

# STEPHEN ONGPIN FINE ART



**Mimmo Paladino (1948 - )**

## **Isola**

Watercolour.

Signed, titled, inscribed and dated Agosto 1982 ISOLA / Argentouli.(?) casa pellica(?) / Mimmo Paladino on the verso.

255 x 333 mm. (10 x 13 1/8 in.)

As the artist has stated, 'I really draw. It is easy for me. In reality, the less struggle there is for me the better I produce. It is not that I have a mentality that preplans, but I feel that drawing is about the impalpable...transparency.'

Executed in August 1982, this watercolour can be related to a later painting of the same title L'Isola (The Island), dating from 1993 and depicting a human figure resting alongside a small island in the midst of a sea, in the Würth collection in Germany.

## **Provenance:**

Acquired from the artist by Galerie Bel'Art, Stockholm  
Anonymous sale, London, Sotheby's, 27 June 1985, lot 763  
Stanley J. Seeger, London.

## **Artist description:**

A sculptor, painter and printmaker, Domenico (Mimmo) Paladino was a leading member of the Italian artistic movement known as Transavanguardia. The term, which can be translated as 'beyond the avant-garde', was coined by the art critic and curator Achille Bonito Oliva in 1979 to refer to a small group of young Italian artists - Sandro Chia, Francesco Clemente, Enzo Cucchi, Nicolo de Maria and Paladino - who each displayed a neo-expressionist tendency in their work. The artists of the Transavanguardia group came to public prominence at the 1980 Venice Biennale, and at the height of its success in the 1980s was to become one of the most influential artistic movements of post-war Italian art.

Paladino was born in 1948 in the town of Paduli di Benevento in Campania, some sixty kilometres east of Naples. In 1964 he visited the Venice Biennale, where he was struck in particular by the work Robert Rauschenberg in the American pavilion. Four years later he had his first one-man exhibition at a gallery in Naples in 1968. Although Paladino began his career working mainly with photography and conceptual art, he soon gravitated towards painting. In 1980 he was invited by Bonito Oliva to show in the Aperto section of the Venice Biennale, alongside the other artists who were to make up the Transavanguardia group. The following year Paladino's work was included in the seminal exhibition *A New Spirit in Painting* at the Royal Academy in London, while an exhibition of his drawings that was shown in several museums in Switzerland, Germany and Holland established the artist's international reputation. In 1982 the artist was included in both the Sydney Biennale and in Documenta 7 in Kassel, and in the same year he produced his first bronze sculpture. (In succeeding years sculpture became a more and more significant aspect of his oeuvre, often incorporated into large-scale, site-specific installations in urban spaces.) From the early 1980s Paladino also began working productively as a printmaker, producing etchings, woodcuts, linocuts and aquatints. In 1985 he was given his first retrospective exhibition, at the Städtische Galerie im Lenbachhaus in Munich, while another important exhibition of paintings, sculptures and works on paper was held in Prague in 1991. The artist has continued to exhibit widely throughout Italy and elsewhere in Europe, notably in London, as well as further afield; in Japan, China and America. Paladino has also worked as a book illustrator, filmmaker and poster designer, as well as creating sets for stage and opera productions. In 2008 the artist constructed a five-meter tall monument, made of ceramics and entitled *Porta d'Europa* ('Gateway to Europe'), on the remote Italian island of Lampedusa, as a memorial to the numerous migrants who had died attempting the perilous sea journey from North Africa to Europe. Paladino today lives and works in Rome, Milan and in his home town of Paduli.