

PAOLO BUFALINI - PORTFOLIO



Argo, 2024

solo exhibition at Fondazione Home Movies, Bologna, and Palazzo Ducale, Genova, curation and text by Sineglossa

mostra personale presso Fondazione Home Movies, Bologna, e Palazzo Ducale, Genova, a cura e con un testo di Sineglossa



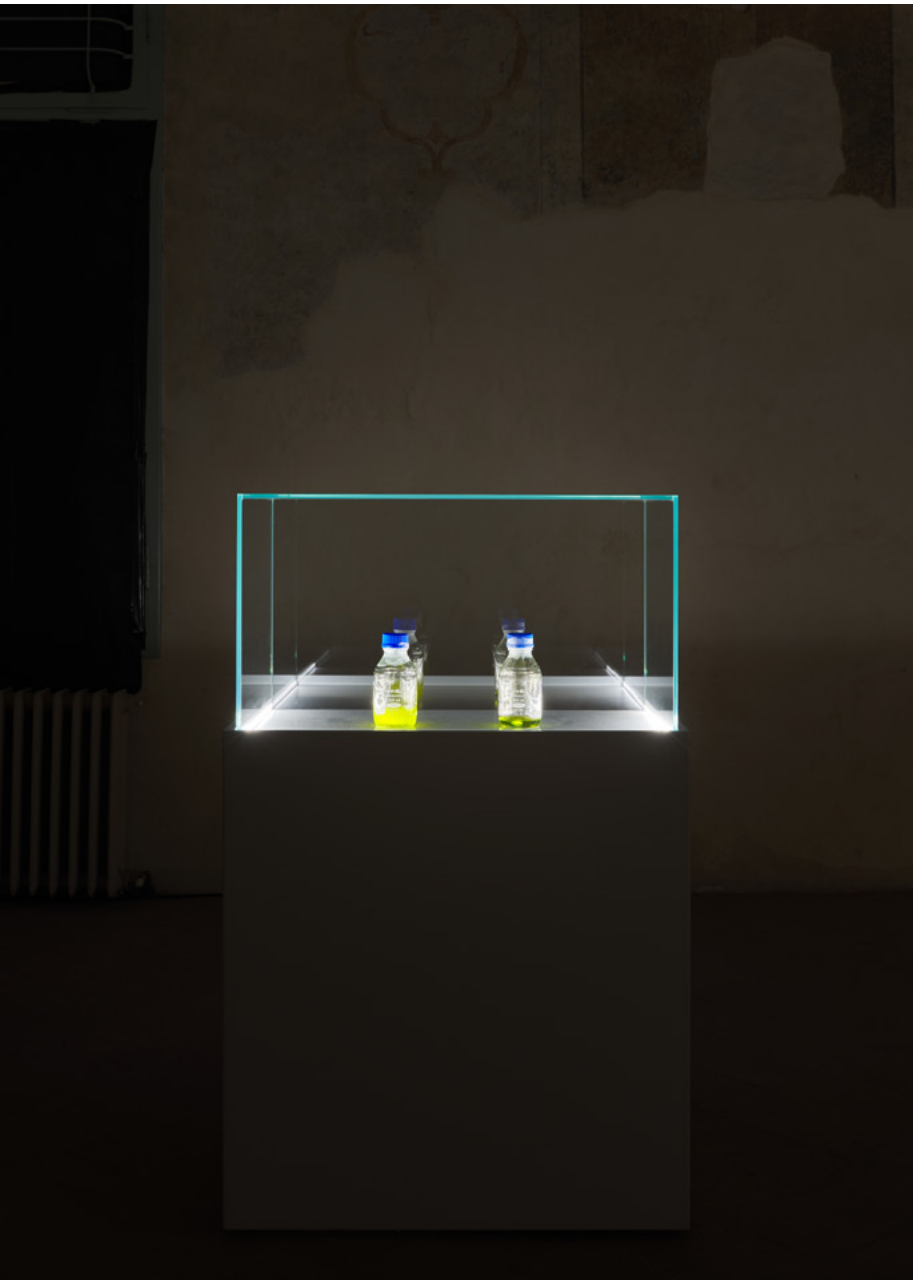
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“With *Argo*, Paolo Bufalini continues his investigation into the remediation of biographical materials through technological devices, which began with the projects *Land of Nod* (2023) and *beloved* (2023). The project applies generative artificial intelligence tools to a series of datasets made up of the digitalisation of the artist’s family albums. Once the datasets were created, the artist used them to train text-to-image generative models capable of reproducing the likenesses of the subjects represented in the albums. The result is the generation of an augmented past, a photographically credible representation of something that has not been, but might have been, in an ambiguous overlap between what’s factual and what’s imagined.

The family albums provide an opportunity for a more general reflection on archives and their power to open windows onto parallel worlds through a dizzying knowledge that redefines the linearity of time. The result is a series of syntographies in which the artist’s family members are depicted, at different ages of their lives, in the pose of sleepers. The ambiguity of sleep, where the subject is both absent and present, reflects the more general uncertainty of the image and recalls the dream-like dimension underlying the entire project.

Argo, from the very title, is intended as a journey - a journey through time and through the artist’s personal history, but also a journey into the technological unconscious, that space containing data that cannot be directly interpreted (in computer science latent space) on which generative models process images through associations precluded to humans. By customizing generative models with biographical and emotionally invested materials, Bufalini operates a poetic re-appropriation of the technological device, subjecting those same materials to the unpredictability of statistical correlations. The sculptural work that completes the project declines a similar idea of latency on a more processual level, presenting flasks containing a stirring acid solution in which second-hand gold jewellery is dissolved. The che-

mical process places gold in a condition of ambiguous presence - it is physically present but invisible and reversible in its original state -, opening up a hypothetical dimension of new generative possibilities.”
Sineglossa

1. *Argo*, exhibition view, Fondazione Home Movies, Bologna

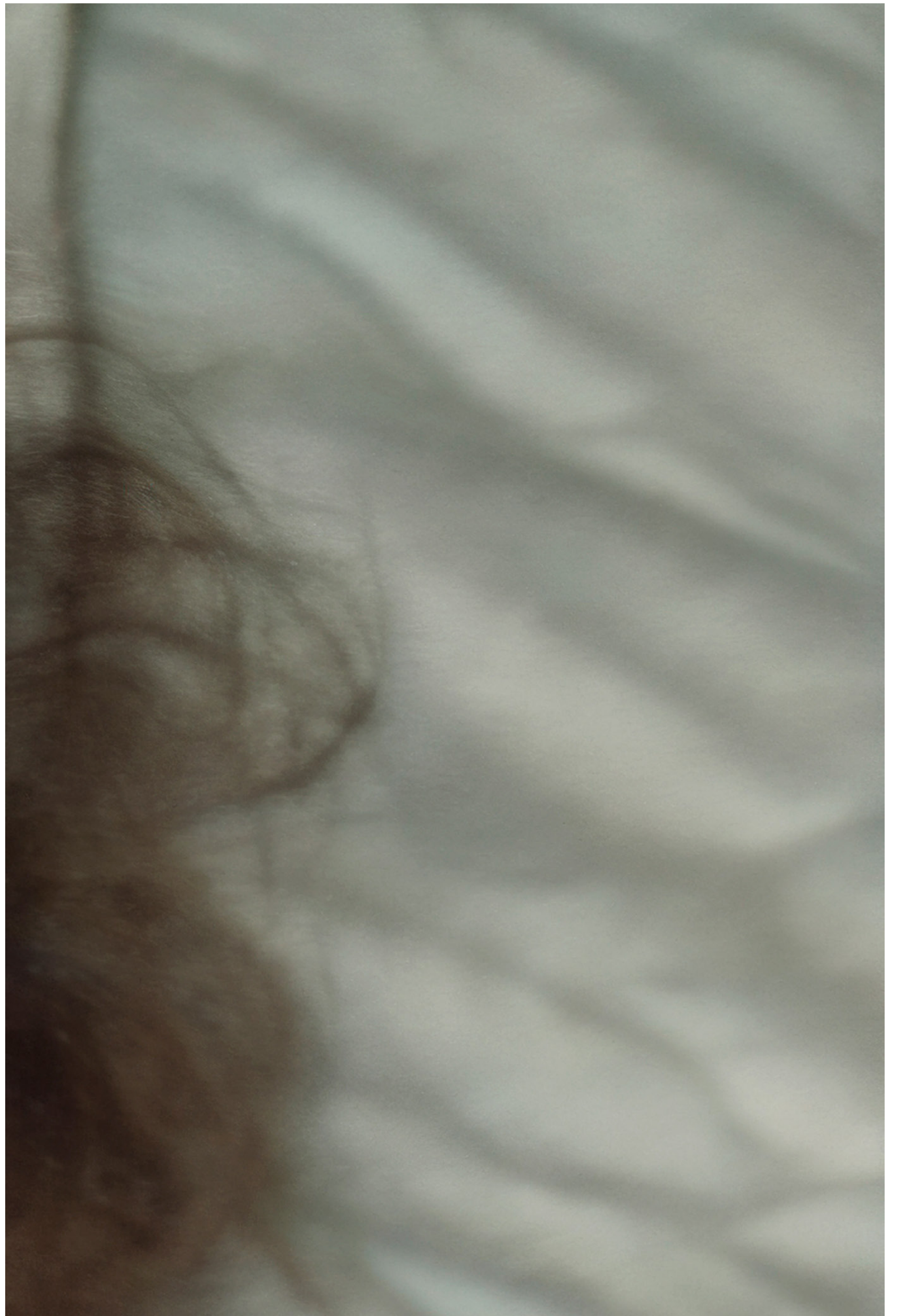
2. *Portrait of the mother as a sleeper I*, 2024
inkjet print on cotton paper, 80x120cm

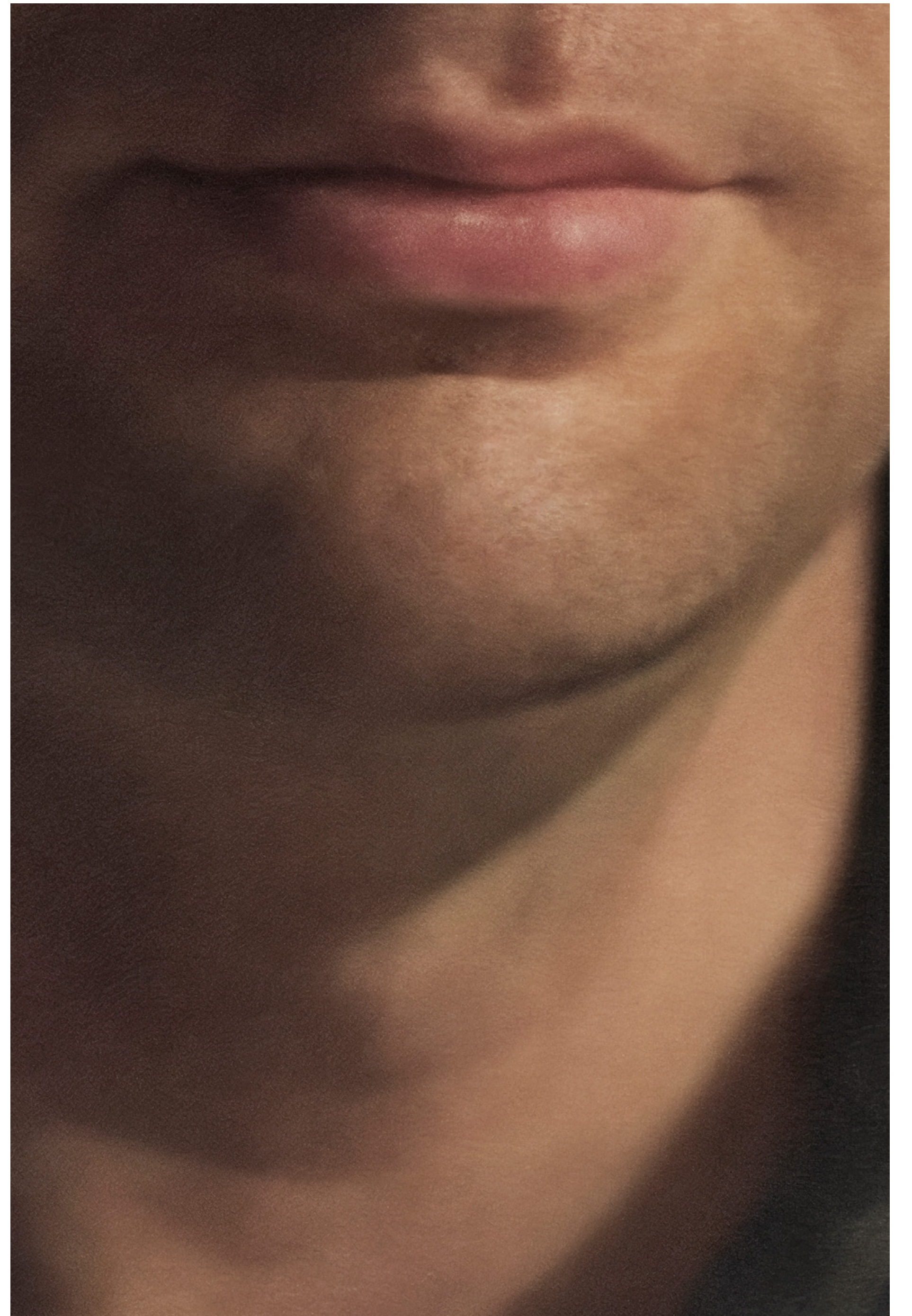
3. *Portrait of the father as a sleeper I*, 2024
inkjet print on cotton paper, 67,5x120cm

4. *Portrait of the sister as a sleeper I*, 2024
inkjet print on cotton paper, 67,5x120 cm

5. *HEALTH*, 2024 - [video](#)
gold ring and earrings dissolved in aqua regia, 3.3 borosilicate glass flasks, magnetic stirrers, enamelled mdf, glass, led, 135hx80x45 cm

6-7. *Portrait of the mother as a sleeper I*, 2024, details (following page)









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8-9. *Portrait of the father as a sleeper I*, 2024, details (previous pages)

10-11. *Portrait of the sister as a sleeper I*, 2024, details (previous pages)

12. *Argo*, exhibition view, Fondazione Home movies, Bologna

13. *Portrait of the mother as a sleeper IV*, 2024 (up)
inkjet print on cotton paper, 9x13,5cm (30x45 framed)
Portrait of the mother as a sleeper II, 2024 (down)
inkjet print on cotton paper, 9x13,5cm (30x45 framed)

14. *Portrait of the mother as a sleeper IV*, 2024
inkjet print on cotton paper, 9x13,5cm (30x45 framed)

15. *Portrait of the sister as a sleeper II*, 2024
inkjet print on cotton paper, 9x9cm (45x45 framed)

16. *Portrait of the mother as a sleeper III*, 2024 (up)
inkjet print on cotton paper, 9x13,5cm (30x45 framed)
Portrait of the father as a sleeper II, 2024 (down)
inkjet print on cotton paper, 7,6x13,5cm (30x45 framed)



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The images in the *Rückenfiguren* series were obtained by re-training generative AI models with scanned and digitalised photographs taken from the artist's family albums. Assuming signs of time such as scratches and dust, as well as the imperfections of amateur analogue photography, as semantic elements of their own language, the new generative models yield a peculiar aesthetic, a hybrid between the encyclopaedic visual knowledge - present in the initial model - and a circumscribed, emotionally dense visual paradigm.

The series takes up from Romanticism the motif of the Rückenfigur, a figure seen from behind and turned towards a mysterious elsewhere, and unattainable themselves. The portraits as Rückenfigur play on this limit between recognisability and unrecognisability of the subject, on the gap between a data-grounded statistical elaboration and an arbitrary imaginative act.

17. *Portrait of the mother as a Rückenfigur I*, 2024
inkjet print on cotton paper, 60x120cm

18. *Portrait of the mother as a Rückenfigur I*, detail



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“*be/loved* continues a dialogue begun in 2021 between the artist Paolo Bufalini (Rome, 1994) and the curatorial/editorial duo Condylura around the notion of excavation. Drawing on his own and the partner’s memories and biographical materials, the exhibition presents different declinations of the deep in the affective and temporal, informatic and mineral fields, contrasting the sentimentality of the subjects with the extractive logic it enacts.

Alongside two new productions made for the exhibition, *beloved* presents an unseen photographic work, born from the collaboration with Marcello Galvani and part of the project *Land of Nod*, dedicated to the hybridization between digital production and physical space. The project is curated by Treti Galaxie, who contributes to the exhibition with a text in curatorial dialogue: *From the dream experiments collection*.

The productions on display cross installation, analog and digital photography, found object and sculpture, mediums that the artist uses as instruments of speculation and reification. The works suggest a direct relationship between extraction on the level of the artistic process, both material and of value, and on a more analytical level, interrogating criticalities related to the present time, particularly the relationship with technology, yet from a personal, emotionally invested perspective. An element made explicit by the exhibition environment itself, marked by a few light points and treated in dark tones, evoking the entrance to a remote place: an intimate space – whether psychic or oneiric – but also a rocky gorge or an underground warehouse.

The Sleeper (life-size) is a 1:1 scale photographic portrait of the artist’s partner caught sleeping in their bed. The exposure of an already intimate and vulnerable moment enters into a suggestive relationship with an additional form of invasiveness. The photograph indeed conceals a second portrait in the form of a data report, *The Sleep*, created through a biomedical device – the sensor-equipped bodysuit that is partially re-

vealed in the photo – through which the artist recorded the parameters of her partner’s breathing, heartbeat, and body movements during a night’s sleep. By treasuring an act of appropriation of sensitive data, the photograph seems to take on a virtual three-dimensionality, traversing portraiture from the view camera to biometrics, re-proposing the theme of the machinic image as a capture of the soul.

The confrontation with the logic of the machine is a recurring perspective in Paolo Bufalini’s work, which is filtered in *beloved* by dynamics of feeling and memory, both personal and datafied. The image of the ‘beloved one’ returns in the refrigerator unit filled with cans of energy drinks, on which is printed a childhood photograph of her in a carnival mask. *Tricksters* takes the form of a monolithic lightbox that holds at low temperatures the viral multiplication of this crowd of harlequins, emitting a carnal light into the environment. If *The Sleeper* refers back to the world of data collection, the ergonomic invasion of devices, and the existence of sensitive information circulating outside the horizon of perception, *Tricksters* seems to call into question the purposes that the same collection of sensitive data has: to the profiling and fragmentation into categories of the subject, its transformation into a reservoir of expendable value follows. The refrigerator thus becomes a hyper-personalized advertising display to enhance one’s performance to a taurine caricature of the self.

The last work in the exhibition is the sculptural group *Untitled*, a composition of forty-five multiform tins, presented on the wall in the form of a diptych. The work originates from a childhood memory of the artist, a ritual of molybdomancy – the divination of the shapes assumed by molten metal thrown into cold water – that has become a New Year’s tradition in various northern European countries. A family game to be played with children, as in the artist’s memory. The theme of divination, of questioning the future, associated with the promises of technology, also returns frequently in Paolo Bufalini’s production. Several works feature the crystal ball, which the artist conceives as the me-

beloved, 2023

solo exhibition at Gelateria Sogni di Ghiaccio, Bologna, curation and text by Condylura

dieval version of an interactive screen, a possible icon of a time when techno-futuristic and seemingly rationalist narratives conceal a strong component of magical and mystical thinking, from entrepreneur gurus to predictive algorithms. While tin may evoke a more material image of excavation, it is also one of the most widely used metals for soldering electronic components. Similarly to the sphere, the choice of the diptych seems to echo a medieval motif, the ancient illustrated layout, inviting the viewer to study a kind of codex or encyclopedia of mineralogical prophecies.

The tin concretions – random forms generated by the hot-cold clash evoked throughout the whole exhibition – recall a figure of becoming, seemingly contrary to the mathematical clarity of computer code. Yet the invitation to a practice of reading by an association of images, in which the phenomenon of pareidolia – the recognition of known patterns from random shapes, as in the reading of clouds – takes place, also refers back to computer vision, to artificial intelligence software such as Google Deep Dream and Dall-E.

From the photograph that captures a part of the soul as a kind of Horcrux, to the cold room that contains the reproductive power of a meme, up to the metalized viscera interrogated by a priest- algorithm, the space of Gelateria Sogni di Ghiaccio is turned into a camera obscura, where at the extraction of the profound is discovered to be fixed a technical internalization of the world.”

Condylura

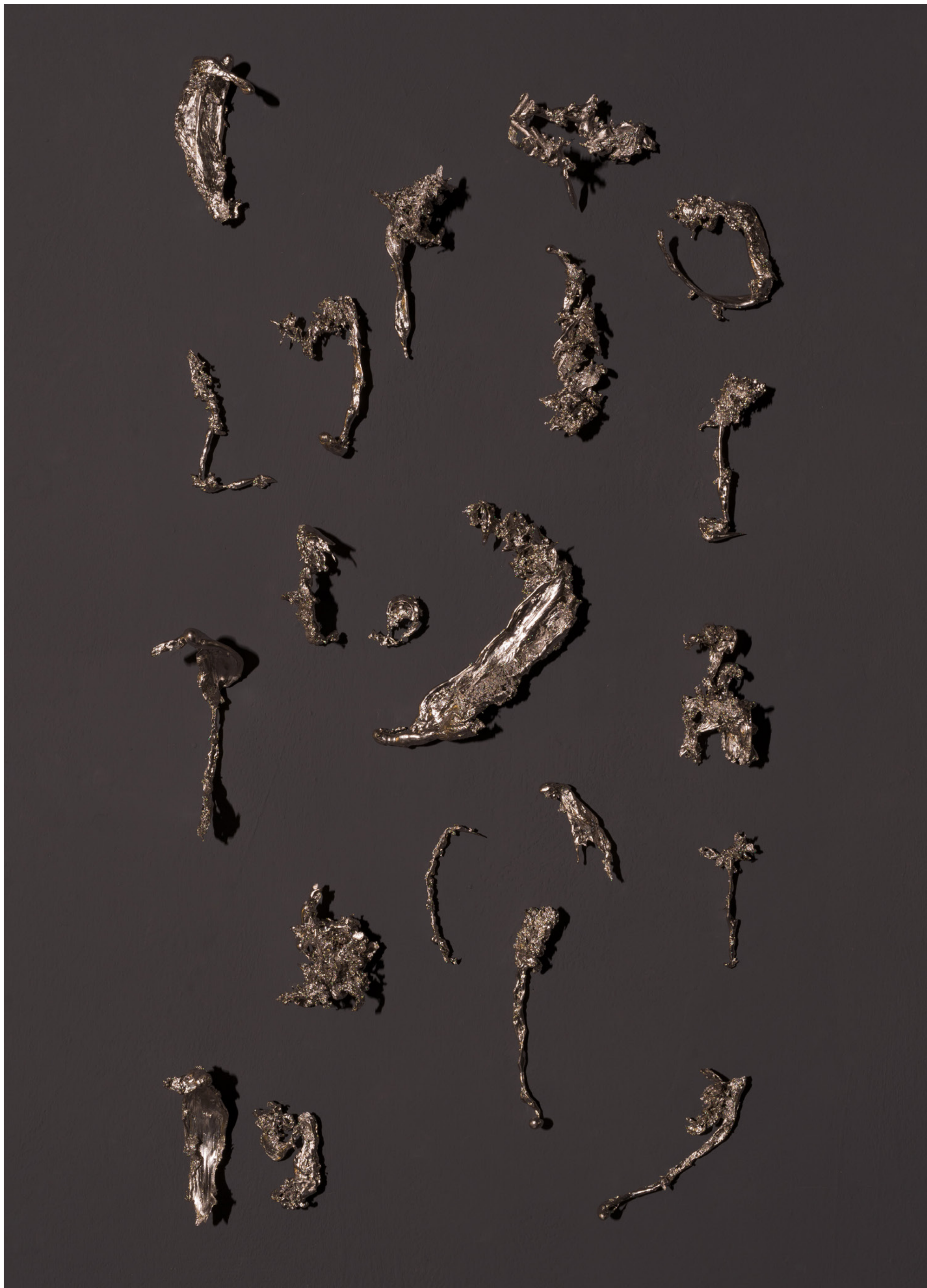
19. *beloved*, exhibition view, Gelateria Sogni di Ghiaccio, Bologna

20. *The Sleeper (life-size)*, 2022, detail
inkjet print on Baryta paper Canson II, 103,5x130x4,5cm

21. *Tricksters*, 2023, detail
refrigerator, 239 customized energy-drink cans, 196x120x70cm

22-24. *Untitled*, 2023, dettagli
tin, 110x100x7cm









fruits is a cycle of ephemeral works made by tattooing trauma and words to exorcise on apples and pears. During the exhibition time, apples and pears are subjected to a process of organic degradation, thus accomplishing what could be called a sublimation - of the trauma, as well as of the body on which it is inscribed. Each work takes, from time to time, its title from the sequence of tattooed words, forming a kind of litany.

24. *Self-doubt, Sex-addiction, Anorexia*, 2023 (left)
glass and steel table, tattooed Kanzi apples, 75x34x50cm
Anger, Ex-boyfriend, Depression, Paranoia, 2023 (right)
glass and steel table, tattooed Kaiser pears 75x34x50cm

25. *Self-doubt, Sex-addiction, Anorexia*, detail

26. *Anger, Ex-boyfriend, Depression, Paranoia*, detail





Y is a series of borosilicate glass works, each of which contains, sealed, a baby tooth dipped in an acid solution. Each of the Ys includes the name of the tooth's owner in the title. Over time, the acid solution will consume the tooth until it disappears. The work hints at a form of presence linked to the invisible - although dissolved, the tooth, continues to "be there" - and at an idea of time transformed, but never fully obliterated. Similarly, in European folklore, the fallen tooth is placed under the pillow for the fairy to pick up, leaving a coin in its place. Fallen teeth thus serve as a conduit for a dialogue with an invisible and magical elsewhere, while marking the stages of leaving childhood.



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“The exhibition, conceived as a site-specific environmental installation housing two sculptures, is articulated as a game of overlapping between different temporalities. On the one hand, the past, evoked by the carpet of shredded texts and documents, discursive scraps that become landscape, and by the bones contained in the bedside tables. On the other, the future, evoked by the crystal sphere and the movement through time recalled by the saddle. The title, eve, alludes to the correspondence, in English, between the noun “eve” and Eve, thus evoking a sense of expectation, the imminence of an event, but also an original gaze, The title, eve, alludes to the correspondence, in the English language, between the noun “eve” and Eve, thus evoking a sense of anticipation, the imminence of an event, but also an original gaze, situated at the dawn of humanity. The orange light, as well as the placement below street level, alludes to an underworld, in a metaphorical as well as literal sense.

[...]

Faced with this amputation of words that is growing in the floor, I have no choice but to look for references, to stitch together quotations from which suggestions may emerge. I pick up a page by Tim Ingold, a passage on the illusions produced by the myth of the will: “To presume mastery in any situation of existential uncertainty is to court disaster”. Paolo’s formal control makes me think of a courtship with disaster, for his works seem to be innervated by the sensation of the impending, in which biographical elements and iconological references mingle, calling into question broader criticalities of the present

age. The way it reveals, day by day, a conjuncture of many ends of the world - social, environmental, economic - but above all the apparent historical incapacity to express them if not in the immobility of a retroactive prophecy. The very title of the exhibition, eve, the vigil, conceals in the harmony of the palindrome word a reference to cyclical time, to a feeling of being trapped in an imperishable wait, which is though essentially dead time as it does not seem to be able to find a resolution in the event.” Paolo Gabriotti, excerpt from the exhibition text

29. eve, exhibition view

30-31. *Untitled*, 2021
horse-saddle, glass sphere, 50x40x60cm

32-33. *Untitled*, 2021
skull replicas, bedside tables, shredded paper, two elements 55x48x40cm each

34. eve, floor detail

eve, 2021

solo exhibition at MASSIMO, Milano, curation and text by Paolo Gabriotti









Senza titolo, 2021

velvet pillowcases, arduino, xbee modules, 3d print, cotton, foam, ten elements 50x50x20cm each

A group of pillows, equipped with an internal mechanism, simulates synchronic, slow and regular breathing. Like a silent chorus, the group seems to be immersed in a suspended time based on telepathic connection. The work reflects my interest in the entanglements between magic thinking and the perturbing potential of the machinic. While the apparent spontaneity of the movement hints at an animistic conception of the object - the inanimate object as a vessel for a breath of life, as the perpetuation of an immaterial presence - the repetition reveals the rigidity of the computer code and the simulacral nature of the device.

31. *Untitled*, 2021

velvet pillowcases, arduino, xbee modules, 3d print, cotton, foam, two elements 50x50x20cm each

[Video](#)



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The movement of two pillows, synchronized through xbee cards, simulates regular, slow and silent breathing. The machine, concealed, stages an ideally infinite repetition, at once harmonious and alienating in its unnatural perfection.

29. *Proposal*, 2020
velvet pillowcases, arduino, xbee modules, 3d print, cotton, foam, two elements
50x50x20cm each

[Video](#) - Fabbri Schenker Projects, London, 2022
[Video](#) - MON viewing room, Torino, 2022
[Video](#) - MAMbo, Bologna, 2020

CV

Italian, born in 1994 in Rome; lives and works in Bologna.

Education

2024-ongoing PhD student at Accademia di Belle Arti di Napoli
2020 MA Visual Arts, Accademia di Belle Arti di Bologna
2017 BA Painting, Accademia di Belle Arti di Bologna

Solo exhibitions

2024 *Argo*, Fondazione Home movies, Bologna, curated by Sineglossa
2024 *Argo*, Palazzo Ducale, Genova, curated by Sineglossa
2023 *Cuore*, MarktStudio, Bologna
2023 *Data Mining* (w/ Lorenzo Lunghi), La Rada, Locarno, curated by Tommaso Gatti & Yimei Zhang
2023 *beloved*, Gelateria Sogni di Ghiaccio, Bologna, curated by Condylura
2022 MON viewing room, Torino, text by Walter Guadagnini
2022 *Forget me not* (w/ Allistair Walter), Fabbri-Schenker Projects, Londra
2021 *eve*, MASSIMO, Milano, curated by Paolo Gabriotti
2020 *Martedì*, Localedue, Bologna, curated by Filippo Tappi & Gabriele Tosi

Group exhibitions

2025 *The good company*, IUNO, Roma, curated by Giulia Gaibisso
2024 *Remote*, NUB Project Space, Pistoia, curated by Condylura
2024 Premio Conai - Ecomondo, Rimini, curated by Spazio Taverna (Marco Bassan, Ludovico Pratesi)
2023 *IMAGINA* - XXVII Biennale di Gubbio, Palazzo Ducale, Gubbio, curated by Spazio Taverna
2023 *Castello a orologeria*, Castello di Andraz (BL) (Dolomiti Contemporanee)
2023 *La sostanza agitata*, Museo di Palazzo Collicola, Spoleto, curated by Saverio Verini
2023 Premio E.ART.H., Eataly Art House, Verona, curated by Treti Galaxie
2022 *emERgenze contempoRanEE* (permanente), Museo della Città, Rimini, curated by Cristina Ambrosini, Claudia Collina, Giovanni Sassu
2022 *Casting the Castle III*, Civitella Ranieri Foundation, Umbertide (PG), curated by Saverio Verini
2022 *A Paradise for the Smiling Alligators*, Mura Urbiche, Lecce, curated by Marta Orsola Sironi
2021 *Peng on the Beach*, Circolo Tennis Italia, Bologna, curated by Xing
2020 *Futuro. Arte e società dagli anni Sessanta a domani*, Gallerie d'Italia, Vicenza, curated by Walter Guadagnini & Luca Beatrice
2020 *Baitball (01)*, Palazzo San Giuseppe, Polignano a Mare (BA)
2019 *Estate Autunno*, State Of, Milano, curated by Irene Angenica, Giovanni Paolin, Giacomo Pigliapoco
2019 *Nights: Prolog*, Lapsus, Timisoara
2019 *La Natura delle Cose*, Museo Temporaneo Navile, Bologna, curated by di Luca Caccioni
2019 *Snoozin' Gutssss*, Neverneverland, Amsterdam, curated by MRZB
2019 *Carbonio e Silicio*, Liceo Crescenzi-Pacinotti, Bologna, curated by Cuoghi Corsello
2019 *Homo Sapiens*, DAS, Bologna, curated by Davide Da Pieve
2018 *Communal Leakings*, Macao, Milano, curated by MRZB
2018 *Ex-Centro*, Otto Gallery, Bologna, curated by Luca Caccioni
2017 *Tirarsi Fuori*, P420, Bologna, curated by Lelio Aiello
2017 *Playing Scenic*, Pinacoteca Nazionale, Bologna, curated by Carmen Lorenzetti
2017 *Savoir Faire*, Current, Milano
2017 *Family Matters*, Gelateria Sogni di Ghiaccio

Prizes and commissions

SIAE - Per Chi Crea
2023 Premio E.ART.H. (shortlisted)
2022 Mint Fund Grant - Foundation for Art and Blockchain
2022 Carapelli for Art
2020 Emilia-Romagna region acquisition prize
2020 Combat Prize
2019 Ducato Prize, Academy Art Award

Residencies* / Workshops

2021 Scuola di Filosofia, ICA Milano, Felice Cimatti
2020 Nuovo Forno del Pane, MAMbo, Bologna*
2019 Cesare Pietroiusti, *Un certo numero di cose*, MAMbo, Bologna
2019 Bocs Art, Cosenza*
2017 GAFF dabasso, Milano*
2014 Cesare Pietroiusti, Andrea Lanini, *Dioniso, un dio liquido e molteplice*, Fondazione Lac o Le Mon, San Cesario di Lecce

On paper

2025 Essay - Face/Off. I volti latenti tra immagini operazionali e operazioni artistiche, Matteo Patelli
in: Blink postfotografico. Teorie, pratiche e derive delle immagini ibride, Postemdia books, edited by Mauro Zanchi
2024 Catalogue - Arte Circolare - Premio Conai
2023 Catalogue - IMAGINA - XXVII Biennale di Gubbio

2023 Catalogue - La sostanza agitata, viaindustriae publishing
2023 Catalogue - EmERgenze contempoRaNee. I premi acquisto della Regione Emilia-Romagna, Regione Emilia - Romagna
2023 Interview - Espoarte #121, Matteo Galbiati
2022 Interview - Artribune #68, Saverio Verini
2021 Catalogue - Live Arts Week X
2021 Interview - Inside Art #122, Eleonora Bruni
2021 Catalogue - 222 artisti emergenti su cui investire, Exibart
2021 Artist book - Condylura01
2021 Catalogue - Nuovo Forno del Pane. A logbook, Edizioni MAMbo
2020 Catalogue - Futuro. Arte e società dagli anni Sessanta a domani, Edizioni Gallerie d'Italia | Skira
2020 Catalogue- Combat Prize
2019 Catalogue - Ducato prize
2019 Catalogue - 222 artisti emergenti su cui investire, Exibart
2018 Catalogue - Live Arts Week VII

Online

2024 Review - *Argo*, Juliet, Giulia Gorella
2024 Review - *Remote*, Juliet, Serena Trinchero
2024 Review - *Argo*, ATP Diary, Erica Rigato
2024 Review - *Argo*, Exibart, Andrea Rossetti
2024 Interview - Mangrovia, Alessandra Navazio
2024 Studio Visit - La Quadriennale di Roma, Edoardo De Cobelli
2023 Essay - Phroom, Enrico Camprini
2023 Studio Visit - La Quadriennale di Roma, Marco Scotti
2023 Review - *beloved*, ATP Diary, Elena Bordignon
2023 Review - *beloved*, Segnonline, Benedetta Sala
2023 Interview (with Condylura and Treti Galaxie) - Exibart, Giulia Turconi
2023 Review - *Land of Nod*, Tropico del Cancro, Chiara Spaggiari
2023 Interview - About, Francesco di Nuzzo
2022 Interview - Artribune, Saverio Verini
2022 Studio Visit - ATP Diary, Giulia Gaibisso
2021 Review - eve, Flash Art Italia, Tommaso Gatti
2021Review - eve, Exibart, Carmen Lorenzetti
2021 Interview - ATP Diary, Tommaso Pagani

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