

An audience including prominent gay

playwright Mario Mieli watch a theatre performance

Date

1969-1979

Medium

gelatin silver print

Description

Mario Mieli was a leading figure in the Italian gay movement of the 1970s. He combined a radical theoretical perspective with a provocative public persona. His sometimes outrageous public behaviour made him a controversial figure, but he was nonetheless respected as one of the movement's most important intellectuals. He's best known among English speakers for *Towards a Gay Communism*, a political pamphlet excerpted from his major theoretical work *Homosexuality and Liberation: Elements of a Gay Critique*. In 1971 he moved to London as a student, where he took an active part in the London Gay Liberation Front. Though he spent intermittent time in London until 1975, in 1972 based himself in Milan where he studied at university. In April 1972, he, along with Massimo Consoli (1945–2007), Nicolino Tosoni (b. 1943), Angelo Pezzana (b. 1940) and the French writer Françoise d'Eaubonne (1920–2005) held the first homosexual demonstration in Italy at a Congress of Sexology in San Remo. They protested against psychiatric condemnation of homosexual conduct and the use of aversion therapy to "convert" homosexuals. In 1972, Mieli helped found the collective *Fronte Unitario Omosessuale Rivoluzionario Italiano* (Italian revolutionary homosexual united front). Better known by its acronym F.U.O.R.I! (Come out!), it was Italy's first major gay-rights group. Started in Turin in 1971, F.U.O.R.I! appeared almost simultaneously in Rome,

Padua, Venice and in Milan, where Mieli was an organizer. After the collective united with the Italian Radical Party, Mario criticized the move as "counter-revolutionary," since he thought the gay movement should remain independent of political parties. He left the organization over political differences in 1974–75. After 1974 Mieli continued his activism by organizing the Collettivi Omosessuali Milanesi (Homosexual collectives of Milan). In 1976 the group's gay theatrical group, Nostra Signora dei Fiori, staged his play *La Traviata Norma. Ovvero: Vaffanculo... ebbene sì!* (the title's numerous puns defy translation). This outrageous production was successfully staged in Milan, Florence, and Rome. An in-your-face spectacle, it deliberately presented behavior designed to flout conventional, heterosexual norms.

Dimensions

Overall: 30.7 x 20.7 cm (12 1/8 x 8 1/8 in.)