2025

How to unknow?

Fabio Barile

How to unknow? presents itself as an exercise in visual disarmament, a practice that questions not what we see, but how we see. The project stems from a simple observation: what is closest to us, what belongs to our every-day visual field, what we assume to know deeply, is often what we perceive the least.

One part of the work centers on a concrete and symbolic gesture: the complete dismantling of a large format camera, a canonical instrument of analytical vision and perspectival construction. This is followed by its reassembly according to alternative, non-functional logics, not aimed at faithfully reproducing reality, but rather at proposing a vision that is unstable, intermittent, and vulnerable. This act expresses the desire to challenge the optical apparatus as an extension of rational, linear thought, and to establish a more open, uncertain, and less codified relationship with the visible.

"Unlearning to see" does not mean losing sight, but temporarily freeing oneself from the internalized structures of perception, the conceptual grids that orient our gaze while simultaneously limiting it. It is about looking not at the moon, but at the finger pointing to it.

The dismantled and reconfigured camera becomes no longer a tool of control, but a critical device, an object that reflects on the possibility of seeing otherwise: an attempt to unknow my own perspective, a tool to embraces ambiguity, opacity, and the elusive proximity of things.

Another part of the work draws on the tradition of cameraless photography. In these images, the ground glass, the very surface through which I normally look, is projected directly onto light-sensitive paper, with light bent through layers of lenses. These are images made through the very things that mediate our seeing.

How to unknow? is thus an investigation into the threshold between seeing and perceiving, between knowing and remaining receptive, between construction and deconstruction of the gaze. It is an invitation to reconnect with the world beyond the automatic filters of habit, and to train the eye to linger in uncertainty.

The project *On the edge of the eyelid* is realized for Fondazione Costantino Nivola and supported by Strategia Fotografia 2024, promoted by the Directorate-General for Contemporary Creativity of the Italian Ministry of Culture, presents three new projects by Fabio Barile (Barletta, 1980), Ezio D'Agostino (Vibo Valentia, 1979) and Luca Spano (Cagliari, 1982).

The artists participated in a research residency that put them in contact with scientists and researchers from leading institutes, including the Gran Sasso Science Institute (L'Aquila), the Physics Department at the University of Cagliari, the INFN – Istituto Nazionale di Fisica Nucleare and the association IDeAS (Cagliari), as well as the Sos Enattos sites (Lula), selected for the future construction of the Einstein Telescope, and the Sardinia Radio Telescope (San Basilio, CA).

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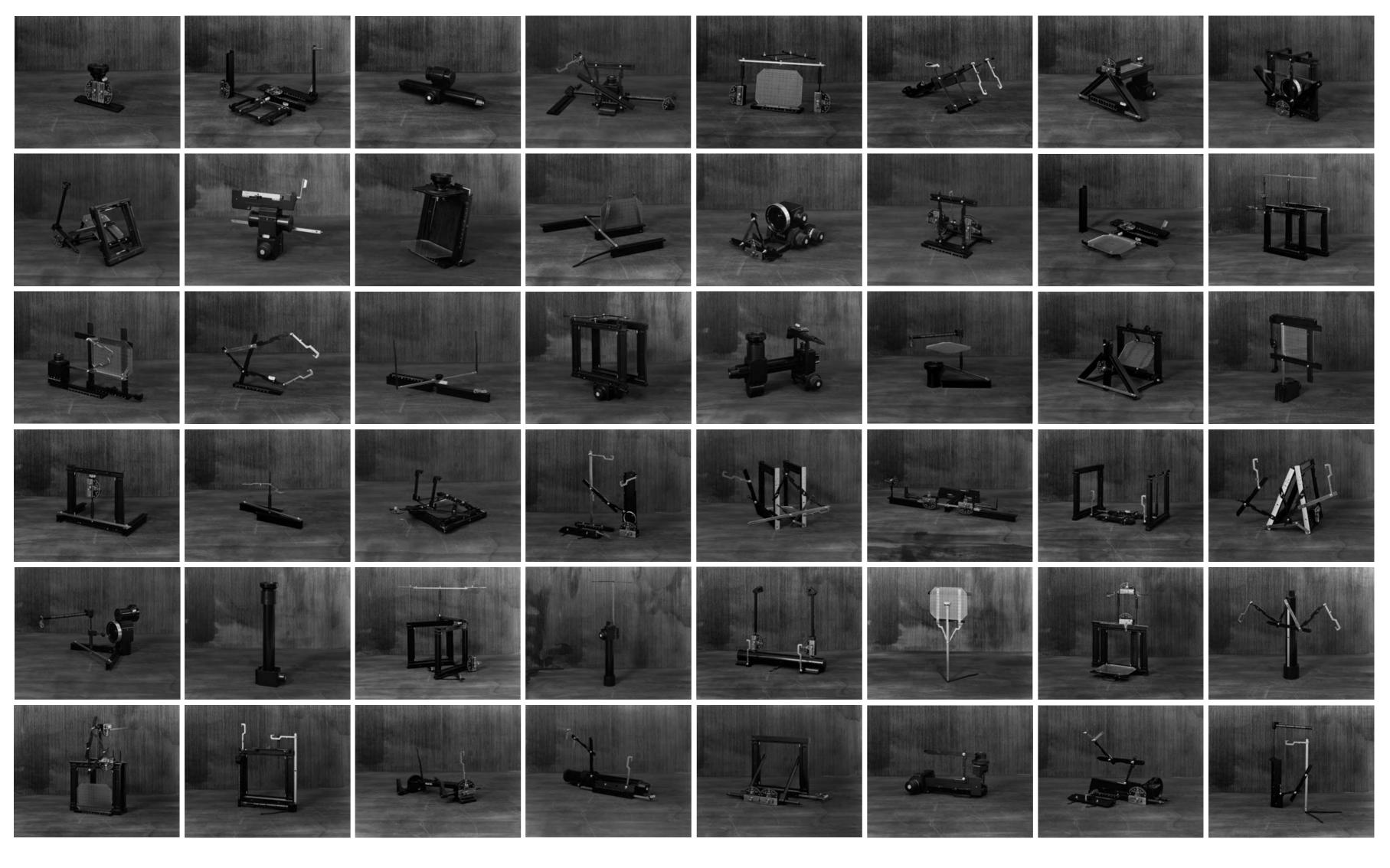






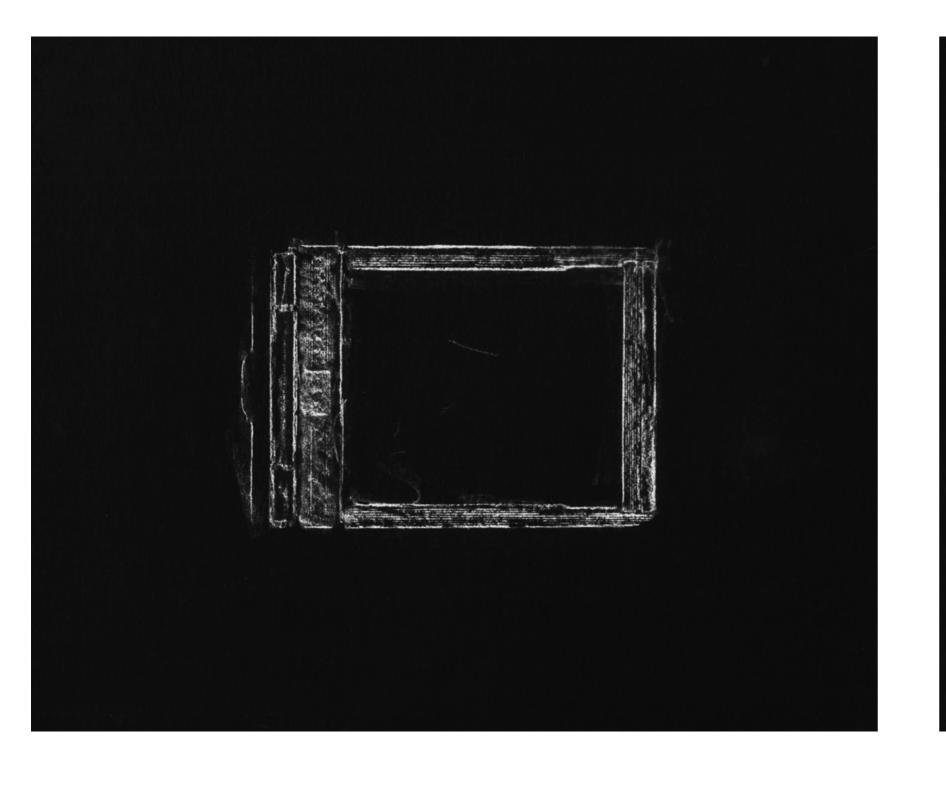


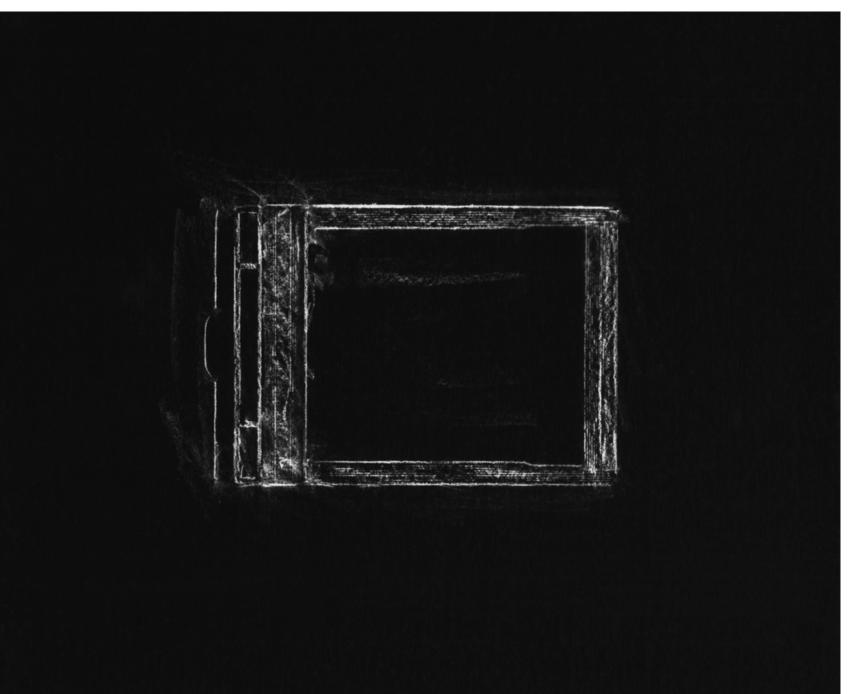


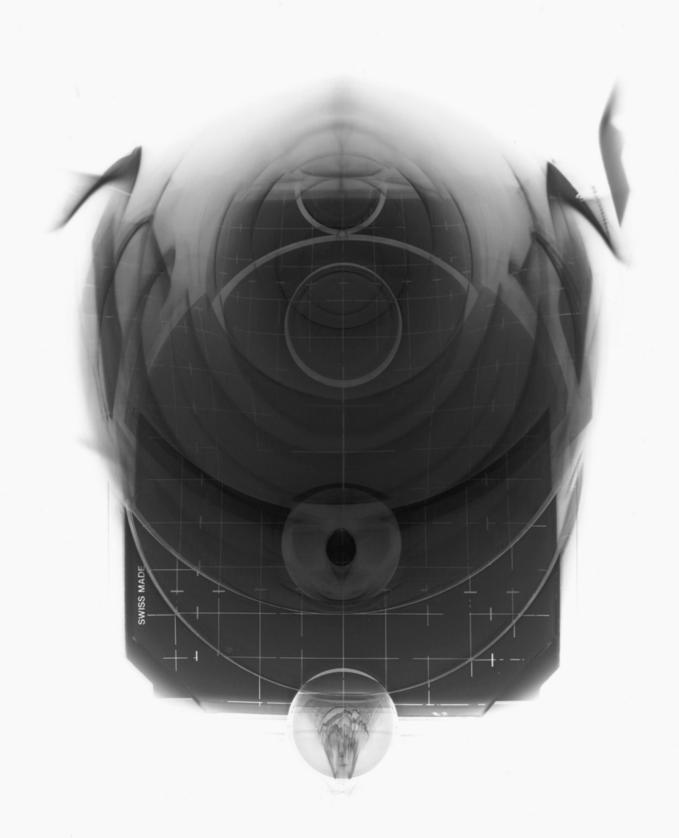


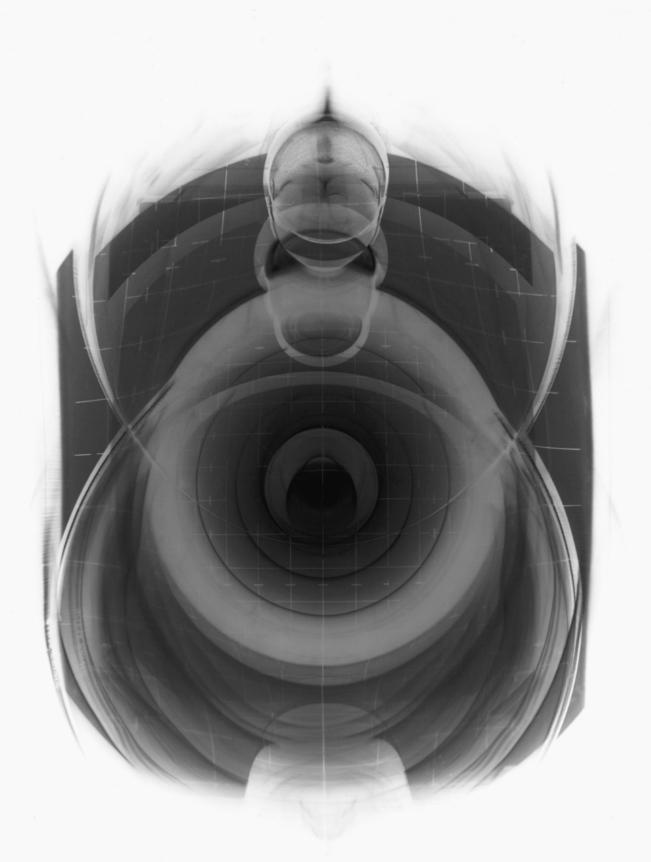


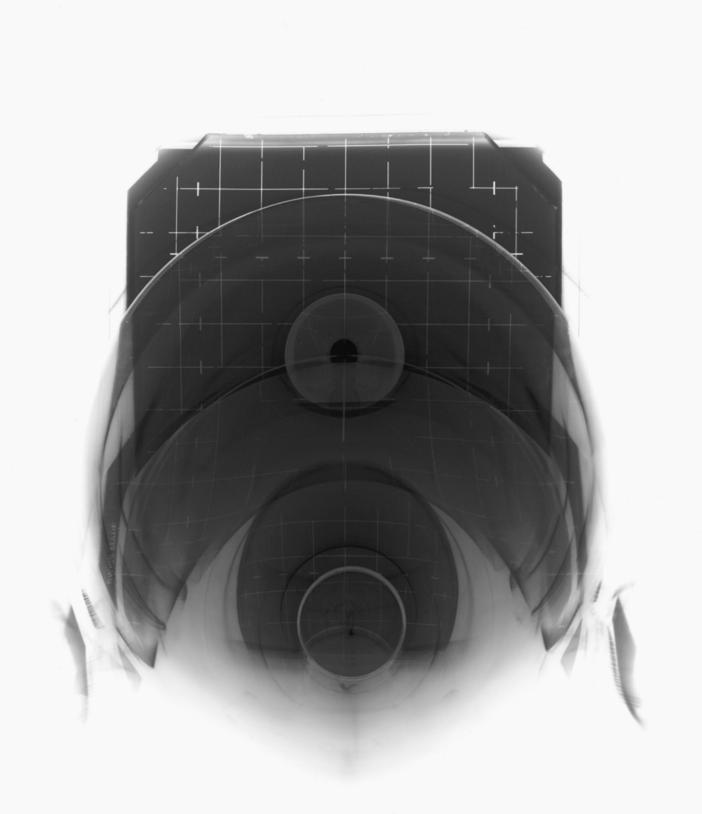


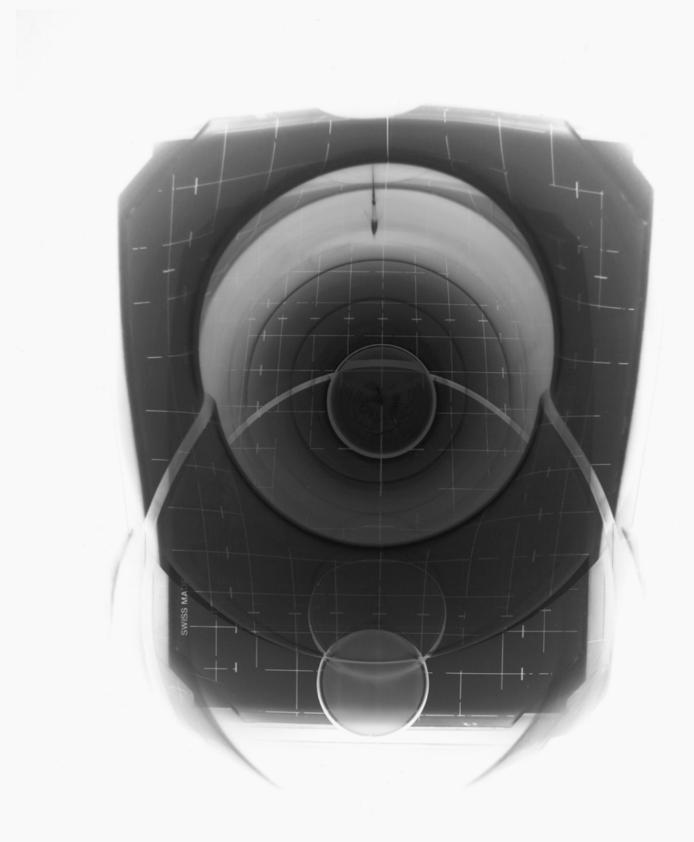


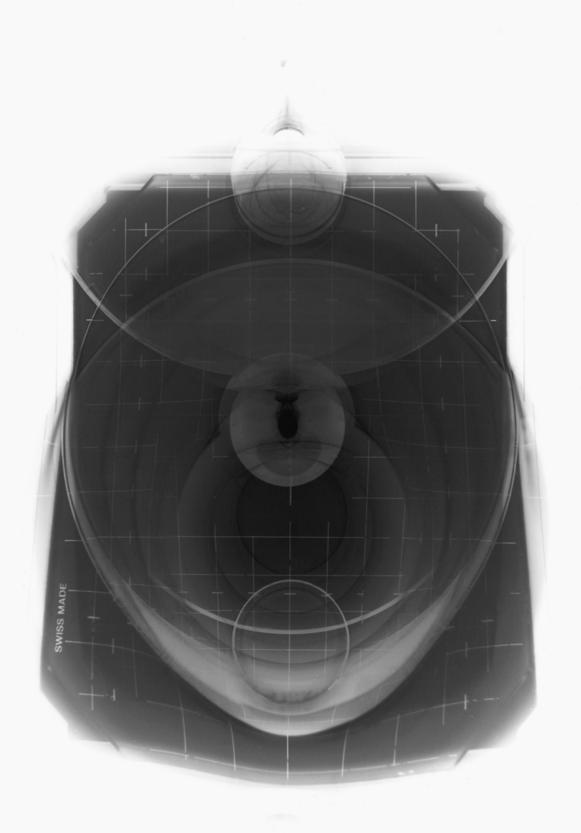


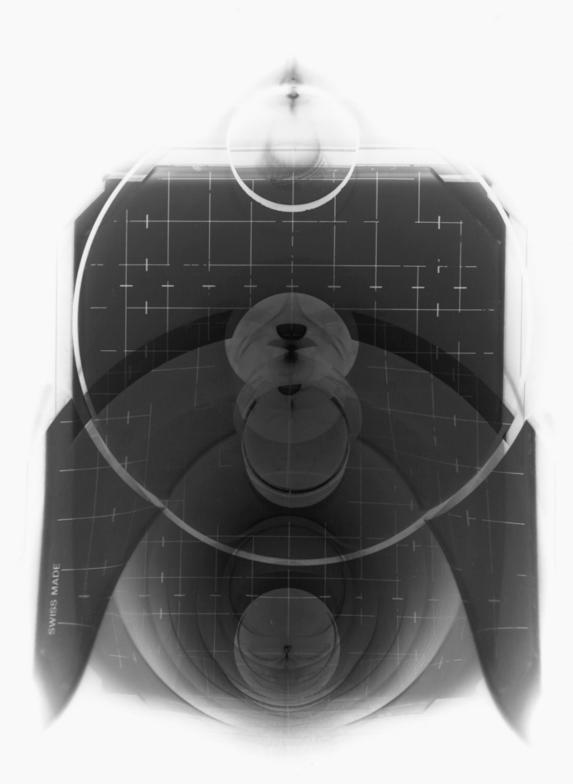


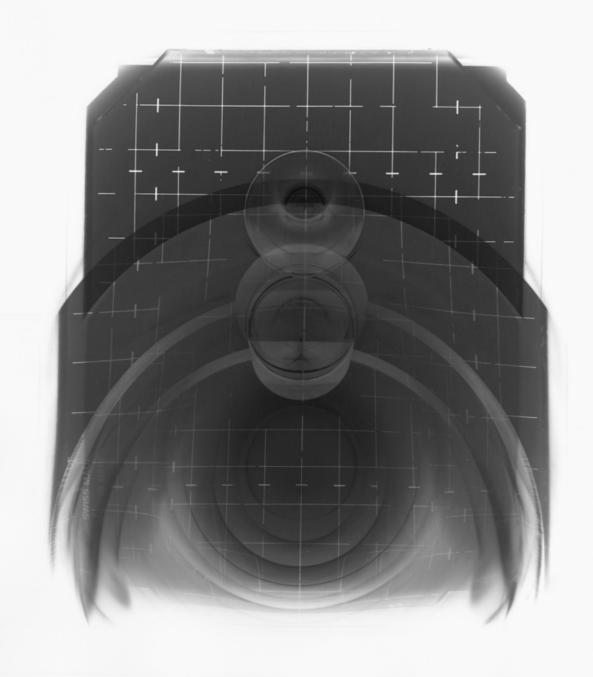


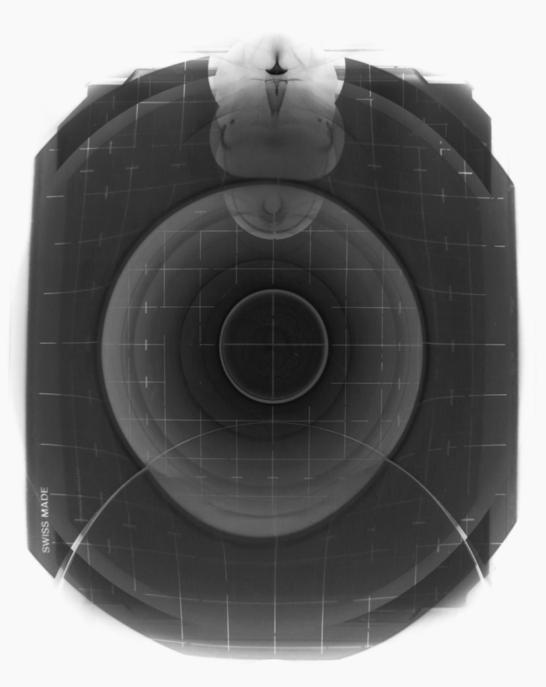




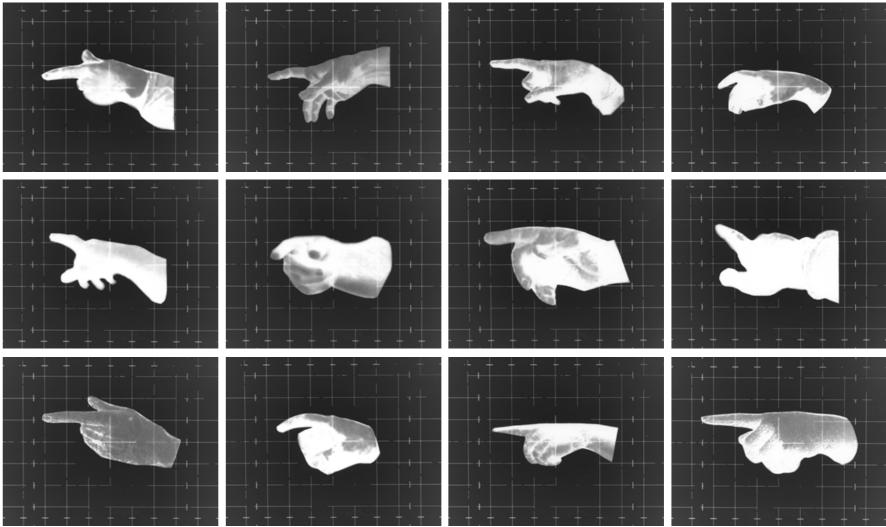


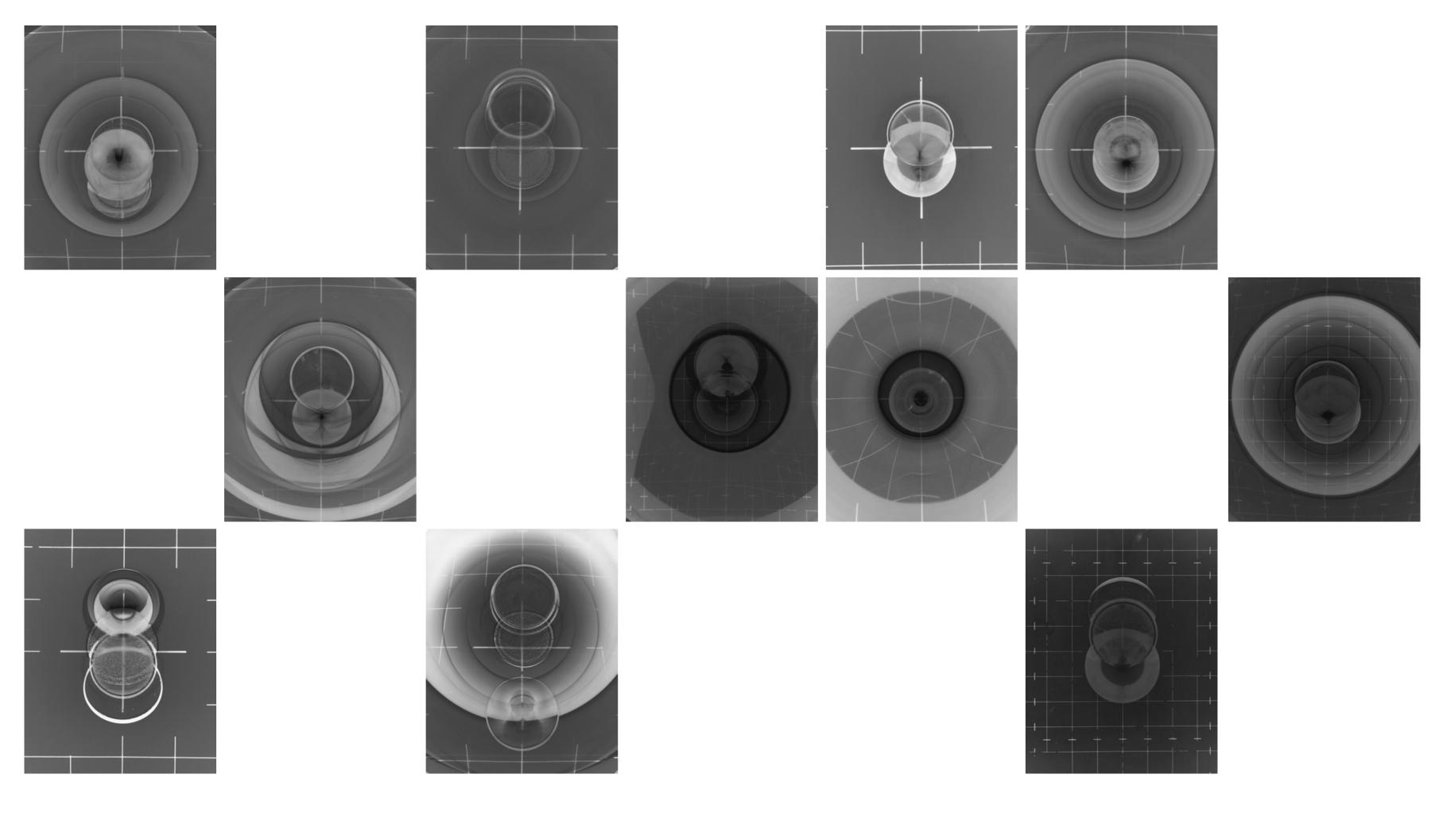


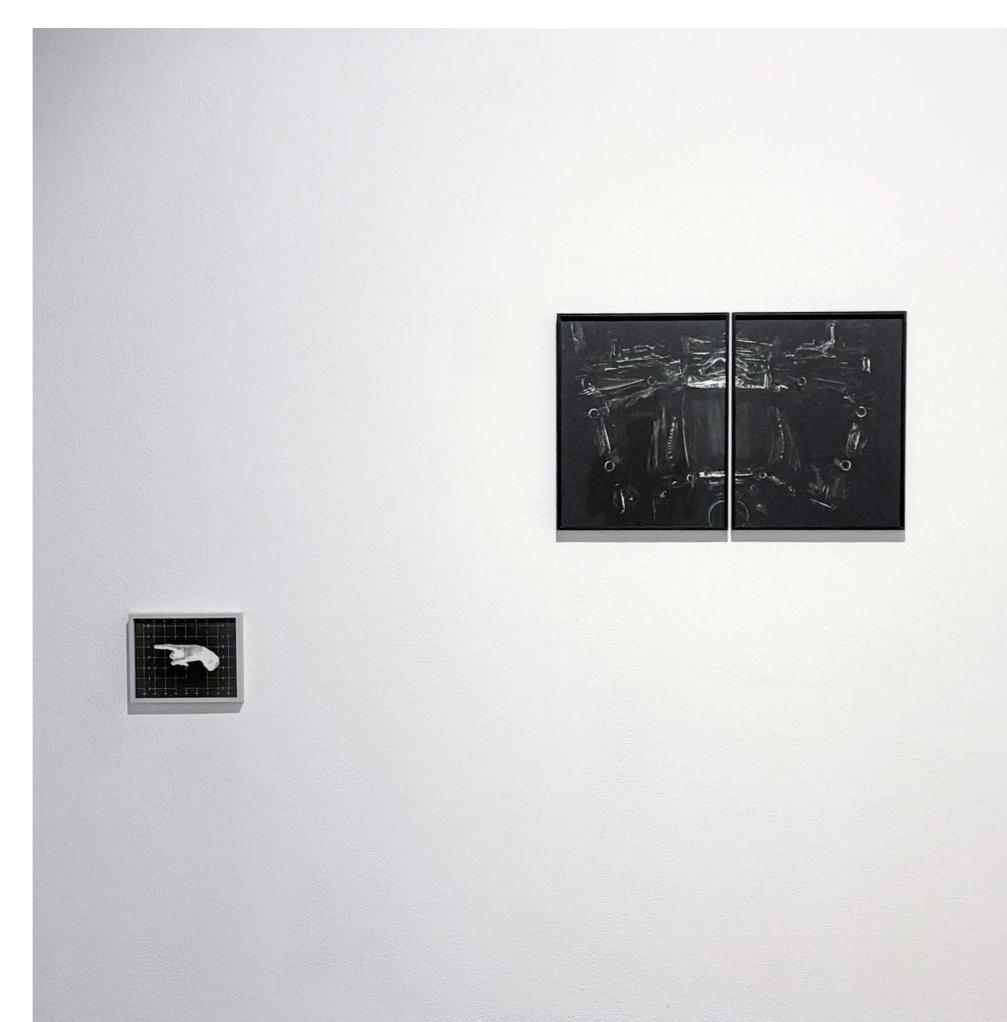




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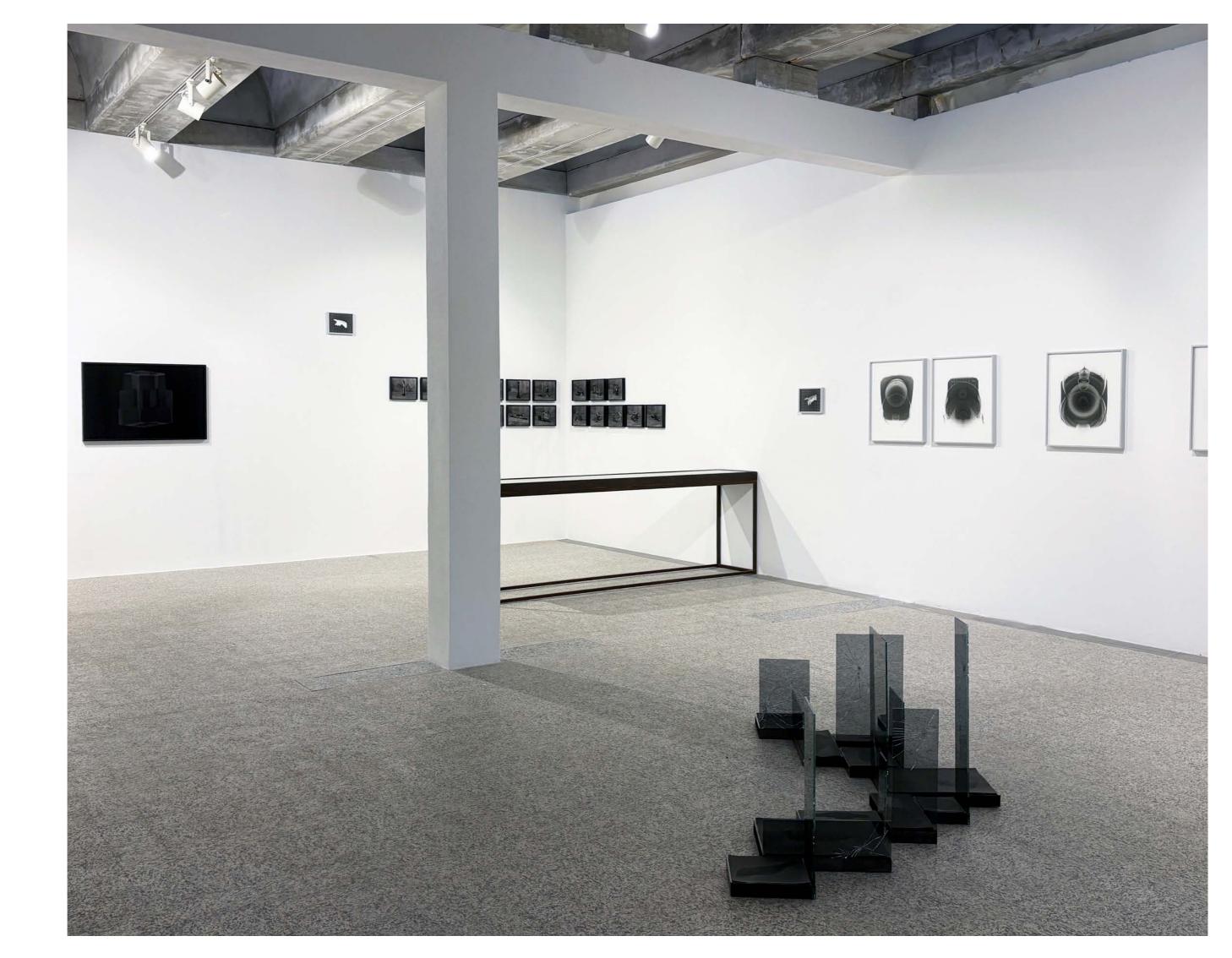


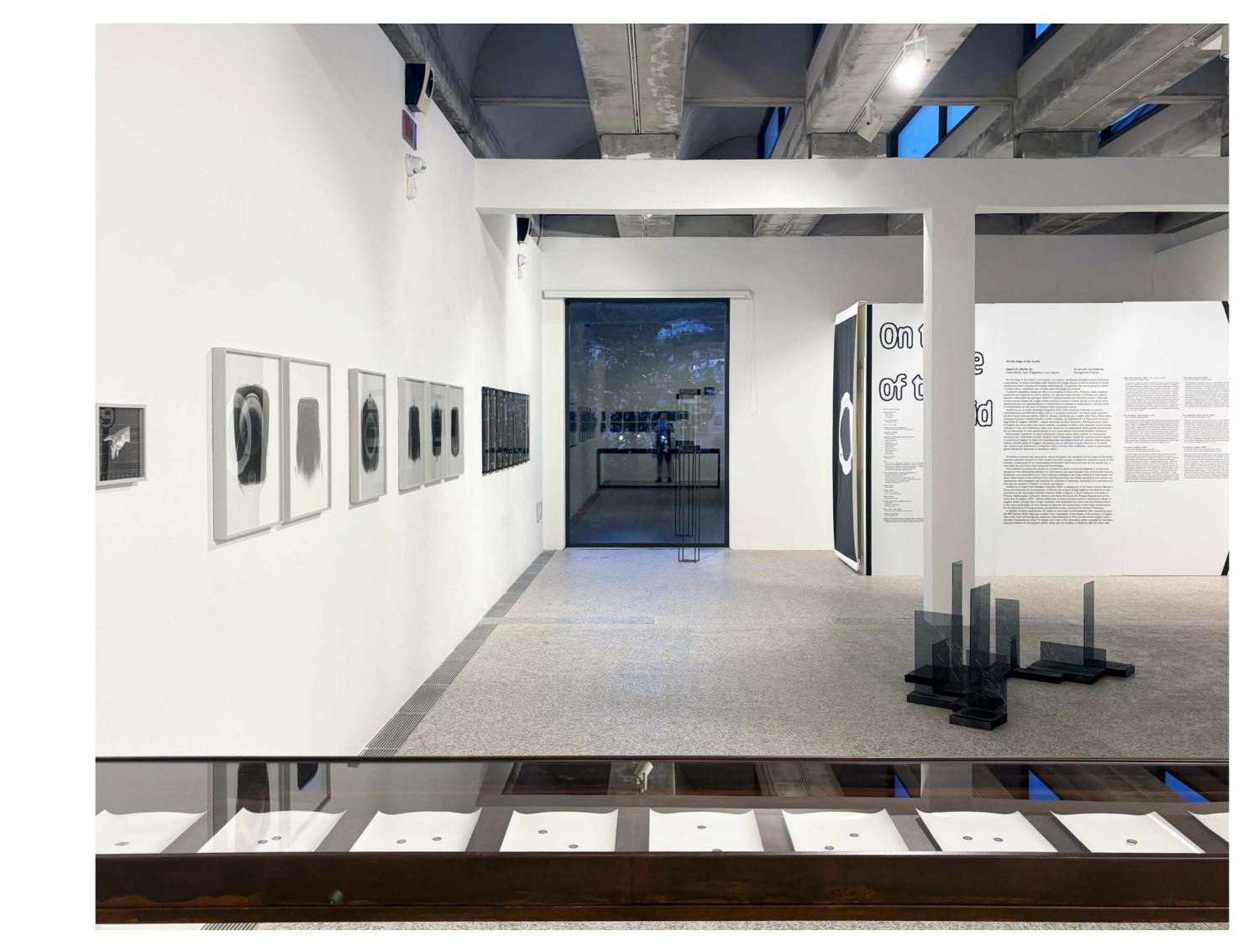












Fabio Barile

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Graduating from FSM in Florence with a degree in photography in 2007. He started his photographic research in 2005 with a project about coastal erosion, which affects 1500 km of Italian costline. The resulting project, "Among" aimed to investigate natural processes of the landscape. Over the last few years Barile's work has been driven by an interest in science in relation to art - both conceived as tools for a better understanding of reality. His long-term project, "An Investigation of the Laws Observable in the Composition, Dissolution and Restoration of Land," examines the manner in which geomorphology acts upon the land, serving as testimony to the vastness of geological time. The work employs photography to stimulate a deeper understanding of the landscape and our connection with the natural environment.

"At first glance, Fabio Barile's practice could be said to follow in the long tradition of Italian landscape photography which includes practitioners such as Luigi Ghirri, Guido Guidi. On closer inspection, however, the images in An Investigation hew to a tight conceptual framework that belie their simplicity, asking deeper questions about the nature of Time, and geologic time questions whose philosophical implications underpin scientific endeavor, human perception, and the unknowable forces of creative destruction at work in Nature"1. 1.Naomi Itami

Selected exhibitions

The Secret of the Deep Time,
Verwey Museum, Haarlem, The Netherlands
Works for a Cosmic Feeling,
Witty Books, Turin

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Tre-di-ci ,Sguardi sui musei di Lombardia (Group exhibition) Palazzo Reale, Milano, Italy

2022

Fabio Barile & Domingo Milella — Le Forme del Tempo
Terme di Diocleziano, Museo Nazionale Romano, Rome, Italy
Regeneration (Group exhibition)
American Academy in Rome, Italy
Di Roccia, fuochi e avventure sotterranee (Group exhibition)
MAXXI, L'Aquila, Italy

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Di Roccia, fuochi e avventure sotterranee (Group exhibition) MAXXI, Rome, Italy

Works for a Cosmic Feeling

Matèria, Rome, Italy 2020

Group exhibition, On Earth - Imaging, technology and the natural world FOAM Museum, Amsterdam.

2019

Group exhibition, On Earth - Imaging, technology and the natural world 50th edition of the Rencontres d'Arles, in collaboration with FOAM Museum.

Fabio Barile & Domingo Milella - The shape of time Centro Arti visive Pescheria, Pesaro, Italy

2018

Osservare la terra — a dialogue beetween contemporary photography and the historical archive of ICCD about photography as a tool for observation

ICCD — Istituto Centrale per il Catalogo e la Documentazione, Rome, curated by Benedetta Cestelli Guidi

2017

An Investigation of the laws observable in the composition, dissolution and restoration of land, Matèria, Rome

2015

Homage to James Hutton Materia, Rome, Italy

Publications

Works for a Cosmic Feeling — Witty Books 2024
Di roccia fuochi e avventure sotterranee — Quodlibet/Ghella, 2020
Fabio Barile & Domingo Milella, The shape of time — Fondazione malaspina edition, 2019
Fabio Barile & Francesco Neri, Middle-Earth a journey inside Elica — Fondazione malaspina edition, 2014
Vision And Documents Box, — Documentary Platform, 2010
Diary N° o - Things that do not happen — 3/3, 2009