

ENGLISH

GALLERIA CONTINUA

SAN GIMIGNANO BEIJING LES MOULINS HABANA

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LORIS CECCHINI

The Ineffable Gardener

Opening: Saturday 20 January 2018, via del Castello 11, 6–9pm
Until 29 April 2018, Monday–Sunday, 10am–1pm / 2–7pm

Galleria Continua is pleased to present a new solo show by **Loris Cecchini**. Active since the second half of the 1990s, Cecchini is one of the Italian artists who has become most well established on the international scene over the last ten years.

Conceived specifically by the artist for the gallery's entire cinema-theatre space in San Gimignano, *The Ineffable Gardener* comprises a substantial body of work. Physical phenomena become an optical and emotive inventory of the environment. Natural systems are transferred into a layered system of semantic relations in order to reveal the invisible processes of a synthesis between nature and culture. Modular steel sculptures, tangible phenomenologies in stone, microscope images re-elaborated in 3D in the shape of monochrome pictures and watercolour and pencil diaries encapsulated in transparent vacuum wrapping yield material geographies and poetically elaborate the space and the surface of the work: the exhibition floats in the spatial infinity of the micro and the macro, in which the phenomenal reality re-elaborated by the artist becomes anatomical memory and conceptual diagram. In the expressive osmosis created between biological forms and architectural structure, Cecchini invites us to reconsider our conceptions of reality and representation, the organic dimension of natural development and that of the technical-artificial landscape.

At the heart of Cecchini's work is a new reading of spatiality: physical space is interpreted as something biological, organic and vital, but at the same time as something that is rationally structured, mechanically produced, perfectly artificial and yet endowed with an organic-structural functionality. In a recent interview, the artist declared: *"I have devised my creative language around the ideas of the object, the model and architecture. Often the work refers in different ways to the idea of inhabiting space. Currently, I am exploring the space of sculpture and of the environmental installation according to a notion of the parcelization of material, almost a sort of molecular deflagration of sculpture, in which scientific phenomenology becomes an intimate structure and go-between for vision. This is after having for many years investigated the human relationship with curved space, a space where the right angle and the Euclidean paradigm give way to organic deformation, pervading the sense of form. What I produce on different occasions are series of works using media ranging from watercolour to photography, from the large-scale environmental installation to the micro-sculpture. It is a space that spectators themselves walk around in and complete. There is the constant idea of a "dual landscape", in which the physicality of the materials refers to a virtual design and vice versa."*

Nature is considered by Cecchini in terms of the constant transience of its structural and metaphysical becoming: the two works situated at the entrance to the gallery introduce us to a world balanced between a scientific and a poetic approach to the natural landscape. In *Seed syllables* (2008), the relationship between the proliferation of steel modules and the intimate structure of the large oak branch on which they are articulated evidences the alternation of the artificial aspect and the natural, environmental one, visually and poetically combining two different and closely interdependent worlds. The irregular propagation of modules recalls the behaviour of cells in analogy with the invisible ones within the plant, in a kind of semantic metaphor in which self-generative and self-organizing processes express the innate beauty and creative energy of evolutionary complexes. In *Sound fossils in the Holocene garden* (2017), the vibrations of several waves act upon the surface of various marble elements, which, like river stones, bear witness to an event related to the phenomenology of propagation in a delicate morphogenetic process: *"Starting from observation of the motion of liquids but also of sound in space and of the scientific diagrams that describe it, I developed the "waves" and "vibrations" project, linking them to various materials and techniques and using specific software,"* says the artist. *"Starting from a virtual description model and then reconstructing them physically on a three-dimensional plane (...), the material moves and ripples, hybridizing into a liquid body and transforming the linearity of the surface. The alteration concerns the physical manifestation of the vibration, but also the visualization of phenomena, ongoing processes and mutations, expressed with different frequencies and intensities."*

In the rooms adjacent to the entrance are a series of new *Gaps (Bookshelf I, II, III)*, which investigate the relationship between the objects and the architecture housing them; the presence of these elements is characterized by the modulation of lights and shadows: like spectres of the originals, they preserve the memory of elements familiar to perception and at the same time alter the view of a model due to their surreal and paradoxical appearance.

The two large installations, *Waterbones (Stochastic Choral Symphony)* and *Green Sponge*, which Cecchini has conceived for the stalls and backstage area of the former cinema/theatre, acquire a completely different configuration in this context by virtue of the adaptive capacity intrinsic to the structure itself, a design premise envisaged by the artist. Consisting of thousands of steel modules called *waterbones*, a word chosen to stress their lightness and morphological freedom, they seem to be a biological metaphor contaminating the entire space and playing with gravity, interacting with the architectural volume and giving rise to an image at once natural and artificial, static and dynamic. The modules of *Waterbones* can be endlessly assembled and combined in innumerable ways, bringing to mind the mathematical algorithms underpinning nature. The installation is thus an alienating biological metaphor, on the boundary between science and aesthetics: a point of contact between poetic narrative and industrial production, which invites viewers to lose themselves in the multitude of realities opened up by the infinite possible interpretations of these fragments of nature, fluctuating and suspended in a concrete yet simultaneously evanescent dimension. "Waterbones is a tripolar module which gives rise to chains and aggregates that might quite simply be inexhaustible," explains Cecchini. "It recalls a kind of cosmology, a rhizomatic structure, or again a three-dimensional diagram. However, considering the seed as a single element that makes up everything, my work can also be read as a repetition of an identical seminal sculpture, in which the original module is in itself already an independent sculptural form." The installation *Waterbones (Green Sponge + L System)* is a dialogue with a sound work realized by the artist Alessio de Girolamo, who observes: "L System is a generative music composition created by reducing Loris Cecchini's modular installations to a mathematical function. My research into the "Nn, NomenNescio" sound, which sees analogies between Bohr's atomic model and the piano designed by Busoni (Bosendorfer Imperial 290), is the compositional structure that introduced the piano theme. The chords obtained from chemical formulas, like the melodies, are the fruit of work on the frequencies of notes compared to elements of the periodic table that inspire some of the works in the show."

A number of other works have also conceived for this show. These include two sculptures made from new modular aluminium elements: *Monocrystals in diagrammatic fuzziness (125)*, based on the proliferation, growth mode and spatial aggregation of crystallographic structures, and *Spin-orbits (128)*, in which the potential interaction expressed in quantum physics is reinterpreted in sculptural form. There is also a series of *µGraph reliefs*, pictures consisting of broad monochrome surfaces generated by microscope images in which the spectrum of forms and structures embodies the morphology observed in the micro-organisms. The surface realized in velvet dust determines its pictorial and plastic qualities: the light is absorbed deeply by the "dusty" nylon fibre surface in tonal variations of a single colour. Another work is *I must have seen things (2017/2018)*, in which naturalism and abstract diagram float in the delicate transparent space of the wrapping that contains them, also a relief sculptural element, in which the light, fluid qualities of the material dialogue with the corporality of the paper and the colour. Finally, there is *Nocturnal thesis fragments (2017)*, a succession of Plexiglas cabinets with branches of rosemary and manzanita on which small sculptures are assembled. The branches are distinguished by surface burning, with the soft, deep black of the burnt material rendering them on an abstract plane associated with drawing and painting. The blackened branches also house various kinds of micro modules in shiny metal, analogous in design terms with other environment-size installations. The different rhizomatic structures made from the modules and the plant fragments overlap in a succession of light and shadow. The carbonized branches take on a symbolic value by virtue of their surface quality, while the artificial graft consisting of the metal micro sculptures emerges with various accents, a dual-nature botanical cosmology, pale light on nocturnal depths.

Born in Milan in 1969, **Loris Cecchini** lives and works in Italy, following a recent five-year period in Berlin. He has shown his work around the world, with solo exhibitions in leading museums such as the Palais de Tokyo in Paris, the Musée d'art moderne et contemporain of Saint-Etienne Métropole, the MoMA PS1 in New York, the Shanghai Duolun MoMA in Shanghai, the Centro Gallego de Arte Contemporanea in Santiago di Compostela, the Kunstverein of Heidelberg, Quarter in Florence, the Centro per l'Arte Contemporanea Luigi Pecci in Prato and the Fondazione Arnaldo Pomodoro in Milan. The artist has taken part in many international exhibitions, including the 56th, 51st and 49th Venice Biennale, the 9th and 6th Shanghai Biennale, the 15th and 13th Quadriennale of Rome, the Taipei Biennial in Taiwan, the Valencia Biennale in Spain and the 12th International Biennale of Sculpture in Carrara. He has also contributed to collective shows around the world, including events at the Ludwig Museum in Cologne, the PAC in Milan, the Palazzo Fortuny in Venice, Macro Future in Rome, the MART in Rovereto, the Hayward Gallery in London, the Garage Centre for Contemporary Culture in Moscow, the Palazzo delle Esposizioni in Rome, the Musée d'art contemporain in Lyon, the MOCA of Shanghai, the Deutsche Bank Kunsthalle of Berlin, among others. Cecchini has produced many permanent site-specific installations, for instance at Villa Celle in Pistoia, the courtyard of the Palazzo Strozzi in Florence, the Boghossian Foundation in Brussels, the Cleveland Clinic's Arts & Medicine Institute in the United States, Les Terrasses du Port in Marseilles, and recently at the Shinsegae Hanam Starfield in Seoul.

For further information about the show and for photos:
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