

Francisco Copello

He was born in Santiago, Chile on May 21, 1938 and died in the same city on May 11, 2006. He developed his artistic career both in Italy and the United States, having lived in these two countries for 30 years, returning to Chile only for his final decade. His work was characterized by a discourse focused on the body, running through all his artistic production and adopting different formats: collage, photography, engraving, performance, mime, and painting. The main premise of his work was his own life. He stood out as a key witness of art history throughout his many creative periods, highlighting his aesthetic experience with important masters of contemporary art, always from the borders and from abroad.

He studied at the Academy of Fine Arts in Florence, Italy between 1962 and 1966, and at the Pratt Graphics Center in New York in 1967. He was granted the New York Council of the Arts Fellowship in 1971, and the Nicolaus Copernicus Award for engraving in Poland in 1972. During the 1970s, he explored dance and trained in New York with choreographer Laura Dean, being part of Robert Wilson's first theater pieces. After these experiences, he began to develop his artistic work based on the body while in Italy, where he was part of the Milan scene, specifically the body art circuit at the Galleria Diagramma (1975-1978), and in Genoa at the Patrizia Carratu Dance School, the Dell'Opera theater and the Campetto 7 Cultural Center (until 1984).

During his decade-long residence in Europe, his performances were recorded by a group of renowned photographers such as Guiseppe Pino, Giovanna del Magro, Maurizio Buscaino and Giuliana Traverso. During his New York period (1986-1995), he carried out two main activities: printmaking and performance. As a printmaker he produced aquatint prints for Sandro Chia, Adolph Gottlieb, Keith Haring, Rainer Fetting, Wifredo Lam, Mark Kostabi, Stanley Boxer, Paul Jenkins and Rachel Friedberg, among others. As a performer he was part of the American Mime Theatre, symbolizing works from the company's repertoire, directed by Paul Curtis, in various theaters such as the Lincoln Center's Bruno Walter Auditorium and The New School, among others.

Upon his return to Chile he received the 1997 Art Critics Award for his exhibitions at the Museum of Contemporary Art and the Las Condes Cultural Corporation. In 1996 he taught body art and bodily expression at the University of Chile and presented the performances *Vogue*, *Black Mass*, *Family Reasons*, *Warhola*, and *The Trip*. In 1999 he held the *Anthology of Engravings, Photographs, Installations, Collages and Videos*, at the National Museum of Fine Arts, offering a compelling historical testimony of his aesthetic experience. In 2001, with the support of State funding, he

created a series of 14 serigraphs on paper and canvas, which were later exhibited at the Las Condes Cultural Corporation. Among his final works, the *Performance Photography. Autobiographical Analysis of my Performances* essay from 2002 stands out, published by Ocho Libros Editores. On this same occasion, videographer Claudio Rojas presented the documentary *Chilean Boy*, giving an account of Copello's career as an artist. (2002). The following year brought a retrospective of his work at the Art Gallery of the University of Concepción, entitled *Exercises on memory* and the *Piece for crazy people* performance, as well as the group exhibition *Stellar* at the National Museum of Fine Arts, with an additional performance and an autobiographical video presented in 2005. In 2006 and before his death, he completed *The best of Copello* exhibition, presenting his latest creations at the Santiago room of the University of Talca.

POSTHUMOUS WORKS

2006: *The best of Copello* travelling exhibition in Santiago, Talca.

2007: *Hello Again*, collage and performance at the MAC in Parque Forestal, Santiago.

2007: *Tribute to Copello*, Istituto Italiano di Cultura.

2009: *NUCLEI: Four decades of artistic production in the MAC collection*, group exhibition.

2009: Collage group exhibition at the National Museum of Fine Arts.

2016: *10-year tribute*. Die Ecke Contemporary Art Gallery and AMA Foundation.