

Esther Schipper

FRANCESCO GENNARI

GREETINGS FROM THE MOON

MARCH 16–APRIL 14, 2018



Francesco Gennari, **La degenerazione di Parsifal (Natività) / The Degeneration of Parsifal (Nativity)**, 2017
Stainless steel, flour, butterflies, variable dimensions tending towards the infinite
Photo © Francesco Gennari

Esther Schipper is pleased to announce **Greetings From the Moon**, Francesco Gennari's first solo exhibition with the gallery. For the Italian artist, each of his exhibitions constitutes a metaphysical landscape of his own sensibility and emotions, exposing his vision of the world and himself in it. While he finds inspiration in his everyday life—his favorite garments, such as the model of white shirt he wears every day, are often the subjects of his works—Gennari believes that the observation of the ordinary can lead to the representation of something universal.

At Esther Schipper, Gennari will present four sculptures organized in a constellation, with a new iteration of his emblematic installation, **La degenerazione di Parsifal (Natività) / The Degeneration of Parsifal (Nativity)** at its center. First created in 2005—in a cubic version—the octagonal installation consists of eight plates of stainless steel held together with clamps that imprison approximately 80 kg of flour and a number of butterfly eggs. Once installed in the exhibition space, the clamps are opened, the plates carefully removed and displayed on the floor around the immaculate octagon of flour. With time, the flour will be affected by gravity and entropy and will start disaggregating, reproducing at a smaller scale the forces at stake in nature, while the eggs will hatch and potentially give birth to small butterflies. Gennari regards **La degenerazione di Parsifal (Natività)** as a total work of art, a metaphor of life and death, in which the artist himself acts as a demiurge—both creator and destructor—deciding over the transformation and becoming of all things.

Around **La degenerazione di Parsifal (Natività)**, on the floor, Gennari has positioned three sculptures characterized by their minimalist aesthetics. **Sempre io / Always Me** (2017) consists of two long metal bars set end to end. Although made of the same alloy, each one has been gilded with a different shade of gold: yellow and lemon. An irregular circle of green Murano glass (**Mi sento quasi... / I Almost Feel Like...**, 2017), as well as a bronze cast of the artist's favorite shirt (**Come una farfalla / Like a Butterfly**, 2018) complete the exhibition landscape, offering an ensemble of metaphorical self-portraits. A primary theme in Gennari's oeuvre, the artist's self-portraits at times refer to his physical being, while others tend to reference his psychological state.

With **Greetings From the Moon**, the artist explores his notion of duality (**Sempre io**) and emotional instability (**Mi sento quasi...**), as well as his desire to escape reality through the act of dreaming—removing his shirt at night like a butterfly released from its cocoon (**Come una farfalla**)—and positions himself at the center of a cosmogony shaped to his own image.

Francesco Gennari was born in 1973 in Fano, Italy. He lives and works in Pesaro and Milan. The artist was awarded the ACACIA Prize for Contemporary Art in 2009.

Gennari's artistic practice is based on minimal formal characteristics and a metaphysical approach. His work draws from a vocabulary of recurring shapes and divergent mediums, both mineral and organic—Murano glass, bronze, gold, marble, as well as flour, butterflies, gin—selected not for their outward appearance but for their inherent specificities. Their apparent matter-of-fact aspect contrasts with the artist's attachment to the ideas of sensibility and poetry that lay behind the experience of being in this world.

Gennari's recent solo exhibitions include: **Transcript**, Galerie Stadtpark, Krems (2016); **Francesco Gennari**, Galleria Civica d'Arte Moderna, Turin (2015); **Francesco Gennari**, Museo Marino Marini, Florence (2014); **Picture this! Francesco Gennari**, Museum Dhondt-Dhaenens, Deurle (2009), and **Francesco Gennari**, Musée d'art moderne et contemporain de Saint-Etienne Métropole, Saint-Etienne (2008).

His work is held in the following collections: CNAP Centre national des arts plastiques, Paris; Collection of Deutsche Bank; Fondazione Sandretto Re Rebaudengo, Turin; Collezione Maramotti, Reggio Emilia; MASI, Lugano; FRAC Île-de-France, Paris; Galleria Civica d'Arte Moderna, Turin; Kunstmuseum Winterthur; Museo del Novecento, Milan; NMNM Monaco, and FRAC Corse, Corte.

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