**Elegia (Elegy), 1969**

Plaster cast with fragment of mirror, matt white plinth
15 x 15 x 11 cm, plinth 100 x 50 x 50 cm

Edition 2/3: Fondazione Giulio e Anna Paolini, Turin
Edition 3/3 [a]: Lost
Edition 3/3 [b]: Collection Annemarie and Gianfranco Verna, Zurich

The work was made in a numbered edition of three: what is currently edition 3/3 [b] was produced on the occasion of the artist's solo show in Zurich in 1973, after the original edition 3/3 [a], acquired by Michelangelo Pistoletto, was lost while the 1972 *Documenta 5* in Kassel was being installed.

In this first use of the plaster cast, Paolini set a fragment of mirror in place of the pupil in the right eye of Michelangelo's *David*.

“*Elegia* is the objective transfiguration of a phenomenon, sight, which refuses objectification: the cast of the eye is made of plaster, and the pupil is made of mirror; as such it becomes the copy and simulacrum of a phenomenon that is exterior to the object”.

For the 1970 Venice Biennale Paolini installed his work so that it was isolated inside a wide empty space with four open corners, which he had had built in the room dedicated to his work in the central pavilion. His first idea had been to install an anthological series of works, but at the last moment he chose instead to exclusively show *Elegia*, as it conceptually "constituted the final and definitive 'gaze' upon all the works that had come before it".

2 Conversation between the artist and M. Disch, January 2003.


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