

## **Giardino (The Garden)**

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A series of botanical paintings depicts four different types of plants that inhabit the *Terzo Giardino*, an artistic study as part of the RIVA Project.

Designed like a theatrical backdrop, the work highlights the various characteristics of the vegetation along the banks of the Arno River and expresses the diversity of nature on a large scale, symbolizing the importance of these unique features in maintaining the river area's ecosystem.

Among these plants, we can recognize the small, colorful flowers of red valerian (*Centranthus ruber*) alongside the more neutral and delicate blooms of chamomile (*Anthemis arvensis*). Additionally, the flora supports the ecosystem through extraordinary species such as the so-called timothy grass (*Phleum pratense*), a natural food source for local wildlife, displayed here alongside black elderberry (*Sambucus nigra*).

*Giardino (The Garden)* thus presents itself as a visual herbarium capable of narrating the centuries-old floral and natural history of the Terzo Giardino. The pre-existing nature guides the viewer through a labyrinthine journey, captured in this series of digital paintings printed on canvas. In this light, the work aims to convey the sensations typical of woodland environments, with their natural, slow, and silent spaces, and the vitality of numerous plant species through their vibrant and luminous colors.

After all, the artist has always had a strong emotional connection to plants, which often become the theme of her works. These works seek to reflect on the relationship between vegetation and local communities, while also addressing issues related to deforestation and potential paradigm shifts in the global system, where morality, art, environment, and society collaborate for a fair and sustainable narrative to benefit the planet. This is achieved through an awareness of the beauty and fragility of the plant world and the urgent need for environmental protection.

The artist explores the language of the specific floral specimens she portrays and invites us to lose ourselves in this fictional natural journey, aiming to stimulate our curiosity and, above all, to urge us to understand and protect these organisms that, as she herself states: "They have always existed, but they have often been ignored".

Exhibition text by *Alessandra Cavalleri, Sara Onofrietti*

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