

GAGOSIAN



GIUSEPPE PENONE

Foglie di bronzo / Leaves of Bronze

Opening reception: Thursday, September 12, 6–8pm
September 12–November 9, 2019
657 Howard Street, San Francisco

Giuseppe Penone, *Pensieri di foglie (Thoughts of Leaves)*, 2017 (detail), bronze and river stone, 71 5/8 × 77 3/4 × 37 1/4 inches (182 × 197.5 × 94.5 cm) © 2019 Giuseppe Penone/Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/ADAGP, Paris

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The bifurcations of the trees that appear so intimately human to us . . . The bifurcations of the fingers, by their movement through space, form the branches, the roots, and by the succession of actions in the same points, construct the branches and trunk of the plant. The woodland landscape is the action of sculpture.
—Giuseppe Penone

Gagosian is pleased to present an exhibition of sculptures and drawings by Giuseppe Penone, his first in San Francisco.

Penone uses objects from the natural world to document the intertwined relationship between humans and nature in evolution over a macroscopic, geological timeline. He was a proponent of the radical Arte Povera movement, beginning in Italy in the 1960s, which used “poor” and unconventional materials such as soil or plant matter to evoke a preindustrial age and subtly

critique systems of industrialization, mechanization, and art. Penone's earliest works included site-specific sculptures situated in the woods around his Piedmont hometown—the start of a decades-long fascination with the arboreal that is still prevalent in his work today.

This exhibition will feature a selection of works in bronze, stone, and marble illustrating Penone's ability to seamlessly transpose human-made and naturally occurring patterns. In *Respirare l'ombra – foglie di tè* (*To Breathe the Shadow – Leaves of Tea*) (2008), a branch-like pair of bronze lungs emerges from a metal-gridded wall of tea leaves, creating a direct link between plant respiration and the inhalation and exhalation of human breath. Freestanding sculptures such as the cast bronze foliage of *Pensieri di foglie* (*Thoughts of Leaves*) (2014–17) compare traces made by the artist's hand to the weathering and degenerative marks made on plants and minerals as they are left to the elements.

In a group of works on paper from 2015–16 in watercolor, coffee, and pencil, Penone further explores the points of simultaneous connection and separation posited in the organic geometries of *Pensieri di foglie*. The wall-hung marble slabs of *Corpo di pietra – rami* (*Body of Stone – Branches*) (2016), in which bronze twigs extend from veined white stone, suggest the slow outgrowth of one element from the other. Penone positions time as a transformative agent, using poetic, indexical mark making to minutely track involuntary processes such as respiration, growth, and aging. He blurs the distinction between human, botanical, and mineral life, giving form to their coexistence.

In conjunction with this exhibition, Gagosian is partnering with the Golden Gate National Recreation Area and the Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy to present an outdoor installation of sculptures by Penone. These works, comprising two large-scale cast bronze trees, will be displayed from October 24, 2019, to October 25, 2020, on the Great Meadow of Fort Mason, a historic site within the Golden Gate National Recreation Area.

Giuseppe Penone was born in 1947 in Garessio, Italy, and lives and works in Paris and Turin, Italy. Collections include the Louvre Abu Dhabi; Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles; Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; and Museum of Modern Art, New York. Exhibitions include Musée des Arts Contemporains du Grand-Hornu, Belgium (2010); *Drawings and Sculptures*, De Pont Museum, Netherlands (2010); *22 Opere a Versailles*, Château de Versailles, France (2013); *Ideas of Stone (Idee di Pietra)*, Madison Square Park, New York (2013–14); *Being the River, Repeating the Forest*, Nasher Sculpture Center, Dallas (2015); *Regards croisés*, Musée cantonal des Beaux-Arts de Lausanne, Switzerland (2016); *Anafora*, Reggia di Venaria Reale, Italy (2016); *Matrice / Matrix*, Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana, Rome (2017); and *A tree in the wood*, Yorkshire Sculpture Park, Wakefield, England (2018). In 2017, *Germination*, a permanent, site-specific sculptural installation by Penone for the Louvre Abu Dhabi, was presented at the inauguration of the museum.

#PenoneSF

Press

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