

CASSINA PROJECTS

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## SNAPSHOT. NO ATELIER DE ...

ANTONIO FIORENTINO

LIZ VAHIA

He arrived a few months ago to work on what would be his first exhibition in Portugal, after visiting Lisbon in November last year and having been fascinated by the National Museum of Natural History and Science (MNHNC).

However, in residence in the Hangar space it was, however, in the old chemical laboratory of the museum that he "set up" his atelier and adapted the exhibition "Vis Attractiva", which can be visited until September 10. Every day I went there to experiment with how to install the pieces, in a process of sharing between artist and space. Naturally, he came up with an idea that was altering as he began to interact with the lab. He says it was a new experience at all levels: the first time he exhibited in Portugal, the first time he worked in such a space.

Four years ago he decided to concentrate his work in the studio and not to be dispersed by other activities. Since then the interviews in "traditional" format are out of the question. "Artists now do everything from production to photography, so I've decided to go in that direction, work instead of speech."

It started in Carrara (and what better place to contact art and its subjects) at the Academy of Fine Arts and then at IPSAM, "Istituto Professionale di Stato per l'Industria and l'Artigianato del Marmo", where he studied sculpture. The marble factory was the only point of contact with the art world there, so it was necessary to expand geographies and visit new formations. Athens, Amsterdam, London, more specifically a workshop at Tate, and Milan were his training in the world of contemporary art. Since then he has regularly exposed "out there".

In 2014 he developed "Dominium Melancholiae", a piece that led him to present the proposal to exhibit at the chemical laboratory of the MNHNC in Lisbon. In the genesis of the work is the invitation to other artists to modify the shape of a sheet of zinc with the same dimensions of the engraving *Melancholia I* (1514), by Albrecht Durer, which represents the influence of melancholic temperament in artistic creation. The sheet with the new shape is then introduced into a solution with chemical reagents which, through an electrolysis process, will give rise to a deposit of crystals on the entire surface of the sheet, which process continues to "grow" throughout the entire exposure of the part, thus creating a species of vegetation in unpredictable and constantly changing forms.

Antonio Fiorentino then creates a generative process that can not be interrupted and whose final form is impossible to predict, in a mixture of materials that confuse our perception and distinction between what is inert and alive, between the mineral and the vegetable. "I wanted to create a world that people would not recognize," he says.



"When I make these sculptures with zinc I lose mastery over the final result of the form. Today artists have control over everything, and people in general make many expectations about things. I, however, want to lose that control and leave several possibilities open. I try to create this by involving other elements, such as water. Work in partnership with water, fire, acid. Even when working with marble I try to lose this control over form, because this becomes more interesting and surprising for me. "In his recent work on video" Opusmaris ", we see the artist diving into the Mediterranean with a piece of clay. As you mold it under water, it will also do its work of dissolution.

In his practice, the artist's role is reduced to minimal intervention. The forms and images created come from the "natural" transformation of the elements, often assembled by others other than the artist, such as the shape of the zinc plate in "Dominium Melancholiae". It is about the possibility of transformation of the material that the artist performs, in this case on the three elements that make up and originate these sculptures - water, metal and reagent.

Antonio Fiorentino wants to explore what connects the worlds of mineral, vegetal, and mineral worlds. In this assembly of the exhibition "Vis Attractiva" in the MNHNC, all on the same level, on the benches of the old laboratory (except the jaw chair that looks at us from above) And animal. The chain of shark jaws that hangs over our heads visually refers to the chain linking these worlds represented in the image of Athanasius Kircher, "Vis Attractiva." The jaws are thus a natural material that creates in the mind of the visitor the association with the chain imagined by Kircher.

The marble sculpture resembles a skull. The idea is to look like an artifact that can be an animal fossil or anything vegetable, but one does not realize what it is exactly. "This creates wonder," says Antonio Fiorentino, adding that "the sculptures present in this exhibition have no reference to the current time. I do not want to make reference to my time, because then I can generate a work that lasts forever, that does not have time nor is it realized when it comes, if the past is of the future. They are contemporary relics. "

However, shark jaws will no longer hang from the roof of the old chemical laboratory and will then travel to the artist's next exhibition in December this year, making the point of contact between past and future actions between material and Or imagery.

*(I.e. Article written from a conversation with the artist after the inauguration of the exhibition "Vis Attractiva", patented at the National Museum of Natural History and Science from July 6 to September 10, 2017.*



# NERO

Nero Magazine, 'La vita della mente/The Life of the Mind' June 2017

## La vita della mente/The Life of the Mind at the Istituto Svizzero, Rome



Antonio Fiorentino, *Opusimago (Il Giardino delle rimembranze)*, 2017 Metal salts, vegetal elements, glass, variable dimensions  
Image courtesy: Simon d'Exéa

The collective exhibition entitled *The life of the Mind*, curated by Giuliana Benassi, was set up in an osmotic relationship with the Studio Roma Inscape Rooms project. The artists involved – Italians and fellows at the institute, namely, Pauline Beaudemont, Alessandro Cicoria, Michela de Mattei, Federica Di Carlo, Antonio Fiorentino, Genuardi/Ruta, Edgars Gluhovs, Nelly Haliti, Marta Mancini, Simone Pappalardo and Marion Tampon-Lajarriette – presented brand-new works or works that were reinterpreted to help investigate the aspects of the mind, touching on different chords and cross-cutting connections.

The exhibition title of *The Life of the Mind*, literally purloined from Hannah Arendt's last – and unfinished – book, alludes to the life of thought for a proposal to interpret the works on display according to themes that have to do with the dimension and functioning of the mind: from memory to visionary components, language, scientific intuition, the relationship between appearance and semblance, the metaphorical operation of the mind, stream of consciousness and the dreamlike dimension: all related to the thinking self. While Arendt's work tackles this subject from a philosophical standpoint and examines three macro-areas – thinking, willing and judging – it starts off with a specific question: What do we “do” when we think? Where are we when we are with ourselves, in which space and time are we moving? In general, this subject is resolved in terms of freedom, always leaving the gap between thought and its “representation” open. In the attempt to narrate this possible narrow opening between mind and image, between thought and language, through the works of these artists – all of whom different in language, research and provenance – in some ways the exhibition continued to unfold and move “as fast as thought” (Homer), oriented by a multiple approach to interpretation and delivered to the visitor with the utmost freedom. The exhibition route extended through the garden of the Villa Maraini and then continued through the other spaces at the institute, from the annexe to the underground area of the Sala Elvetica. Embarking on a conceptual journey, the visitor moved from an airy environment to arrive at the deepest underground part of the institute, almost as a metaphorical representation of the transition from the conscious to the unconscious parts of the mind.

Here NERO presents the documentation of the exhibition held from the 23-25 June 2017 at the Istituto Svizzero in Rome.

# INSIDEART

Insideart, 'Swiss Institute, a 24 hour event to celebrate the end of the academic year', June 2017

## Swiss Institute a 24 hour event to celebrate the end of the academic year

06/22/2017

ROME



The ' Swiss Institute of Rome opens its doors to an eventful weekend. From June 23 alternate in house workshops, interactive installations, performances, concert sleep, works on show, DJ sets and dance to celebrate the end of the academic year. The Swiss Institute of resident artists and researchers, have chosen to present - as the final work of their annual residence - the interdisciplinary project *Inscape Rooms* involving some guests invited for the occasion. The title refers to the ability to explore space and work as if they were internal landscapes. The supporting theme of this event is in fact the investigation of thought in the aspects that relate to the unconscious, the dream of the area, the metaphorical functioning of the mind, the multi-sensory perception, memory, trespassing in virtual reality or supernatural, the sublime, the stream of consciousness, the hypnotic state. And just like the thought moves in an area of freedom difficult to limit or define, so the event year-end will be offered to the public as a container to explore and experience the different structured times in 24 hours: from 14:00 Friday, June 23 at 10:00 on Saturday 24.

Among the many events opens June 23 at 18.00, in the garden and dependence spaces, the collective *life of the mind* , curated by Giuliana Benassi and built in harmony with the project *Studio Roma Inscape Rooms* . The artists involved - Italian and fellows at the Institute -Pauline Beaudemont, Alessandro Cicoria, Michela de Mattei, Federica Di Carlo, Antonio Fiorentino, Genuardi / Road, Edgars Gluhovs, Nelly Haliti, Marta Mancini, Simone Pappalardo, Marion Tampon-Lajarriette present of new works or redesigned to contribute to the building of an investigation into aspects of mind, touching various ropes and cross connections. The show's title, literally stolen last work (unfinished) by Hannah Arendt, alludes to the life of thought for a reading of the works proposed on display according to themes concerning the size and function of the mind: the visionary from the memory components, by scientific intuition language, the ratio appearance-semblance to the metaphorical functioning of the mind, the stream of consciousness to the dream dimension: Relate all ego thinking. The project and the exhibition will coincide, overlap or stand in the same place: the event cites fluidity somehow Fluxus dynamics, even reconnecting the exhibition *Stockage* John M Armleder, visited in the Villa Maraini salt. Throughout the program: [www.istitutosvizzero.it](http://www.istitutosvizzero.it)

# INSIDEART

Insideart, 'Antonio Fiorentino in New York', April 2017

## Antonio Fiorentino in New York

04/28/2017

Close the winner artist residence of the Talent Prize in the Big Apple, an account of his new job and his old obsession: matter



Antonio Fiorentino welcomes us smiling in his studio on the third floor dell'ISCP - International Studio & Curatorial Program, New York, where he is to conclude the residency project began last February. His refusal for interviews is now well known, no one seems to have ever been able to record the sound of his voice; He prefers somehow they are his works to tell. But the Florentine artist profession knows very well, marble and sculpture have in fact become over time some of the basic elements of his visual alphabet.

At the root of all his research is a love and a deep knowledge of the subject, and materials, which the artist alternately picks up from the street or from nature during her walks or chooses to turn in his studio . The intent is always to take care of this matter, but also to measure the limits, "to investigate the fate", sometimes assuming total control sometimes letting to do so is the action of nature and its agents. The stakes in the work of this young artist is really very high, especially in its relation with time, not surprisingly Gino De Dominicis is often cited

as a reference in his conversations on the subject of art. That which aspires Fiorentino, with an attitude always at the limit between the absolute seriousness and ironic self-consciousness, is a kind of work immortality, to be placed not only within a history of art but rather within the larger human history.

Its making art basically responds to a basic need to leave a trace of his stay on earth. This aspiration leads him to prefer very resistant materials but especially to erase from his works almost every element that could ricondurne membership to our historical epoch. It is therefore a great interest in short: an array of sculptures designed to resist the decay time but curiously similar to wrecks, or relics, coming from distant era.

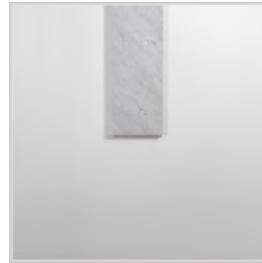
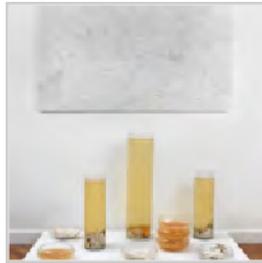
The works produced during his stay in New York, while interacting with the stimuli and materials offered by the city, do not betray this aspiration. At the center of the study *Dominium Saturnus (Wall Tea)* , a project of complex gestation that demonstrates the artist's fascination with alchemy, the practice of transformation of matter par excellence. In many of the old houses of Manhattan, including one in which resides Fiorentino, there is still a paint containing lead, by contact with which you can contract lead poisoning, an illness that among its most serious consequences includes the onset of madness and even death.

Fiorentino takes from his apartment fragments of this toxic paint and places them in large glass ampoules which installs on the floor of his studio. With the addition of hot water the paint starts to release the lead allowing you to distill the "saturnine liquid", a herbal tea which, paradoxically, if taken, could lead the visitors of his studio in permanent mental imbalances. In *Anobiumraggie* , other investigation around the theme of the disease twelve thin slabs of white marble are patiently carved on the surface as if to take such action had not been the artist's work but a worm imaginary able to feed on the marble.





Curious and perhaps more ludic is covertly *Unicorn* , very small sculpture born implantation of a lizard's tail inside the dried body of a sea horse, both by the materials found in a Chinese pharmacy in Manhattan. The result is an imaginary and mysterious - fossil creature of the past or the future? - which aims to arouse in the viewer a sense of awe and "marvelous", feeling that the artist constantly seeks to generate in those who have dealings with his works.



# INSIDEART

*Insideart, 'Antonio Fiorentino, Opusmaris', August, 2016*

## Antonio Fiorentino, Opusmaris

08/31/2016

He was the winner of our artistic award, the Talent Prize 2015, Antonio Fiorentino . *Dominium Melancholiae* the work with which he was awarded: zinc slabs cut, inserted in a tank under an acidic solution that continued to shape the material. It seems a variation of this work his recent work *Opusmaris* exposed in Roquebrune-sur-Argens in the South of France as a result of a pipeline residence at Port Tonic art center . In fact the artist is immersed in the Mediterranean, holding a clay modeling dough in the salt water. Alongside this series of items handled by human hand, exposition, are exhibited objects found on the seabed and shaped by the maritime weather, worn and deformed by iodine from seaweed. In the video *Opusmaris* made in collaboration with Giovanni Sannino , Fiorentino has resumed, while immersed in the sea, plasma clay.

June 22, 2016

## National Gallery of Modern and Contemporary Art (Rome)

*The Lasting*

June 22, 2016–January 29, 2017

### National Gallery of Modern and Contemporary Art (Rome)

Viale delle Belle Arti, 131

00197 Rome Italy

**Hours:** Tuesday–Sunday 8:30am–7:30pm

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The **Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Moderna e Contemporanea** inaugurates its new exhibitions program under the direction of **Cristiana Collu** with the opening, from June 22, 2016 to January 29, 2017, of the group show ***The Lasting*** curated by **Saretto Cincinelli**.

The exhibition, dedicated to the relevance of temporal dimension both in artistic practice and poetics, features **more than 30 works by 15 Italian and international artists** from different generations: **Francis Alÿs, Barbara Probst, Hiroshi Sugimoto, Tatiana Trouvé, Franco Vimercati**, alongside younger but already successful protagonists, such as: **Giorgio Andreotta Calò, Emanuele Becheri, Antonio Catelani, Giulia Cenci, Daniela De Lorenzo, Antonio Fiorentino, Marie Lund, Elizabeth McAlpine, Alessandro Piangiamore, Andrea Santarlaschi**, and with the inclusion of works by **Alexander Calder, Lucio Fontana, Medardo Rosso** from the museum's permanent collection.

The works on display—all of large format—span from painting to sculpture, as well as from video to photography, and are hosted in a single, huge space—the museum's central hall—taking advantage of its verticality, too, in order to form a whole with the surrounding environment. Traditionally conceived as being antithetical and conflicting, the concepts of duration and interval lie at the center of this exhibition in an ever-changing way, as if two sides of the same coin or two simultaneous and indivisible moments of the very same transformation process.

The exhibition is accompanied by a **catalogue** published by the Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Moderna e Contemporanea with a vast iconographic apparatus, with texts by Dario Franceschini and Cristiana Collu, and essays by Saretto Cincinelli, Jacques Rancière, Francesco Piccolo, Massimo Mininni, Arabella Natalini, and Carolina Pozzi.

# Flash Art

Flash Art, 'Antonio Fiorentino', D. Ambrosio, March 2014

## Antonio Fiorentino

by Daniela Ambrosio



*Candle, 2012. Ice, wick, variable dimensions.*

Meeting Tony Fiorentino one afternoon when he just stopped raining. Although there is a thread of mist we recognize instantly. He says that he does not like the questions and so I agreed to write a text. It is very difficult to place his work, ranging from video to sculpture (he attended the Academy of Fine Arts in Carrara), from photography to installation and performance, moving along the paths often inaccessible experimentation. Starting from illustrious ancestors such as Albrecht Dürer, Baudelaire and Arte Povera artists, Fiorentino creates a language in which a personal archeology mingles with evocative and mysterious alchemical experiments, seasoned with a fascination with psychoanalysis and the study of the chemical elements. However the concept of *Melancholia* dominates one of his most emblematic works: *Dominium Melancholiae*. Born in 2013 from a suggestion provided by an engraving of Dürer in 1514, in this work we find different symbols related to the esoteric world and the difficulties encountered in trying to transmute lead into gold. Tony Fiorentino stages a real scientific-alchemical experiment dipping zinc sheets in ampoules containing distilled water to which was added lead acetate: here comes to life the tree of Saturn (the planet that is associated with melancholy), a chemical vegetation characterized by delicate leaden ramifications, as the color of black bile theorized by Hippocrates, the father of medicine. *Dominium Melancholie* is a project in which the fragility of existence, represented by glass ampoules, is revealed in all his dark office, manifesting itself as a floating structure and constantly changing - like life. The artist tries to

give a shape, a color and a substance to a state of mind, moving on that ephemeral art-life boundary, as shown in another work, *Box for Standing* of 2012, in which the artist places in a public space, and for a whole day, a life-size wooden container sealed with a padlock, which contains his personal effects. The artist's personality becomes an entity anonymous and distant, yet a place of vantage which can lead to reflections. Like for example the randomness of life, man faces by placing the ritual inside of his existence: *Candle* (2012), is an ice candle that melts the air, dissolving like an ice cube on a summer day. In the same direction lies *Untitled*, an installation consisting of a lot of jute filled consumed votive candles that the artist has collected in various churches: the goal is to collect them for recycling and create new ones. The ritual is separated from the sphere of the sacred to become an act not collective but personal, a "crisis of presence" that finds its way to atonement in the recycling of matter. In *I Like An Arch*, 2013, Fiorentino uses marble items recovered from the Milan Cathedral assembling restoration work in a solo sculpture that "reinvents" the very concept of creation, giving dignity to waste material that lives with new life. Art becomes a ghost.

*Tony Fiorentino was born in 1987 in Barletta. He lives and works in Milan*