

**FRANCISCO COPELLO:  
MI ARTE ES MI CUERPO (MY ART IS MY BODY)**

Works from the Juan Yarur Collection.

13 JUNE–28 JULY 2017

Cecilia Brunson Projects is proud to present the first UK exhibition of work by the acclaimed Chilean performance artist Francisco Copello (1938-2006). Copello worked in a variety of media – printmaking, photography, collage, painting, performance, choreography and mime– but central to all his work was the overriding theme that ‘mi arte es mi cuerpo’ (my art is my body).

For this exhibition, we are privileged to be able to present works solely from the Juan Yarur collection. Combining photographs and collages, the works span over three decades. Central to all of the works is Copello himself – whether capturing previous performance pieces in the elaborate collages or using himself as the subject. He embodied the concept of what he described as ‘living art’. Within the depictions, the artist explores a multitude of complex issues, ranging from sexual ambiguity and identity, to national identity. While some close-up self portraits are immediately reminiscent of Duchamp’s ‘Rose Sélavy’, others have a more political agenda. The series of black and white photographs of the artist dancing with the Chilean flag are haunting images that remind the viewer of the artist’s exile from his homeland.

Copello spent much of his working life in both Italy and the United States and it was here that he developed his unique, flamboyant style of self-expression and performance. After studying at the Academia di Belli Arti, Florence, he left for New York to complete his printmaking studies at the Pratt Graphic Center. In 1969, with the help of Fernando Torm-Toha, Copello founded the alternative New York Art workshop, ‘Studio F.’ / ‘Taller 69’. There they experimented with printmaking, collage, modern music and body-art. As well as printing all his own work, Copello printed works for key artists of the era – Rainer Fetting, David Hockney, Keith Haring and others. He was friends with Andy Warhol, came into contact with The Factory, and was part of the underground club scene. It was during this period that he developed his performative style. There he became a leading influence upon avant-garde art and visual performances.

In 1986 Copello accepted a founding role in the formation of the American Mime Theatre of New York (under Paul Curtis). Copello was later to bring this back to his home country in 1996 when he taught Body Art and Body Expressionism at the University of Chile. He became a deeply influential figure to future generations of Chilean artists, such as Carlos Leppe. When he later left to return to Italy, much of his performative work was a reaction to the social and political turmoil that Chile was facing at that time. Francisco Copello died in Santiago, Chile in 2006.

Video excerpts of some of Copello’s performances will also be on view alongside the exhibition.

Exhibitions in Santiago: **GRACIELA ITURBIDE** (18 - 31 May 2017)

**SEBASTIÁN GORDÍN** (15 - 29 June 2017)



*El Mimo y La Bandera*, 1975, silver gelatin print, 24 x 30 cm

Francisco Copello's solo exhibitions include the Instituto Chileno Italiano, Santiago de Chile; Instituto Chileno Norteamericano, Santiago de Chile; Galeria Pecanins, Mexico City; Studio F., New York; Instituto Chileno Frances, Valparaiso, Chile. His group exhibitions include the Galleria delle arti e del Disigno; Pratt Graphics Art Center, New York; Taller 99, Lima, Peru; Bienal de Viena, Austria and many other important exhibitions. Today the art of Francisco Copello is found in many major international collections, including the Brooklyn Museum, New York; the Museum of Modern Art, New York (MoMA); the New York Public Library; the Bibliotheque National, Paris; Museo de arte Contemporaneo, Sao Paulo, Brazil; the Art Museum of the Americas.

**The Juan Yarur Collection**

Juan Yarur’s contemporary art collection marked a turning point for Chile. The collection began in 2002, and ranges from historical figures such as Warhol, Muehl, Downey and Goldin to more contemporary masters such as Hirst, Jaar, Ruff and Amorales. A large part of the collection focuses on Chilean art and ranges from 1960 to present. Today he is patron of the Latin American Acquisitions Committee at Tate Modern, The Museum of Modern Art and the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. In 2013, works from his collection were showcased at an exhibition at the Museo de Arte Contemporaneo in Santiago titled “Juan Yarur: A Personal Tale.” This was the first time that a private collection was shown in a state museum in Chile. In 2008, Yarur founded a non-profit art foundation, Fundacion AMA. The Foundations’ mission is to create international networks for artists, curators, art historians and arts administrators through an annual residency for Chilean artists at Gasworks, London and an art historical grant with University of California, Los Angeles, as well as through exhibitions and international loans. For more information please visit [www.fundacionama.com](http://www.fundacionama.com).