

# ETTORE FAVINI

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# ETTORE FAVINI

CREMONA 1974

As an artist manipulator of ideas and objects, thoughts and spaces, Ettore Favini builds its work into an intimate relationship with history and its actuality.

Reader and interpreter of the social context viewed in its complexity even through public art operations, he realizes works and installation with a great poetic and symbolic value. He sees sculptures, installations and community environment design as ways of getting close to the reality that surrounds him, and his work often links up to environmental themes and the importance of memory as processes by which space and time are recorded and organised.

He has won several awards and held a number of residential posts, 2006 he won the *Artegirovane Prize* in Turin, in 2007 the prestigious *New York Award* of the Italian Academy at Columbia University, 2009 was finalist at the *Prize of Castello di Rivoli* and in 2012 resident at *Civitella Raineri Foundation*.

His works have been exhibited in many solo and group exhibitions in Italy and abroad, Gallery of Modern Art in Milan, Fondazione Sandretto Re Rebaudengo in Turin, American Academy in Rome, Palazzo Strozzi in Florence, MART in Rovereto, Futura Space in Prague, ISCP in New York, Italian Academy in New York, Villa Medici in Rome.



*"Come se i bambini ci mostrassero la natura"; 2012, installation, wood, iron, 210 X 15 X 15 cm each.*  
 installation view, Fuoriclasse, Gallery of Modern Art Milan

Several cylindrical cases contain wooden rods in various hues. The rods take up the up the form and colour of those used by Alberto Garutti in his 2005 work *Come se la natura avesse lasciato fuori gli uomini* ("Af if Nature Had Left Men Out"). In the latter case, the rods constructed a cage in which grass freely. Favini's work suggests a new interpretation of that project, offering children playing in the park the chance to build different forms.



"W18s"; with Antonio Rovaldi; 2012, 18 engraved stones, 100 X 70 each

Ettore Favini Rovaldi and Antonio, who acted site specific with 18 chapters of the Thoreau's book "Walden or life in the woods" engraved on stone slabs, "radically deconstructing the concept of sculptural object".



*"Upside Down"* (video still), action, 2012, 5' video  
action at Vennestraatproject, Genk, BE

A social action, a public monument, a gift to the mine and the miners: to climb the 'Terril', the earth belly reversed outside of it, during the night, as dark as can be the mine, like a young miner on its first descent in the tunnels; to plant on the top of this anthropic souvenir, facing the passage of time, a cherry tree, the symbolic tree of the "Saint Barbara's Miracle". The action will be invisible, as the miners were when they descending down in the earth. Those men sold by their Country within the crazy race for energy. A "bad" energy, which devastated the environment and the life of people. One more time the artistic action by Ettore Favini inserts itself discretely in the everyday life, suggesting a responsible gaze on the world and evoking the social memory of a place.

Dissimulating the art gesture within the natural element and the ritual action, that remembers industrial and Christian symbols, Favini evokes the impact of mankind on the environment and on itself. An impact that can be as evident as the artificial 'terril' or as discrete as a signature hidden on a tree cortex, clumsy inscribing our existence in the nature.



*"I sunbathe on the sidewalk" action, 2012,*  
Stracrepaccio Paradise, curated by Marcello Maloberti

At Il Crepaccio twenty-four artists are invited to stage their work throughout one single evening. A race against the clock, marked by set ups and replacements, in which the contribution of each artist is on the run in search of its own space. A pulsating multitude, sensibility, generations and different attitudes who express themselves and then dissolve inside a small showcase, a chaotic, exotic and alive ecosystem that unexpectedly appears in front of us until it's too dark, the shutter goes down and lucky those who've been there!



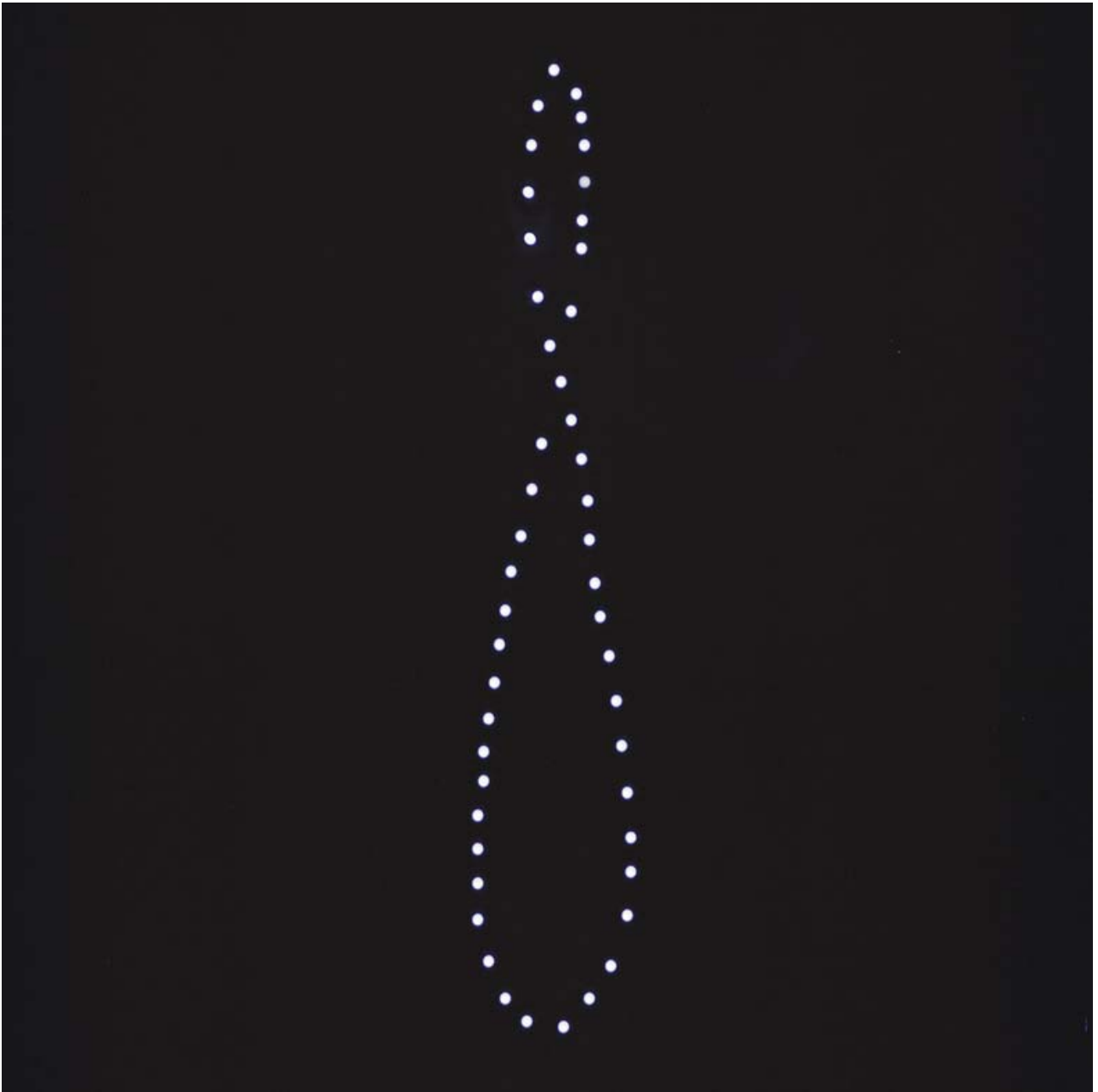
*"Il sole all'improvviso"; 2012, magazine page, magnifying glass, 50X40 cm*

At the source of his new series of works, giving exposure to an invisible phenomenon, attempting to give shape to time, to narrate it, through a process that has lasted a year. A year dedicated to observing the guiding star: the Sun. Visitors then enter a flow of forms and images, a process where the display elements have been directly transformed by the sun or refer to processes tied to the natural element. An investigation aimed at the multiple aspects this may assume, also in relation to history. This multiplicity is also present on a linguistic level: sculpture, collage, installation, are all media used by the artist in constant dialogue with each other.



*"Ipotesi di finito\_#3"*; 2012, wood section, magnifying glass, 300X50X20 cm

At the source of his new series of works, giving exposure to an invisible phenomenon, attempting to give shape to time, to narrate it, through a process that has lasted a year. A year dedicated to observing the guiding star: the Sun. Visitors then enter a flow of forms and images, a process where the display elements have been directly transformed by the sun or refer to processes tied to the natural element. An investigation aimed at the multiple aspects this may assume, also in relation to history. This multiplicity is also present on a linguistic level: sculpture, collage, installation, are all media used by the artist in constant dialogue with each other.



*"Forty-eight sun"*; 2011/2012, photo on baritated paper, 100 X 100 cm

A year dedicated to observing the guiding star: the Sun. Observing the solar analemma (the technical term of the Sun's movement across the sky) restores a shape that is similar to an 8, the lemniscate of mathematics, the symbol of infinity. The cameras on the Sun with a special sun filter and took a picture at the same time (12:15) established by a calendar, always with the same frame, with the risk that all this waiting could be in vain due to a ray of light that could filter in and burn the frames. The result is an 8 suspended in a black sky, the form of infinity in the void, a shape that has continued for years now and will continue, marking our time with the calendar.



"Cantra" (detail), iron, log, wool, 2011, 260 X 60 X 50 cm  
Installation view Basilica S.Maria Maggiore, Bergamo

The works especially conceived and realized for the third chapter of the exhibition cycle All in good time. The first work is the realization, on the ceiling of the second matroneo, of a great wool warp weaved without its weft, to point out the multiple possibilities of a beginning life. The second one has a more autobiographical side and it's composed by a frame extracted from a trunk of a tree from the artist's native home, on which the spun tissue wants to mark, in the elaboration of warp and weft, the trace of lived experiences.



*"Ordito"*, wool, 2011, measures determined by the space  
Installation view Basilica S. Maria Maggiore, Bergamo



*"Cantra"*, iron, log, wool, 2011, 260 X 60 X 50 cm  
Installation view Basilica S. Maria Maggiore, Bergamo



"Vertumnus", photography, 2011, 30X 42 cm  
courtesy: Aike Dellarco Gallery; Shanghai, Hong Kong

This series is named after the Roman God, Vertumnus, who presided over earth, season, and change, gardens, plants and fruit trees. In a playful homage to the diety, Favini meditates on the cyclical nature of life and earth-bound elements, both physically and culturally. Clever as is playful, Favini's portrayal of Vertumnus evokes the familiar works of Reinassance artist, Arcimboldo, in particular his portrait of Rudolph II, 1590, or more recently, the film works of jan Svankmajer, such as Dimension of Dialogue, 1983. As such, this body of work joins the continuum of discourse that sorrounds Vertumnus, in effect exploring organic cycles of change and metamorphosis in nature and humanity, the links between man and heart, earth and god, god and man. First exhibited as an installation accompanied by fields recordings that portrayed the four season (another reference to Arcimboldo's legacy) here we see the work in a actual state of mutation, quietly but grandly decomposing untill there is only soil left. Once decayed, the artist will compost the remains and use them to make a small tetrahedron sculpture. Thus, Favini creates a new cycle.



"Vertumnus" (selection), series of 30 photography + 1, 2011, 30X 42 cm  
courtesy: Aike Dellarco Gallery; Shanghai, Hong Kong



*"Alcuni uomini scrivono la storia, gli altri la leggono"*, 150 sheets of handmade paper , botticino marble,  
2011, 50 X 70 X 15cm  
courtesy: Aike Dellarco Gallery, Shanghai, Hong Kong

*"History is the witness that testifies to the passing of time; it illuminates reality, vitalizes memory, provides guidance in daily life, and bring us tidings of antiquity"*  
(Cicero, On the Orator, 2.36)

History often symbolize all the events that have the capacity to produce changes and transformations and that introduces the future. These events, which we call "facts", constitute the objective component of history itself. The work "Alcuni uomini scrivono la storia... gli altri la leggono" start from archival documents, personal documents between 1861 and 2011, that the files after scanning was destroyed because they are not considered of historical importance, they are often minor stories that act as a backdrop to more crucial events, the small stories hidden in the page margins. So I signed out the document and the letters and I destroyed them, steeping them so they turned to pulp, using a traditional paper making technique, and which point I put back together the 150 "pages of history", and created one single story. 150 new pages were made, ones that inside contain fragments of memory to rewrite the history of contemporary and future Italy.



*"Walden Method"*, tent, neon light, sounds, 2010, dimensions determined by the space.

For "Metodo Walden" project, Ettore Favini inspired to the most famous book by David Henry Thoreau. If the American writer used to create while living in a hut by a lake, the Italian artist started by staying 5 days in a tent near Pordenone (because of this the image modified by Favini proposes the cover of Thoreau's book showing a tent instead of the original hut!) Favini's project develops in 4 chapters, one each season. For every season the artist chooses a different abandoned location in which to stay for a short period. During his one week staying he documents the life of the place; small actions and movements regulating the natural world.

He records sounds, takes pictures, records videos...The images, sound and olfactory perceptions recorded find expression in a sensorial itinerary divided into four sections, corresponding to the four season. The intensity and shades of light vary from section to section in relation to seasonal conditions, reconstructed by means of certain engineering calculators, just as the smells vary - created by starting out from information supplied by the artist - which emanate from ceramic diffuser. The visitor is accompanied by music, once more composed on the basis of sounds and suggestions recorded by Favini during his various stays, that stimulates emotion through varied tones and rhythms.



*"La verde utopia"*, video 27', 9 photographs 40 X 40 cm on baritated paper, 2009, dimensions determined by the space  
installation view CCCS Strozzi, Firenze

*"La Verde Utopia"*, produced by CCCS for Platform, is a video interview of Gilles Clément, author of *Manifesto of the Third Landscape* and *The Planetary Garden*, by Ettore Favini and Alessandra Sandrolini. Alongside, the portraits of the great founders of contemporary ecological thought pay him tribute.

The interview proceeds by analysing the concepts of "third landscape", referring to residual areas colonised by spontaneous vegetation, and "planetary garden", or the world seen as an enclosed place – a garden in the true etymological sense of the term – within the biosphere. From the critical analysis of Darwinian thought to the appeal for social and political commitment to serve as gardeners in the cultivation of the planetary garden, Clément's "realist utopia" vindicates a fundamental awareness for contemporary man. A new political project is required, capable of accepting the idea of partial de-growth in economic terms to develop new growth of intangible values, attentive to biodiversity as a global and transversal principle – a value that is currently misunderstood and constantly threatened.



*"Qualche centimetro più in alto del suolo"*, installation, mixed media, 2009, dimension determined by the space  
 installation view GC.AC, Monfalcone (GO)

This series of works was created in Rome, during a visit at the American Academy, where Favini had been invited for the exhibition *Buffer Zone*. It was a simple and minimal gesture; one object was moved to the floor and raised on four small wooden bases. This work stems from a fascination with objects that lie abandoned in the cellar, everyday objects, vintage furniture that loses its domestic utility, but also boxes that you forget about that live in a sort of limbo before ending up in a landfill. The bases realized with a Palissandro Rio, this wood was utilized in the construction of stringed and wind instruments. These bases thus became amplifiers of private memory, but at the same time collective, making us relive moments of "madeleine", and simultaneously showing us our waste and the consumer society.



*"Qualche centimetro più in alto del suolo"*, installazione, mixed media, 2009, dimensions determinated by the space  
installation view American Academy, Roma



*"Qualche centimetro più in alto del suolo"*, installazione, mixed media, 2009, dimensions determinated by the space  
installation view Palazzo della Gran Guardia, Verona



*"Varietà Margherita"*, installation, mixed media, 2009, 180 X 100 X 130  
installation view Teatro Margherita, Bari



*"Battaglie"*, installation, photographs, 2011, 100 X 100 cm  
 installation view Villa Medici, Roma

The history of mankind could be described in pragmatic terms as a long sequence of wars, interspersed with brief intervals of peace during which men prepare themselves in order to "defend" that peace. Every corner of our planet has been affected by these events. The landscape has often been changed, and sometimes completely overturned by these terrible occurrences. Many men have lost their lives on the battle fields. But how have the battlefields themselves changed? How has mankind celebrated such places?

This work consists of a close study of places that have been the arena for war. They have been photographed as they are today. The research hinges upon how the landscape (the trees, the rocks, the soil) has been a silent observer of these events. "In some cases, mankind has later violated that silent memory, by changing the landscape almost as though to blot out the veiled, intrinsic memory of the place".

The memory of places as witnesses to the human reactions that war tends to exacerbate and emphasise: violence, cruelty, ferociousness, revenge upon the faceless enemy; but also, the compassion of their descendents.

This is a work in which time, memory and landscape are fundamental elements.acerbate and emphasise: violence, cruelty, ferociousness, revenge upon the faceless enemy; but also, the compassion of their descendents.



"Battaglie", Photographies, 2007/in progress, variables dimensions



*"Verdecuratoda", permanent installation, 2008, environmental dimension*  
Collection of Public Art of Turin Municipality

Favini's most complex project uses a similar vision of nature as a biological universe on which to inscribe one's own memory. This project involves the planting of an orchard on the Falchera farm, containing 18 different and centuries- old local species of fruit-trees. The orchard is self-sufficient in energy thanks to a system of integrated solar panels. Verdecuratoda (2007), which had its origins in Favini's winning entry for the Artegiovane "Milano e Torino incontrano ...L'Arte" Award, and whose name is a pun on the idea of vegetation which looks after itself, is an investigation into the historical memory of Turin's Falchera district, which has always had strong links with the countryside. The artist is trying to recreate the original character of this place, involving immigrants from the surrounding area in the daily upkeep of the orchard and garden. The project is an example of how ideas about nature and ecology can build a shared legacy for a community even in the artistic gesture that turns into a socially responsible form of local activity. .

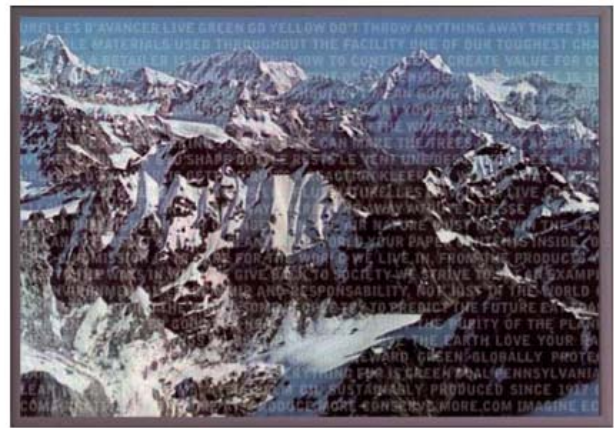


*"Green is the color of the money", digital print on canvas, 2008, 370 X 165 cm*  
 installation view Fondazione Sandretto Re Rebaudengo, Torino

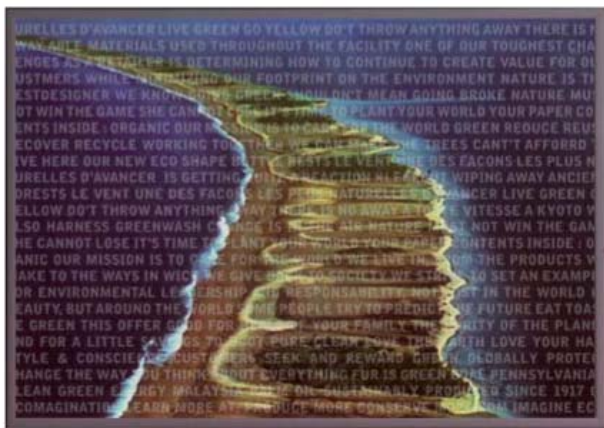
The work is a digital print on canvas, that illustrates a one-dollar bill with the slogan of the title written in block capitals. The artist also used a font of the contemporary capitalism (the American Express credit cards lettering) to focus attention on the strategic power that environmental issues have amassed in the globalised economic market today. The green background of the dollar note has been created by combining "green" advertising text - taken from newspaper, posters, invitations, banner, and so on. Placed together, out of context, like a series of pixel, the text are even more ambiguous.



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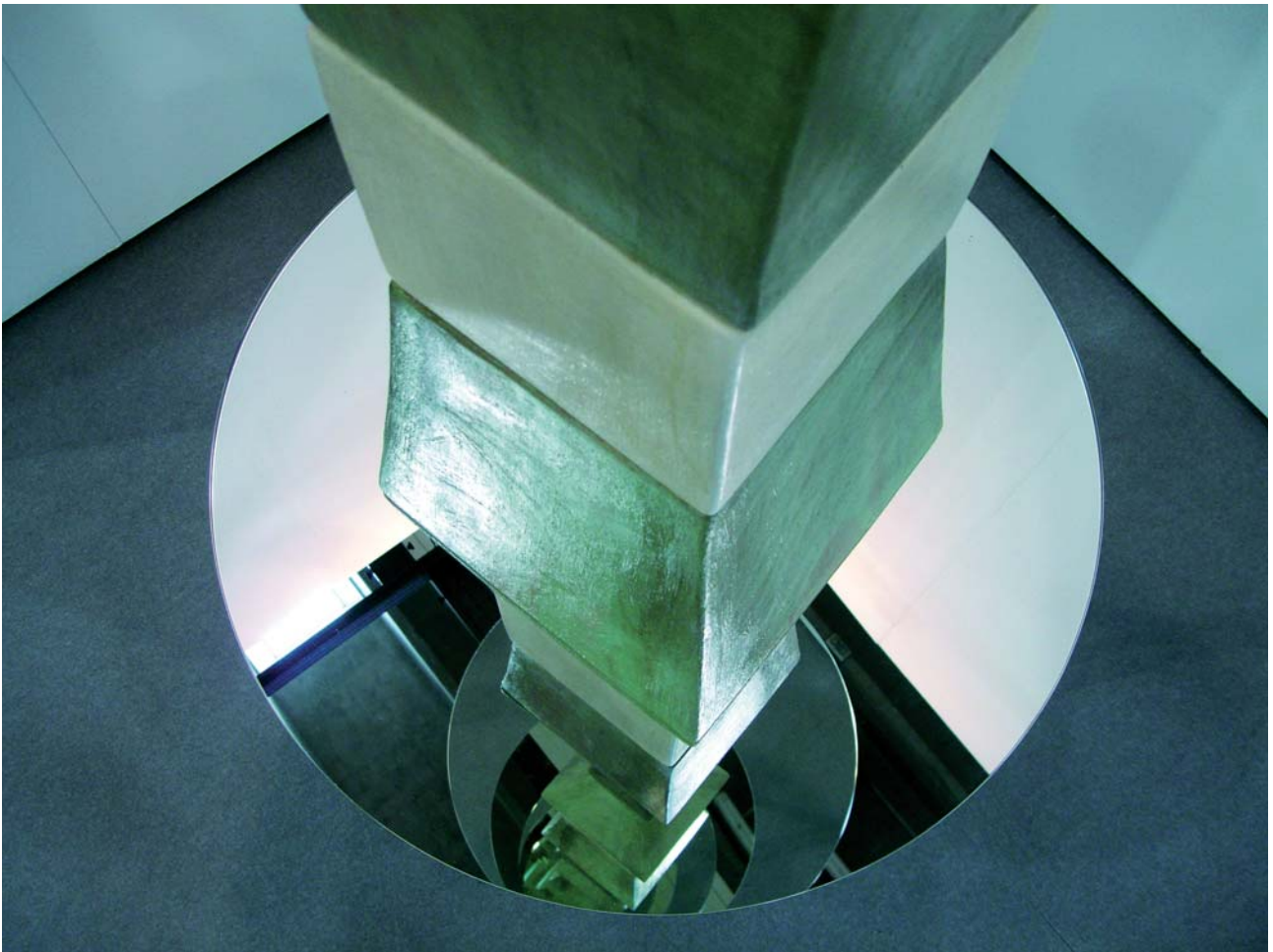


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*"The real revolution is not to change the world", laser engraving on glass, digital print, 2008, 30X21 cm*

- 1 . Saint Croix
- 2 . Himalaya
- 3 . Mururoa
- 4 . Rio Negro

*"The real revolution is not to change the world"* from 2007 show four images taken from stock photos of seemingly unpolluted landscapes, actually changing or partially compromised by global warming. Overall, covered by claims of "greenwashing" that create a disturbance for viewing images, in reality this slogans have determined the negative fate of those landscapes.



*"Tutta una vita per pochi attimi di bellezza"*, ceramic, iron, mirrors, 2010, 180 X 60 X 60 cm,  
Courtesy Galleria dell'Arco Palermo, Hong Kong

*"All the life for a few moments of beauty"*, which reflects the unique nature of the agave plant that takes about thirty years to reach flowering and that once blossomed, dies in a few moments. The idea, according to a progressive process of abstraction, has evolved from a written text to the sculptural form.



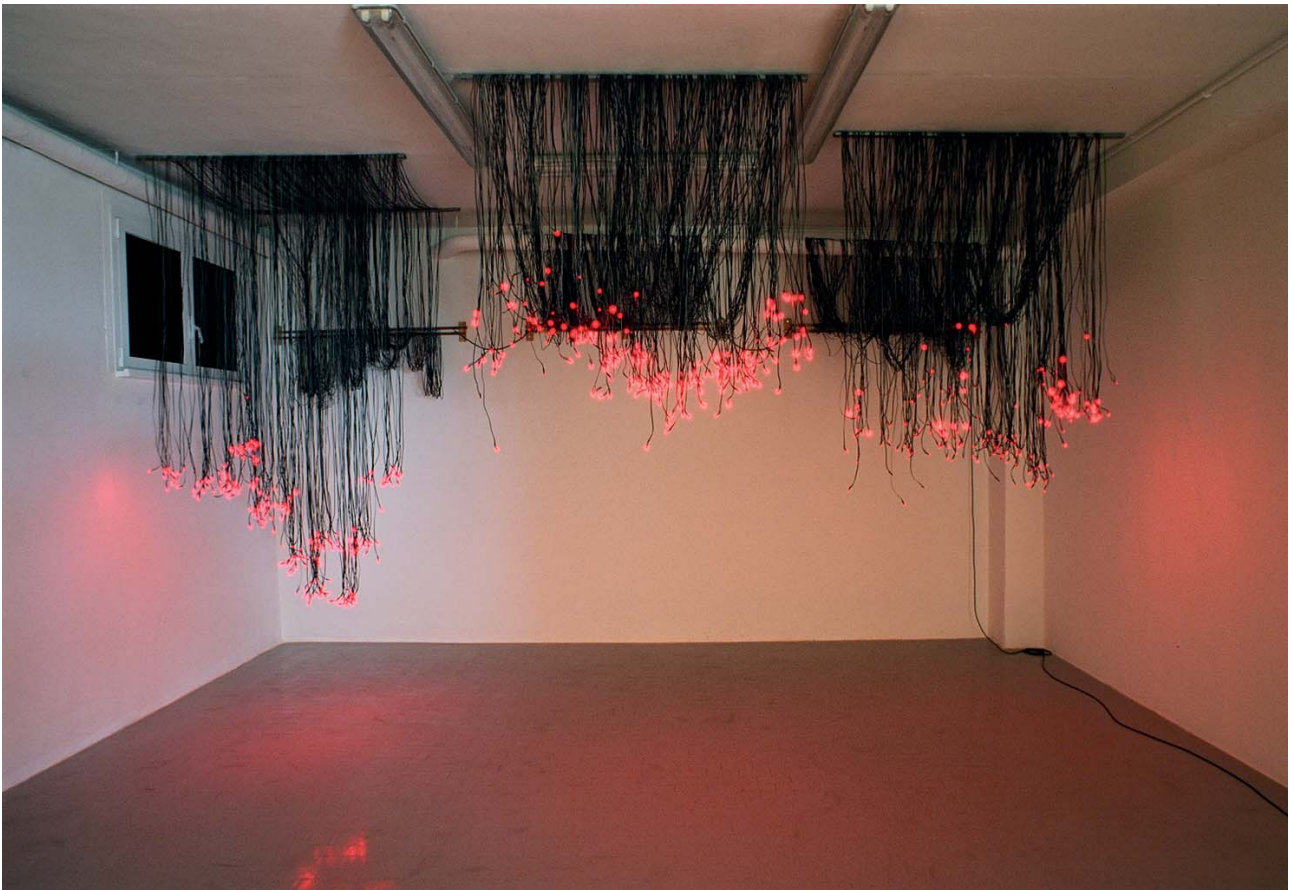
*"Private view", Wood bench . ipermanten installation . 6th St. & Ave B Garden . New York . 2007  
collection of 6th St. & Ave B Garden*

As the artist says, the exhibition is -a view, a personal look at a fleeting image. The idea of time passing; the idea that what is around us disappears, illustrating the fragility and instability of the present. This is the starting point for the research that I wanted to conduct for the Premio New York; a project that links the idea of time with the idea of landscape - the precarious gardens of the Lower East Side, the advance of real estate that slowly removes patches of green (emptiness) to add cement (filled in). Simply, I would like to offer viewers the chance to make use of an impalpable work, the emotion of a glance. I want to create and donate to some community garden a bench or chair that the user can pick up and shift in order to enjoy his own private view, to record in his mind a pleasurable memory of a green space that might not exist tomorrow.



*"Ipotesi di finito in tre variazioni", black marble, ceramic, glass, brass, iron, 2007, 150 X 50 X 100 cm*

Three objects on a table created using classic sculptural materials: glass, ceramic and brass. Three 'open' forms that are searching for impossible perfection. The glass that is never completely clean, the sphere that is always flawed no matter what position it is in and the pyramid that is always looking for that perfect position, that extra face that it doesn't possess.



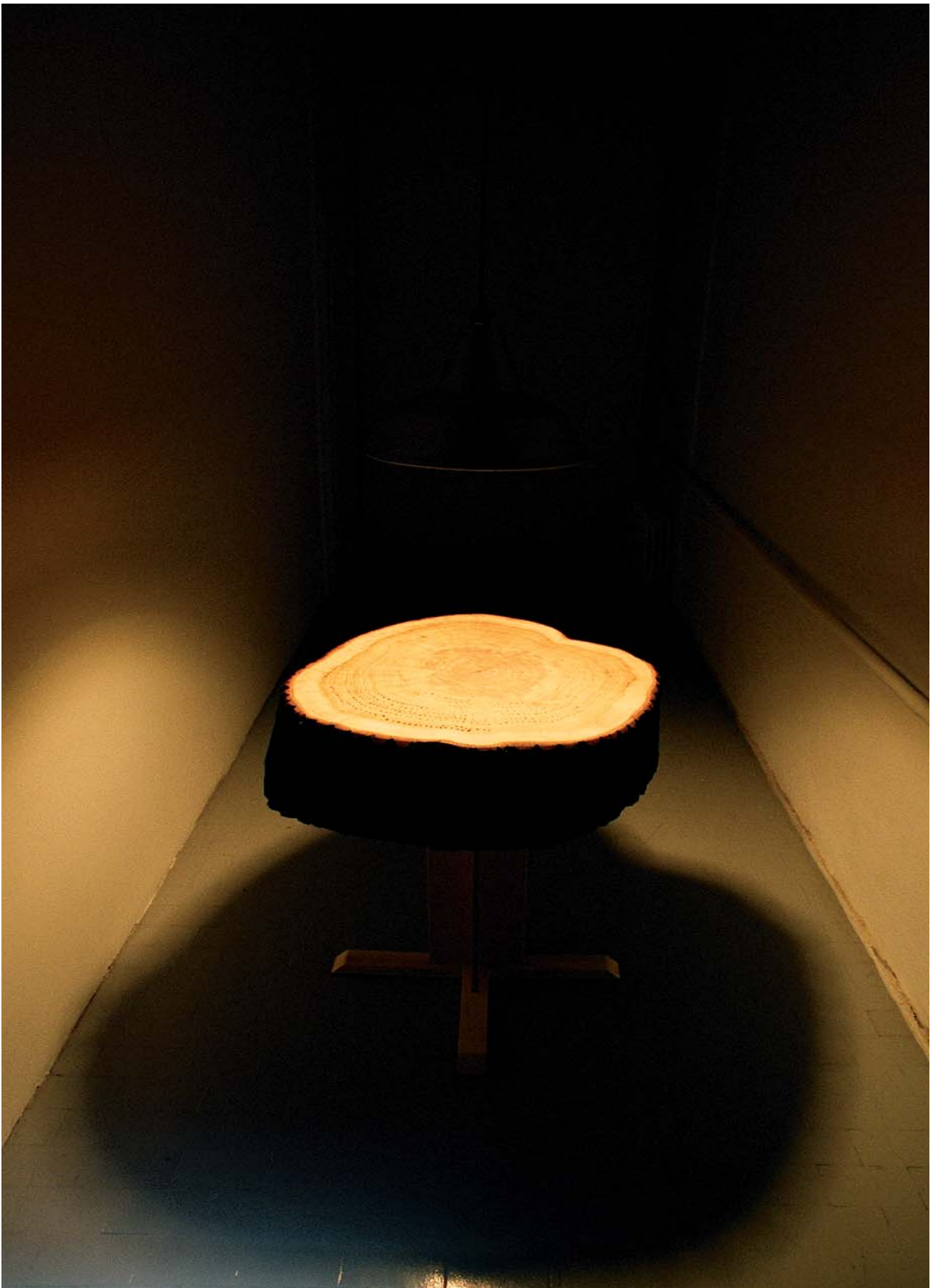
*"Dasein"*, led, electric cables, copper bars, 2007, dimensions determined by the space  
private collection

*"Dasein"*, is a light sculpture with an undefined shape. The work becomes a physical object, an organic, living, lit diagram which changes over the years, with lights coming on while others are switched off. The final result is the re-reading of the self-portrait itself.



*"Ipotesi infinito#2", wood, plexiglass, metal bases, 2007, 120 X 50 X 100 cm  
private collection*

*"Ipotesi infinito#2"* is a sculpture whose nature is to be visible by hiding. It is made from 33 sheets of punched plexiglass that evoke memory and layering. Each sheet represents a year, and each hole a person: when placed over each other, the sheets underneath are hidden, creating a foggy effect whereby the signs become less readable and clear as the gaze abandons the external sheets in order to penetrate further into the sculpture.



*"Dendro", roller oak , wooden base, suspended lamp, 2007, 80 X 50 X 100 cm  
private collection*

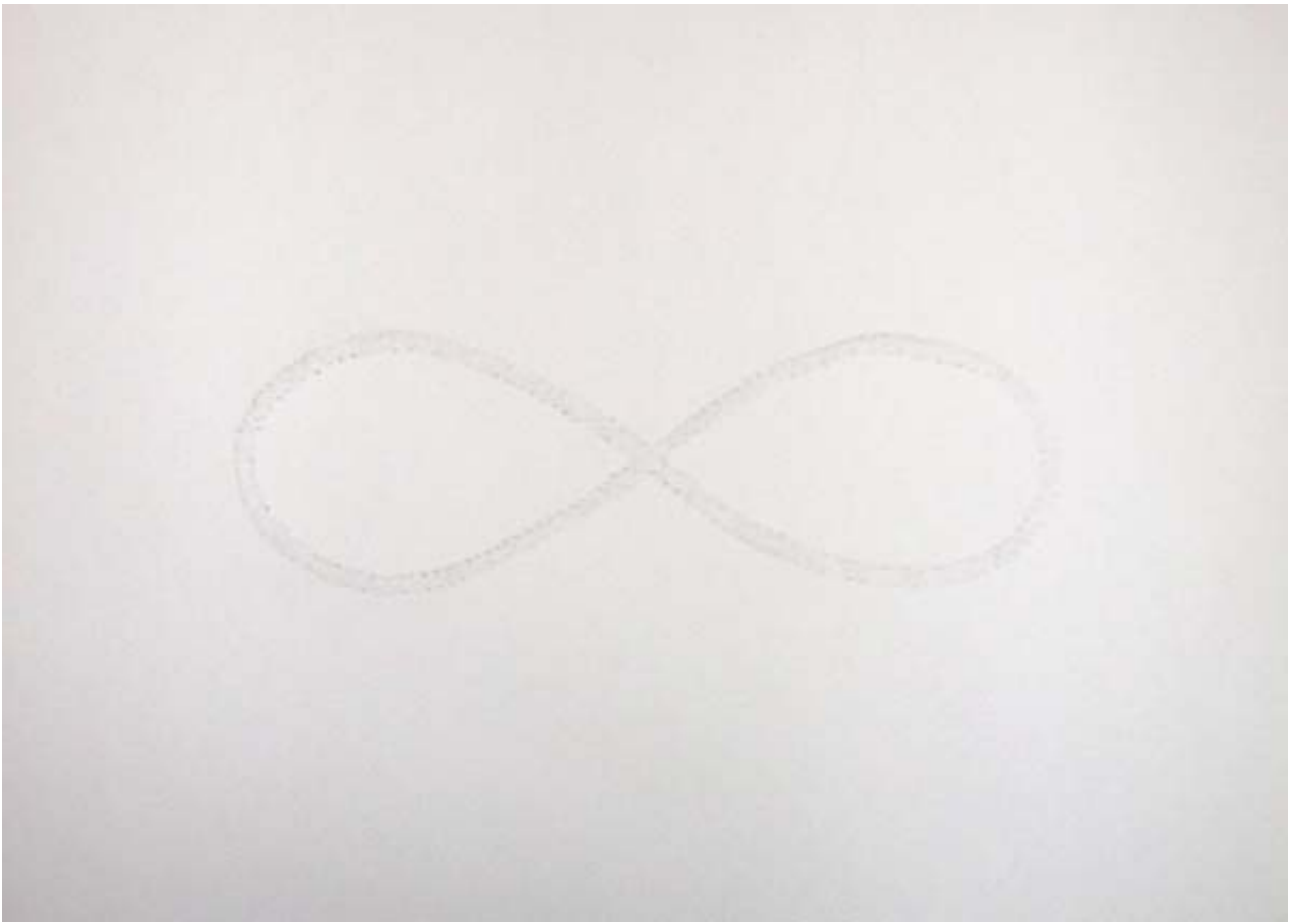
"Dendro", is an dendrochronological analysis of the cross-section of an oak tree. Through it, he underlines the close connection between his life experience and the history of a place. On its surface, there are as many holes as people he has known. Each of the tree's growth rings represents the exact year in which the meeting took place.



*"Untitled", carved paper, 2007, 100 X 50 cm, edition of 3+2 a.p.  
private collection*



*"Selfportrait", handmade paper, 2007, 35 X 25 cm  
private collection*



*"Ipotesi di finito#001", perforated paper, 2005/06, 29 X 21 cm  
private collection*

This series of works is created using the technique of making holes in rough parchment paper, a traditional technique used for the preparation of frescoes. The holes highlight the temporal dimension and it was through this that the whole operation was repeated allowing this kind of non form to grow. The intention of the works is to provide an empirical proof of a scientific formula (Zeno's paradox) which is represented in its making and its constant development. And so these perforated cards acquire this sense of a repeated obsessive gesture caused by the infinite and unpredictable effects. At the same time, the action of making holes in the card is futile and paradoxical as it tries to practically demonstrate a theory without ever succeeding.



*"Ipotesi di finito" (detail), perforated paper, 2005/06, 180 X 330 cm  
collection of the artist*

This series of works is created using the technique of making holes in rough parchment paper, a traditional technique used for the preparation of frescoes. The holes highlight the temporal dimension and it was through this that the whole operation was repeated allowing this kind of non form to grow. The intention of the works is to provide an empirical proof of a scientific formula (Zeno's paradox) which is represented in its making and its constant development. And so these perforated cards acquire this sense of a repeated obsessive gesture caused by the infinite and unpredictable effects. At the same time, the action of making holes in the card is futile and paradoxical as it tries to practically demonstrate a theory without ever succeeding.



*"Ipotesi di infinito", photography on luminium, 2005, 40 X 30 cm  
private collection*

This image is nothing more than a drawing of the lemniscate used in mathematics to represent infinity: The photograph captures a static image in time, a moment in the present that cannot be repeated again. Two families are united in a construction of their own history, the transmission of stories, traditions and knowledge. A moment that is suspended and frozen