

DOMINIQUE LÉVY

For Immediate Release

Media Contact:

Andrea Schwan, Andrea Schwan Inc.

info@andreaschwan.com

+1 917 371.5023

WITH A DOZEN ARTISTS AND COLLECTIVES, DOMINIQUE LÉVY GALLERY PAYS TRIBUTE TO ITALIAN ICONOCLAST GIULIO PAOLINI

"Hypothesis for an Exhibition"

8 July – 16 August

Dominique Lévy

909 Madison Avenue

New York City

New York, NY...Beginning 8 July 2014, Dominique Lévy gallery will present a collaborative artists' project inspired by the work of Italian Conceptualist **Giulio Paolini**. Titled *"Hypothesis for an Exhibition"* and curated by Begum Yasar, the project is comprised of two components: The first is an exhibition of work by Paolini and a dozen New York artists and collectives paying tribute to his ideas. The second component is a publication designed by **Studio Manuel Raeder**. In addition to Paolini, participating artists include **Richard Aldrich, Harold Ancart, Sebastian Black, Kerstin Brätsch, Guyton\Walker, KAYA, Charles Mayton, Seth Price, Josh Smith, R.H. Quaytman, Antek Walczak, and Viola Yeşiltaç**.

On view through 16 August, *"Hypothesis for an Exhibition"* coincides with the artist's retrospective *Giulio Paolini: To Be or Not to Be*, on view at the Whitechapel Gallery in London.

"Hypothesis for an Exhibition" explores parallels in thought and aesthetic strategies between Paolini's work, especially of the 1960s and the '70s, and the work of a younger generation of artists based in New York City today. The underlying principle of the project is *self-reflexivity*, evident in the way works on view investigate the relationship between language and the work of art, as well as the language of the work of art itself. *"Hypothesis"* highlights Paolini's visionary status in historical context and reveals various ways in which his strategies have evolved in the art of others, taking on additional layers with advancements in technology and methods of production and distribution of art since Paolini's first forays into



these questions in the 1960s. The gallery's publication, edited by Begum Yasar and also titled "*Hypothesis for an Exhibition*," features an introduction by the renowned curator, art historian and critic **Germano Celant**, and contributions by the participating artists **Sebastian Black**, **Kerstin Brätsch** (with **Boško Blagojević**), **Seth Price**, and **Antek Walczak**, as well as a prose poem by **Kari Rittenbach** and a critical essay by **Begum Yasar**, alongside a selection of excerpts from the writings of **Giulio Paolini**.

The title "*Hypothesis for an Exhibition*" is a reference to Paolini's 1963 work *Ipotesi per una mostra* (*Hypothesis for an Exhibition*), which was to have been Paolini's first exhibition but remained unrealized until his 2003 retrospective at the Fondazione Prada in Milan, curated by Germano Celant. The word *hypothesis* can be defined as a proposition made on the grounds of limited evidence, as a basis for reasoning, without the assumption of its truth, as a starting point for further investigation. The work of art—as well as the exhibition as a work of art—is not limited to the physical space it occupies, but is rather conceived, in Paolini's words, as "an expanding module," with the potential for generating further questions and possibilities.

This project at Dominique Lévy is indebted to Paolini, who has occupied a singular artistic position since the 1960 inception of his very first work: *Disegno geometrico* (Geometric Drawing) was a small canvas depicting only the perspectival squaring of the picture plane, executed in ink and tempera. Its *raison d'être* was to make the space of representation visible rather than carrying out the act of representation. According to Paolini, this first and only painted work—a *self-reflexive* surrogate for a painting—embodies the motivation and the justification for all of his subsequent works to the present day. What drives Paolini's work is a phenomenological inquiry into the *becoming* of art, without any assumptions regarding the essence of the work of art. The self-reflexive work of art meditates on and poses questions about the devices and strategies, formulations and operations that have gone into its creation and constitution. The exhibition at Dominique Lévy anchors itself in this paradigm of *self-reflexivity*, a notion that unites the approaches of all the artists in "*Hypothesis for an Exhibition*."

Paolini

The self-reflexivity of Paolini's works takes place at two levels. The first is through an incessant cross-referentiality, which happens through the way in which Paolini's work incorporates photographic images of existing works from the art historical canon—paintings by Ingres, Velázquez, Poussin, and Lotto, among others, as well as images of Paolini's own existing works. The second and deeper level of self-reflexivity exists in Paolini's belief that all of his works are hypotheses

on the origin of those same works of art: For Paolini, a work of art is not merely an object in the here and now, but also a record and echo of earlier traditions, each of which has played a role in forming the conventions of how we look at art and in shaping the relationship between the artist, the work, and the spectator.

Paolini's early works often index the fundamental physical building blocks of artmaking—fragments of canvas, frames, stretcher bars, panels of plywood, color, pigment, paint, brushes, tubes, paint cans, brushstrokes, and so on. Other works allude to the rules and conventions that govern artistic practice, inside and outside the studio; the figure of the artist engaging in both the mundane and the enigmatic processes of artistic production. For example, prints on canvas of photographs of the studio with works piled up and leaning against each other and the walls, as in *2200/H* (1965), and *Diaframma 8* (Diaphragm 8, 1965), a photographic canvas that depicts Paolini carrying a blank canvas across the street. Two years after making this work, Paolini carried it on the street, which in turn was documented as a photograph and printed on a new canvas, in the same size, and became *D867* (1967). There are works that meditate on the multitude of psychological and sensory factors experienced by the participants, including the artist himself, not only in the moment of creation but also in the moment of exhibition, such as *Giovane che guarda Lorenzo Lotto* (Young Man Looking at Lorenzo Lotto, 1967); *L'ultimo quadro di Diego Velázquez* (The Last Painting of Diego Velázquez, 1968); and *L'invenzione di Ingres* (Ingres' Invention, 1968). Other works by Paolini reflect on the physical space in which the work of art is exhibited and in which it meets not only the gaze of the spectator but also the presence of the other works in the exhibition, such as *Quattro immagini uguali* (Four Identical Images, 1969) and ***Mimesi (Mimesis, 1975)***, on view at Dominique Lévy. Several works meditate on the constituents and indications of authorship: the signature, the title, the date, the inscription, and so on, such as *Giulio Paolini* (1971) and *Un segreto* (A Secret, 1969); and ***Un quadro (A Painting, 1970)***, which consists of fourteen emulsion prints on canvas of the photograph of *Disegno geometrico*, in the exact same size as the first painting, variously titled and signed by hand with fictional artists' names on the back, such as "Ahmed Barka" (on view in this exhibition), "Orlando de Luna," and "Edgar Bogojawlensky."

Twelve Artists and Collectives

Paolini's meditations have been carried forward by the participating artists in "*Hypothesis for an Exhibition.*" In the vein of Paolini's first solo exhibition in 1964 at Galleria La Salita in Rome, which consisted only of plywood panels used as stand-

ins for the presence of paintings, **Guyton\Walker's** ink-jet printed "painting" on drywall, *Untitled (2009)*, reflects on its own status as painting or sculpture, and on the wider constellations of authorship, production, distribution, and reception in which it is situated. **Richard Aldrich's** work *Birthmark (2012)*, similarly reflects on the relationship between the artist, the work, and the spectator. It is a large primed canvas, imageless and without any further trace of artistic agency on its surface except for the evidence of its preparation for a deferred future state, much like Paolini's *Disegno geometrico*.

Paolini bracketed the notions of painting through means other than the act of painting itself. Among the artists in "*Hypothesis for an Exhibition*" are painters who continue in this analytical vein, including **Sebastian Black, Kerstin Brätsch, and Charles Mayton**. In direct response to Paolini's *Quattro immagini uguali (Four Identical Images, 1969)*, Brätsch's *Interchangeable Painting (3 Parts) (2014)* is installed in a light box/museum-wall construction within a window bay on the second floor of the gallery. The back of this construction is sealed off so that the painting hanging on its front is visible only from the street below.

KAYA is the name of a series of collaborative interventions by Kerstin Brätsch and Debo Eilers. There have been four KAYA projects to date, each highlighting and compressing the process that yields a work of art from the studio onwards, parodying and short-circuiting accepted hierarchies of art and the mechanisms by which it is made and dispersed. Referring back to all of the previous KAYA projects, **KAYA IV, S is for Sex (Chamberbag Clubhand) (2014)** on view at Dominique Lévy is an exercise in self-archive or self-retrospective.

The act of reflecting on one's own position in the "art world," which is composed of artists, gallerists, critics, curators, collectors, and so forth, characterizes Paolini's 1968 work *Autoritratto (Self-Portrait)*, on view in this exhibition. Paolini's canvas reproduces a black and white photomontage that takes as its focal point the 1890 self-portrait of Henri Rousseau titled *Moi-même. Portrait-paysage*. The serious figure of Rousseau brandishing his palette is at the center of the composition, surrounded by a crowd of people standing together under the idyllic sky of the original painting. This is a snapshot of Paolini's art world of 1968, filled with such fellow artists as Lucio Fontana, Cy Twombly, and Alighiero Boetti, as well as renowned critics and gallerists of the day. **Josh Smith's** 2008 painting, based on the exhibition poster he designed for the 2008 exhibition "Painting Now and Forever, Part II," seems a latter day echo of Paolini's "painting." The artist reflects, in the work and through the techniques for making it, on the place he occupies in a realm that bestows meaning on his own art. Smith's piece references the exhibition "Painting Now and Forever," which included some of the same

artists participating in "*Hypothesis for an Exhibition.*" Continuing with this vein are **Antek Walczak**'s recent series of oil paintings, *New Transbohemian States*, and **Seth Price**'s illustrated texts in the project's publication.

Sebastian Black's serial practice is on view in the exhibition with examples of New Yorker Pieces and Period Pieces, as well as a new type of sculpture, *Untitled (2014)* that refers to another series by the artist called Puppy Paintings. "The concern," in the words of the artist, "is how much autonomy a painting has, how much is inherent content, how meaning is informed by context and discourse, and how often the imperatives of knowledge and capital overlap or diverge." Similarly **Charles Mayton**'s paintings often come in series and meditate on the phenomenon of vision and its relationship to the language of painting's building blocks: color, pigment, brushstroke, frame, canvas, gesso, and the idea of seriality.

In **Viola Yeşiltaç**'s works on view, the folded images in photographs come from the posthumously published engraving *The Origin of Drawing* (1829), after a drawing by Anne-Louis Girodet de Roussy-Trioson, a student of Jacques Louis-David, and from a painting by David Allan titled *The Origin of Painting* (c. 1775)—both in their turn self-reflexive works of art depicting different interpretations of the origin of mimesis by means of mimesis, in a way similar to Vermeer's *The Art of Painting*, on which Paolini based his work *Lo studio* (1968). Yeşiltaç reflects on her own status as a maker of images and signs filtered through the layers of history. In a similar way, **Harold Ancart**'s 2010 work *You Have No Idea* and its 2014 reiterations *Perfect Idea (1, 2, 3) (After You Have No Idea)*, on view in the exhibition, explore the enigma of artistic creation.

The work of **R. H. Quaytman** on view in this exhibition, *Spine, Chapter 20 (iamb)*, features the image of a mezzotint by the English romantic painter John Martin, which Quaytman had previously used in Chapter 12. This work embodies the drive for reflexivity, seriality, circularity, and self-archive, that course throughout "*Hypothesis for an Exhibition.*"

For additional information, please contact:
Andrea Schwan, Andrea Schwan Inc.
Info@andreaschwan.com
+1 917 371.5023