

PAOLO BUFALINI
PORTFOLIO 2025-20



Portrait of the mother as a Rückenfigur I, 2024
AI-generated image, inkjet print on cotton paper, 60x120cm

***Rückenfiguren*, 2024-ongoing**

The images in the *Rückenfiguren* series were generated by fine-tuning generative AI models, each trained on a subject-specific corpus of scanned and digitised photographs drawn from the artist's family albums. By treating signs of time—such as scratches and dust—as well as the imperfections of amateur analogue photography as semantic elements of their own visual language, these fine-tuned models produce a hybrid aesthetic situated at the intersection of statistical process, emotional density and temporal depth.

The series takes up from Romanticism the motif of the Rückenfigur, a figure seen from behind, absorbed in contemplation, oriented toward something mysteriously other and itself inaccessible. The *portraits as Rückenfigur* play on this limit between the recognisability and unrecognisability of the subject, opening a gap between data-grounded statistical processing and the alterity it produces, evoking the possibility of a technological sublime.





Argo, 2024

Fondazione Home Movies Bologna, 2024;

Palazzo Ducale, Genoa, 2024.

curated and with a text by Sineglossa

“With *Argo*, Paolo Bufalini continues his investigation into the remediation of biographical materials [applying] 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, thus generating what may be described as 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 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 dreamlike 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 memories, 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 chemical 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





Portrait of the father as a sleeper I, 2024
AI-generated image, inkjet print on cotton paper, 67,5x120cm



Portrait of the sister as a sleeper I, 2024
AI-generated image, inkjet print on cotton paper, 67,5x120cm



Portrait of the mother as a sleeper I, 2024
AI-generated image, inkjet print on cotton paper, 80x120cm



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



Argo, exhibition view at Fondazione Home Movies, Bologna



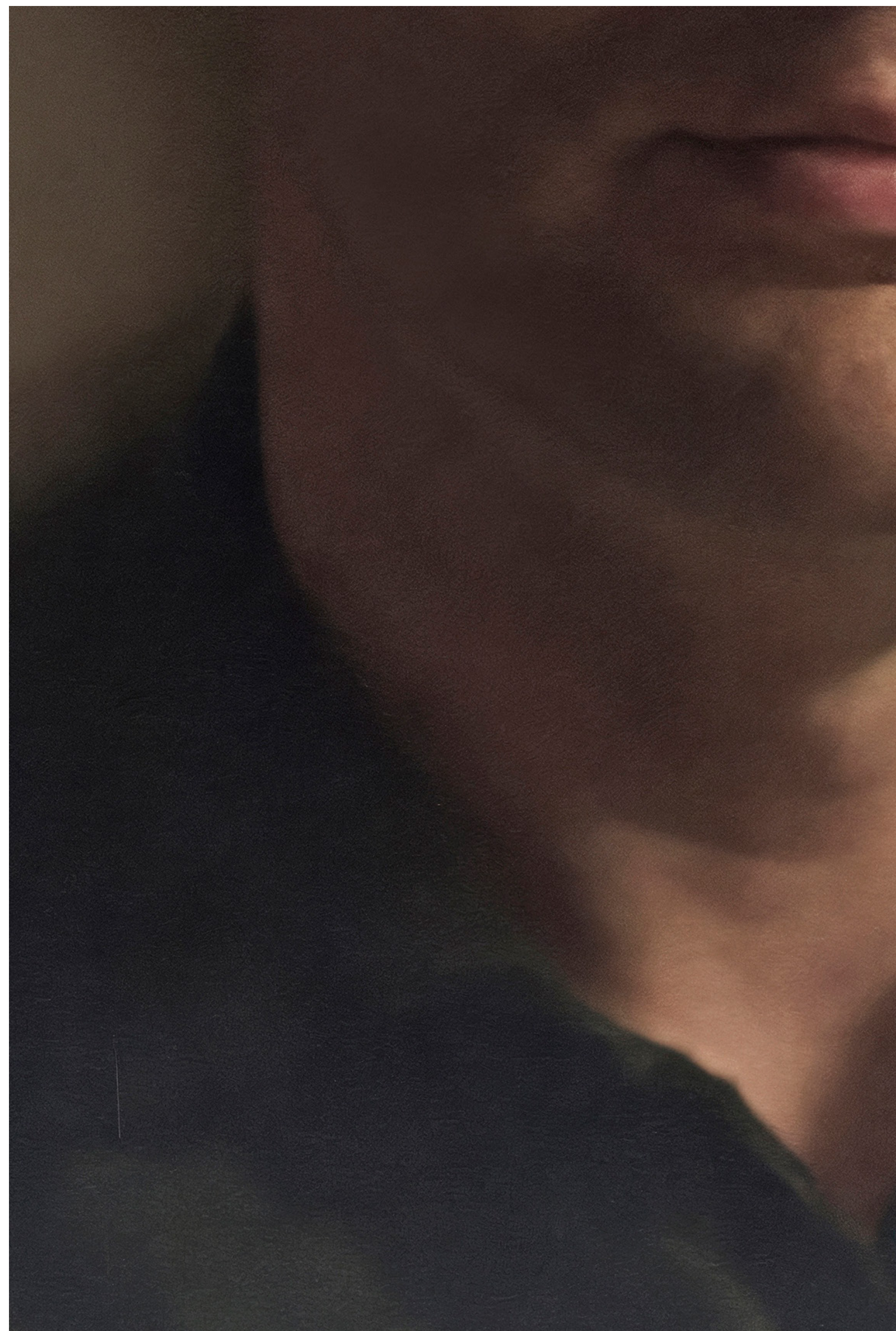


Portrait of the mother as a sleeper I, 2024
AI-generated image, inkjet print on cotton paper, 80x120cm





Portrait of the father as a sleeper I, 2024
AI-generated image, inkjet print on cotton paper, 67,5x120cm





Portrait of the sister as a sleeper I, 2024
AI-generated image, inkjet print on cotton paper, 67,5x120cm





Portrait of the sister as a sleeper III, 2024
AI-generated image, inkjet print on cotton paper, 9x9cm (45x45cm framed)





Portrait of the mother as a sleeper II, 2024
AI-generated image, inkjet print on cotton paper, 9x13,5cm (30x45cm framed)





Portrait of the father as a sleeper II, 2024
AI-generated image, inkjet print on cotton paper, 7,6x13,5cm (30x45cm framed)



Home, 2023

contact c-print from 4x5" negative on Fuji Chrystal Archive paper

36x27x3cm (framed)

“About twelve or thirteen years ago my mother came home with a tableau depicting four hearts and hung it in the kitchen. It is an object that has always caught my attention - for its dissonance with the other furnishings, and for the sentimentalism it expresses so openly. Going through numerous removals and different placements, it has slowly taken root in my imagination as a kind of domestic icon, a synaptic shortcut for a set of feelings that is hard to define - melancholy, affection, guilt. I wanted to portray it as I happened to see it one day, on the veranda. This seemingly marginal placement actually reaffirmed its power - it was still there.”

Paolo Bufalini



fruits, 2023

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.

Self-doubt, Sex-addiction, Anorexia, 2023

glass and steel table, tattooed Kanzi apples 75x34x50cm

Anger, Ex-boyfriend, Depression, Paranoia, 2023

glass and steel table, tattooed Kaiser pears 75x34x50cm









Y, 2023-ongoing

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.

Y (*Luca*), 2023

borosilicate glass, hydrochloric acid, water, milk tooth 48x80x1,8cm





beloved, 2024

solo exhibition at Gelateria Sogni di Ghiaccio, Bologna

curated and with a text by Condylura

“*beloved*” 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.

[...]

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



The Sleeper (life-size), 2022, detail

inkjet print on Baryta paper Canson II, 103,5x130x4,5cm

“*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 revealed in the photo – through which the artist recorded the parameters

of her partner’s breathing, heartbeat, and body movements during a night’s sleep. The report was then minted as an NFT. 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”.





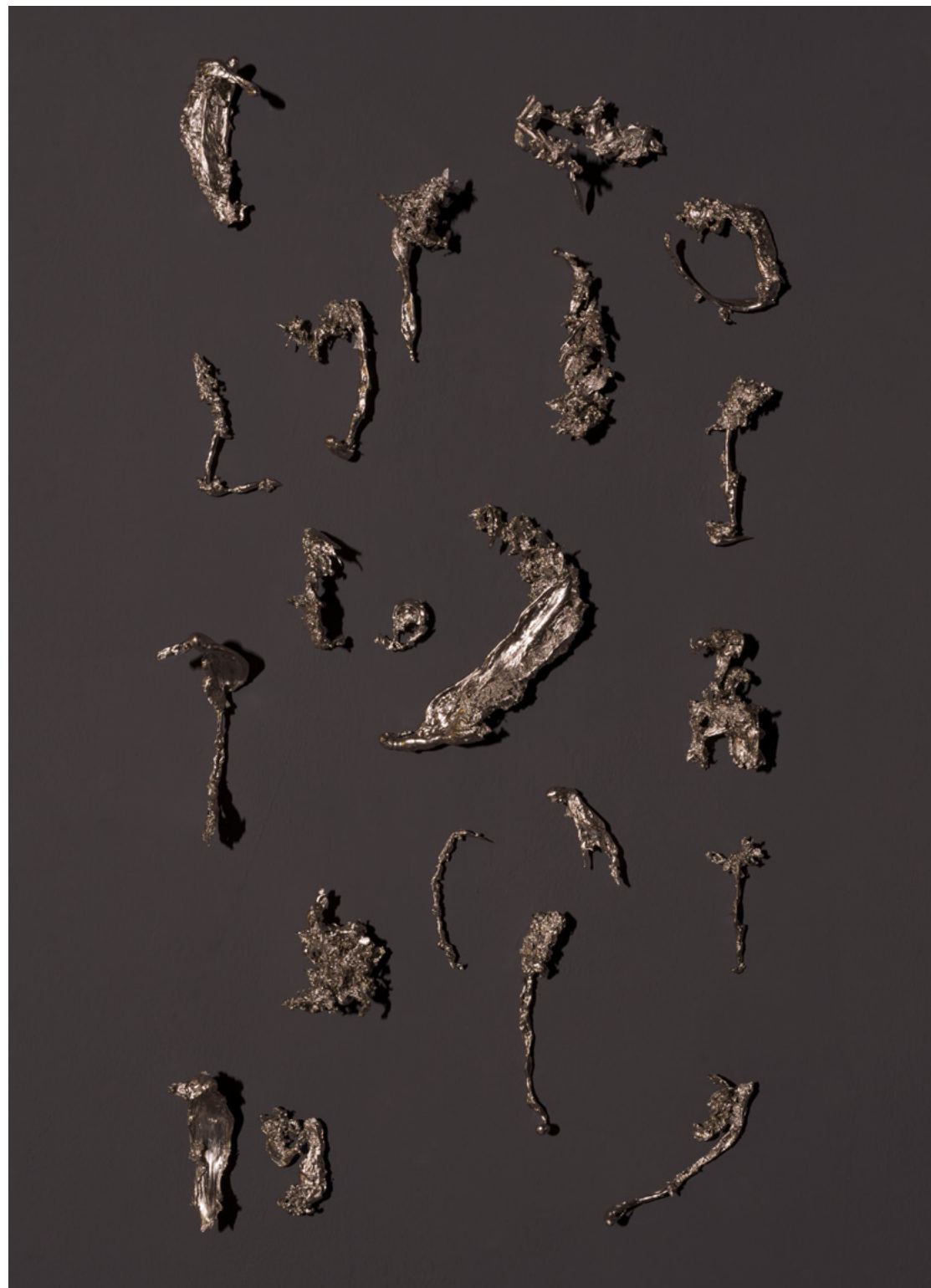
Tricksters, 2023, detail
refrigerator, 239 customized energy-drink cans, 196x120x70cm

“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”.







Untitled, 2023
tin, 110x100x7cm

“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 medieval 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”.





eve, 2021

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

“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.

[...]

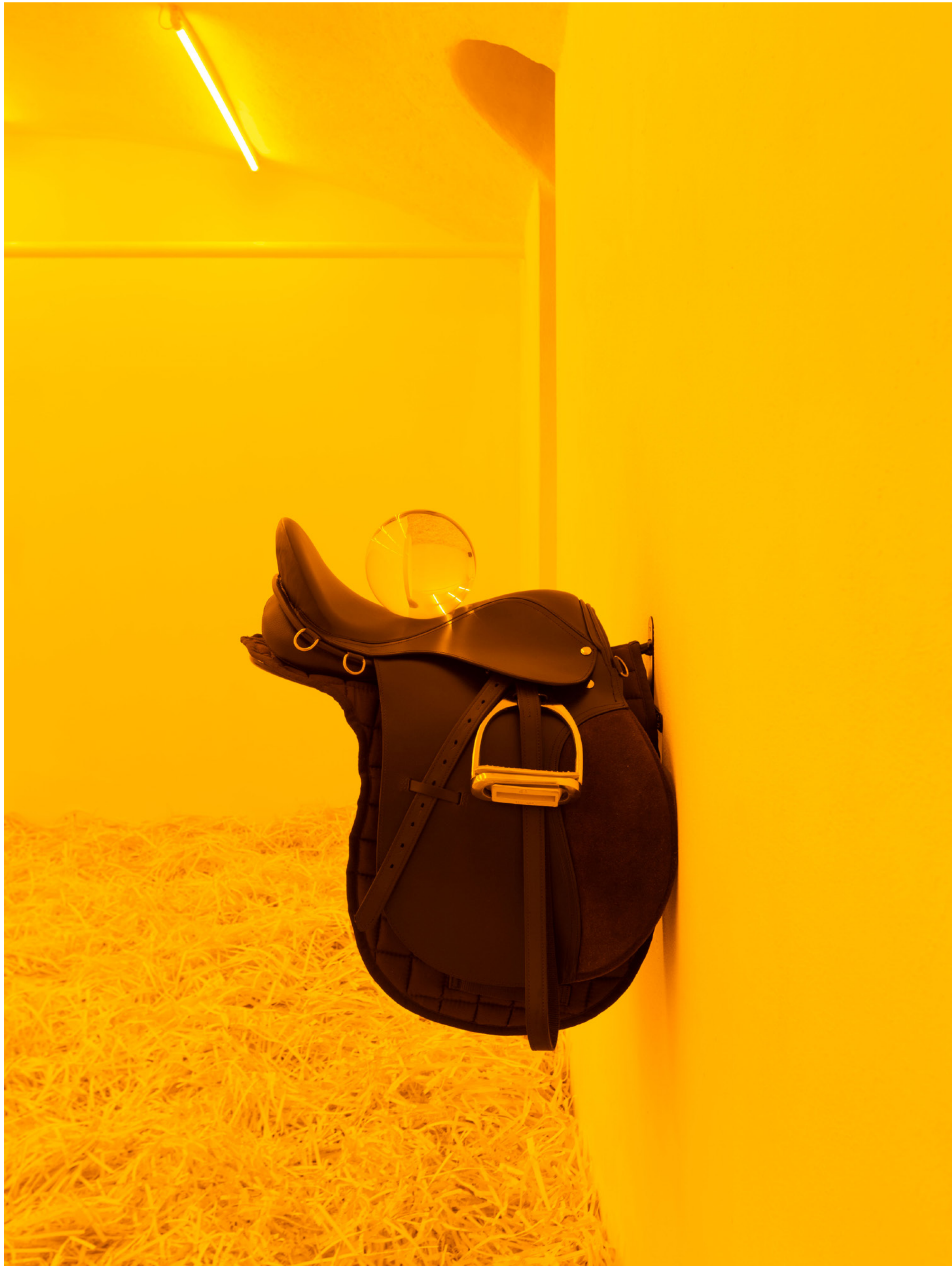
Faced with this amputation of words that is growing in the floor, I have no choice but to look for references, to stitch together quotations from which suggestions may emerge. I pick up a page by Tim Ingold, a passage on the illusions produced by the myth of the will: “To presume mastery in any situation 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

Works:

Untitled, 2021, horse saddle, glass sphere, 50x40x60cm

Untitled, 2021, bedside tables, shredded paper, skull replicas, two elements 55x40x48cm each









Untitled, 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.

VIDEO

Proposal, 2020

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

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.

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/ Alistair Walter), Fabbri-Schenker Projects, London

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 molteplici*, 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

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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