

# ORGANIC TRACES

*Kin constellations among contemporary artistic practices -  
investigating site-specific cultural traces*

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## 1. Introduction

*Organic Traces* is a curatorial project conceived with the aim of constellating four young artists who are rooted in bordering territories. The symbiosis between their perspectives reveals common strengths by proposing distinct narratives and hybrid expressive languages that disclose the itineraries and perceptions pertaining to their practices. Those that might be defined as their *biographical geographies* flow into a broad and intertwined mapping of personal and collective themes.

In order to comprehend the articulation and reflection of the research carried out, the core of this project has been divided into three chapters or cluster terms: *Site-Specificity*, *Female Presence* and *Organic Trace*. Each section is interlaced with the other and finds in the named keywords theoretical references and explanatory cases, global or autochthonous, iconographic or etymological, through which the authors are related. The fusion of an investigation with references to significant essays and practices, combined with the realisation of a tangible drawing, is therefore based on the analysis of the three pivotal sections mentioned above. Firstly, it looks at the dynamics of implementation and at the importance of the specific location selected for a cultural event conceived in a small-scale reality, as well as at the possible audience and the type of works displayed. Furthermore, it offers a space to contemporary female artists who operate through multiple narrative media. The study includes an in-depth examination in percentages, applied to the most recent decades on both the Italian and Swiss territories. Finally, the third chapter investigates to what extent and how the organic-visceral trace is an essential element of the pieces presented, in terms of the materials selected, semantically in the analysis of the subjects proposed, as well as in their concretisation.

The content in the first pivotal and introductory section opens the paper and contextualises the definition of *Site-Specific Art* illustrated by Miwon Kwon, and consequently how the inextricable binomial between work of art and site emerges. The theoretical perspectives addressed are then broadened by counterproposals and concordant approaches by other authors, including Lippard, Buren and Serra. Following the investigation of possible formal evolutions regarding the dynamics developed among the two entities, some relevant examples of their effect on cultural production will be provided in context. Finally, it heads towards a thread focused on the role of creative forces and their origin, location and possible destination. The chapter concludes with a reference to *The Owl of Minerva* proposed by Hegel, and the developments of the same addressed by Innis, in his theories on the *Monopolies of Knowledge*.

The second chapter examines the female participation in the contemporary cultural scene. It purposes to identify the presence in terms of gender, within historiography and institutions, circumscribed to the geographical context considered. Main pillars will be the curatorial approach undertaken by Lea Vergine – first in Italy to shed light on the avant-garde female artists – and the work of Maria Lai, whose artistic practice will be portrayed and contextualised in terms of form and the rural setting in which it originated. Reference will then be made to two studies, conducted in Italy and Switzerland and dealing with a more analytical perspective.

Last but not least – thanks to which the whole structure of the project comes to life –, we can introduce the third chapter, namely *Organic Trace*. The entire work, as a matter of fact, addresses the natural and biological element as the starting point for the creation of the selected works: marble, plaster, minerals, plants and furthermore human rests such as tears and hair are just some of the employed materials. Seeking to investigate what was the artist's primordial bond with mother Earth, the role he or she is destined to play in these times so dense with events and concerns and finally the responsibility towards the living and non-living world, theoretical references to the disturbing and sophisticated philosophy of Donna Haraway as well as more recent references to the curator of the Venice Biennale 2022 Cecilia Alemani will be thoroughly explored.

Following the theoretical lines just mentioned, the bedrock of the entire work, it will be possible to proceed with an in-depth analysis of the case studies. In each of them, attention will be focused on the chosen work(s) in order to extrapolate, based on the previous theories – after a careful description including materials, technique, language and interpretation – the artists' own poetics and narrative. More specifically, an attempt will be made to apply the categories of site specificity and organic element in the individual cases, one at a time, trying to identify potential hooks between them and aiming at creating a “kin constellation of artistic practices”.



## 2 Theoretical Perspectives

### 2.1 Chapter I: Site- Specificity

*«The Owl of Minerva spreads its wings only with the falling of dusk.»*

Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich

First among the three insights and aimed at imagining a common thread for *Organic Traces*, is Site-Specificity. This section observes the territory, the origins and the cultural proposal of a small local reality. It investigates the links of belonging - by roots or by recall - to a specific site. Are the places lived and the events that occurred within them decisive in forging a unique language? Which choices does it entail to hold an exhibition as *Organic Traces* in such a local setting? Furthermore, what is the connection, if one exists, between the place, the spectator and the works shown? Finally, what can the specificity of the place offer in terms of the overall creative and cultural scene?

#### Miwon Kwon: From Work-Site Binomial to *Unfixed Impermanence*

In order to address these concerns, references will be made to the book *One Place after Another* by the curator Miwon Kwon, which reconstructs the concept of *site-specific art* and, subsequently, identifies its evolution into *site-specific oriented art*. In summary, the paper under consideration questions the meaning of choosing a site to host a work of art, and how the relationship between the two elements stimulates the interest of the audience. The author defines the concept of *site-specific* as being physical or material, related to the environmental context in which it is inserted, formally determined or directly determined by it. From here, in turn, *site-specific art* derives, which presupposes the existence of an inextricable binomial between the work of art and the site where it is created, for which, moreover, the viewer's presence is necessary for the accomplishment of the work itself. On this subject, Richard Serra wrote about the relationship *ouvre-site*, in particular concerning a sculpture designed in 1981 and conceived for Federal Plaza in New York:

*«Tilted Arc was conceived from the start as a site-specific sculpture and was not meant to be "site-adjusted" or . . . "relocated." Site-specific works deal with the environmental components of given places. The scale, size, and location of site-specific works are determined by the topography of the site, whether it be urban or landscape or architectural enclosure. The works become part of the site and restructure both conceptually and perceptually the organization of the site.»<sup>1</sup>*

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<sup>1</sup> Richard Serra, "Tilted Arc Destroyed," *Art in America* 77, no. 5 (May 1989), 34–47.

Through several examples, Kwon illustrates how certain minimalist currents challenged the concept of site viewed in solely spatial or physical terms. Firstly, it is understood that there is no universal spectator (which can in fact be distinguished by culture, gender, age, social class, religion, ethnicity...etc.). Consequently, the site cannot only be spatial but it becomes much more: a "cultural framework defined by institutions of art". Foundations, museums, cultural centers had previously attempted to disassociate the artistic space from the external, natural environment, to place it in a neutral space. What they cannot do, nevertheless, is separate art from the social, cultural and political context in which it is generated: the same cultural and artistic institutions are at the mercy of the phenomena of the moment.

*«Art, whatever else it may be, is exclusively political. What is called for is the analysis of formal and cultural limits (and not one or the other) within which art exists and struggles. These limits are many and of different intensities. Although the prevailing ideology and the associated artists try in every way to camouflage them, and although it is too early - the conditions are not met - to blow them up, the time has come to unveil them. »<sup>2</sup>*

In order to bypass the above conditions, to try to obviate the institutional frame - in response also to the commodification of art introduced by capitalist logic - *site-specific art* profoundly changes its original nature. In particular, it adopts strategies that are aggressively anti-visual - informative, textual, expository and didactic - or wholly immaterial - gestures, events or performances bounded by temporal boundaries. In this way, therefore, art goes from being noun-object to verb-process, diverging from the binomial initially illustrated by Serra and becoming more an "unfixed impermanence", something whose deep essence is ephemeral and at the same time unrepeatable.

As we move closer to the present, *site-specific oriented art* is tinged with new colors, given by its approach to current political issues (in a form of *activism*) and, on the other hand, to an approach related to many different disciplines (anthropology, sociology, literary criticism, psychology, natural and cultural histories, architecture and urbanism, computer science, political theory, philosophy etc.). If the site, finally, fits into an institutional context in the first place and, moving away with a magnifying glass, is in a subordinate position to a *discursively determined site* (given by the ongoing cultural debate), then it loses its precondition status.

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<sup>2</sup> Buren, Daniel. "Critical Limits (1970) in *Five Texts* (New York: John Weber Gallery, 1974), 38.

The above models, which can be defined as "physical," "social" and, finally "functional" are not to be conceived as an evolution but as situations applicable to different contexts, not necessarily in chronological order.

### Site-Specificity as a Response to Nomadism and Site's Marginalization

Certainly, the intentions of *site-specific art* as a whole have had to submit to the rules of a world in constant change, which has affected the figure of the artist in no small way: the drive toward globalization has exacerbated the hierarchies already present between areas of the world, and the artist finds himself forced to move (from his native place) in search of opportunities (educationally, professionally, etc.) to other sites seemingly characterized by a more active and fervent artistic scene. His life, his works, as well as the key to his potential success is measured by remoteness, being "outside" his native place, abandoning, as a result, the latter to a sad fate.

There is, therefore, an endurance which pushes in the opposite direction to this artistic phenomenon of *nomadism*, and that is embodied in the revaluation and enhancement of the place, for its uniqueness, its history, as well as its people, until a certain moment marginalized and to whom through local cultural and artistic events and projects it is possible to restore dignity and justice.

*«If the universalizing tendencies of modernism undermined the old divisions of power based on class relations fixed to geographical hierarchies of centers and margins only to aid in capitalism's colonization of "peripheral" spaces, then the articulation and cultivation of diverse local particularities is a (postmodern) reaction against these effects [...] It is perhaps no surprise, then, that the efforts to retrieve lost differences, or to curtail their waning, become heavily invested in reconnecting to uniqueness of place - or more precisely, in establishing authenticity of meaning, memory, histories, and identities as a differential function of places.»<sup>3</sup>*

The recovery of place, however, not only cannot be considered important from the point of view of the place itself (objectively speaking), but also and especially through the human experience, i.e., the subjective mediation of the artist. As Lucy Lippard points out in *The Lure of the Local*, where place is conceived as a portion of land that is familiar and known to the person, forced or voluntary

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<sup>3</sup> Kwon, Miwon. *One Place after Another, Site-Specific Art and Locational Identity*, 157.

migration concurs at the loss of relationship with it. The *place*, taking part in the formation of our inner identity, if at fault, automatically contributes to a disconnection with nature, history and a status of alienation from ourselves, which also pushes us to spiritually seek it and make sense of it. Again, according to the writer, the connection to one's native place, which she strongly encourages, offers to the artist a chance for shelter to the artist, from the visions and pre-formed concepts of the henceforth dominant capitalist culture.<sup>4</sup> In conclusion, there are forces that seem insuperable to the cultural and artistic realization of a remote place (a "margin"): indeed, some places often remain in a perpetual state of *Potency* struggling to become *Act* unless local personalities and institutions make the difference.

### The Margins Paradox

Besides, is it not from the peripheries or margins of the world's network that *The Owl of Minerva* rests, weary of the atrophy of knowledge in central areas, in the hope of finding novelty, singularity, improvement? With reference to the introductory metaphor of this first chapter, proposed by Hegel in his *Philosophy of Right*, it is proposed that innovation, change and knowledge production, applicable to manifold domains, do not originate in the most advanced realms, but in the most unthought-of, remote places, where existence is of greater complexity.<sup>5</sup> These places are more recently reviewed by Harold Innis, who re-identifies them as *margins* or *peripheries*, as distinguished from the *centers*, i.e., those locations where the "monopolies of knowledge" reside: once knowledge takes root on the ground, it undergoes a process of standardisation, stagnation, atrophy, effectively perishing within itself. Therefore, only a different perspective can lead to rebirth. And this awakening can only be provided by the most isolated places, the margins of the Earth where cultural potential is realized.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Lippard, Lucy. *The Lure of the Local: Senses of Place in a Multicentered Society*, 7.

<sup>5</sup> Hegel, G.W.F. *The Philosophy of Right*, 20.

<sup>6</sup> Innis, Harold. *Staples, Markets, and Cultural Change: Selected Essays*.

## 2.2 Chapter II: Female Presence

Through an enthusiastic and heartfelt, yet gentle approach, the second main pillar of this research unfolds. It focuses on contemporary female production and its minor presence in public and private cultural institutions. The choice of gathering female exponents for an initiative as *Organic Traces* is therefore conceived with the aim of balancing and increasing the percentage of local female artists active in the contemporary scene as well as offering a space of shared interaction. Trusting that this work will be considered in its entirety as stimulating or of interest not *only* on the basis of this choice, - the intent of which is neither political nor sentimental -, and encouraging a dialogue window that is legible on multiple levels of kinship. Among the numerous and equally relevant curatorial approaches, artistic practices and theoretical references considered for this section, and which do not omit but on the contrary illustrate their cultural, geographical, political and social contexts, follow the most significant ones. Two among the earliest relevant approaches to curating and artistic practice afferent to the Italian scene will be contextualised. By proposing these visions, it will be possible to glimpse the debut of a female presence within the national cultural context. Finally, emphasis will shift to the observation of two studies conducted in Switzerland and Italy, in order to frame a more precise present-day view as to the subject matter.

### A Historical and Contextual Overview

By the attempt of depicting a temporal and historical overview focused on the dynamics concerning the artistic and curatorial contexts – addressed also to adjacent geographies and concerning the last decades -, reference is made to the emblematic investigation conducted by Lea Vergine. Her pioneering approach proved to be indispensable in shaking up the entrenched patriarchal mindset that characterized Italy in the past century and which was not confined to the artistic labour sphere. In recognition of the resourcefulness shown in the issues addressed, she is considered the first Italian female figure to approach curatorship as a critical, documentary and analytical procedure. Such an effort is particularly visible in the publication and exhibition *The Other Half of the Avant-Garde (1910-1940)*, held at Palazzo Reale in Milan in 1980, which saw the works of over one hundred female artists unjustly erased by historiography. The author defines her practice as not

oriented strictly towards a feminist stance, which in those years - as often occurs in the present - was deemed a trendy topic; but rather she aims to prioritise fairness in the judgement and consideration of the artists, exclusively on the basis of the qualitative value of their production.<sup>7</sup> *Female Presence* raises the issues made visible during the previously mentioned retrospective, and guides towards the complexities being experienced by the female creative hemisphere, the impediments faced in attempting gaining access to the cultural landscape as representatives of modern and contemporary artistic movements, allowing an account to emerge with current events. The preface to the curator's work outlines the limitations and/or incentives identified over the course of her research and motivates the direction and intent for her anthology. The proposed theses are close to those which motivated the writing in *Organic Traces* with regard to two aspects, which will now be outlined. The first argument addressed and which it is appropriate to report, concerns the lack – at the time – of interlocutors to corroborate the documentation sought, along with the absence of earlier investigations on this subject to which reference may be made. The author reflects on the crucial role that reliable documentary investigation may play as a benchmark for future research and how at least what she defines as *the barrier of silence* has been transgressed. The second involves shedding light on a time parabola, which powerfully topical, reminds us of the open prospects toward the ensuing transformations. Vergine states:

*«What moved me then, in choosing this time frame, was the conviction that paying homage to our past is the only gesture that also includes the future (on the past, in fact, lies the identity of the present): and the need to investigate within situations quite close to us, but almost unknown, in order to understand the reasons for so much censorship, for the silencing, for the removal - or almost - of such polyhedric personalities from the bright face of the avant-garde.»<sup>8</sup>*

In contrast to the characters presented by Lea Vergine, a particular case will be described in succession, adherent in genre to the group described above and in contextual location close to that which is availed now to depict a rural setting.

Arcumeggia is an isolated and unusual village located on the Varese Pre-Alps, also known as *Il borgo dipinto (the painted village)*<sup>9</sup>. During the post-war years, the most noted local painters had the opportunity to create extensive frescoes on the walls of residential and municipal buildings.

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<sup>7</sup> Vergine, Lea. *L'Altra Metà dell'Avanguardia (1920 - 1940)*, 11.

<sup>8</sup> *Idid.*, 15.

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.arcumeggia.it>

Approximately 25 artists were represented, with no women attending. Whilst not detracting from the extraordinary and unquestionable talent of the participants, it is clear that at the time women were not professionally dedicated to art; perhaps on a national scale, the percentage of art producers was beginning to be mixed in terms of gender participation, but it is still almost absent in rural areas. Nevertheless, is it considered utopian and discriminating to conceive of a present-day reality where female artistic production has its share of involvement, whether in a suburban context or in large institutions? Prior to providing an answer to this query, however, it would be worthwhile to portray an artistic practice, who acquired prominence within a similar historical and geographical context.

An apt example of extraordinary depth is the operate of Maria Lai, who at the beginning of her career was described as “a woman who sculpts like a man!”, and is internationally known today, despite having emerged in a remote territory. From an early age she cultivated her inclination for creativity, although her journey was marked by no little turbulence. She attended her studies in Rome, where in the post-war years, women were still not perceived as influential in the national art discourse, except as “sources of inspiration”. The narrative of Maria Lai is described with brilliant cleverness by Michela Murgia in her diverse and provocative podcast *Morgana*, which, together with the collection of articles and interviews gathered on the artist, has made possible to reconstruct her poetics and language of great significance in the Italian 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>10</sup> In 1981, she conceived a work that can be considered hybrid between a relational installation and a collective intervention, but actually originates as a site-specific work. *Legarsi alla montagna* was realised in Ulassai, the artist’s native village located in the Sardinian hinterland. The act performed by all the villagers occurs in connecting the houses together with a ribbon, which is then tied to the mountain above, as a symbol of complicity between people in relation to nature and art. As she listens to the stories of the townsfolk, the artist learns about the relationships between them, the bonds, the grudges, and realises that it is necessary to overcome the obstacle of mistrust. So, the artist decides to unveil the ties that unite the village, making the ribbon pass differently according to the relationships between the families, from one house to another. If there is a bond of kinship and affection, a special festive bread will be added to the ribbon; if there are ties of friendship, a knot will be made; if, instead, there are reasons for resentment, only the ribbon will be needed, without any other sign.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Murgia, Michela. *Maria, Lai*. Morgana (Podcast). February 17th, 2020.

<sup>11</sup> Pontiggia, Elena. *Maria Lai, Legarsi alla montagna*, Introduction.

## Rebuilding an Equal Participation

Clearly, not only do these cases prove to be an indispensable drop in the sea of noteworthy personalities, a variety of other factors – including historical shifts, stubborn minds and political strivings – have together pushed towards the evolutions we see taking place in the dynamics of the present day, in our contest with the achievement of women representation in the art realm. Today, the values delineating gender differences are in fact different, less marked but more ramified, it is feasible of choosing a professional career to be pursued, envisaging close equal access or remuneration. The percentage of female presence in the contemporary cultural system appears to be changed, increased compared to a few decades ago, although not yet equivalent. In order to provide a percentage analysis covering the contemporary presence of female representatives in the Swiss and Italian scenarios (the countries covered by this research), the following studies were taken into consideration.

On the subject of the proportion of women in contemporary cultural institutions, reference can be made to the detailed study *Gender relations in the Swiss cultural sector*, commissioned by Pro Helvetia and conducted at cantonal and national levels. The data collected by the foundation take into account various indicators, including presence in art exhibitions, remuneration and management roles; the survey reveals that, in the specifics of the case in question, the presence of women artists in group exhibitions is 31% and 26% in solo exhibitions (in both cases minor compared to the male percentage).<sup>12</sup> Concerning the Italian landscape, although there are no consistent statistics in this respect, we can refer to the study conducted by *Kooness*. The digital platform allows users to virtually visit the world's leading art galleries and has recently published an evaluation carried out on a global level. The methodology applied considers the artists with whom they cooperate, the works with their estimated prices and the winning artists among some prestigious art prizes. From the data collected, they estimate that the representation of female artists in their respective portfolio, accounts for 36% of the total.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> *Gender relations in the Swiss cultural sector, An Analysis focusing on cultural practitioners, institutions and associations*. Preliminary study by the Center for Gender Studies, University of Basel and Social Insight GmbH.

<sup>13</sup> *Gender, In the Eye of the Beholder*. Kooness.



## 2.3 Chapter III: Organic Trace

The materials employed and the discourses identified by the artists to shape their interventions, together with the threads established through their practices, constitute the third agglomerating definition of this project – and also its title. *Organic Trace* names the bond established between the narrator and the tangible elements needed to compose the works. Consistency and essence, process, equilibrium and memory are composite ingredients and bordering themes of a densely interconnected apparatus; some materials belong to nature, others are descended from it: marble, minerals, rain, fabric, plaster, hair, plants... they all interact with the authors. During this constellation of actions exchanged between the two parties, the link with the origins is structured, parallel narratives are pursued, and places are re-found. As a matter of facts, if the profound purpose of this work is to dig for links between four selected female artists, as well the connections between them and nature, whether living or non-living, one cannot but refer to Donna Haraway's philosophy as theoretical milestone, in reference to her illuminating essay *Staying with the Trouble – Making Kin in the Chthulucene*. The author's resources touch different spheres among them philosophical, scientific, ecological, art and, finally, feminism; therefore, they fit well with the concept of *kin*, which she precisely described, and which represents a pivotal hub of the goals set for this paper. In a world dense with issues, in a damaged planet, it is necessary and categorical to intervene vigorously to *unravel the skein* in our present. However, the closing paragraph will be devoted to the innovative ideas that characterise *The Milk of Dreams, the 59<sup>th</sup> International Art Exhibition*, curated by Cecilia Alemani and ranging in a nuanced manner between the metamorphosis of the bodies, the human-technology relationship and last but not least, the bonds with nature in a post-human era.

### *Chthulucene: Making Kin and Staying with the Trouble*

The first concept to be reconstructed is that, precisely, of *trouble*. It comes from the French verb *troubler* meaning “to agitate”, “to muddy”, “to disturb”, and is identified with the issues that inflict global society and existing relationships.<sup>14</sup> They are presented by the author as *chthonic ones*<sup>15</sup>, tentacular beings of different shapes and sizes, who have no consciousness, they simply make and unmake. Faced with the trouble of our existence, Haraway theorizes a healthy attitude to undertake

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<sup>14</sup> Haraway, Donna. *Staying with the Trouble - Making Kin in the Chthulucene*. Introduction, 1.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

and at the same time makes very strong critics against two other modes, referred to by the author as *Anthropocene* and *Capitalocene*. Profoundly wrong is the secular attitude of those who, in the first place, seek to contain the containable, avoid the avoidable, plug the holes without seeking alternative solutions as much as pointing the finger at those who are held responsible for all the world's issues: Man himself. Doing it this way severely risks the absence of conscience and thought, only duty matters, and worldview is lost. But also erroneous is the primarily religious or techno-scientific attitude of outright submission (or rather surrender) to the global horrors, calling the current situation "game-over". One cannot in any way, in fact, according to these views, question God or Power (in the economic sense of the term) and the only temporary solution is to submit to the prevailing logic. Haraway finally proposes her vision of managing and overcoming the trouble in our existence: whether it is to bring calm or storm, joy or sorrow, what we must do is to embrace the trouble. This is only achievable by creating new and inventive kinships or connections (*kin*), which the philosopher explained as "a necessary activity for learning to live and die well with one another". The type of connections reported as requiring creation are not those already present, such as familiar or friendship relations, but rather new ones, not yet existing, those between elements that apparently cannot be paired with one another. So, if in the *Anthropocene* one is trapped in an ideal past thus preventing a future, and in the *Capitalocene* there is a rupture with the past and the future does not exist as the only possible scenario is the apocalyptic one, in both these cases there is no real "being in the present" attitude. Rather, the neologism *Chthulucene* presupposes a temporal space useful for staying in touch with living or dying in a responsive-able form, where *kainos* means (from the Greek *now*) beginning, opening newness, not as a tabula rasa, but rather imbued with memories and hopes for the future<sup>16</sup>. The future itself, for Haraway, does not have to be already created, nor does it have a certain end, at least not without an intervention from our side that is "sympoietic", that brings together, that unites seemingly discordant elements into a new unity.

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<sup>16</sup> Haraway. *Staying with the Trouble - Making Kin in the Chthulucene*. Introduction, 2.

## Art and Science in a Sympoietic Relationship

The philosopher clearly refers, as described in her essay, to the well-known biologist as well as radical theorist of evolution, Lynn Margulis: according to the latter, at the basis of evolution there are only sympoietic systems, or processes called, precisely, symbiogenesis. Literally “with-doing”, the expressions refer to systems that produce collectively, have no defined spatial and temporal boundaries within them, and hence information and control are distributed among all components. The scientist, as well as Haraway, strongly denies autopoiesis, as she believes that nothing ever originates itself: rather, symbiogenesis challenges organisms that organize themselves autonomously. Consequently, the evolution of cells, tissues, organs and so on is allowed only by “persistent intimacy between unknown beings”.<sup>17</sup>

Among the many examples of sympoiesis among the sciences elaborated by Haraway, surely “The Crochet Coral Reef”(2005), an idea of mathematician Christine and her twin sister Margaret Wertheim-also a mathematician and artist- stands out, where mathematics, marine biology, environmental activism, ecological awareness, women’s craft techniques, textile arts, museum layout forms and finally community art practices come together to create a simpoietic result that is as extraordinary as it is unexpected. For the first time, a model of hyperbolic plane representation is brought to life and crochet technique is used, and it is at the same time a clear allusion to the extreme conditions that are endangering the most precious jewels of our oceans. This is how Haraway describes it:

*«The code is so simple: crocheted models of hyperbolic planes achieve their ruffled forms by progressively increasing the number of stitches in each row. The emergent vitalities of this woolly experimental life-form take diverse corporeal shape as crafters increase the numbers from row to row irregularly, oddly, whimsically, or strictly to see what forms they could make—not just any forms, but crenulated beings that take life as marine critters of the vulnerable reefs.»<sup>18</sup>*

This is but just one case in point of how the responsive-ability of the artist, the curator and humans in whole manifests itself through the act of con-doing, con-thinking, passing the “thread” to the other so that he or she can handle it or can pass it on accordingly, because at the basis of everything of is a strong trust that is established.

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<sup>17</sup> Haraway. *Staying with the Trouble - Making Kin in the Chthulucene*, 58.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 78.

## A Contemporary Curatorial Approach

*"Many artists envision the end of anthropocentrism, celebrating a new communion with the non-human, with the animal world, and with the Earth; they cultivate a sense of kinship between species and between the organic and inorganic, the animate and inanimate."<sup>19</sup>*

Cecilia Alemani

Haraway, nevertheless, was not the only one to question about our responsibilities to our fellow human beings, to other life forms and to our Earth: very recently the curator of the Venice Biennale 2022 Cecilia Alemani has made this theme the focus of the most relevant and profound international exhibition. It, albeit fluidly and unified and not as sections whose adjacent spaces are delimited, consists of three main elements intimately related to each other: the metamorphosis of bodies, the human and technology and, finally, the human in its relationship with nature. The starting point that can connect to the very rest to make sense of the exhibition on the whole, is the title itself: "The Milk of Dreams". It is taken from a storybook written by surrealist artist Leonora Carrington (1917-2011), which tells of a magical world where life is constantly reinvented through an imaginary prism and in which for every being there are infinite possibilities. In this way, the protagonist takes on ever-changing hybrid forms, human, non-human, always different from herself. Through the selected curatorial practices, Alemani questions what the future holds for us, a future that is, indeed, post-human: many of the artists have identified this era as the sharp boundary with anthropocentrism and the beginning of a communion between human-beings and non-human-in a relationship that is no longer hierarchical or extractive but harmonious and symbiotic. The idea of the Western white male, the man of Reason, and measure of the whole universe, comes to an end for good. Not a few intimations as well as misinterpretations have been directed at the curator, labeling her work as "feminist"; to such claims, Alemani firmly retorts how deep intentions are mostly feminine rather than feminist (even though some of the chosen personalities were feminists). In fact, it is not proposed at all to rewrite the history of art, but rather to give back to women - to female artists - the space they deserve.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> <https://www.instagram.com/p/CcXiuDNtJa/>

<sup>20</sup> <https://www.ilgiornaledellarte.com/articoli/la-biennale-postumana-di-cecilia-alemani/138327.html>  
<https://www.ilgiornaledellarte.com/articoli/una-biennale-femminile-ma-non-femminista/138333.html>

### 3 Case Studies

The analytical methodology associated with the selection of materials employed and topics addressed, featured in the introduction of the third chapter *Organic Trace*, will now be applied to all four performers, detailing the distinctive characters of some works in the exhibition, while revealing the connections to the previously reconstructed theoretical references. By means of illustrating the following cases, the chapter's content will branch out in two phases: the initial one, descriptive in nature, will clarify the existence or absence of connections already embedded in the works within the general thread and those established between the authors, the expressive means, materials and themes handled, as well as the affinities of each poetic with the project's pivotal pillars, related precisely to a specific site, the female presence and the organic trace. In a second stage, questions arising from the three chapters will be posed in the individual terms of each artist. With regard to matters concerning the specificities of site, it is relevant to identify whether the latter is determinative in the artistic narrative and whether the work matches the cultural context upon which it is situated. In addition, possible identifications will be suggested with the topics discussed in the theoretical perspectives regarding the artists' ties to the organic element, while also attempting to identify echoes of Harawayan philosophy.

#### 3.1 Biological Element and Nodal Narratives



*Secreta*, Serena Nicoli, 2021.

Installation view at collective exhibition *Bianco*, Fondazione Arsenale, Iseo.

Photographed by: Celeste Lombardi



*Secreta*, Serena Nicoli, 2021.

Installation view at collective exhibition *Bianco*, Fondazione Arsenale, Iseo.

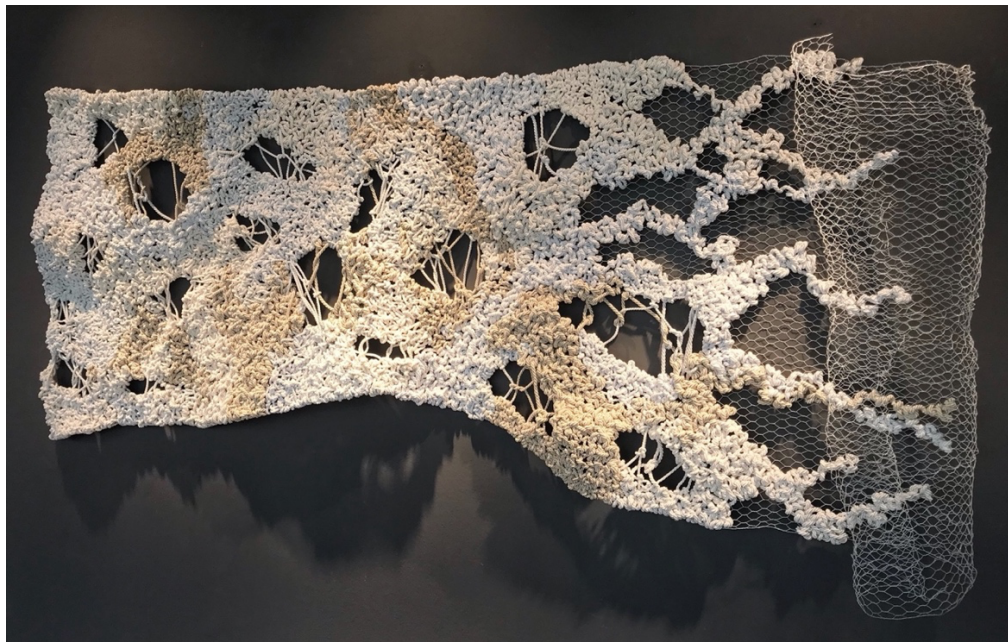
Photographed by: Celeste Lombardi

Serena Nicoli distributes her practice across two streams of language, dissimilar in technique and material, but close in conceptual discourse. The former denotes the genesis behind her creative process and involves the biological imprints secreted by the body, in the form of tears and hair. Pertaining to this series is *Secreta*, a work permeated by a strong scientific component, which starts from the microbiological observation of the artist's own tears and proposes a path in which the descriptive geographies of interiority, morphologies of emotion, are offered to the world through the visible trace of the body on material, in a constant dialogue between art and science. Observing teardrops under a microscope and gathering documentation, she discovers scientific studies proving that their colouring, morphology and pattern differ depending on the reason for which the tears are generated. She collects them in emotive states of commotion, joy and sadness and photographs them under the magnifying glass. The title of the work finds its derivation in the Latin verb *secernere*, as in a solitary ritual, usually performed in intimacy, but which is specific in its universality. The further language articulated by the artist is what she calls the *narrative of knots*, a succession of rope entanglements supported by a wire mesh core. *Dilania* is a plot of matter, a metaphor for a life plot. Within this narrative, the knot represents the emblematic system of union. However, this expressed bond is not indissoluble, and in the dense weave of this path, there are knots to be untied, which produce gashes, wounds, which allow a glimpse of a new space beyond



oneself. The work is metaphorically pervaded by the concepts of union, disunion, encounter and dissolution, which distinguish our existential journey. The work could be read as immediately as the words, proceeding from left to right, in a progressive widening of the lacerations that characterise it. These openings create new spaces for action, generating renewed and infinite evolutionary possibilities.

With an introspective and conceptual slant, the artist is hardly inserted into a local context, being a personality who has travelled extensively (see biography). In fact, she belongs to the category of nomadic artists, those that have by choice moved away from their homeland for a long time. But perhaps it is precisely for this reason that her spiritual and meditative character drives the artist to dwell on feelings experienced, on life, on human relationships, always from a strictly subjective perspective, which allows the viewer to see reality through her eyes, turning creative expression towards a true direct dialogue with others. Several times, when explaining her works, Nicoli claims that she is not willing to 'waste' her tears, as if she reworks concepts within herself and then endows them with a life of their own, either by employing components of her body (*Secreta*) or inanimate elements (*Dilania*). This newly-formed kinship enables overcoming moments of discouragement and generates further growth, which does not deny the past, on the contrary, it is valued and praised above all and simultaneously there is an opening towards a more conscious future.



*Dilania*, Serena Nicoli, 2021.  
Installation view at *Organic Traces*, Galleria Ottonovecento.  
Photographed by: Veronica Mari

### 3.2 Presence - Absence

*The proliferation of the Equal is a 'fullness where nothing but emptiness transpires'. The expulsion of the Other produces an adipose void of fullness". I have always loved sculpting human beings; at a certain point I felt the physicality of those bodies out of tune with the present day. Observing and living in this era, where corporeality becomes liquid, where we prefer to navigate in a virtual reality rather than physically collide with the real world, it would be more coherent to sculpt invisible figures. Physically less and less present in our bodies. What is the point of sculpting bodies if they are not inhabited?*

Sofia Cassina



*Presence - Absence* (Series), Sofia Cassina, 2019.  
Photographed by: Alessandro Paolini



As far as the latter is concerned, one among the reflections the artist envisages during the conception of her series *Presence – Absence*. The artist reflects on those questions which, when raised, generate others and do not require unequivocal answers. Our society is intertwined with virtual habitats and pushes us to dismember ourselves, to renounce the body in order to become ethereal, dynamic, attractive, but dangerously delicate and empty. The process to create the body and destroy the material stops at the exact moment, a limbo, in which the marble becomes a fragile veil poised between being and not being, and the only concrete witness to a corpus that is now invisible. At the same time, all the remains of the preserved organism are witnesses of the destruction, but also of the strength and the whole weight that is being renounced. Marble sculpture presupposes the handling of large blocks of matter, which in this specific work, are dismembered and emptied. A human shape leaves a trace of its features, opening space for new levitating silhouettes.

Sofia Cassina might appear difficult to locate within the exhibition framework, perhaps because of her poetics, or perhaps because of both technique and material chosen. However, the artist's discourse fits into one of the most discussed cultural debates of the last decade, and even more so in the inter and post-pandemic period. Emergency measures of social distancing have extremely altered the way we relate to and perceive ourselves and others. Often faced with the virtuality of a screen, we have lost our carnality, our bodily component, and have felt solitude. Perhaps the artist assessed this procedure – depicting the overlays rather than the central core of our bodies – as a means to represent a void we left behind and so desperately attempt to fill. Rather, we should just embrace that we are no longer the same, and open ourselves up to a new age: the time when humanity acquires new characters, a post-human age.

Despite having felt the necessity to relocate, in order to pursue an academic career akin to her practice, the author remains close to the issue of site-specificity and familiarity with the territory (her roots lie on Lake Maggiore). In addition, a separate series of works pertaining to the same sculptural technique deal with the subject of ties and relationships binding individuals. A dialogue between the latter and Serena Nicoli's works, the main feature of which is the knot, was conceived during the exhibition.



*Presence – Absence* (Series), Sofia Cassina, 2019.  
Photographed by: Alessandro Paolini

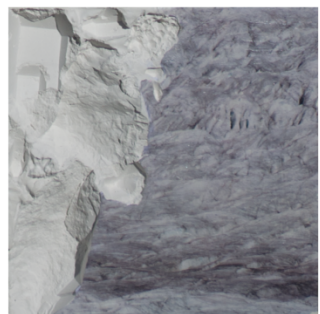
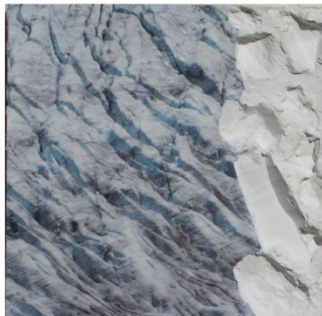
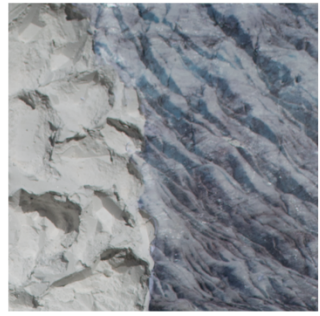
### 3.3 Die Seele von Aletsch

A nostalgia for faraway places, loved and yet to be discovered. A glacial landscape, where horizon is lost and ice becomes the sky, the whites sculpt the blacks of the deep waters, made palpable and defined at the same time. The series portraying frozen lakes (*Fernweh*) focuses on the meanings of belonging and distance, insinuating itself into the nostalgia linked to a beloved, desired place, far from being reachable. The gaze and the mind can pause to look and understand: becoming overwhelmed.



*Fernweh*, Giulia Ferretti, 2019.  
Digital print on Aluminium.

A sea of ice descends sinuously between the rock walls, taking over the visual space. It almost seems to be moving, breathing: a long river of ice that leads us to silence, to the essence of things. Glaciers are landscapes of extraordinary strength and great patience. They are formed by snow that does not melt during the summer and compacts, in a succession of layers, by its own weight. The transformation takes years, often decades. And the glacier is there, patiently, to accommodate this transformation. Meanwhile, the ice is not standing still, but moving, even more than a hundred meters a year, sliding downwards. According to recent studies on climate change, an estimate has been made of the damage our way of life will cause to our landscapes: 75% of Swiss glaciers, three out of four, will have disappeared by 2050. In just thirty years, the landscapes we are tied to, in which a few of us have grown up, will disappear, transforming into something else.



*Die Seele von Aletsch*, Giulia Ferretti, 2021.  
Installation view for *Organic Traces*, Galleria Ottonovecento.



*Die Seele von Aletsch* and *Fernweh* are among the works that most vividly reveal the issues tackled by Giulia Ferretti. Through a mapping of the Alpine and glacial regions, the natural border between Italy and Switzerland, the author bears tangible witness to an irreversible landscape mutation. The artist's practice denotes her attempt to stay with the trouble, documenting the process of transformation that the surrounding lands undergo through both the action of time and impact of climate change. The artist fulfils this exigency by travelling parallel to the concept of preserving personal memories and attachment to origins. She intertwines composite techniques, blending photography, plaster sculptures and etchings.

Giulia Ferretti is among the more closely connected authors to the specific site. In her works, the reader glimpses the evolution towards an affiliation with her territory, her glaciers. The bond with nature is intertwined with the bond with her land, as never before. She performs the physical-material model of the specific site, the threads between the work and the site being indissoluble and invisible, but also between the latter and the audience, if they share roots and territorial identity. The artist also fits into that sphere in which site-specific art expands towards new horizons: political and ecological activism. However, her intentions are not only to denounce the current situation. In fact, in the first place, she aims to reconstruct the contemporary picture by keeping track of it, organically/materially but also historically. She emphasises the word 'coexistence' on several occasions throughout the exhibition, as we must learn to live with the actual conditions, be aware and acknowledge them.



*12 Peaks*, Giulia Ferretti, 2019.  
Series of etchings. From left: Dom, Cervino, Eiger, Diavolezza.

### 3.4 *De Rerum*: Towards a Mapping of Existence

Close to the author presented above, in terms of relevance to environmental subjects and photographic imprint, is Vittoria Mazzonis. Her space of action draws from the location she inhabits, where the stages of her life unwind and the remnants of her journey are assembled, in an exercise of collection and cleaning, order and classification. *De Rerum* is a continuous and ongoing project, a photographic series composed of three distinct narrative chapters – *De rerum natura (incipit)*, *De Rerum Natura Umana* and *De Rerum Laguna*, subdivided by territory and temporal space in which they were realised. The installation elements are built with discarded material, identified through what the author defines as a “stumbling of the gaze”. The practice of walking and getting lost in the territories in which the artist lives, is an exercise of appropriation, as well as of identity construction. The equilibrium of form, the tension between two polarities, the impermanence of the moment, are all aesthetic and conceptual components at the base of this work. Therapeutic process and at the same time essential for its balance. Investigation and discovery, loss and rebirth.



*De Rerum Natura (Incipit)*, Titani. Vittoria Mazzonis, 2020.  
Digital print on cotton paper.

She adopts the same methodology applying it to the diverse sites in which she lives, not only the homelands, but also those of relocation and passage. It is not always possible to identify a precise locus, as the artist possesses a wandering spirit, and identifies the latter in the perpetual search for her identity, so the *stumbling of the gaze* is likewise a narrative of existence and a method of construction for new kinships, living and non-living. Mazzonis, through the act of wandering, matches elements of natural provenance with human-made elements, released into nature. They are conferred, not only with a new body, but also with a new meaning, unique and inhuman. The communion of the aforementioned items assembles into new compositions, hybrid creatures belonging to other species and coined by the author's mind. There is therefore a variable site that adapts and takes its cue from the ground trodden. Her relationship between site and work is shaped by the succession of events. The result of her process is therefore always methodical in its succession, but assumes the specificities of the locality.



*De Rerum Natura (Incipit)*. Vittoria Mazzonis, 2021.  
Digital prints on cotton paper.



*De Rerum Laguna*. Vittoria Mazzonis, 2021.  
Digital prints on cotton paper.



## 4 Discussion and Conclusion

Devising a composition gathering together a twofold, place-related priority themes and those of personal value, in a multifaceted intersection of careful and sincere curatorial approach, the initiative and its homonymous publication were driven by the desire to create something other, stimulating, aimed at achieving transformation. Since the dawning and spreading of rural cultures, art has been stirring the terrain of conflicting, overlapping or shared sensations, which are entrusted to strike the observer and the reader in their intimate dimension, reaching even into the sphere of his or her private memories. *Organic Traces* is a yet acerbic curatorial approach that gazes into further unfolding, a first of new attempts *to trouble* the waters within an already fertile but somehow forgotten geographical realm. Curatorial decisions, contemporary authors, the topics they explore and the space in which this framework is envisaged, form parts of a pattern, a network, united in a constellation of layers and bonds, intricate and grounded as well as voluble and interpretable. The concluding chapter will devote attention to delineating the most significant analogies and distinctions among the performers' practices, with reference to the previously elaborated theoretical perspectives and illustrated case studies.

Referring to the site-specific pillar, it can be argued that the close link with the origins is not always explicit and powerful. This relationship is only fully established in the practice of Giulia Ferretti, who develops all the features characterising her language around roots and native territory. However, for all four authors, a strong bond with place exists in a broader vision. They approach differently, incorporating the place they inhabit, or detracting experiences from it, in order to compose their narratives. Landscape and space become the essential *biographical geographies* in the processes distinguishing them. Answering the question posed in the first chapter - *Are the places lived and the events that occurred within them decisive in forging a unique language?* - an affirmative implication is evident. Adherent to the thematic of places, the issue arises as to how it might affect the artists setting themselves in the specific site, rural in nature and in its marginal context of which *Organic Traces* is inserted. The approach, in this circumstance, focuses on the value of lived events outside the circumscribed territory. Since the authors are considered to be nomadic, the vicissitudes accumulated during a covered journey spring forth and lead back to a concentric type of dynamic, which spreads from the margin outwards, heading back again to the original fulcrum, per se allowing the marginal potential to actualize into something concrete.

As far as the first chapter is concerned, it was therefore possible to identify bonds with the external environment (bonds thus lying beyond gender and birthplace). The organic traces represent the leading gestures underlying this work, as the directional evolution of this paired terminology proceeds in a dual direction: on the one hand, the curatorial approach has created a kinship, uniting the four practices - which was the primary attempt -. On the other hand, other kinships were sought, or attempts were made to unearth entanglements between these ties - whether spontaneous or established posthumously - have been discovered in the individual languages, narratives and works. Giulia Ferretti and her mountain atlas, establish *kin's* between humankind and nature, between technical instruments (media) and substances (materials), between the communion of craftsmanship and activism. Serena Nicolì writes using alternative modes, which differ from words. Instead of typing in the classical language, characterised by the merging of letters and a succession of words, she narrates knot after knot, or through her organic trace (tear secretions), thus forming a kin between non-verbal communication and emotional art. Sofia Cassina and Vittoria Mazzonis, on the other hand, produce post-human figures by employing different means and achieving atmospheres: the first, by assembling vegetable and mechanical remains in a new balance that is also ephemeral; the second by materialising the partiality of human bodies with human sensations such as loss and suspension.

Shifting finally, no less relevant in this curatorial project, to the female representation in the latter, it is necessary to underline some aspects that have already transpired in the evolution of the path carried out: first of all, as already reiterated, the interest and choice towards female practices is not part of any political or partisan project from the curatorial point of view, but it can be restated that the selection and consideration of female artists is measured exclusively on their artistic skills and the potential that can be realized through their active involvement. Hence, the idea of organizing an all-female curatorial project in a local reality such as Lake Maggiore can neither be identified as discriminatory toward the male gender nor even feminist: a choice that is based on the value and merit of the person is never unfair.

## 5 Curatorial Project

*Organic Traces* is an exhibition conceived with the aim of constellating four young artists who are rooted in the territories overlooking Lake Maggiore. The symbiosis between their works reveals their common strengths by proposing distinct narratives and hybrid expressive languages that disclose the itineraries and perceptions pertaining to their practice. Those that might be defined as their *biographical geographies* flow into a broad and intertwined mapping of personal and collective themes.

### 5.1 Concept

In order to comprehend the articulation and reflection of the research carried out, the core of this project has been divided into three chapters or cluster terms: *Site-Specificity*, *Female Presence* and *Organic Trace*. Each section is interlaced with the other and finds in the named keywords theoretical references and explanatory cases, global or autochthonous, iconographic or etymological, through which the authors are related. The fusion of an investigation with references to significant essays and practices, combined with the realisation of a tangible drawing, is therefore based on the analysis of the three pivotal sections mentioned above. Firstly, it looks at the dynamics of implementation and at the importance of the specific location selected for a cultural event conceived in a small-scale reality, as well as at the possible audience and the type of works displayed. Furthermore, it offers a space to contemporary female artists who operate through multiple narrative media. The study includes an in-depth examination in percentages, applied to the most recent decades on both the Italian and Swiss territories. Finally, the third chapter investigates to what extent and how the organic-visceral trace is an essential element of the pieces presented, in terms of the materials selected, semantically in the analysis of the subjects proposed, as well as in their concretisation.

### 5.2 Artists Biographies

#### *Serena Nicoli*

Born in Varese in 1985. She currently lives and works in Brescia. She graduated in Contemporary Visual Arts at the Accademia di Belle Arti SantaGiulia in Brescia, after completing her studies and graduating in International Relations, which for many years led her to travel and work in different countries worldwide (Spain, China, Latin America). The dynamic dimension of her life profoundly influences her artistic research, which develops from a reinterpretation of biographical, identity and cultural geographies, both personal and experienced, collective and imagined. She works with

different types of materials, on which she imprints a strongly manipulative and gestural action, with a particular predilection for mainly natural textile fibres, also combining organic and non-organic elements. The knot is the emblematic system of her poetics, which in the ties of the fibres seeks and establishes the sense of path, of relationships, the meaning behind life's dynamism. The weft is ambivalence in the interweaving of matter and in turn a narration of existence. The word also often accompanies her artwork or is part of it, correlated or integrated with the expressive dimension, as a portal opening onto other worlds.

### *Sofia Cassina*

Born in Masciago Primo (VA) in 1996, she lives and works in Carrara. She received a three year degree in Sculpture from the Academy of Fine Arts in Carrara, where she is now finalising her postgraduate studies in the same academic discipline. Her investigation, in unison plastic and spiritual, takes place among the inner and outer space, in the empty and full spaces, in the inconsistencies generated by the splits. Sofia Cassina explores the connections between the self and the outside world, the human and the soul, space, phenomena large and small, pleasant and unpleasant, spirituality and earthiness. In an attempt to give form to the questions arising from the observation of these relationships, the author dismembers the blocks filled with white marble, reconstructing a light, suspended figure. The encounter with corporeality thus allows a clash, a questioning, which starts from a sensation that is always physical but permeates layer by layer until it touches something deeper.

### *Giulia Ferretti*

Born in Lugano in 1996. She lives and works in Malcantone, Switzerland. She graduated from the Accademia di Belle Arti SantaGiulia in Brescia with a Bachelor's degree in Painting and then attended a Master's degree in Visual Arts at the same institution. Her artistic research focuses on the identity of places rooted in the territory of origin and of continuous appeal: Switzerland, the Alps and the mountain landscape. Expressing herself through different media and visual languages, she combines etching, sculptural installations and photography. Artistic practice becomes her exploratory vision to investigate the notions of belonging and distance, of trace and memory, with the intention of freezing time and encapsulating what has been. The sidereal dimensions captured trace a path of extraction, selection, detachment, isolation, with the ultimate aim of representing a feeling, a story of the soul. Her punctuated microcosm thrives on shades and the light detachment that turns from immaculate whites into shadows, synthesizing a message that leads to something imaginary.

*Vittoria Mazzonis.*

Born in Turin in 1997. She works between Turin, Milan and Venice, where she currently resides. She graduated in Painting and Visual Arts at NABA, the New Academy of Fine Arts in Milan and then attended the Master's degree in Visual Arts at Iuav in Venice, where she will soon conclude her studies. Her research is oriented towards a key to interpreting her existence, to be able to find her roots, her place of belonging. The elements that make up her installations are all collected on the road, they are fundamental, since they represent the means by which she manages to activate a cognitive process. The natural detail is essential for her identity construction; it is in the confrontation with this other element, external to her interiority, that the artist identifies a key to interpreting her experience. Sculpture and photography mingle, one becoming functional for the other in an interpenetration of layers that is not always distinguishable. There is always a tension towards the balance of form: its dual essence is based on the multiple and fragile facets of identity. It is therefore in the tension between the two poles, in this unstable stability, that the pivotal point of its balance lies.

### 5.3 Exhibition Space, Setting and Images

The exhibition space perimeter is divided into two adjacent rooms. The itinerary is designed to accommodate the works arranged in two groups, which according to a double elliptical path develop two distinct moments and viewpoints for the visitor to observe. In the initial room, which corresponds to the original exhibition space of the gallery, the wall mounted works branch out in a blended order; while in the second, the contiguous room - the specifics of which will be detailed below -, the installation and sculptural works have been located. Considering measurements and number of the pieces displayed (18 in total), the curatorial strategy involved finding an additional space - annexed to the art gallery's premises - previously employed as a storage area by the bordering business. The latter space was offered by the owner, with the curator agreement to take care of renovation, illumination and conversion of the premises for exhibition purposes. Geniosa Srls, an emerging company working as a general contractor in interior architecture and innovation design, was responsible for creating a mobile partition wall to separate the main area from the store room where the equipment of the existing business is kept. In addition, the company collaborated with the

curator in setting up the finishing features of the space, lighting (the space lacked electrical connections), and lights were installed to illuminate the venue during the evening hours, and then connected to the gallery. In order to arrange the available spaces in the most efficient way and mapping the exhibition course at the visitor's fruition, approximate floor plans were made of the two spaces, complete with the titles given to works and the performers' details. Two panels illustrating the curatorial concept and the biographies of the authors were placed at the entrance.



Installation setting for *Organic traces*, 2022. Photographed by: Vittoria Mazzonis



Installation setting for *Organic traces*, 2022. Photographed by: Vittoria Mazzonis.



Exhibition plan for *Organic Traces*, 2022. Giulia Ferretti Sofia Cassina Vittoria Mazzonis Serena Nicoli

## 5.4 Where and When

Galleria Ottonovecento  
7. - 22. May 2022

## 5.5 Institutional Collaborations





## 5.6 Schedule

### *November - December 2021*

research on exhibition and dissertation concept  
selection of artists and venue  
initial contact with artists and venue

### *January 2022*

receiving confirmation from artists and exhibition space  
renting the exhibition space and fixing the date of event  
discuss the selection of artworks and special needs of artists  
write an abstract  
prepare a schedule and budget for the project  
researching funding and deadlines  
prepare a presentation for funding applications

### *February - March 2022*

submit funding application dossier  
writing of the exhibition catalogue  
make arrangements for transportation of artworks with artists  
designing posters, flyers (digital and print format) and monthly editorial agenda  
determining the layout of the works in the gallery and outlining the visitor route

### *April 2021*

receive feedback on funding applications  
print catalogue, posters and flyers  
organise the catering for opening day  
organise photographic documentary of the exhibition  
establish collaborations/sponsors  
writing exhibition text and artists' biographies  
presenting the press release

### *2. - 6. May 2022*

print texts of the exhibition and artworks  
send press release and newsletter  
spreading flyers and activate communication on social media  
upload the information on the website  
install with the artists and the gallery team

*7. - 22. May 2022* exhibition days

### *23. -27. May 2022*

dismantling of exhibition and installation material  
cleaning of the space

## 5.7 Budget/Funding

In order to finance the initiative, it was necessary to request sponsorship from a number of local, regional, public and private organisations. Only one association contacted participated. The funds received were used to purchase lighting fixtures, skirting boards, catering for the vernissage and posters to promote the event. Aziende Lungolago Srl made available the room adjacent to the original exhibition space, which had undergone some previously planned renovation works (movable partition wall), enabling an agreement to be reached between the two parties: The use of this space for exhibition purposes was therefore granted to the curator for the duration of the event. The curatorial work and her presence in the gallery space, for the entire period of the exhibition and installation, returned the amount needed to pay the rent requested by the art gallery.

Position	Calculation	Funding	Outstanding Amounts
<b>Exhibition</b>			
Artist's fee	0	no fees paid	0
Artworks transportation	200	Galleria Ottonovecento	200
<b>Curator</b>			
Curatorial work	- 1120	Galleria Ottonovecento	-1120
<b>Installation and equipment</b>			
Renting of the exhibition space	1120	Curatorial work	1120
Mobile partition wall	2600	Aziende Lungolago Srl	0
Lightening (2 pieces)	40	Ticino.Re Sa	0
Skirting board	30	Ticino.Re Sa	0
Catering for vernissage	150	Ticino.Re Sa	0
<b>Communication</b>			
Exhibition catalogues	1000	Galleria Ottonovecento	1000
Flyers and posters	80	Ticino.Re Sa	0
Social Media	0	no fees paid	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>5340</b>		<b>1200</b>

## 6 Appendix

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