (Bus) 2008 - Piero Golia

Models, Monuments, and Sculptures on Pedstals, his latest show at the Gagosian in Paris opens today and features a new set of bronze figures depicting his colleagues, his studio and his previous works as a self-reflexive narrative.

In Studio (4/13/2013) studio assistants, works in progress tools and machinery are rendered in miniature in aluminium, copper and stainless steel. Gold and Concrete Cube at the Venice Biennale (2013) is a miniature model of an earlier work (Untitled, My Gold is Yours in which one kilo of gold was mixed into a giant concrete block.

The idea behind the diminutive scale models is to upend the conventional aspect of planning large scale artistic works and give the viewer an over arching view of his more monolithic works.

You can read a little more about Golia and the Mountain School of Arts he founded in LA, a small, fully functioning school that awards full scholarships to 15 students a year from around the world in our book Defining Contemporary Art. You can learn more about the Paris show, which opens today and runs until April 19 at Gagosian Gallery's site.