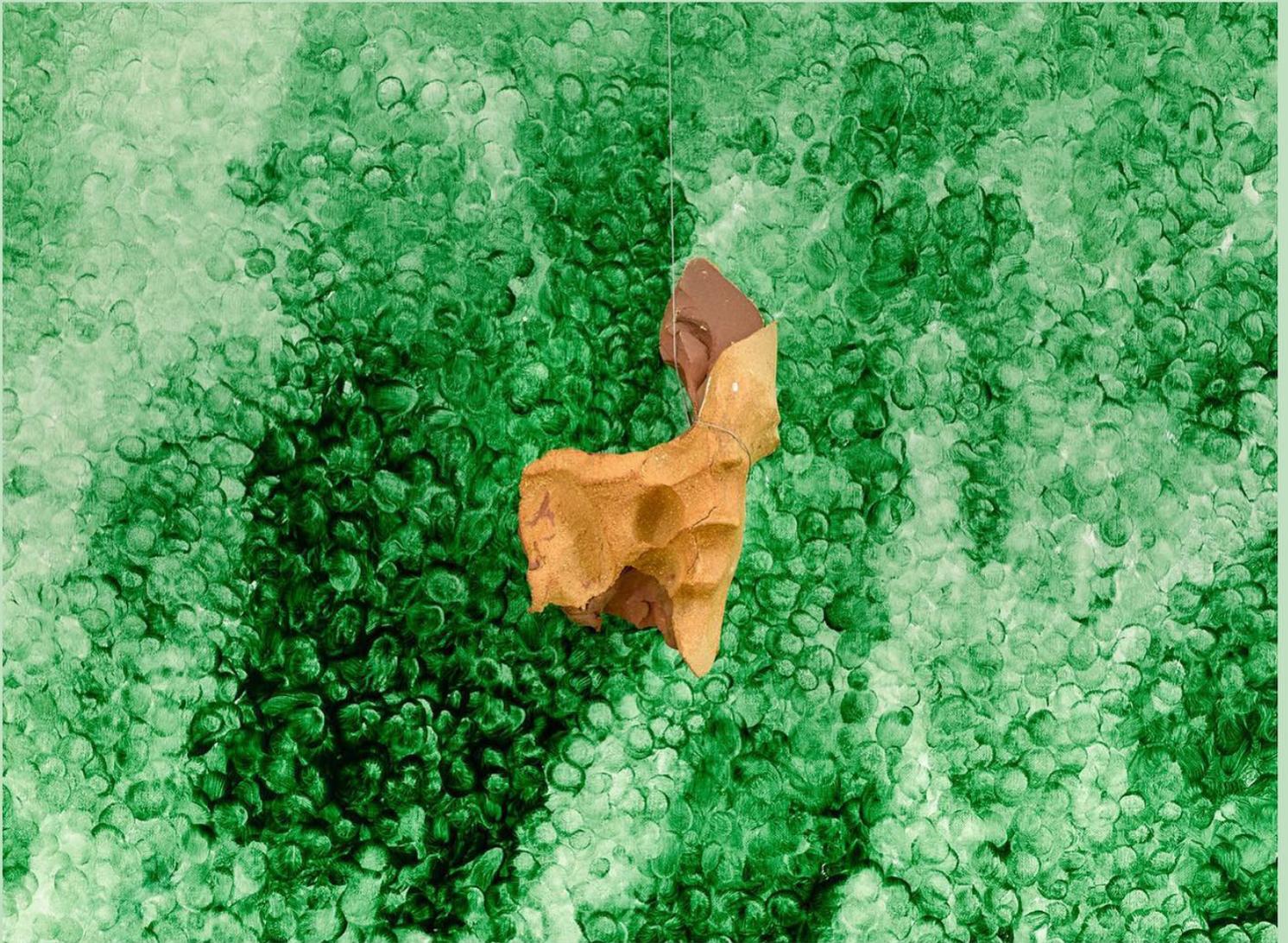


BROOKLYN RAIL

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FEATURE INTERVIEWS WITH

**LYNN HERSHMAN LEESON · DAVE MCKENZIE · LUCY RAVEN
GIUSEPPE PENONE · ARAZEL THALEZ · JOHN SIMS**

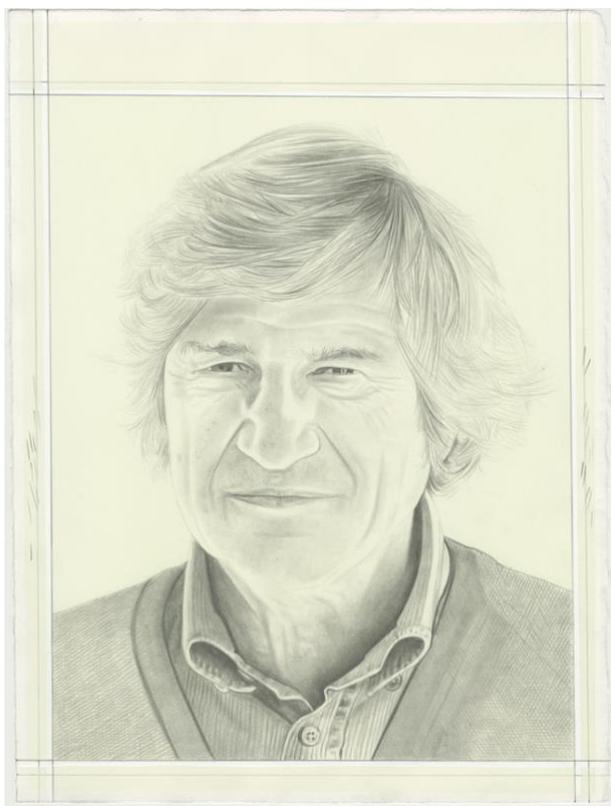
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 **BROOKLYN RAIL**

*Giuseppe Penone with
Francesca Pietropaolo and Alexis Dahan*

“During our existence, we touch an infinite number of things, covering a huge surface with our imprints, and this tactile reading of reality accompanies us throughout our life.”

(July / August 2021)



Portrait of Giuseppe Penone, pencil on paper by Phong H. Bui.

On the occasion of the exhibit *Giuseppe Penone* at Marian Goodman Gallery in New York, which ran from March 9 to April 17, 2021, *Rail* Editor-at-Large Francesca Pietropaolo and contributor Alexis Dahan held a public conversation with Giuseppe Penone on April 9, over Zoom, discussing touch, color, the book as physical object, sculpture, poetry, animism, Man’s relationship to Nature, and much more. What follows is the edited text of that interview, which took place in Italian (with simultaneous translation in English) and appears here in English translation (translation by Angela Brisotto and Francesca Pietropaolo).

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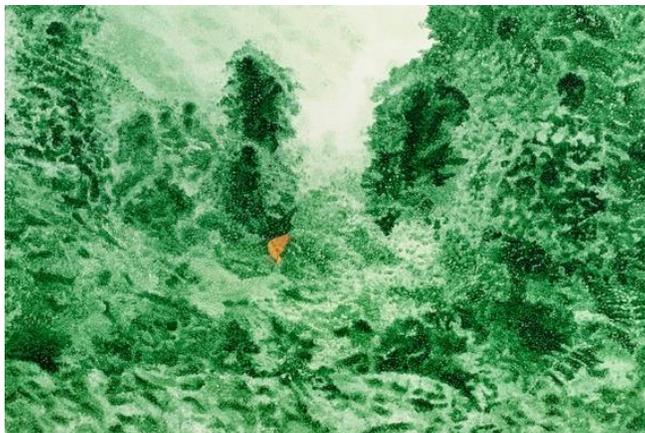
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Francesca Pietropaolo: I would like to start our conversation from your current exhibition at Marian Goodman Gallery, which includes sculptures, drawings, and a series of works on canvas, thus encompassing a wide range of media. In particular, you are presenting, for the first time, a remarkable series of works titled *Leaves of Grass* (2013). These are monochromatic oils on canvas, each presenting a small terracotta sculpture delicately suspended on a metal thread over the painted surface. These works were inspired, as a starting point, by a book. A poetry book: the first edition of Walt Whitman's *Leaves of Grass* (1855), created in all its details, as a physical object, by the poet himself. What immediately struck me of these works is how, when seen from afar, they evoke reveries of landscapes opening up before our eye, but, up close, they reveal an ever-changing, almost pulsating matter expanding over the entire surface. It is made of the accumulation of your fingerprints pressed onto the canvas employing oil paint of a vivid green. The repetition of that gesture and the accumulation of its traces create a sense of osmosis, that is, an osmosis between the body—evoked by the imprint—and nature. Some of those fingerprints create forms that contain hints of vegetal forms, glimpses of germinating leaves. There is an accentuated sensuality of matter, linked to the theme of fertility, which is also echoed by the imprints captured in the terracotta sculpture suspended over the canvas. It is an unbridled sensuality that evokes that of the poetic language explored, as an organic language, in Whitman's work and it calls to mind his verses, "Urge and urge and urge, / always the procreant urge." The urgency of procreation. Can you tell us about the genesis of these works that inhabit a space *between* sculpture and painting, and about your relationship with this specific book by Whitman?

Giuseppe Penone: My core concern is sculpture, and sculpture is based on contact. When one touches something, one covers and hides from sight the touched surface. In its etymology, the word "color" comes from "to cover": one covers, both by the hand and by color. Contact was at the heart of the first works I made, at the end of the 1960s: I wanted to adhere to the things around me. This was my idea of sculpture, an idea that I have continued to develop. When one touches a surface, one comes into contact with another matter, a parity is created between two bodies, and an involuntary image is generated, an imprint of the skin which is, in its physicality, a trace of grease. Imprints bear witness to our identity. But only if the imprint is isolated and highlighted, can it become culture. In one of my early works, I gripped a tree trunk with my hand. My idea was to mold its living matter as if it were clay. The work would have made itself with time, in harmony with the life of the tree and its slow growth. To create it, I replaced my hand with a steel cast of it and placed it on the trunk—this work was based on the idea of holding the tree's growth with my hand. The handprint in the clay—which you mentioned with regards to *Leaves of Grass*—is a primary image, it is one of the simplest sculptures that can be realized. This minimal gesture—leaving an imprint—was in syntony with the contents and values of artistic expression in the 1960s, which questioned the conventions of previous art. We—and by "we" I mean almost all the artists of that generation—worked to create a new language. This was easier to do with sculpture, which can become part of reality without representing it. For instance, if you draw a chair the outcome is not the chair but a drawing—the bidimensional representation of that object; instead, if you make a sculpture with materials that are usually employed to make chairs, we will have a chair, without representing it. My *Leaves of Grass* works can be considered as paintings, but they are born as sculptures because they are images produced by way of touch, by the hands. The outcome of this contact is processed by the gaze, and as a whole the fingerprints produce the effect of leaves and landscape. *Leaves of Grass* is a very beautiful title that suggests a relationship with nature and a sense of osmosis of the human being with other beings; it contains an extraordinary idea of parity between the various living forms. *Leaves of Grass* is a book, and a book is like a hand that opens and closes: a book is born from the form itself of a hand. There is a profound adherence between contact, the book, and sculpture. I own a copy of the first edition of *Leaves of Grass*, which has a dark green cover. When you

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open the book to read it, tiny parts of that color adhere to your hands and then get pressed onto other surfaces that you touch, and in this way the book matter itself spreads, not just its contents. These are the thoughts that inspired these works of mine.



Giuseppe Penone, *Leaves of Grass*, 2013. Oil on canvas, terracotta, wire, 78 3/4 x 118 1/8 inches. Courtesy Marian Goodman Gallery.

Alexis Dahan: Unfortunately, I have not been able to see these works in person—I am in Mexico City—but when I saw the pictures, I told myself, “But, Giuseppe Penone has become a painter!” There is matter, there is volume, there is a type of chiaroscuro, maybe even a bit of Pointillism. This reminded me of, so to speak, classical paintings of forests, such as those by Gustave Courbet and Cherubino Patà or *Forêt dans Pontaubert* (1881) by Georges Seurat, or also *Arbres et sous-bois* (1887) by Vincent van Gogh. I would like to ask you if you have ever thought about these references, and if, for you, there is a difference between being a painter and a sculptor.

Penone: Basically, there is no difference: the feelings that one feels when looking at a work of art, be it painting or sculpture, are only in part due to its material. An idea can be realized employing different techniques, but what matters is the emotion that it manages to elicit. I wasn’t concerned with producing a work that would be a landscape or would be aligned with the history of painting. That I organized the contact-derived image as a landscape is clear, but the fingerprint is the starting point. My idea was to cover the entire surface of the canvas with fingerprints, which are oval-shaped like many leaves. The *Leaves of Grass* book allowed me to evoke countless plant leaves and put them in direct relationship with my imprints. Also, in poetry there are the words, which are breath, breath that goes into the air, that is, carbon dioxide that gets assimilated by the leaves that then return it to us as oxygen. Therefore, there is also a relationship between the spoken word and the landscape, the leaf. My intention was to touch the landscape that one sees, touch it with my fingers, my hand.

Pietro Paolo: In relation to what you just pointed out, it is interesting to note how Whitman, in this 1855 first edition, graphically rendered the title *Leaves of Grass* so that each letter of it is transformed into a vegetal form. In a similar way, in your series *Leaves of Grass* your fingerprints give life to leaves and germinations. It seems to me that there is also a sense of osmosis between the written word—every element of it—and the primary, almost primordial element of the gesture of sculpture which is a gesture of contact, visualized in these works of yours by the imprints of the fingers that touch the surface. With regards to your long-standing interest in books, where does your impulse to collect in particular first editions stem from?

Penone: I think that the emotion, the intensity, the desire, the anticipation that a poet feels when their first book is printed is very important in their life. It is the moment when they entrust themselves and all their aspirations to an object. Also, a particular relationship ensues between the book and the physicality of the poet's body, which, in subsequent editions, is perhaps less evident or less felt. In the first edition of a book there are always extraordinary things happening, as is the case with Whitman's *Leaves of Grass*, but also with Jorge Luis Borges's collection of poems *Fervor de Buenos Aires* (1923). There is an interesting story about that first book by Borges, who was 24 years old at the time of its release: when the book had just been published, he had to leave for Europe. He decided then to put copies of it in the pockets of the coats hanging in the coatroom of a Buenos Aires literary circle related to the *Nosotros* literary journal. Upon his return to Argentina, Borges discovered that his book was a success! There are other interesting stories. For example, upon the release of his first book, the collection of poems *Primo vere* (1879), Gabriele D'Annunzio, who was then 16 years old, spread the news that the poet, himself, had died—following a fall from a horse—in order to generate more interest in the book. Each first edition has its own story; some of these books are very bare, with a very simple graphic design, as in the case, for instance, of Fernando Pessoa's first book, *Antinous* (1918), a eulogy for Antinous, the lover of the Roman emperor Hadrian. Each book has a physicality of its own that characterizes it, and the relationship it has to the hand that opens it is a gesture similar to the first gesture of sculpture.

Dahan: There is one aspect of this book, *Leaves of Grass*, that I would like to focus on: the first edition includes 12 poems, and then the last edition includes 400 poems. Therefore, keeping the same title, this book has developed somewhat like a tree, it has grown. I wanted to ask you whether you are interested in this peculiar aspect of *Leaves of Grass*.



Giuseppe Penone, *Leaves of Grass*, 2013. Oil on canvas, terracotta, wire, 78 3/4 x 118 1/8 inches. Courtesy Marian Goodman Gallery.

Penone: The energy from where Whitman's subsequent poems would develop is already present in the first edition. I believe that the first production of every poet or writer contains the embryo of the work that they will develop in the future: it is the seed from where their work sprouts. Goethe in his botanical essay "The Metamorphosis of Plants" (1790), of which I own a first edition, demonstrates how in the seed there are already all the parts of the future tree. This aspect is also present in the first edition of Whitman's *Leaves of Grass*, as in almost all of the first works of any artist. As I mentioned earlier, in addition to the intensity and the cultural value of poetry, the first edition contains a whole world of emotions, which one finds enclosed in the book-as-object itself; and this happens also in the case of the first work of a painter or of a sculptor.

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Pietropaolo: Your *Leaves of Grass* series includes 12 works on canvas, of which six are currently on view in New York and the other six will be exhibited in the fall in your solo show at the Bibliothèque Nationale de France in Paris. Can you talk about the dimensions that you chose in making these works—their scale clearly invokes the presence of the body, both from the point of view of the creator of the work and in terms of the experience of the viewer who instinctively relates to their scale—and describe how this series was conceived in relation to the poetic structure of the first edition of *Leaves of Grass*?

Penone: There are 12 canvases because Whitman's book is composed of 12 poems. My canvases relate to the dimensions of the first edition. I enlarged the surface of the open book seven times. The number seven has a kabbalistic meaning but, apart from that, it coincided for me with the optimal dimensions for the canvases: two meters by three meters, an ideal form. I should also add that in some of the 12 paintings the surface is less legible as a landscape and more similar to a vegetal matter that may call to mind even fluidity and seawaves, in which case the feeling one has in front of the canvas is different.

Pietropaolo: This attention to fluidity, to changes of state, to metamorphosis is also a theme that accompanies your research on sculpture as a language.



Giuseppe Penone, *Alpi Marittime (1-6)*, 1968, Set of 6 black and white photographs, each framed, 26 3/4 x 20 3/4 in. (66 x 50 cm). Photo © Archivio Penone. Courtesy Marian Goodman Gallery.

Penone: Absolutely. It is a research that I have continued to develop since 1968. As I mentioned earlier, my first work consisted in placing my hand on a tree—an action documented through some photographs that are part of the series *Alpi Marittime 1–6* (Maritime Alps 1–6) (1968). I thought that if I'd had the physical resistance and my lifetime had been so long to allow me to grip for years the trunk of a small tree, that tree would have grown to envelop my hand in its growth. I viewed the tree not as a solid matter, but as a fluid, living one able to develop in space, a form that could be molded. This idea of fluidity has defined and accompanied my entire sculptural production. For example, it allowed me to make the form of a tree visible by digging inside the wooden mass of the trunk. Mine is an investigation on matter and its expressive possibilities, its identity. Going back to my series *Leaves of Grass*, the clay sculptures present over the paintings capture the gesture of the hand that has clasped a handful of American earth. Man is destined to turn into dust that spreads out, becomes earth, clay, and the earth that I placed over the canvases through those sculptural imprints in clay is a handful of the mineral, vegetal, and animal memory of the place where it was collected. The earth is part of the landscape, it is an element that contains all the values of what can be seen, it is a point of synthesis between the different visions or thoughts on landscape.

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Dahan: In your show at Marian Goodman Gallery, among other sculptures, there is one in particular I would like you to talk about, *Artemide* (Artemis) (2019). Considering what you have just said about your sculpting process in relation to the world of trees, I would like to ask you to explain the process you went through to create a work such as *Artemide*.



Giuseppe Penone, *Artemide*, 2019. Bronze, 135 1/8 x 43 3/4 x 40 1/2 inches. Courtesy Marian Goodman Gallery.

Penone: I talked earlier about the works I made by discovering, inside the wood, the form of the tree. In the case of *Artemide*, by the same principle, I carved a negative of the tree out of the inside wooden mass of a trunk, following a growth ring. I obtained its matrix, its casing. The hollow forms of the junctions of the branches with the trunk had the appearance of breasts and suggested the idea of a body. The work had an anthropomorphic form. I made a positive of that human-sized matrix and I cast it in bronze. I titled the sculpture *Artemide* because it is the name of a goddess, in Greek and Mideastern mythology, linked to fecundity, procreation, and life.

Pietropaolo: In this case, the notion of art as memory comes into play, in that this work is also part of a very ancient sculptural language. I am thinking of the goddesses of fertility from the Paleolithic Period up to, for example, the deity Artemis represented in votive sculptures such as *Artemis Ephesia* (125–175 CE) preserved at the Ephesus Archeological Museum, in Turkey. Can you tell us about your relationship to art tradition, also with regards to the materials that you like to use, such as, to name one, bronze—of which *Artemide* is made—considering in particular that for you the very process of casting bronze references the natural world and the life of trees?

Penone: There are many types of materials, there are natural materials and others which are produced by humans. I prefer natural materials, which are independent of humans. Technology is not present in my works; I can use it to produce them, but it is not part of them. Technological material is linked to human activity, it has a duration that is that of the economic interest that produced it. Instead, clay, stone, metals are materials that have always been present in nature. The emotion we can feel when looking at a stone, a leaf, a sunset or a sunrise is similar to what people living thousands of years ago felt. When working with these materials, it comes naturally to make references and connections to the ancient world. With *Artemide* I wanted to indicate how bronze, which is present as material in the sculptures and vestiges of ancient peoples, is still present today and how we share its usage in sculpture. Through art, human beings spread and radiate around them their own image and their own sensations. This possibility of expression, which is a specific characteristic of art, is also found in paintings dating from 30,000 years ago such as the mural paintings at the Chauvet Caves, which I visited, in the Ardèche in France, where there are many different types of animals represented on the walls in a very realistic manner. These are paintings of great immediacy, that convey the same emotion that we can feel when looking at the animals surrounding us. Only art can transmit this expressive possibility over time, allowing us to share the same sensations felt by people who lived 30,000, even 40,000 years ago.

Pietro Paolo: I would like to talk about another project of yours, among the most recent ones: *Abete* (Fir), a sculpture made in 2013 that has just been installed in Florence. Away from the anthropomorphism of *Artemide*, *Abete* takes us into the realm of monumental proportions: it is a 22-meters-high tree made of bronze and stainless steel, rising up in the beautiful Piazza della Signoria. This public artwork is situated in a space with a rich historical stratification, where it coexists with sculptures such as the copies of Michelangelo's *David* and Donatello's *Giuditta* among others, and it was inaugurated during the *Dantedì* (Danteday), this past March 25. The context of this year's celebrations in honor of Dante has also lent this sculpture interpretations tied to the poetry of the *Divine Comedy's* "Paradise" that contribute to enrich the reading of your work. It would be interesting to know how you came up with the choice of the work for this specific site, its location in the square, in relation to both the history of the site and the movement of people walking across the *piazza* or stopping there.

Penone: This sculpture is a taste of the exhibition that will open at the end of June at the Uffizi Gallery in Florence. We wanted to present a work outdoors, outside of a museum-like experience, thus also thinking of people who may not visit the museum. It is a sculpture I made in 2013, without thinking of Dante, but it can acquire a meaning pertinent to his poetry. With this work, I wanted to indicate the spiral that is present in plant growth and the movements of its fluids towards the leaves, the light, and towards the roots, the subsoil. I indicated this growth employing bamboo canes which I cast in bronze and placed upon some of the branches of the fir cast in steel. I think this sculpture can be related to Dante's work by virtue of the ascending and descending motion of the spiral. Dante descends into Hell and then he ascends towards knowledge, towards Paradise. In the *Divine Comedy*, there is a passage where Dante talks about a tree that receives nourishment from the sky and, in this episode, many have seen a direct link with my work. I titled this exhibition *Alberi In-versi*—which in Italian reads both as "*inversi*" meaning "inverted" (in this case the title translates as "Inverted Trees") and as "*in versi*" meaning "in verses," in a poetic sense (in the latter case the title translates as "Trees in Verses"). That is also the title of some of the works that will be exhibited. I have always been interested in poetry; the mental process of writing poetry is very similar to what happens when creating a visual artwork. It is a process of synthesis: with very few words, in poetry it is possible to evoke a very large number of images, sensations, and emotions—and this aspect brings it closer to the conception and execution of a work of art. But there are other aspects of poetry that also interest me. For example, I think about when

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one enters a bookshop and sees long shelves of books on tourism and travel; continuing on, the bookshelves become smaller and there one finds novels, essays, prose, until one reaches, at last, a small shelf with poetry books. This very tiny shelf contains all the words of all the other books. That is the aspect of poetry that interests me the most: this limited physical space that encompasses a huge mental space.



Giuseppe Penone, *Abete (Fir)*, 2013. Stainless steel, bronze, 876 x 228 x 228 inches.
Photo: Ela Bialkowska, OKNOstudio. Courtesy Associazione Arte Continua APS.

Dahan: I have more of a material question for you. It seems like the fir is a tree you especially love. How do you choose the ideal tree for a specific context?

Penone: The fir is a stele. All conifers look like steles. The stele is perhaps one of the most ancient forms of sculpture: it is an idea of erection, an idea of verticality, and therefore also of ascendance. The reason why I have often used firs and conifers is that I need coniferous wood to make sculptures where the trees are revealed out of beams; that is, I am obliged to use this type of wood because of its characteristics: its growth rings, very clear and easy to follow, allow me to dig backwards through time, year by year, in the life of the tree, until I find its chosen form. Moreover, the branch sequence offers a clear and synthetic image of the tree's form and structure. By using oak wood, for instance, I would get a tree form with a lot less branches. The sculpture *Abete* (2013) has been made out of a tree that had to be cut down because it had been growing too close to a group of houses. Its branches were very regular, and this allowed me to cut them alternately to create a support for the bamboo elements cast in bronze. Employing steel as material was necessary because of its structural characteristics and, moreover, I find

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that its color partially recreates the metallic look of the fir's bark. Stainless steel is clearly a material of our times. Bronze, instead, as we mentioned earlier, is a material that has always been used in sculpture; it is a material rooted in the animistic vision of nature. Since forever, in its casting, branches or reeds have been used to build vents or channels through which the metal flows into the mold of the sculpture. The link between bronze and plants is a very profound and extremely ancient one. The appearance of bronze is also surprising in that its colors are very similar to the tree bark and vegetation. I am thinking, for instance, of the bronze sculpture of Balzac by Auguste Rodin, located on Boulevard Raspail in Paris. Its patina has turned it, over time, into a vegetal form that has transformed the figure itself. Bronze has the capacity to integrate itself with nature. In Plutarch's *Delphic Dialogues*, some visitors to the temple of Apollo in Delphi converse among themselves, and the discussion focuses on the color of the bronze sculptures outside the temple: they praise the beautiful patina colors created by the particular microclimate of Delphi. In its colors, bronze has the vitality of plants.

Pietro Paolo: The theme of vitality allows us to shift our focus from the discussion of sculpture to drawing. In *Pensieri e linfa* (Thoughts and Sap) (2015), a work on paper created two years after the sculpture *Abete*, in the center there is the image of the sap that flows in the plant, inside the tree. Perhaps, one of the most interesting aspects in this drawing, for me, is the dialogue, the tension between the image, which is matter, and the text written by you—these are thoughts, annotations that have a character of essentiality, of “adherence to reality,” as you often say, but also, in some way, a poetic value. I would like you to talk a little bit about the role of writing in your drawings, and also about the process of gradually giving form to a composition that, in this case, rhymes with the ascending one of the tree, it seems to me.



Giuseppe Penone, *Pensieri e linfa (Thoughts and Sap)*, 2015, India ink and watercolor on paper, 18 7/8 x 13 in.
Photo © Archivio Penone. Courtesy Marian Goodman Gallery.

Penone: Yes, the lines of the written text envelop the central trace of a synthesized tree and enrich it. Each line of the writing is akin to a year of growth. There is the desire to enlarge the volume of the central tree by expanding the ideas contained in the writing that envelops it. Enlarging the size of a drawing through concentric lines is something I did also in other works such as the *Propagazioni* (Propagations). Writing allows me to jot down ideas faster than drawing or to create digressions that complement a drawing. Sometimes I integrate writings into a work to remind myself, above all, of the mental process that generated the drawing, or to clarify an intention that, through writing, becomes more understandable.

Pietropaolo: Indeed, in trying to read the text in *Pensieri e linfa* (Thoughts and Sap), the sensation of a flow emerges. Your sentences tend to “recall” one another, they are almost chained to one another. There is a great fluid freedom in this flow of thoughts, in the cursive writing which, in its distinctive identity, still preserves its own mystery.

Penone: Cursive writing is also close to drawing and an individual’s identity, due to the direct relationship that the hand has with the material of the support.

Dahan: Drawing is truly a key part of your work. We live in an ultra-technologic world, and drawing brings us back to the simplicity of a paper sheet and a pencil. What do you think about the relationship between the evolution of technology and art?

Penone: As I said earlier, technology is a human product. It certainly offers expressive possibilities, which, however, are within the realm of a codified language programmed by others. Written-down thoughts or images drawn using a small charcoal stick are much more expressive than images processed with a computer. My relationship with drawing is a relationship of adherence to reality, outside of conventions. There is already a big difference, for example, between a drawing created by looking at a photograph and a drawing from life. In looking at the reality that surrounds us, the eye chooses the parts to represent: not everything, but only what stimulates sensibility and interest. Instead, photography documents a subject in an objective manner. The choice of what to draw is the result of a process of selection and understanding of reality that the technological image does not allow. In art, it is necessary to preserve the development of a critical thinking that is not subjugated by conventions, that is independent, free from the conditioning and interests of the technology market. When it appears on the market, a technological product is already obsolete, replaceable by a new production, whereas a handful of clay, a pencil, a sheet of paper belong to the past but also to the future. When one looks at a drawing by Leonardo such as the one depicting air motions whose image I integrated into one of my works on paper from 1969, *Progetto per Leonardo* (Project for Leonardo), one understands the great synthesis of reality that Leonardo’s mind realized, and that is the most interesting aspect of his representation of the world.

Pietropaolo: I would like to ask you about the notion of propagation that you explore in many of your works, establishing an intimate connection between body and nature. For example, let us consider two drawings, *Propagazione* (Propagation) (1997) and *L'impronta del disegno, Anulare destro* (The Imprint of Drawing, Right Ring Finger) (2001), and compare them.

The first evokes the growth of the tree’s annual rings, and the second is an expansion starting from the line of your fingerprint—so, in some way, we go back to that dimension of touch and contact with which we opened our conversation discussing your *Leaves of Grass* series, and also to the meditation on the

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relationship between Man and Nature, which nowadays has taken on new relevance and urgency. Could you talk about the importance of the notion of propagation for you, and describe how these drawings came about?

Penone: During our existence, we touch an infinite number of things, covering a huge surface with our imprints, and this tactile reading of reality accompanies us throughout our life. *L'impronta del disegno, Anulare destro* is a work that originates from the idea that on our fingers we have the image of the reality of the world around us. Using a pencil, I connected the lines of one fingerprint, creating a circle that I enlarged through a succession of concentric lines that propagate over the space of the paper sheet. Thus a drawing develops from one imprint and it extends in the space of the sheet according to the same logic of the growth of a tree, or akin to the propagation of waves on a surface of water rippled by the touch of the fingers, or like the diffusion of sound. From a small dot, from an insignificant presence, an image is generated which, mirroring the development itself of life, grows and can become enormous and spread, integrating with the other elements. Man's action interferes with the surrounding reality and puts humanity on an equal level with respect to the other elements of creation. Our value as individuals equals the value of a stone, or, perhaps, has a lesser value since a stone lasts thousands of years while we only live for some decades. In order to survive as a species we need to accept this parity between our presence and that of other forms of life, including minerals—since the cosmos is a living thing. For a long time, the word “nature” has been associated with the animal and vegetal worlds, while humans have considered themselves superior to the other elements. In recent years, we have realized that Man too is Nature and our survival is closely connected with the survival of the other forms of life on the planet. Parity between humanity, other living beings, and non-living things existed in the past. That is a vision that we are rediscovering today, but in fact it is a very ancient one in humanity's history, and I believe that it has always been present in the minds of artists who, with their work, have unveiled the vitality of matter.