

## ANDREA FRANCOLINO. CONTEMPLATIO



Andrea Francolino, *M*<sup>2</sup>, 2024. Concrete, wood and 24kt gold leaf, 107 x 107 cm.

Mazzoleni, London

5 June – 12 September 2025

Private View: Thursday 5 June, 6 – 8pm

London Gallery Weekend | 7 June: 11am – 6pm | 8 June: 12 – 5pm

Mazzoleni presents **Contemplatio**, the first London solo exhibition in almost a decade by contemporary Italian artist **Andrea Francolino**. Open from 5 June to 12 September, the exhibition offers a sanctuary for reflection, inviting visitors to contemplate the beauty found in both human and earthly imperfections.

Andrea Francolino (Bari, b. 1979) centres his artistic reflections on the **concept of rupture** in all its variations, consequences and possibilities. He explores rupture as a marker of space and time, a symbol of natural evolution, and a representation of environmental and societal equilibrium. With an ecological and philosophical approach, Francolino views rupture as a space for infinite possibilities.

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In ***Contemplatio***, the artist invites viewers to rediscover two fundamental conditions for engaging deeply with art and its manifestation: **contemplation** and **inspiration**. Contemplation – through stillness and reflection – allows us to see beyond surface appearances, while inspiration transforms perception into generation. In an era driven by speed and performance, these concepts are elusive, *Contemplatio* thus urges us to pause, reflect and embrace the profound messages that emerge from these fractures, both in the world around us and within ourselves.

Central to the exhibition, a striking 24k gold crack, made in Turin in 2021–2022, embodies the show's core theme: **imperfection as a source of reflection, transformation and meaning**. Through highlighting the crack with gold, the artist does not suggest that the crack should be closed or repaired. On the contrary, it must remain open and never be concealed. As such, this evocative work serves as a threshold to infinite possibilities.

The contemplative process also emerges in the series *Caso x caos x infinite variabili*, in which Francolino explores the balance between chance and order. Each work begins with the accidental breaking of a glass which forms the foundational layer of the piece. The artist then meticulously hand-cuts three additional layers, replicating every fracture of the first glass with exact precision. When superimposed, these layers construct a structure where harmony emerges from chaos—an echo of nature's own ability to find equilibrium within disruption.

Further exploring themes of human and ecological connectivity, a floor-based work invites visitors to physically engage with the piece by stepping onto it, leaving their own imprint. Over time, these traces accumulate, turning the artwork into an evolving narrative – an ever-changing record of shared experiences and personal reflections.

The exhibition also features a series of recent photographic works, each image symbolically and virtually through GPS coordinates, linked to a celestial body. These works remind us of our connections beyond the earthly realm, expanding our perspective to the vastness of the cosmos and inviting us to transcend the limits of our imagination.

Through *Contemplatio*, Francolino invites visitors into a space of quiet introspection and renewal – where cracks, fractures and breaks are portals to transformation.

## NOTES TO EDITORS

### ARTIST DEFINITION OF CONTEMPLATIO

The Latin term *Contemplatio* (from *contemplari*) originates from *cum-templum*. In ancient Rome, *templum* referred to a portion of the sky marked out by an augur for divination, where divine signs—such as the flight of birds or lightning—were observed and interpreted. It was a consecrated space, whether celestial or earthly, akin to a temple.

In Greek thought, *Contemplatio* was understood as the highest intellectual faculty in the pursuit of intelligible knowledge. Over time, its meaning evolved into the idea of rational reflection or the focused concentration of the mind on a philosophical or religious truth.

Contemplation can thus refer to both intellectual knowledge of nature and divine understanding. Today, to contemplate means to gaze for a prolonged period with interest, wonder, admiration, and curiosity, in a state of absolute attentiveness.

## ANDREA FRANCOLINO

Andrea Francolino was born in Bari, Italy, in 1979 and lives in Milan. His practice begins with and revolves around the concept of rupture in all its variations and consequences, offering endless possibilities for reflection on the relationship between man and nature - free from external conditioning and open to further interpretation even after the work is completed. Adopting a multidisciplinary approach that embraces aesthetics, ethics and ecology, Francolino has coined the term *econcretic* - a combination of *eco* (eco), *concrete* (cement, but also concreteness) and *ethico* (ethical). This term defines works composed of natural materials, as well as site-specific interventions in nature.

His 2013 installation *Et onne Tempo*, which won the San Fedele Prize, traced the floor plan of the world's largest shopping mall using reclaimed cement dust. The work reflects on consumerism and the inevitability of human creations succumbing to the passage of time and atmospheric events. In *Performance of a Plant* (2013–2015), a spontaneous plant emerges from the rubble of discarded artworks that the artist had thrown away outside his studio. Through the birth of the small spontaneous plant, nature breathes life into what was once inert, giving new meaning to the remnants of past creations.

His ongoing *Percorsi* series (since 2015) records cracks from urban surfaces, imprinted on paper with their precise location and time. In *A-Biotic*, he examines humanity's paradoxical attempts to replicate nature, while his *Limiti* series (2019–2020) captures cracks at the threshold of built and natural environments, evolving in 2022 into sculptural impressions of fractures using soil and water. His 2018 solo exhibition at Spazio Aperto San Fedele featured two cracks in the wall filled with 22k gold leaf, a poetic threshold of infinite possibilities.

Francolino is a co-founder of The Open Box, a Milan-based non-profit art space. His work has been widely exhibited in solo shows across Europe, including Fondazione Castellani, Milan (2024); Galerie der Stadt Tuttlingen, Germany (2024); Mazzoleni, Turin (2022); Museo Novecento, Florence (2020/21), which included a performance between Palazzo Vecchio and the museum; Spazio Contemporanea, Brescia (2020); The Open Box, Milan (2018); and Kristin Hjellegjerde Gallery, London (2016). He has also participated in numerous international group exhibitions at institutions such as Lentos Kunstmuseum Linz, the Courtauld Institute, London, the Austrian Cultural Forum, Rome, and Magnani Rocca Foundation, Parma.

## MAZZOLENI

Mazzoleni is a leading Post-War Italian and contemporary art gallery based in London and Turin. With over 35 years of activity, Mazzoleni focuses on a museum-calibre exhibition programme and participates in the main international art fairs, including Art Basel, Frieze, and TEFAF, as well as Artissima, Artefiera and Miart. Most recently, the gallery has expanded its reach towards new art scenes with its participation in Frieze Seoul, Art Abu Dhabi and Art Dubai. The Mazzoleni collection is exhibited in museums and institutions worldwide, such as: the Centre Pompidou and Palais de Tokyo in Paris; the Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation in New York; the Smithsonian Institution in Washington; The State Hermitage Museum in St. Petersburg; Tate and the Estorick Collection in London, as well as Museo del Novecento in Florence, the GNAM in Rome, MADRE Museum in Naples, Triennale Milano and Palazzo Reale in Milan, and the Venice Biennale. Mazzoleni represents the Estate of Agostino Bonalumi.

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