This paper will examine the role of the body in Jannis Kounellis’ performative works. Having arrived in Italy from Greece at a young age to study in Rome, the artist soon became associated with the Italian avant-garde group Arte Povera. In the early 1970s, Kounellis produced several performative works in which he impersonated the god Apollo by wearing a mask made of white plaster. In the performance *Untitled*, staged for the first time in March 1973 at La Salita Gallery in Rome, Kounellis presented himself motionless, seated behind a table on which fragmented body parts in plaster were displayed. His face was covered by a mask of Apollo, while a flautist was playing an excerpt from Mozart. Central to the interpretation of the work is the notion of conflicting bodies. The opposition between the artist’s body and the plaster cast reproductions, that is between living and inanimate bodies, but also whole and fragmented, real and artificial, illustrate the central role of the body in the artist’s practice. Do the sectioned body parts on the table illustrate the lost wholeness of a remote past or the alienation of the present condition? Why does the artist mask his identity by wearing the features of an idealised, unreal, and yet fragmented face? This paper seeks to answer these questions by examining the way in which the body is employed and depicted in the work, thus unveiling its complex layers of meaning.

**Biographical note**

Roberta Minnucci is a PhD candidate in History of Art at the University of Nottingham. Her AHRC-funded PhD examines the role of cultural memory, in particular the use of citation and appropriation, in the late 1960s Italian avant-garde movement Arte Povera. She is particularly interested in investigating the use of art historical references and cultural heritage in Arte Povera in relation to the specific Italian artistic and political context of the time. In particular, her research is focussed on the works of Jannis Kounellis, Giulio Paolini, Luciano Fabro, Michelangelo Pistoletto and Pino Pascali, for their use of copies of classical sculptures and Old Master paintings together with a theatrical approach to performance.

As part of her doctoral studies, she has recently completed a research placement at Castello di Rivoli Museum of Contemporary Art working as curatorial assistant for the exhibition Giorgio de Chirico. Major Works from the Collection of Francesco Federico Cerruti. In 2017 she collaborated with the Estorick Collection of Modern Italian Art, London, in the role of exhibition assistant and catalogue contributor for the show Poor Art / Arte Povera. Italian Influences, British Responses, which examined the influence of the Italian movement on contemporary British art. Prior to the beginning of her
PhD, she has worked as a researcher and curator in different institutions such as Christie’s London, the Southampton City Art Gallery and the Pino Pascali Museum Foundation.