

GAGOSIAN

The Creators Project

Primal Italian Artwork Explores the Void Between the Natural and Man-Made

Diana Shi



Equivalenze—12 aprile 2016, 2016. Metal, acid, terracotta, 88x140x120 cm. © Archivio Penone. All images courtesy the artist and Gagosian Rome.

A testament to an unfiltered and pure understanding to nature, an artist from the *arte povera* movement finds special joy in connecting in a primal way with the natural world. Giuseppe Penone extols touching water directly to the tongue and pressing fingertips into soil as representative of the kind of organic energy flowing through his artwork. Enraptured with the natural organic strength of trees, easily juxtaposed with the degradation with the human body, Penone's latest spring show at Gagosian Rome stitches together video collages while exhibiting his signature surrealist sculptures. A massive collection of terracotta sculptures showcase his forceful grip, applied manually, and frozen indefinitely as amorphous, flesh-toned objects, indeterminate from first glance as human or something created by nature.

Titled *Equivalenze*, the exhibit draws upon the Italian artist's fascination with the natural world, specifically the entity of the tree. In a new piece, Penone introduces a life-sized tree derived from molds of a real tree, and then cast in bronze, installing a metallic trunk and branches in the gallery setting.



Giuseppe Penone in his Turin studio, Italy, November 2016. © Archivio Penone. Photo: Angela Moore

Translated to English, *Equivalenze*, equates to "equivalences," a commentary perhaps on the cooperative reality of Penone's shifting artworks, one part man-made and one part a product of the Earth. Included in the series of *Equivalenze* is the idea that, like natural organisms, humans are constantly shifting and changing, working themselves into knotted masses similar to tree trunks.

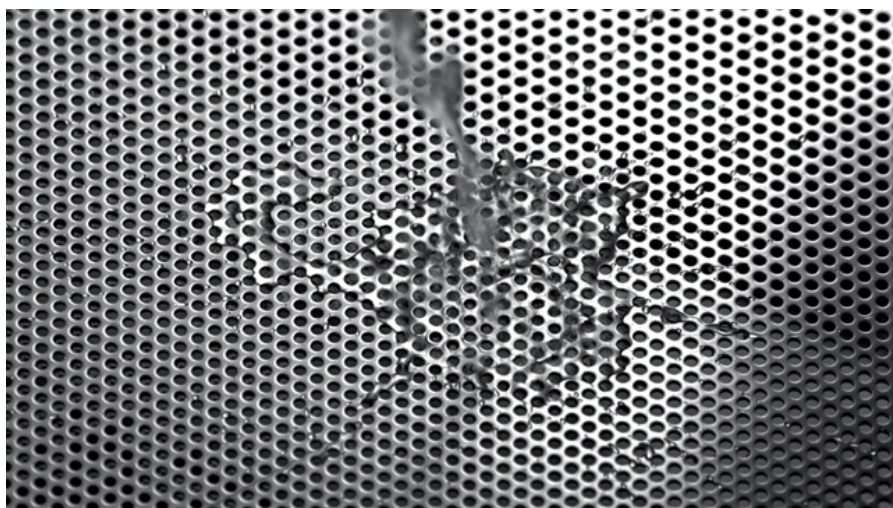
Equivalenze showcases new sculptures from Penone, as well as a short film, *Ephemeris*. See film stills, as well as a few more views of the Italian artist's sculptures below:



Equivalenze—2 luglio 2016, 2016. Metal, acid, terracotta, 88x140x120 cm, total dimensions 264x280x20 cm. © Archivio Penone



Film still from Ephemerais series. © Archivio Penone



Film still from Ephemerais series. © Archivio Penone

Equivalenze runs at Gagosian Gallery in Rome from January 26–April 24, 2017.