

PRESS RELEASE

Michele Savino. *Erosioni sospese* | *Suspended erosions*

Curated by Camilla Remondina

From 4th to 27th July, 2024

Opening on Thursday July 4th, at 6.00 pm

Exhibition venue

IAGA Contemporary Art

Cloșca Street, n. 9-11, Cluj-Napoca, Romania

The exhibition can be visited for free from Tuesday to Saturday, from 2.00 to 6.00 pm and by appointment.

For further information:

Website: www.iagacontemporaryart.com

Email address: info@iagacontemporaryart.com

Tel: +40 724059844

FB: [@iagacontemporaryart](https://www.facebook.com/iagacontemporaryart)

IG: [@iagacontemporaryart](https://www.instagram.com/iagacontemporaryart)

IAGA Contemporary Art is pleased to inaugurate the first solo exhibition signed by Michele Savino (1989), young artist from Bergamo (Italy).

The exhibition ***Erosioni sospese* | *Suspended Erosions*** is the culmination of Michele Savino's selection by IAGA Contemporary Art **as the winner of the Gallery Prize**, awarded on the occasion of the **fourteenth edition of the Combat Prize in July 2023 in Livorno**, which included, precisely, a personal exhibition in the gallery spaces. The choice was possible thanks to the work *Gabinetto Archeologico (Archaeological Cabinet)* (2018), nominated in the Graphics section, which stood out among the eighty finalists, also receiving a **special mention from the jury in its category**.

Exactly one year after the Prize was awarded, the exhibition focuses on the artist's most recent body of work, **with a preponderance of works made in 2023 and a few examples from 2024, most of which have never been exhibited before**. Besides, the work that gave rise to this project could not be missing, placed in the opening as a manifesto of this partnership.

Even before being an artist, Michele Savino is a collector, a tireless researcher of history and what has come down to us - hence his curiosity about science and the processes of transformation of matter that are reflected in the definitions he uses.

His research also reflects this **fascination for objects that have been corroded but restored by time**, witnesses of a more or less distant past, which, from simple tools, have taken on a privileged role as relics.

As the title suggests, his subjects are eroded, undefined to the point where they approach abstraction, but suspended, frozen in the moment of their pictorial representation. The artist is entrusted with the task of **exalting their degenerative process**, contrary to traditional painting which would like to preserve their flourishing appearance: he consumes them more sharply, acting upon them as the relentless time - despite his intention to keep them away from it - and he colours them with acid tones, different from reality, to remind us that we are not looking at the object itself, but at its representation, as René Magritte recalled in one of his famous works.

Together with sketches in oil colours and bands of contrasting colours, these elements **highlight the presence and importance of painting**, in an attempt, even in figuration, to represent painting itself and to reflect on what it means, today more than ever, to make painting.

The aforementioned abstraction acts as a driving force of curiosity, making these artefacts even more mysterious and therefore fascinating, whose characteristics, which have only partially survived the ravages of time, and original function are unknown. Perhaps we have already seen them in the past in museums and books, or perhaps not, Savino does not want to give us clues, instead he wants to trigger in us a **progressive layering of possible interpretations**, based on our own experience, and for this reason he decontextualises them, making them float in space and annulling any reference to their surroundings.

A museum-like action on the part of the artist - comparable to the anonymous showcases in which archaic objects are exhibited in order to be preserved - who, moreover, declares: *"I have always envied the artifacts in museums for their suspended and privileged condition of surviving objects, which have already been, which now exist by virtue of their preservation, their exonerated state"*.

If institutions are custodians of artefacts, Savino is undoubtedly the custodian of their images, which in turn become true pictorial artefacts, autonomous from what generated them, but powerful as ancestral artefacts, created in the present by reference to the past, with an eye to the future. Past, present and future meet in the work as a possible representation of an impossible painting at the border between figuration and abstraction, between reality and fiction, in and beyond time.

The concept of exoneration has accompanied the artist since his first solo exhibition (*Sono esonerato da educazione fisica / I am exempted from physical education*, 2011), and if it is true that the term indicates a "motivated exemption from fulfilling an obligation", then the reason why his exhibits are immune to decay is to cope with the fragility of the objects, with forgetfulness. His subjects are often reproduced in different works and in polyptychs - either on wooden slabs kept as prized possessions in entomological boxes or, in stark contrast, on canvases free to float in the exhibition space - depicting their different perspectives, similar but never the same, a **reiteration meant to underscore the fear of losing the original finding**.

Erosion is only suspended, a temporary condition that must be accepted as such: time has already left its mark on them as a reminder of its unstoppable, even if slow and almost imperceptible, action. The artist himself states it: "*That museum immobility and that exoneration that deprives and privileges permeates the exhibits within their imposed, undeserved and temporary contexts of human preservation and cataloguing. In the showcases of museum collections, they appear to be exempt from time, but are perhaps only in a state of suspension, as the needles suspend the paper inside the entomological box; a more mundane state of waiting for the exhibition to pass, for the encyclopedic taste to decay, for that captivity to end and return underground.*" The same destiny is already written for the works, they are the saving testimonies of condemned objects but, in their turn, they will know wear and tear, reaffirming for everything and everyone the unstoppable looming of time.

In his daily life, Michele Savino writes - the titles of his works are extremely important to him -, paints, grows bonsai and more; in fact, among his many passions, when it comes to nature, there is also room for suiseki. According to Japanese art, these are stones found in nature with a particularly pleasing appearance and capable of encouraging meditation; in China, in fact, they are also called "scholar's stones".

Savino displays them inside his studio on pedestals hand-carved in the shape of the stone, according to tradition, and in open spaces, creating a harmonious composition with bonsai, placed in discreet bowls to water them with the water in which they then stand in warmer periods: they are objects that need to be cared for, like plants.

Because of their meditative power, the exhibition presents three specimens from Savino's collection, collected in the Brembo River, whose bases were carved by himself in 2023 from cherry wood and which, together with the works, foster a contemplative atmosphere.

Vari scheletri a tema / Various themed skeletons (2024), a **polyptych made especially for the exhibition**, ideally closes the circle opened with *Gabinetto Archeologico* and crossed by all the works from 2018 to this day, present in the gallery, sharing technique and meanings, but in a more essential and immediate form. Pixels hand reproduced with India ink on cotton paper, in antithesis to their purely digital origin, have the task of suggesting the abstraction of an image that

irretrievably disappears, actually falls apart, demonstrating the coherence of his thinking and the appeal the artist makes for these findings and for painting.

Michele Savino is an archaeologist of the image, studying its origins and reconstructing its essence in order to theorize **the role of iconography in an age marked by the *fury of the images*.**

The artist, Michele Savino

Michele Savino (Bergamo, 1989) studied at the Accademia di Belle Arti Giacomo Carrara in Bergamo (2008-11) and at the Accademia di Brera (2011-13).

Michele Savino's artistic research has progressively focused on the concept of the image as a pictorial relic. The artist uses painting to consume and corrode the image, attempting to act on it as time has acted on relics over the centuries. The images created through this particular process of temporal alchemy manifest as ectoplasmic fragments, ancestral residues of images whose references are lost within an indefinite, yet never entirely abstract, figuration.

To the extent that an archaic object, having survived its alteration, can reach us only as an object altered by time, the pictorial image also seems to have found its possible ultimate form of survival in intentional iconographic consumption. Nevertheless, these surviving images present themselves as the extreme residue of an impossible painting, exploring its iconographic limits in the face of the current frenetic proliferation of images.

Notable solo exhibitions include: in 2019, *Libri d'artista* at Studio Vanna Casati (Bergamo) and *Gabinetto Archeologico* at viamoronisedici/spazioarte (Bergamo); in 2017, *Dal babbuino al cinocefalo* at Zen Arte (Milan); in 2016, *Cinocephalus hamandryos* at viamoronisedici/spazioarte (Bergamo) and *Coppie d'idoli* at ATS (Bergamo); in 2011, *Sono esonerato da educazione fisica* at ARS arte+libri (Bergamo).

Among the group exhibitions: in 2023, *Premio Nocivelli 2023* at Chiesa della Disciplina (Verolanuova), *Premio Combat Prize 2023* at Ex Granai di Villa Mimbelli (Livorno) and *20+ a call for drawings* at Cremona Art Fair (Cremona); in 2022, *Premio Combat Prize 2022* at Ex Granai di Villa Mimbelli (Livorno), *Premio Nocivelli 2022* at Chiesa della Disciplina (Verolanuova), *Il peso della madre* at Luogo_e (Bergamo) and *Mail Art Project* at Fondazione Pistoletto (Biella); in 2021, *Premio Combat Prize 2021* at Ex Granai di Villa Mimbelli (Livorno); in 2019, *ContemporaneaMENTI 2019* at Fondazione l'Arsenale (Iseo) and *10x16* at viamoronisedici/spazioarte (Bergamo); in 2018, *L'arte x l'arte 2018* at Fondazione l'Arsenale (Iseo), *ContemporaneaMENTI 2018* at Fondazione l'Arsenale (Iseo) and *Nelle intermittenze dei segni* at viamoronisedici/spazioarte (Bergamo); in 2017, *Premio Combat Prize 2017* at Ex Granai di Villa Mimbelli (Livorno).

Camilla Remondina

Camilla Remondina, born in Brescia in 1995, is graduated from the Art Didactics course for Museums and she's a specialist in Communication and Art Didactics at the Accademia di Belle Arti

SantaGiulia in Brescia.

She is an independent curator and collaborates with Ilaria Bignotti (Brescia, 1979) on many exhibition projects as well as the coordination of art installations for the walk entitled *The Way of the Sisters (La Via delle Sorelle)* (main project of Bergamo Brescia Italian Capital of Culture 2023), the event *Meccaniche della Meraviglia* (Brescia) and the project *Una Generazione di Mezzo* (Brescia). Since 2017 he has been in charge of the Scientific Secretariat of the Antonio Scaccabarozzi Archive (Milan).

IAGA Contemporary Art

IAGA Contemporary Art Gallery was founded in 2014, in Cluj-Napoca, Romania, in the Transylvanian region, by Alberto Perobelli, entrepreneur and collector of modern and contemporary art: starting from the acquisition of the works of the great masters of the Italian post-war period after the Second World War, through his activity in Romania, began to deepen the research and languages of young local artists and founded the project of a gallery to give voice to their works, in a careful and original dialogue with artists from other Eastern European countries, without forgetting the young Italians and the middle-aged.

From 2014 until now, the result is an intense activity of the gallery, coordinated by Rosalba Di Pierro, Gallery Manager, and Vincenza Mascolo, hosting six exhibitions a year and with an active participation in art fairs in Northeast European countries, with a careful presence at Italian fairs.