

Flash Art

LOS ANGELES

Holy Mountain



Eric Wesley and Piero Golia of Mountain School of Arts. Photo: T. Lander.

In Los Angeles, artists Eric Wesley and Piero Golia recently established Mountain School of Arts, a fully functioning institution offering an alternative 'supplemental' arts education to its students by inviting space engineers, local artists, philosophers and L.A. art world personalities.

Who is the student body at MSA?

Piero Golia: Our first session of classes starts in January 2006 and we have admitted 15 students: 6 invited from countries in Europe, 3 students from the United States and 6 local students from L.A. The

school is open to different categories of people (not necessarily artists, although most of them are). The program is complementary to other schools, some of our students have attended more traditional art schools or are still involved in other programs such as USC or UCLA.

What is the school modelled on?

PG: As with everything in life, we did have a look to the past. Black Mountain College was an interesting example as was George Maciunas' Fluxus school and the school that Pierre Huyghe and Philippe Parreno started. Each were very interesting and poetic experiences.

Why did you feel it necessary to create such an institution?

PG: A lot of people have asked us this question and we really think that the only answer is because we thought it was a good idea.

Is it an accredited school? Can one graduate from it or receive a

certificate of some kind?

PG: Different from other schools, the Mountain School of Arts doesn't see the diploma as a goal, so we decided to give a diploma to the students the moment they begin the program and it is up to them to maintain it until the end of the program.

"The program is complementary to other schools..."

How is it funded?

PG: The school is supported by private funding together with public and private contributions. In particular the generous support of the Netherlands Consulate in Los Angeles, BeLA Foundation, the Croatian government, Gai (Associazione Giovani Artisti Italiani), the Goethe Institute and 1+1=3.

Where does the name come from?

PG: The name comes from the bar in Chinatown designed by Jorge Pardo. In fact the school takes place in the bar's backroom. This situation interested us since it is similar to the secret societies in Europe that were fighting for national liberation two-hundred years ago. —AM