

Johan Creten

Tremore Essenziale

September 11 – October 31 2025

Alfonso Artiaco is pleased to present *Tremore Essenziale*,
the first solo exhibition by Johan Creten at the gallery.

The show will open on Wednesday September 10, at 7 pm with the presence of the artist.

The exhibition unfolds as an instinctive flow, born from the urgent need to give form to an experience that traverses body, matter, and history. Creten's works do more than inhabit space: they reveal its inherent instability, as if the ground itself was quickened by an invisible pulse. The title gestures toward this very condition, suggesting tremor as both a formal and existential principle, a subtle vibration that resonates within the material and within the viewer's perception.

Central to the exhibition is the series *Odore di Femmina*, which explores the delicate tension between attraction and repulsion, desire and apprehension. By shaping clay - primordial, moist, fertile - Creten conjures flowers that are at once fragile and disquieting, capturing the paradox of impurity transformed into the sublime. In these works, sculpture functions as a ritual of transformation, where impermanence and renewal are inscribed in the gestures of molding, building, and letting collapse. Employing a metonymic language, the artist allows the flower to evoke the feminine, conceived as a space of desire, mystery, and sacredness. While the classical elegance of the forms and the meticulous craftsmanship of the petals attract the eye, it is their inherent fragility that imparts true force - a delicate equilibrium between radiance and transience.

The sculptures, realized in glazed stoneware, emerge as unstable apparitions, poised between eros and the sacred, light and shadow, beauty and decay. Within them, tremor becomes a key to understanding a universal condition: a world at once vulnerable and powerful, perpetually in motion. In Naples - a city defined by volcanoes, earthquakes, and constant renewal - *Tremore Essenziale* finds a natural resonance, transforming the gallery into a space for sensory experience and contemplation on the essence of art and existence.

Creten's own words accompany the exhibition as an extension of the work, not as commentary, opening to the visitor the intimate horizon from which the sculptures emerge: a narrative of vibration and fragility, in which matter becomes image, and image becomes a shared experience.

Johan Creten was born in Born in Sint-Truiden, Belgium in 1963. Lives and works in Paris

He has exhibited at the Louvre Museum, the Musée Nationale Eugène Delacroix in Paris, the Bass Museum of Art in Miami Beach, the Istanbul Biennale, the Mamco in Geneva, and the Middelheim Museum in Antwerp, among many other places. In 1996, he was awarded the Prix de Rome and could stay as resident in the Villa Medici. Between 2004 and 2007, he was visiting artist at the Manufacture Nationale de Sèvres. In 2009, he was nominated for the Flemish Culture Prize. In 2013, he held the Theodore Randall Chair at Alfred University, New York. In 2014, he presented a major solo exhibition of monumental bronzes in the sculpture park of the Middelheim Museum in Antwerp. In 2015, an entire room was dedicated to his pioneering work in the exhibition *CERAMIX* at the Bonnefanten Museum in Maastricht and in 2016 at La Maison Rouge in Paris.

As I write these few lines, I tremble.

I don't know if it's this immense heat wave sweeping over Paris, or the unending stream of news from around the world that I absorb relentlessly through the media. My heart is racing wildly. In any case, I tremble.

I tremble, and it feels as though the building, the ground, and the entire earth tremble along with me. When I first began shaping delicate, fragile clay into flowers, my hands were already shaking.

The emotion, the dizziness of taboo - transforming a material so dirty, damp, yet so fertile and full of possibility into those seemingly untouchable, fragile flowers - led me to this series: *Odore di Femmina*.

A series that plays with the mystery of the Other, with attraction and repulsion, desire and fear, that Dark Continent which is sex itself, what makes us quake to the very core of our bodies. Don Giovanni is not far away.

And one day, as I was building an enormous figure made of flowers, I thought to myself: How beautiful it is... it seems to tremble. And in the end, it really did tremble - before collapsing under its own weight. Only to be reborn, days later, beneath my hands. The eternal return.

In *Glorie*, it is the trembling before the unknown, before the divine, before the boundlessness of the world and the universe - before power itself - that drove me to create works which seem to shift endlessly under a ray of sunlight or a passing dark cloud.

And I think of *Tosca*, when she says, after her cruel yet truly heroic act: "And before him, all Rome trembled." The struggle between wasps and bees, between La Fontaine's cicadas and Beuys's utopias. Between money, power, and poetry.

A Black Pearl becomes an existential crossing, filled with fear and hope.

The viewpoints - those places where we anchor ourselves for a few seconds or minutes - look at the works and the sky through the windows. Where, for a brief moment, we find calm... before reality inevitably returns: the volcano off the coast, and in the distance, that city still bearing the scars and wounds of the earthquake.

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