

Darren Almond
Songbirds and Willows
January 22 – March 8, 2025

Alfonso Artiaco is pleased to announce Darren Almond's
sixth solo exhibition at the gallery entitled *Songbirds and Willows*.

The exhibition opens on Tuesday, January 21st at 7pm, in the presence of the artist.

"Songbirds and Willows" invites us to reflect on the passage of time, the fragility of memory and our connection with nature, offering a meditation on the cyclical and ever-changing rhythms of life.

Darren Almond criticises contemporary society's linear conception of time, inviting viewers to analyse their memories and emotions related to time.

The first two rooms of the gallery are dedicated to a series of works born from Almond's experience in London when he visited Lucian Freud's studio. Invited to spend time in that space, Almond was impressed by what remained of the famous English artist's practice: the paint-stained cotton rags that had been used to create Freud's works. This episode led Darren Almond to a profound exploration of light and form, leading him to transform those rags into monumental landscapes that, painted on large canvases, attempt to catch the emotional weight of presence and absence, life and death.

The exhibition continues with the Untitled series, in which we find the concept of 'zero', which Almond uses to evoke notions of infinity and the interconnectedness of all things being both nothingness and the starting point of everything. In Almond's work, this paradox becomes a meditation on how we measure and experience time.

The presence of zero can also be read as a contemplation of mortality, as the moment when existence meets non-existence. This relates to the philosophical questions of being and nothingness that run through much of the artist's work.

In the "Willows" series, Almond uses metals (gold, copper, palladium) to capture the dynamic qualities of light, evoking the changing seasons. Each panel depicts the willow plant in different stages of growth, from the budding leaves of spring with gold to the bare branches of winter with palladium, creating a continuous change through time and nature.

The embedded properties of these metals allow light to be attracted, reflected and altered in a way that mirrors the passage of time, evoking the fluidity and grace of nature, while their geometric patterns recall traditional Japanese byōbu (folding screens).

This synthesis of Japanese artistic traditions and materials shows how Almond has not merely appropriated these influences, but rather uses them to explore his interests in time, light and perception in new ways. Just think of Jun'ichirō Tanizaki's 'In Praise of Shadows' (1933), which shows how traditional Japanese aesthetics value shadows and subtle reflections over direct lighting. This concept relates directly to the way Almond uses metal surfaces to create subtle, shifting effects rather than static images.

At the same time Darren Almond will also be presenting RAGS, an exhibition project in collaboration with the Artiaco Gallery at Cappella Sansevero spaces in Napoli from **January 22 to March 17, 2025**, admission allowed with mandatory reservation on the museum website.

The works on display in the chapel's nave are part of the same cycle exhibited in the gallery's first rooms that grew out of the artist's visits to Lucian Freud's studio.

A double exhibition, then, that draws a route through the heart of the historical center of Naples to explore and learn about Almond's latest works on the edge between various artistic languages.

Darren Almond was born in Wigan, England, in 1971.

The artist works with a variety of media including photography, sculpture and video. He was nominated for the Turner Prize in 2005 and has had numerous solo exhibitions worldwide: The Renaissance Society, Chicago (1999); De Appel, Amsterdam and Kunsthalle Zürich, Zurich (2001), Tate Britain, London (2001); Fondazione Nicola Trussardi/Palazzo della Ragione, Milan, Italy (2003); K21, Düsseldorf (2005); Museum Folkwang, Essen (2006); SITE Santa Fe (2007); Parasol Unit, London (2008); Villa Merkel, Esslingen and FRAC Haute- Normandie, Sotteville-les-Rouen (2011); Domaine de Chaumont-sur-Loire, Chaumont-sur-Loire (2012); Kunsthau Graz, Graz (2015), MUDAM, Luxembourg (2017); Timeline, SCAI The Bathhouse, Tokyo (2023). Main collective exhibitions include Berlin Biennale (2001), Venice Biennale (2003), Busan Biennale (2004), the Turner Prize-related exhibition, Tate Britain, London (2005), Moscow Biennale (2007) and Tate Triennial, Tate Britain, London (2009). Others include The Nothing That Is, Royal Academy of Arts, London; Photographing Monet Gardens: Five Contemporary Views, Musée des Impressionismes, Giverny (2015); Fire under Snow, Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, Humlebæk and Sublime, les tremblements du monde, Centre Pompidou, Metz (2016); In My Shoes: Art and the Self since the 1990s, Yorkshire Sculpture Park, Wakefield and The MOON: From Inner Worlds to Outer Space, Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, Humlebaek (2018); Apollo's Muse: The Moon in the Age of Photography, The Metropolitan Museum, New York (2019); Slow Painting, The Edge and University Gallery, Bath, UK SCAI 30th Anniversary Exhibition, SCAI Park, Tokyo (2020); The Expanded Landscape, Getty Center, Los Angeles (2021); Whitechapel Gallery, London (2022); Fondation Carmignac, Porquerolles, France (2023).