GIULIO SCALISI

News about the ferguson case, pictures of my cousin's new child and Kim Kardashian's new revealing cover go one after the other as I casually slide the tip of my index finger across the screen of my portable device.

I am not completely sure if that is the way social media were intended to be experienced but, as a I go through this flow of contents, I can not help but block my emotional input. Think about it, if we were supposed to fully react to this condensed series of events as if we were in real life, one after the other, it would be a quite schizophrenic and emotionally exhausting experience.

There is really too much going on in front of our eyes to handle... and as I spend my time immersed in this continuous stream of information I can feel the present slipping off my hands.

As an artist I always wonder about what position I should take in this flow of pictures or, rather, what ambition I should have in creating a new image or adopting an old one; what should be my position and orientation in this ever changing and slithery present. That is why, in my practice, terrified by the idea of sinking under the waves of this semi-infinite moving global picture, I started thinking about the creation and use of virtual environments: satellites revolving around this said global picture that, just like the moon, are composed of some of the elements of it but that still are detached from it, distant and somehow atemporal.

Nowadays the more an event is relevant the more is shared and liked on social platforms; and as the spectrum of attention gets wider it seems like all the important things are always happening out of our immediate field of action.

My practice is more or less a counterstrategy of this: I am the creator of these artificial and fictional environments so I get to choose the time, the characters and the environment. I get to decide when things happen. I believe that, even though the products of this practice are extremely personal and, yes... dictatorially staged, they are still able to connect with the person they interface with because the elements that make up my work are mostly selected from things we see or hear daily through mass media.

I will go on with my practice as an artist, and continue creating these satellites inhabited by creatures that live in the confines of our mental structures, so to question such system, so that the gestures that we repeat daily will regain their full significance, so that we might build new bridges to cross our differences.

Waiting for things to happen [excerpt] — 2017

YOU ARE CANCELLED

link to the video

The application of artificial intelligence and algorithms is now a given in regulating the way data moves through social medias. They act as filters through which our contents, and that made by others, have to go through in order to appear in someone else's feed. One could even say that our presence online is determined by the algorithm.
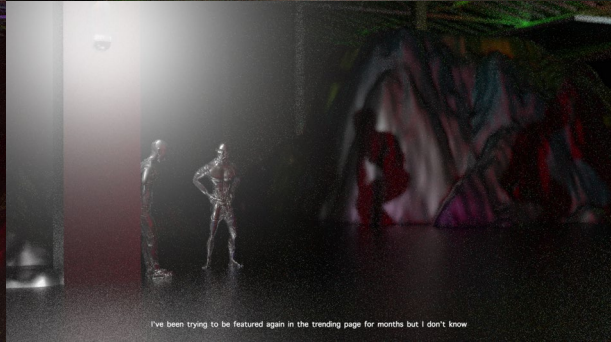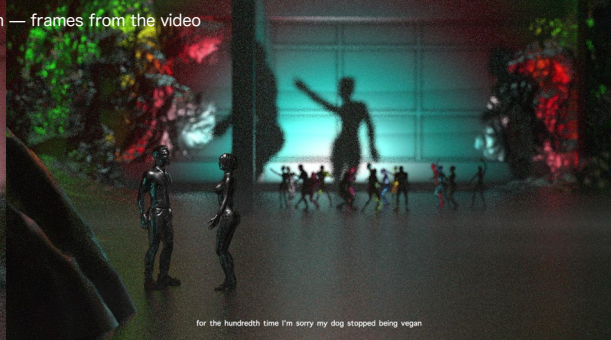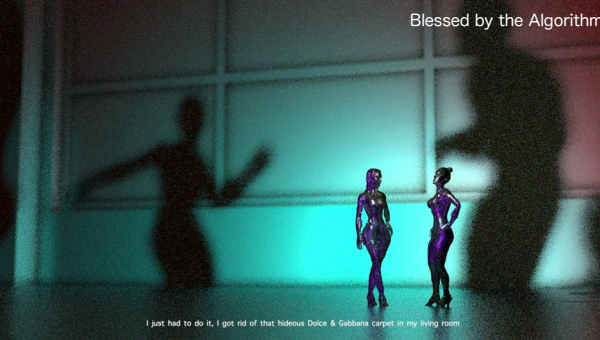
The video starts with this hypothesis, and tells of a time when our online presence is the only one available to interact with others: a universe immersed in the conditioning that this awareness creates and that assigns a sort of sacredness to the algorithm.

The expression "Blessed by the Algorithm" wants to highlight some kind of religious-driven way of thinking. This predisposition toward the algorithm — the way in which we filter ourselves and what we want to share — is something I believe we already do.

The context of the video is that of a party. Participating in it are "human forms", "avatars", "influencers", and as they dance they cast enormous shadows on the walls, the projections of the projections, endless are the way in which we distance ourselves from reality.

Blessed by the Algorithm — frames from the video

I just had to do it, I got rid of that hideous Dolce & Gabbana carpet in my living room

for the hundredth time I'm sorry my dog stopped being vegan

Everywhere you turn you head, violence

I've been trying to be featured again in the trending page for months but I don't know

Bello e Buono e Giusto is a mix between a photo novel and a comic that shows the story of a character without a face and without a precise identity through 15 images. The pictures have been laminated and attached to a support structure that allows the viewer to flip through the story by rotating the pages around the structure.

The pictures have two elements to them, the shadow which is drawn digitally in post production and the photographic background, taken with a phone camera trying to highlight the presence of an amateur photographer who is just randomly taking picture as they walk through a new city.

The work implies the presence of two characters, one is the photographer, and the other is the shadow that, like in a cheap horror movie, creeps inside the pictures to be seen by the photographer afterwards, once they look back at them

The shadow presents itself as an ambiguous identity, both in shape, body and attitude. At first eerie and scary, then campy or ridiculous and then violent and profane. That which does not belong to the traditional conception of righteousness will forcibly take space inside the space we built to represent pleasantness, and take home inside the frescos of a palace.

We hold on to things not realizing they are already dead — 2020, sculpture, variable size

The sculpture depicts a hand protruding from the white wall holding a dead creature, two eyes are firmly looking at it. The work is entirely 3D printed and then coated with white acrylic paint.

We hold on to things not realizing they are already dead — detail

The special billboard commission expands digitally through a QR code, revealing Angelo Azzurro, a 3D-rendered video work inspired by late-90s videogame aesthetics. The original score by Milanese musicians 72-HOUR POST FIGHT pays homage to the seminal 1999 hip-hop anthem "Street Opera" by cult-status producer Fritz Da Cat.

Looking back at the times that were before, and the way they are now, there is a definite shift in the way we use and look at virtuality. If it used to be a mean of escape from reality — with the advent of the internet, and the phantasmagoric potentiality of the first 3D-rendered videogames — nowadays reality dwells and expands itself inside our screens, always present, always flashing, always begging for our attention. In a sense now, the way to escape this hyper-reality is to stand apart from the screen.

The video wants to present a simulated reality where the mediation through which the characters interact are highly apparent: they talk through "tex-boxs" typical of old-school RPGs, they fight like they would in games such as Pokemon or Final Fantasy, and they buy drinks from a pop-up menu once they arrive at the bar. The backdrop of the story are the streets of Milan in 1999, with its telephone booths, old FIAT cars and 90s graffiti and *not a cell phone in sight, just ppl living in the moment*.
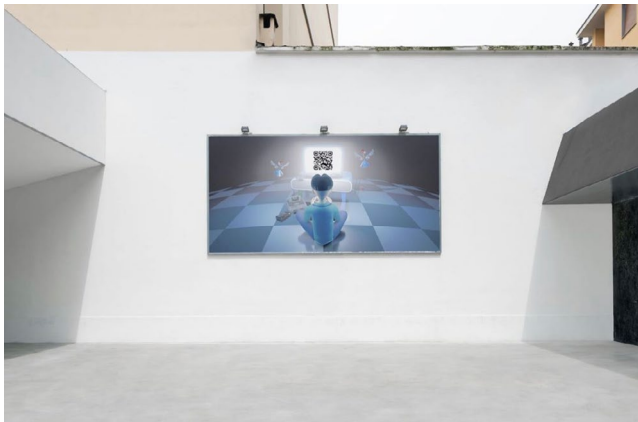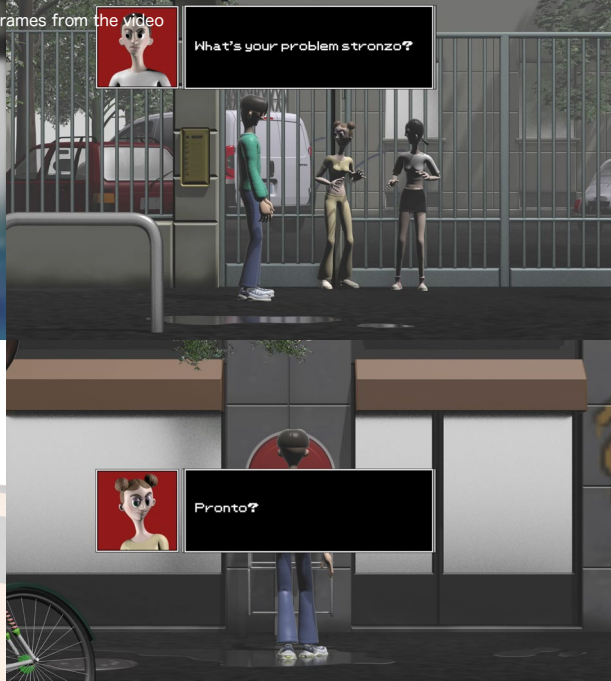

link to the video

Angelo Azzurro — 2019, frame from video
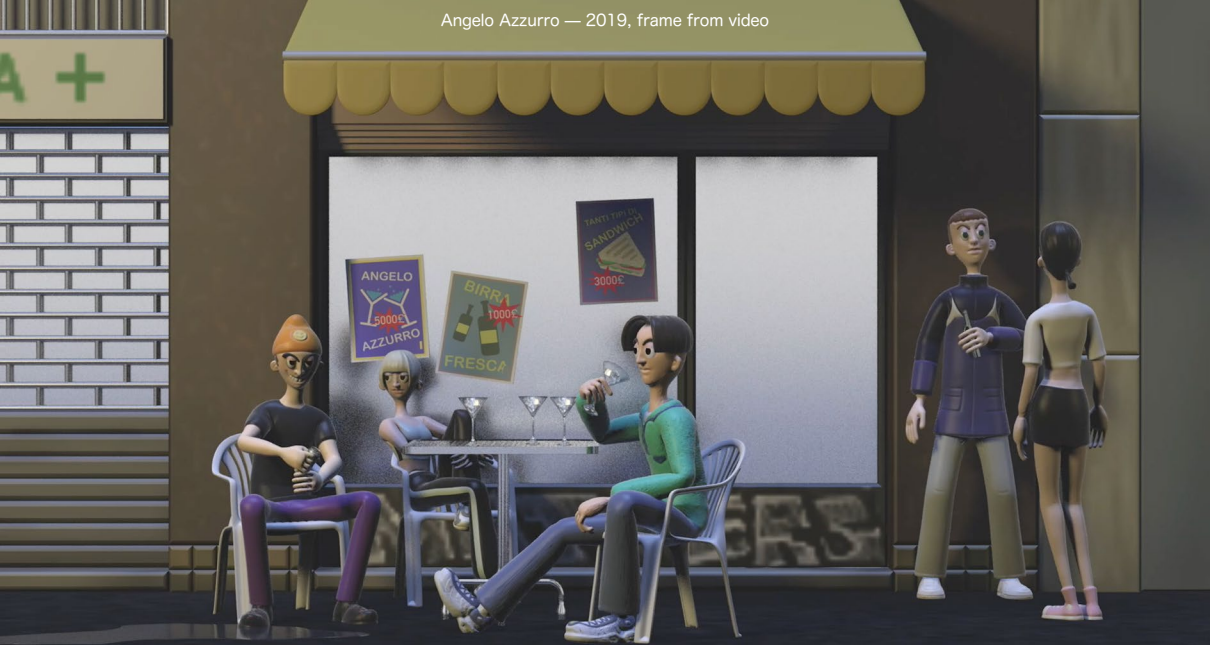
ANGELO AZZURRO

NEW GAME

LOAD GAME

SETTINGS

©1999 BRODO VIRTUALE INC.

What's your problem stronzo?

The street bully challenges you to a fist fight...

Pronto?

Angelo Azzurro — frame from the video

Fontana Infinita — 2019, video, 16:9, 1080p, 10 min + series of 5 prints, 21 by 29 cm + pre-spaced stickers

link to the video

Fontana Infinita is a project articulated through a site-specific installation, an audio-video work and a series of prints. Through the re-enactment of some sort of city council, the work wants to present a metaphor, deliberately simplified, on the limits and complications of a democratic system.

The characters on the video, which are also the subjects of the prints, are strongly characterised and they each represent a political identity or a certain perspective on life. They are all called upon, in the video, to take a decision that will determine the future of the citizens they represent, but it will be their individuality to inform their choice, and not the well being of their peers or the desire to pursue a common project.

"Intersubjectivity without objective reality is a formula for a kitsch culture where values increasingly elude the purview of facts, and fear of objective thinking becomes a social convention. On the other hand, science and theoretical focus on objective reality without intersubjectivity leads to something akin to today's neoliberal science which, in having dispensed with criteria of normativity, values and ethics in general, ironically traffics the most dogmatic form of politics and human conservatism in the name of scientific or naturalistic disenchantment. These pathologies of education are prevalent as much on the left and as on the right." Reza Negarestani
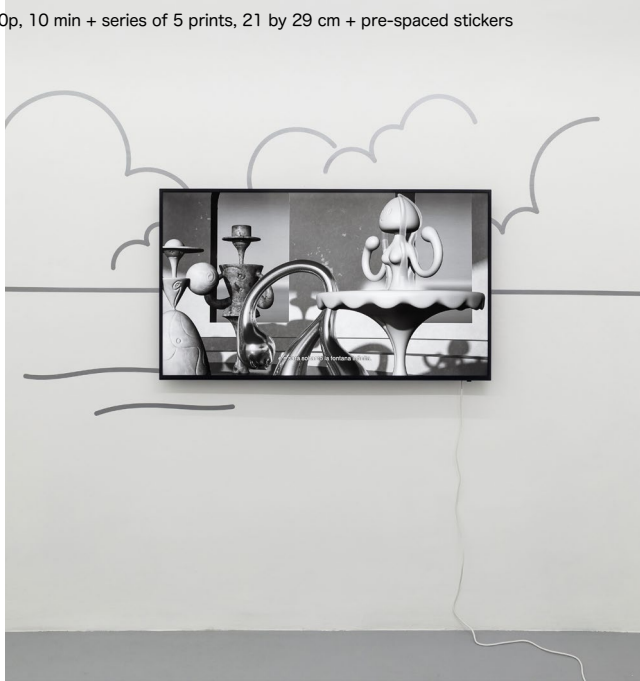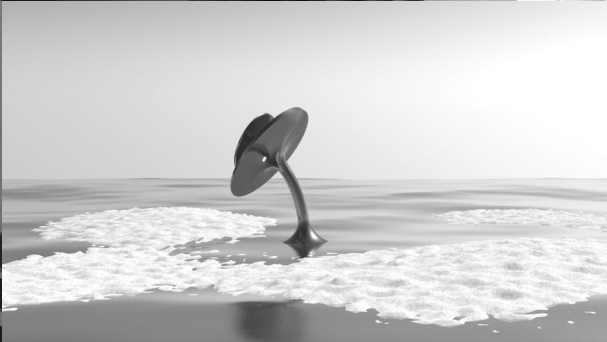
Chi ci dice che non stai solo mentendo?

— È comodo parlare con un interlocutore che non ci risponde,

Fontana Infinita — installation views from "Every Breath you Take" at Galleria Umberto Di Marino, Naples

Fontana Infinita — installation views from "Every Breath you Take" at Galleria Umberto Di Marino, Naples
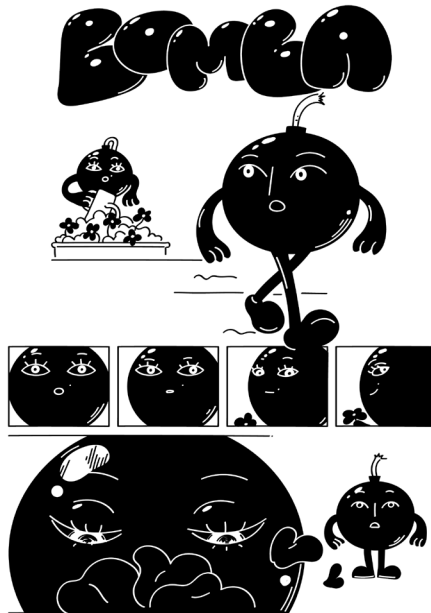
Fontana Infinita — installation views from "Every Breath you Take" at Galleria Umberto Di Marino, Naples
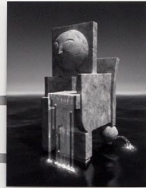
Bomba! — 2018, comic of 8 pages
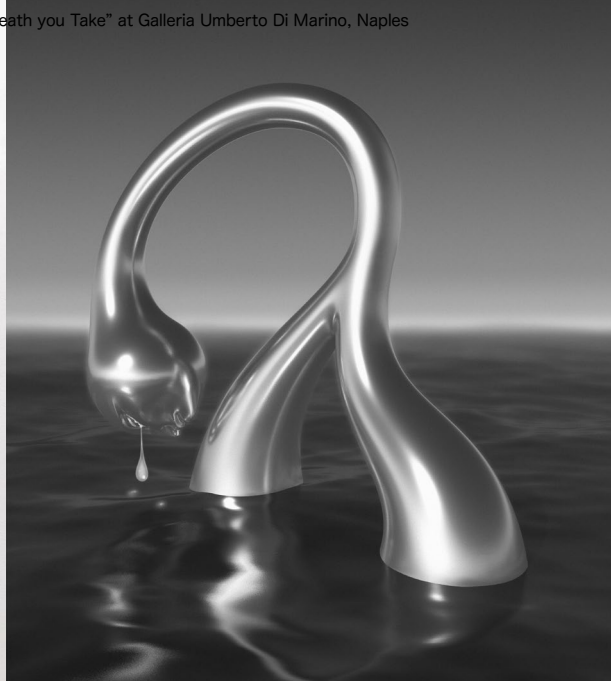
Bomba is a short comic I made for an issue of Flash Art Italia focused on Italian comics. It wants to tell a simple love story: Dino randomly meets Glicerina and gets infatuated by the way she's gardening her flowers and by how she destroys them with the same passion. The following pages will show us their first date: it starts with a romantic dinner, then a walk through the city and, finally, the climax at his place.

The key difference is in how these characters satisfy their lustful and consumeristic needs, which is by destroying the object of desire, taking the saying "want it, pay it, forget it" to the next level. As the story unfolds they will disintegrate, with no discrimination, flowers, pizzas, a cute puppy and, then, eventually, even their love.

ANDIAMO?

ASPETTA! HAI UN PEZZO
DI PIZZA SUL VISO AHAH

link to the video

"Why did the Persians hold the sea holy? Why did the Greeks give it a separate deity? Surely all this is not without meaning. And still deeper is the meaning of that story of Narcissus, who because he could not grasp the tormenting mild image he saw in the fountain, plunged into it and was drowned."
from "Moby Dick" by Herman Melville

"Shipwrecked" is an animation movie that tries to explore the degrees of virtualisation that are investing our daily life and question the way through which images are consumed, or rather, how the images we create of ourselves are consumed.

Somewhat working like a documentary on the life of the ocean, the video starts up in the cloud and through its descent toward the seabed it will encounter many of the inhabitants that live in these waters who will be able to speak in first person and express their feelings and thoughts on the world they live in.

Acting like a mirror, like a virtual screen, the surface of these waters host a community of youngsters that spend their day looking at themselves reflected on the ocean and at the images that slide through its surface. Not knowing how they ended up there and not knowing how to go back to the mainland.

Shipwrecked — frames from the video

Shipwrecked — seen as part of the solo show "Alghe Romantiche" at TILE Project Space, Milan

It seems to me that the most appropriate symbol to represent the feelings of our generation is that of a shipwrecked.

"A dreamy sensation lingers in the air after each sudden change. These waves of change having a face today, and another, absolutely opposite the morrow. These waves of change disappearing after having tormented us··· just to rise once again after we remembered the joy of having something to belong to." [excerpt from "Shipwrecked"]

A shipwreck symbolising the failure of a departure from a system of thought rather than a physical place. If the raft, the floating device, is made out of transparent plastic, the imaginary waters it floats upon are just as peculiar: I wanted to use the ocean as a metaphor for our present condition. I try to set a simple distinction between walking on solid ground and floating on the surface of such ocean. With walking symbolising a corporeal way of experiencing life and floating on water a virtual one.

In the hypothesis of this work, it is as if the mainland had been completely submerged. And so, all that we had been, is down there, distand in the abyss, only to be looked at through a filter — never being able to be accessed again — because that's a world we created and lived before, when we were different.

This work starts from the same considerations that created the video "Shipwrecked" and "The raft of the user", being all three part of the solo show "Alghe Romantiche", but it wants to shift its discourse on virtuality and mediation on the act of wearing a picture.

On the ability of temporarily appropriating and wearing an image that we might think could represent ourselves. Hence the fact that the abstracted fish are hanging on a set of hangers.

The fish of this installation are the same of the video "Shipwrecked" and, like in the video, they are wearing a set of pictures on their skin. More precisely, they are carrying a set of memes, which I found particularly representative of the state and role that images have nowadays.
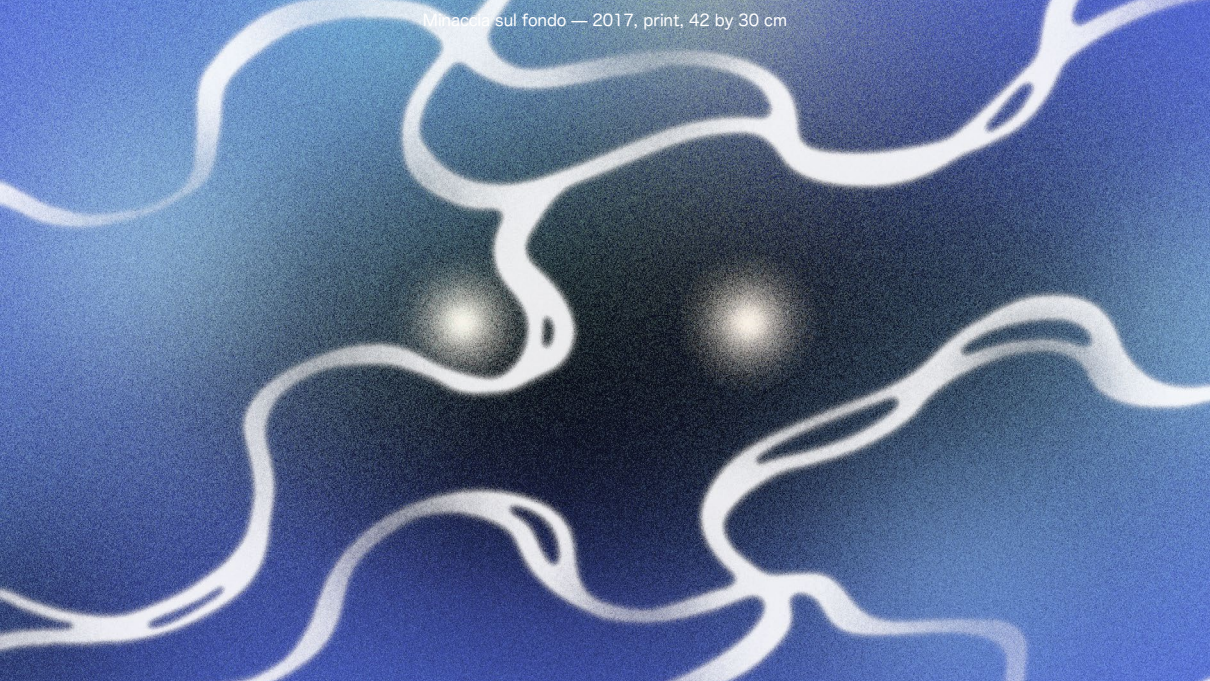
Memes are pictures that don't really hold any intrinsic meaning to them, but that acquire value and "meaningfulness" as they travel from one screen to another and slightly change form as they are reworked and slightly changed by the hands of the user.
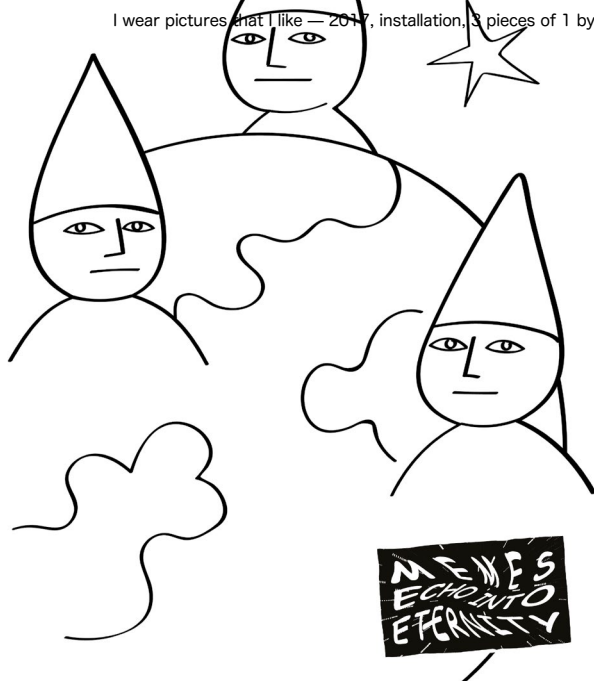
Minaccia sul fondo — 2017, print, 42 by 30 cm

Le Betulle — 2016, installation, 4 by 4 by 3 meters

"The idea of space and time in Japanese culture has been influenced by the principle of "Ma" — the negative space, the relationship between parts, the passing time-space — To use it, is to depart from the familiar perceptual grid, and to reset our imaginary meter.

Or as Arata Isozaki would put it when he described the creation of the Shintoist shrine: "Ma is a way of situating the place where the kami [Japanese deity] will descend. When worshippers wished to summon a kami to earth they prepared a holy place, himorogi, by setting four poles in the earth to mark the corners of a square or a rectangle […]"

A parallel could be easily set up between such religious practices and art production. In both cases we put an effort in creating the optimal space in which objects can be charged, either by godly spirits or information. We set up barriers and borders in order to define an inside where such events can occur and be real, the shrine or the art space, and an outside where such occurrence will stop holding any significance.

These mock-up trees, with textures trying to simulate a physical object, are placed in the space to highlight such division, between the wilderness of *the forest looking back at you* and the rules of the modern world. They are placed in the space to replicate a place crossed by the character of the video "Something, someone, somewhere".
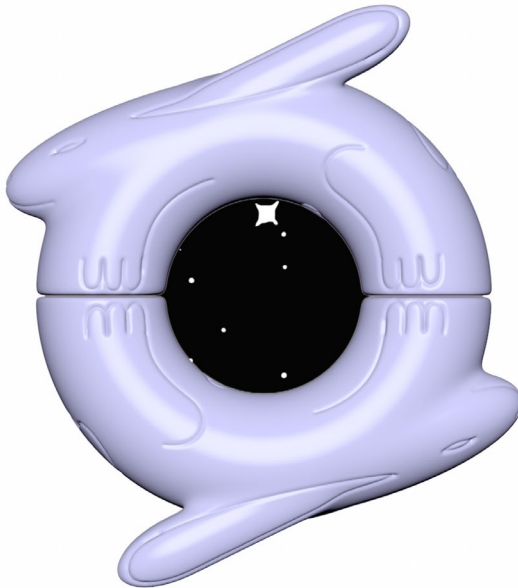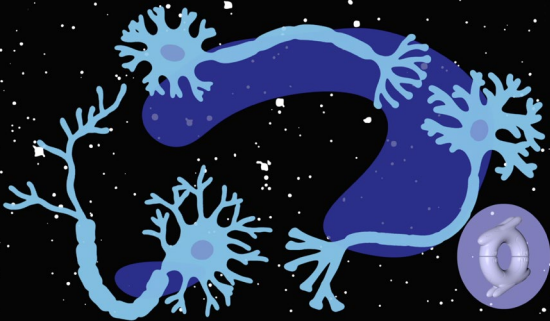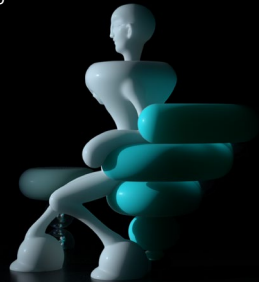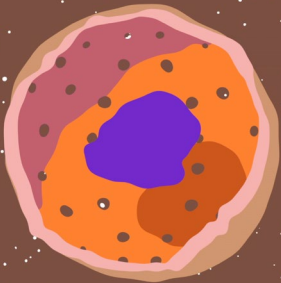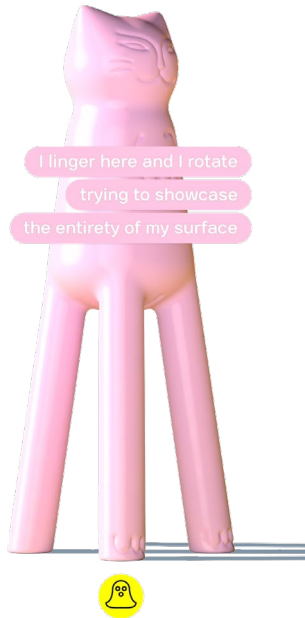
link to the video

"Dalle Stelle alle Cellule", literally meaning from the stars to the cells, it's a mixture of 3D animation, 2D animation and real footage. It consists of a slide-show of illustrations I made looking at picture of celestial bodies and cells that make up our human bodies. The video, being mostly silent and still, is interrupted by some intermissions in the middle and at the end/beginning.

As I was working on this project, I was fascinated by knowledge production and its consequent communication. On how technology can mediate our view on reality, or rather, it is able to render our reality, and how scientific discoveries need to be translated in pictures for mass diffusion. In this scope of vision that goes from the telescope to the microscope, the intermission wants to give space to different forms of meaning or simply go against the illusory abstract point of view of modern science.

Phantoms and Notifications — 2015, video on iPhone, 16:9 (vertical), 1080p, 3 min on loop

Phantoms and Notifications — 2015, video on iPhone, 16:9 (vertical), 1080p, 3 min on loop

This video animation has been designed to be played on an iPhone as I was fascinated by the pockets of information that we send each others everyday and that animate our phones.

The panorama of things that end up creating our surroundings have all been categorised in centuries of intellectual work — smartphones, though, seem to evade or, rather, lay in different categories at once. Objects that through time collect some of our most intimate memories and that wake us up at night to carry out other's people emotions.

It's 3 am and you definitely need to go to bed. So you do that, but you can't manage to fall asleep and you lay there alone, with your thoughts as your only companion for the night. Sometimes our brain can be really vicious⋯ it likes to twist the knife when you feel the loneliest.
So you tell it to shut up and you stop listening to it, and you enter a phase of unaware mental stillness — total passivity, nothing to do with meditation. You always keep your phone by the bed, still turned on, and it sporadicly lights up at every notification. As you are about to fall asleep, you see it for what it is⋯ it is awake.

link to the video

link to the video

This work talks about the tale of a group of fictional characters from the future, The Leaping Hares. The contents of this piece and the way they unfold are typical of a 80s' science fiction movie but the way in which they are represented takes advantage of the mediums of our age, primarily the user interface of our internet browsers.

I streamlined and abstracted the most frequent operation of our digital experience, like pop-ups windows and scrolling through internet pages, in order to create a container to convey the information that makes up the video.

The viewer is first introduced to the video with a short poem I wrote highlighting a swift in human's nature, increasingly more immaterial but which in its behaviour and its disregard to the passing of time, closer to that of a beast. After passing through a virtual cathedral the viewer has access to the website of the Leaping Hares.

A series of images and texts unfold as the video browses this simulated website that, one after the other, end up forming a fragmented story that speaks of the conditions of humanity in that dystopian future. Memories of these users who have lost touch with their physical reality and live, love and make experiences in the reality created by the information that we share each day in the web.

trapped in the idea of what we could be and do
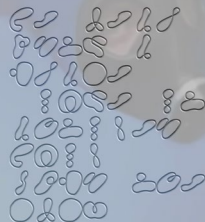
leaping from a space-time to another with just one click

Like Ghosts — detail of two of the three prints

Giulio Scalisi — 1992 Italy, lives in Milan — 2014, BA in Visual Arts at NABA — 2016 MA in Visual Arts at ÉCAL

Collective Shows

2013 - Academy Awards: Homeostasis is not enough, Via Farini, Milan
curated by Daniele Maffeis, Giovanna Manzotti and Giulia Mengozzi
2014 - tAPC/the Artist's PC, Le Botanique Centre Culturel, Bruxelles
curated by Emanuele De Donno
2014 - Good Guys (Gran Riserva), Gasconade, Rome
curated by Luca Castiglioni and Michele D'Aurizio
2014 - Cali Gold Rush, Lucie Fontaine, Milan
curated by Marcello Maloberti and Caterina Iaquinta
2015 - Life is a Bed of Roses, Fondation Ricard, Paris
curated by Stephanie Moisdon
2016 - Bubble Tea, Boba Bubble Tea, Milan
curated by PANE project
2017 - Homesick, Future Dome, Milan
curated by T-Space
2017 - Self-care while Smoking, CLOG, Turin
curated by Lucrezia Calabrò Visconti
2018 - Fedeli alla Linea, Sonnenstube, Lugano
curated by the Sonnenstube collective
2018 - Day in, Day out, TILE Project Space, Milan
curated by Roberta Mansueto and Caterina Molteni
2018 - Every breath you take, Galleria Umberto di Marino, Napoli
curated by Alberta Romano
2019 - Dripping in Crocodile Tears, Like a Little Disaster, Polignano
curated by Roberta Mansueto
2019 - Voi rubate del tempo alla fretta, a noi il mare ci impone lentezza, Ansedonia,
curated by Enzo Di Marino and Alberta Romano, CASTRO based project
2019 - 1999, Kaleidoscope @ Spazio Maiocchi, Milan
curated by Alessio Ascari and Federico Sargentone
2020 - A Healthy Dose of Confusion Before the Bang,
Federica Schiavo Gallery, Milan
2020 - Transatlantico, Mana Contemporary, New York,
curated by Edoardo Monti
2020 - The Hawt Show II,
Rolando Anselmi Galerie, Rome

Collective Shows

2021 - Meet the artwork, OGR, Turin
online exhibition curated by V. Lacinio and S. Piazza
2021 - Basta, Palazzo Monti, Brescia
curated by Edoardo Monti
2021 - Primary Domain, Ordet, Milan
curated by Edoardo Bonaspetti and Stefano Cernuschi
2021 - Una Cosa Mostruosa, Parco dei mostri, Bomarzo
curated by Vittoria De Franchis and Giampaolo Scapigliati
2021 - Fotoromanza, Ville de Genève, Geneva
curated by Camilla Paolino and Giada Olivotto
2021 - Videocittà, Palazzo dei Congressi, Roma
curated by Damiana Leoni and Rä Di Martino
2021 - Ciak Collecting, Palazzo Orti, as part of Art Verona
curated by Irene Sofia Comi

Solo Shows

2017 - Alghe Romantiche, TILE Project Space, Milan
curated by Roberta Mansueto and Caterina Molteni
2021 - upcoming show at Kunsthalle Lissabon, Lisbon
curated by Luis Silva and Alberta Romano
2022 - upcoming show at Case Chiuse, Milan
curated by Paola Clerico and Ginevra D'Oria

Prizes

2019 - Ducato Prize, winner of the special mention

Contancts

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