

Erbario fluviale
Elisa Pietracito
2024

In the work *Erbario fluviale*, Elisa Pietracito deepens her artistic research by creating three compositions with leaves of white poplar, black poplar, and white willow, sewn together. These plant species, collected from the Arno banks, characterize the native European flora despite belonging to geographically distant riverine environments. These plants are essential for stabilizing riverbanks by holding the soil with their roots and slowing the river's flow with their trunks, thus reducing the risks of erosion, landslides, and flooding.

The organic compositions are placed on a backlit panel that highlights the contrast between a visual perception mediated by the screen, typical of contemporary times, and a direct sensory experience. This effect serves as an invitation to reflect on our relationship with nature and the intuition of natural forms in their original state. The light emphasizes the particularities and uniqueness of each specimen.

Through the ancient practice of embroidery and sewing, which require steadfastness and patience, the artist creates new connections and links, giving life to ever-changing abstract patterns.

Pietracito's works express an invitation to reclaim one's time, advocating for a daily life where individuals can reconnect with manual activities and a craftsmanship that seems to be lost. Pietracito uses golden viscose thread that reflects the veins and colors of the leaves, which will become lighter once dried. The use of golden thread recalls the Japanese technique of Kintsugi (literally "kin" meaning gold and "tsugi" meaning repair), which involves using gold lacquer to join the fragments of a broken ceramic object, highlighting the repair. This technique creates unique artworks, each with its own pattern and beauty to tell, much like the artist's work that gives new life to leaves by joining them together.

Erbario fluviale can be defined within the context of environmental art. The artist is indeed attentive to sustainability in the creative process of her works, considering the environmental impact from the selection of materials, placing the environment itself at the center of a reflection related to cultural ecology. It is the rich vegetation of the Tuscan landscape where Elisa grew up that inspires her and leads her to explore the connection between humans and their surrounding nature.

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