

# Pietro Agostoni

## *A mali rimedi*

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Hosted by Sergey Kantsedal e Katya Kabalina

The air is heavy as I write this text. It teems with clots of black smoke, drifting thick as oil. Would you have guessed, you who now look at these bodies sway so slender in space? The soot at rest onto sheets with ancient histories, fading into fleeting figures. Insolent flames' daughters, they embody its audacity.

It is the technique itself that defines their vibrant looming. A tribal production in essence, drawing from vandalism and DIY techniques while simultaneously exploring the poetics and technē of fire. Let me explain: Pietro Agostoni has devised a system of tinfoil cones that channel candle flames, allowing the lumpblack to settle on the surface — when it doesn't escape mischievously, that is! A proto-pen, unruly by nature, it forces artistic intention into constant negotiation with the entropic behaviour of its own plume, or at least to find shifting strategies that accommodate it. Among these: rotating frames, acetates, and lightboards on the verge of obsolescence, making the whole production process — and its subjects — highly performative. Jury-rigged, yet accurate. Breath too becomes part of a ritual where transformed matter manifests simultaneously a malice and a transience, where even the slightest air displacement can alter the desired image. A unique technique, rooted in anti-technological experimentation. Elemental by nature and fractal in form.

Notice, it's not only in the puffs of soot that this tapered line can be traced. Similar patterns emerge in space: fairy-like shadows that are nothing more than the fibres of a mandarin, or the slender dragonflies caught in that web in the corner. But also the dried crowns of tomatoes scattered here and there, or the mackerel's fishbone eaten on Friday. Even inanimate objects can be inscribed within this circle. See the dense embroideries of the lace? Or those elongated dogs?

There is an intimate dimension permeating the exhibition. The sheets, certainly, evoke such an imaginary. So do the yellowed squared pages of an old school notebook. Time marked by instants of daily care, where everything has value. All this well aligns with Agostoni's artistic approach at large, which indulges and allows physical forces and environmental agents to define the artwork, alongside the natural decay of bodies and the energy that lingers within objects.

Among the works included in the exhibition, there are sculptures from the series *Dee Esumate*. Inspired by Paleolithic Venuses and themselves dedicated to fertility, they are modelled in raw clay and then returned to the earth; buried for years in bramble pots, where they yield under the slow pressure of roots and the erosion of water. Here too, Agostoni relinquishes full control of the artistic gesture, allowing the outcome of material transformation to be part of the final artwork when brought back to light in all its fragility.

A vulnerability that offers itself, as gentle as reckless. Its most insidious side is embodied by the soot figures — those “extremes extremes” subtracted from the exhibition's title\* — which exceed their frayed limits to the point of total exposure. Stripped to their raw state, they dull any sense of integrity. They too are fractal: in their unruly tufts, or in the grin that characterizes them. Almost caricatural in their ruthless honesty.

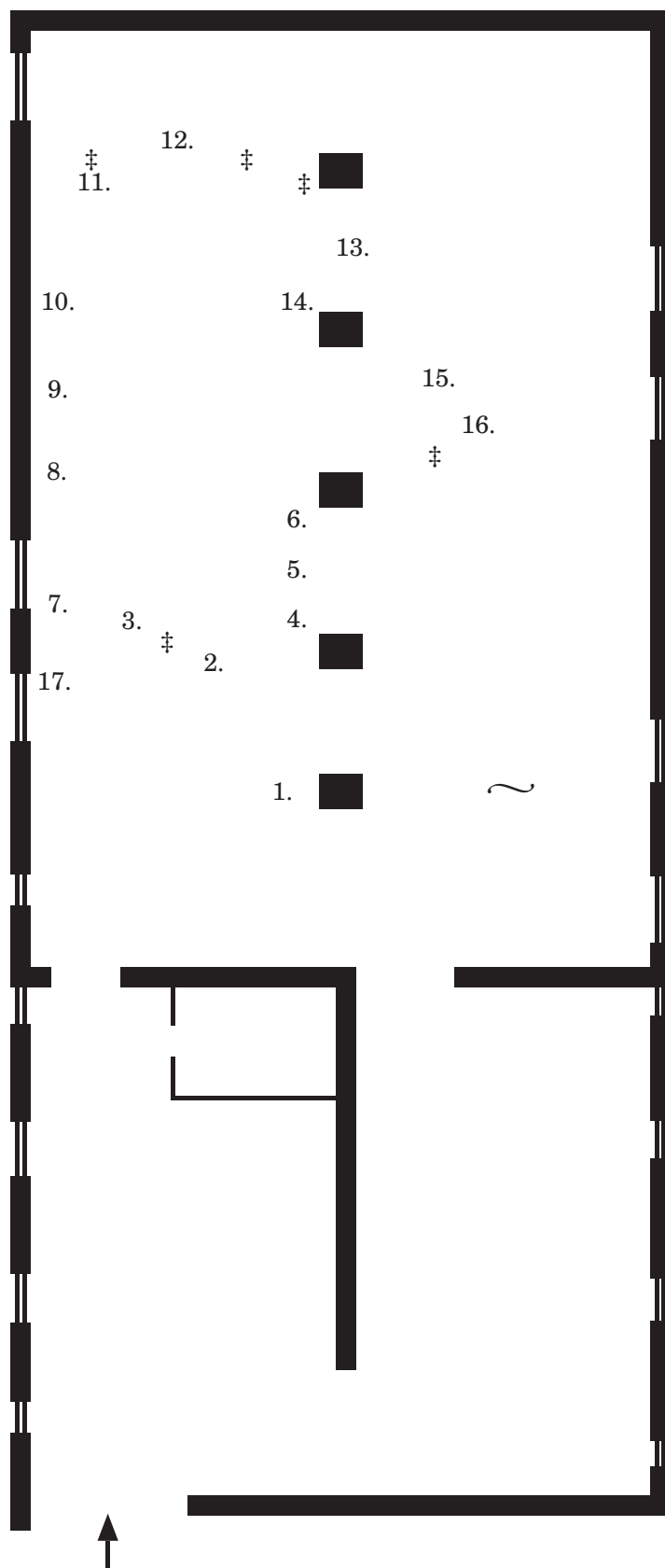
It is not uncommon for some to see a self-portrait of the artist. At the same time, the titles of some of the artworks allude to more or less collectively recognizable stories. I think of them as guardians of a buried dimension. Their resurfacing is suggested by the very motion of the gesture that creates them, tending upward.

External actors then — ParsimoniaRig, with their shoe-like pedestals and curtain-loop hands, and Alan Stefanato, whose seething frames become caskets for the drawings on notebook pages — allow these apparitions, between stain and mirage, to remain anchored among us for a little longer, before returning to that inner world they belong to.

1. *Ash-ley & Hell-len*  
Soot on sheet, 400 × 245 cm  
2026
2. *Heroin's heroine*  
Soot on sheet, 145 × 250 cm  
2026
3. *Heroine's heroin*  
Soot on sheet, 145 × 250 cm  
2026
4. *Lorenzo* (feat. ParsimoniaRig)  
Soot on sheet, 50 × 70 cm  
2026
5. *Io* (feat. ParsimoniaRig)  
Soot on sheet, 50 × 70 cm  
2026
6. *Zeno* (feat. ParsimoniaRig)  
Soot on sheet, 50 × 70 cm  
2026
7. *Madame Bovary* (framed by Alan Stefanato)  
Ink on paper, iron, 25 × 31 cm  
2026
8. *Anita/Tina* (framed by Alan Stefanato)  
Ink on paper, iron, 25 × 31 cm  
2026
9. *Jessicka* (framed by Alan Stefanato)  
Ink on paper, iron, 25 × 31 cm  
2026
10. *Dolores* (framed by Alan Stefanato)  
Ink on paper, iron, 25 × 31 cm  
2026
11. *Dylan* (framed by Alan Stefanato)  
Ink on paper, iron, 25 × 31 cm  
2026
12. *Rauchen ist Tödlich (la ventriloqua)*  
Soot on sheet, 300 × 245 cm  
2026
13. *Venus Trapstar*  
Soot on sheet, 150 × 250 cm  
2026
14. *Why Wynona?* (framed by Alan Stefanato)  
Ink on paper, iron, 25 × 31 cm  
2026
15. *Snakes Mating I*  
Soot on sheet, 150 × 250 cm  
2025
16. *Snakes Mating II*  
Soot on sheet, 150 × 250 cm  
2025
17. *God* (from the series: *Dee Esumate*)  
Clay, 10,3 × 17 × 11 cm  
2022 [2023 exhumed]

‡ ParsimoniaRig  
Iron, 3D print, plaster, variable dimensions  
Technical Fabrication, 2026

~ Chill Room



The Barriera program is supported by:



Founded in 2007 as a non-profit cultural association by a group of collectors, Barriera is a space located in a former industrial building, in the Barriera di Milano district in Turin. The space directs initiatives, exhibitions and events both toward dialogue between artists, curators and collectors, and toward contamination with other disciplines such as music and performance, as well as with underground and Eastern European cultural contexts. Barriera is curated by Sergey Kantsedal. Art direction by Katya Kabalina. Graphic design by Siliqoon Agency. Production assistance: Gabriel Leano Martinez. A heartfelt thanks to Caterina, Biagio, Zeno, Lorenzo, Alan, Gabriel, Katya, Sergey, Carla.

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