

St. Thomas’ Haptic Gaze

Fabio Barile

Touch and sight have traditionally been considered opposing senses: the former requires direct contact and proximity, while the latter operates at a distance, mediating knowledge through light. However, the theory of the haptic gaze challenges this dichotomy by proposing a way of seeing that resembles touching. The haptic gaze does not merely observe but “caresses” the image, perceiving its texture and density as if fingertips could explore it.

This idea resonates with the figure of Saint Thomas the Apostle, who doubted Christ’s resurrection until he could touch His wounds. His story highlights the limitations of sight alone and the need for tactile confirmation of reality. From this perspective, visual perception is never purely optical but always involves a tactile dimension, especially when the image becomes material.

In these images, I have chosen representations of Saint Thomas in which the eyes are looking at the wound while the finger is touching it. By recombining these two elements, touch and sight find themselves in a battle of perceptions.









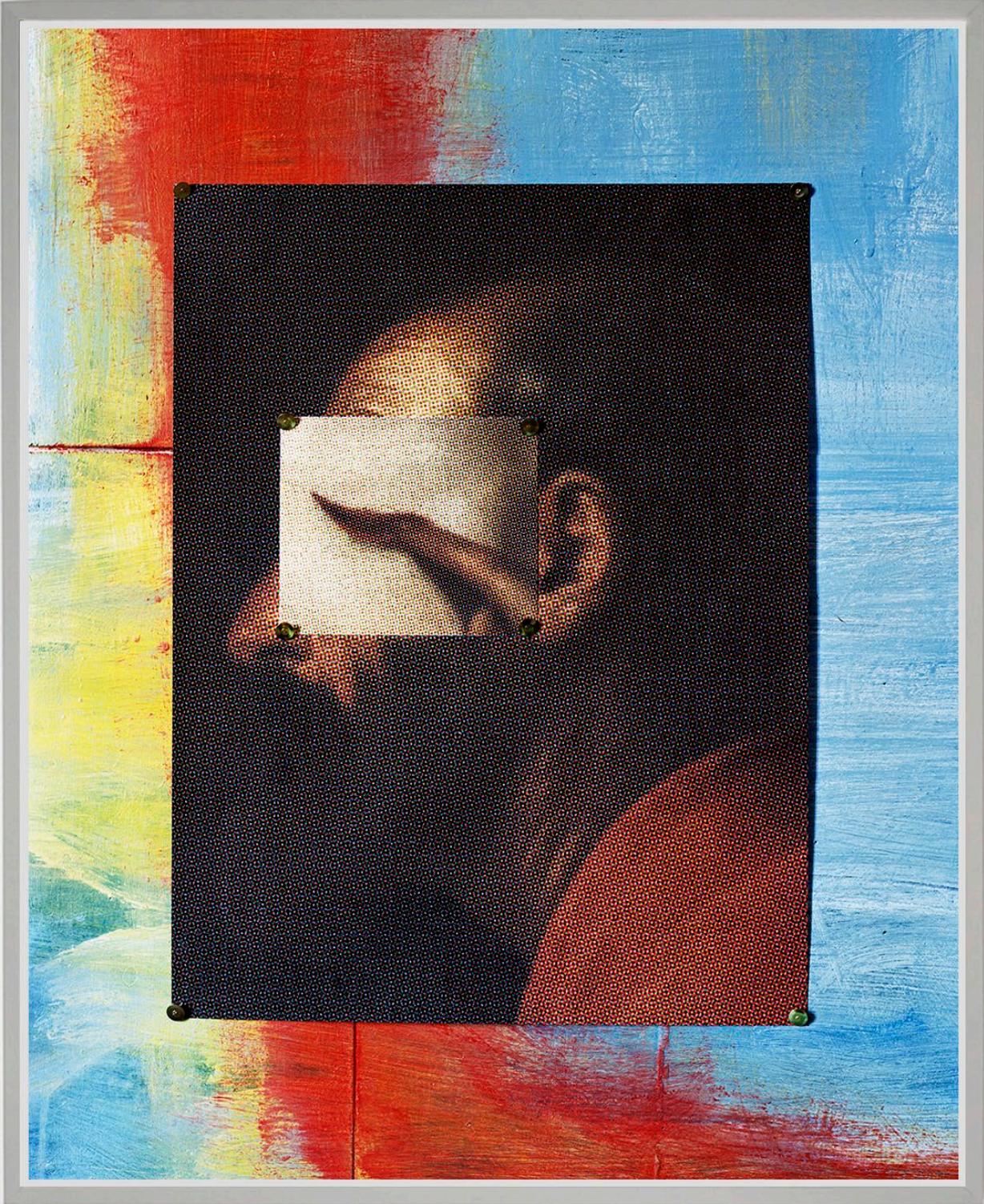




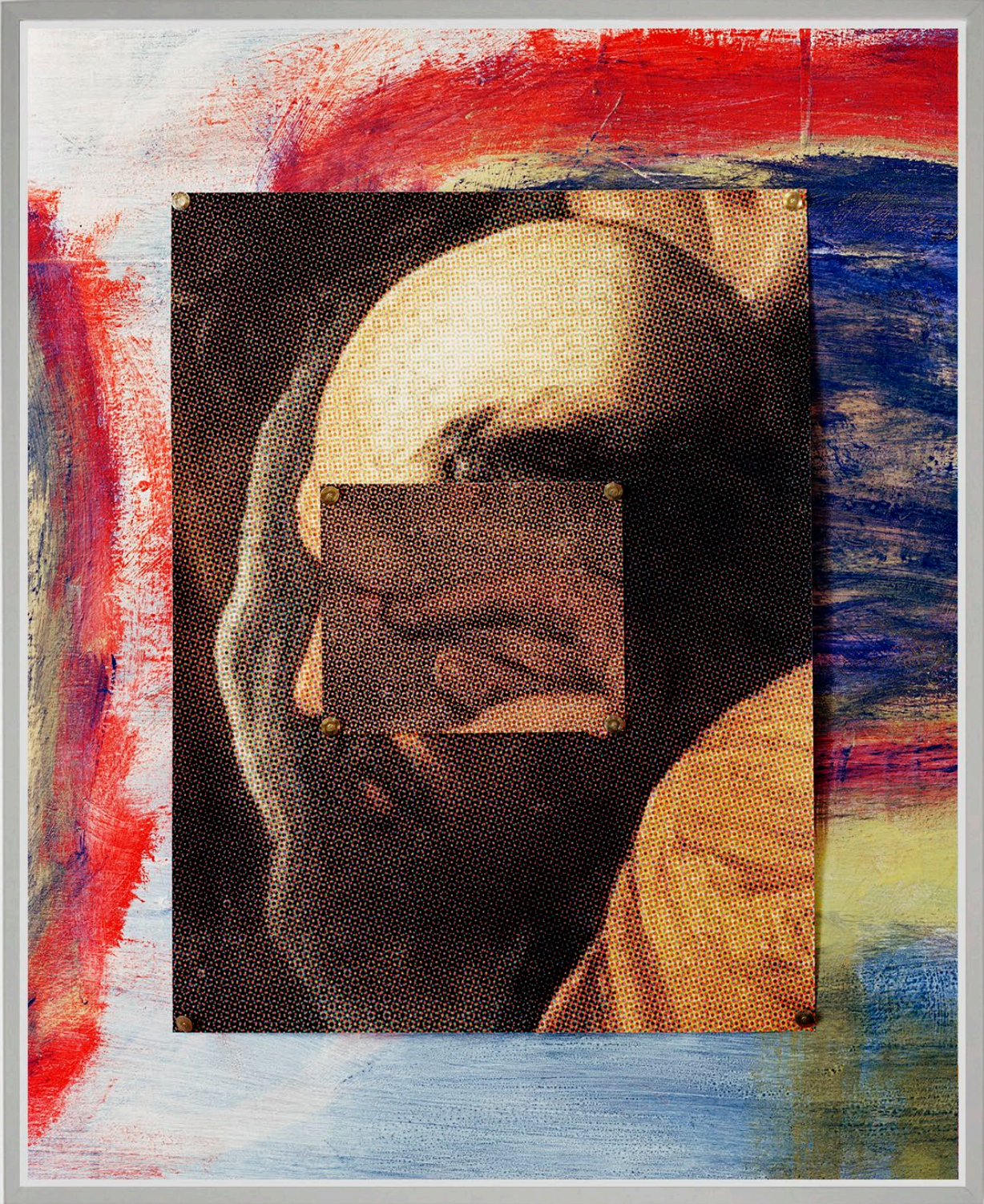




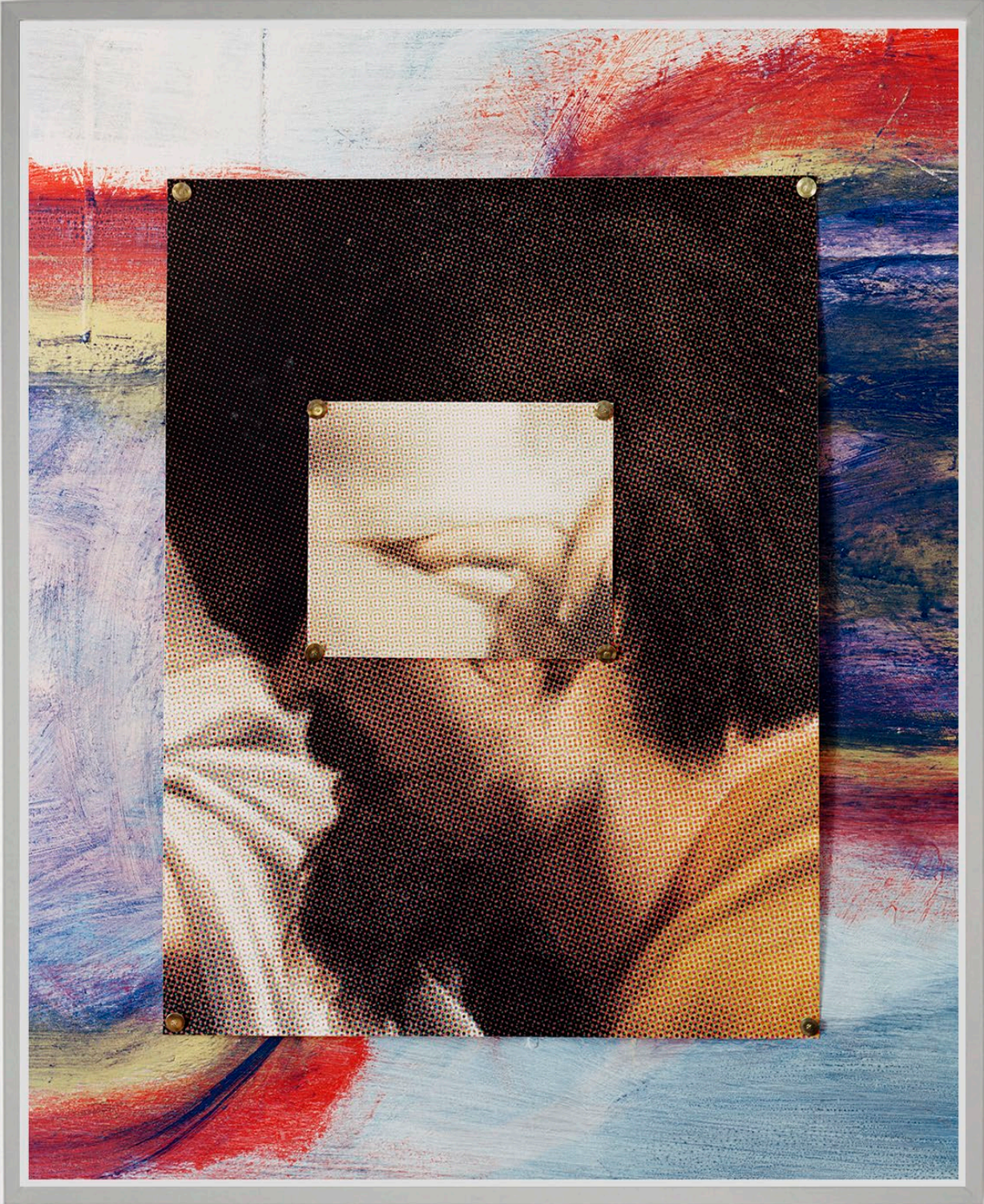




















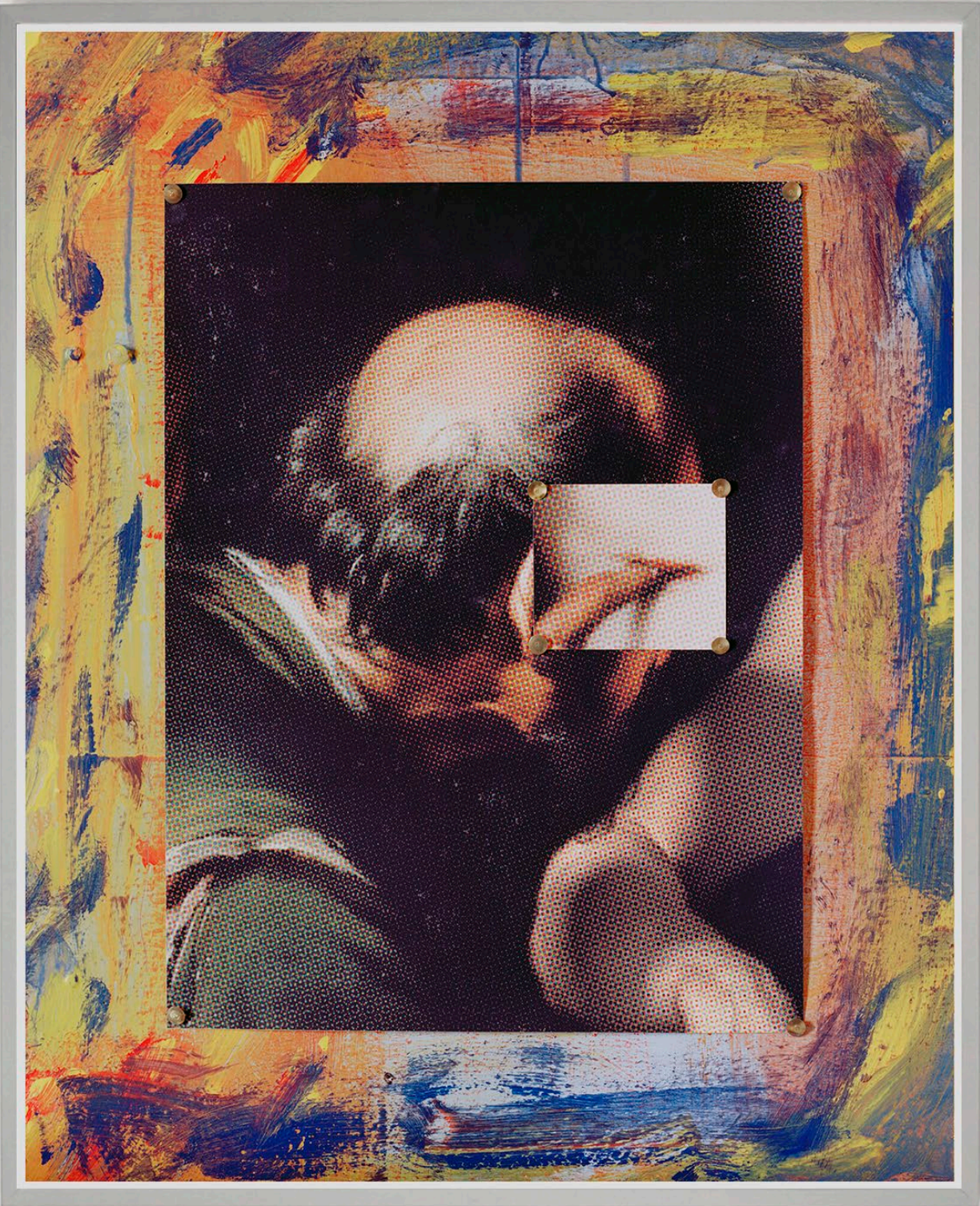














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Graduating from FSM in Florence with a degree in photography in 2007. He started his photographic research in 2005 with a project about coastal erosion, which affects 1500 km of Italian costline. The resulting project, “Among” aimed to investigate 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”I. I.Naomi Itami

Selected exhibitions

- 2024

The Secret of the Deep Time,  
Verwey Museum, Haarlem, The Netherlands  
Works for a Cosmic Feeling,  
Witty Books, Turin
- 2023

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
- 2021

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 between 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  
Matèria, 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