DESIDERIO | ATTO TERZO
Francesco Carone, Albrecht Dürer, Jonas Forchini, Nan Goldin, Maggi Hambling, Anne Imhof, Sebastiano Impellizzeri, Andrea Mantegna, Erik Saglia, Leonor Serrano Rivas, Kiki Smith, Enrico Tealdi

From 25 October, 2026 to 10 January, 2027 Société Interludio will present DESIDERIO | ATTO TERZO, the third and final chapter of a broader project exploring "desire as an opening in the direction of Elsewhere, as transcendence, as invocation of another possibility than mere presence of the existent" (Massimo Recalcati, Ritratti del desiderio, Raffaello Cortina Editore, 2018).

DESIDERIO (from the Latin de-sidera: "absence of stars") carries within its etymology a sense of longing and anticipation, a state in which the stars seem to have vanished. It is from this absence that a yearning for the Elsewhere emerges: a watchful, nostalgic vigil awaiting their return; an awareness of something missing that compels us to seek a way forward; and a belief that there is room for the unfathomable, and for a horizon beyond that of everyday existence.

Critical text by Giulia De Giorgi

"[…] an invisible landscape conditions the visible one; everything that moves in the sunlight is driven by the lapping wave enclosed beneath the rock's calcareous sky."

(Italo Calvino, Invisible Cities, 1972; translated by William Weaver, 1974)

From the yearning for the stars of PRELUDIO and ATTO PRIMO, to wandering amidst the storm in ATTO SECONDO, we arrive at the final destination of our journey: the depths of the sea.
Ulysses has himself chained to his ship's mainmast as he sails towards Ithaca, so that he can hear the Sirens' song. He is driven by the desire to confront his own limits and fears and achieve complete knowledge without being overwhelmed by it. For Ulysses, the Sirens' song offers the prospect of regaining his sense of direction and finding his final destination. For the heroic traveller, it offers the chance to bring movement and transformation to an end, should he manage to get close enough to the depths of his own being.

The explorer is welcomed by the song of **Anne Imhof**'s figure: a siren suspended in a silent, colourless song, representative of an age in which human sensibility has been numbed by the filters of technology and communication. Yet she continues to lure travellers towards her, appealing to the inescapable Freudian tension between *Eros* and *Thanatos*.

In **Albrecht Dürer**'s engraving, the death drive that accompanies the life impulse is what compels the woman to allow herself to be abducted by the sea monster, whose very name — *Das Meerwunder* — conveys a mixture of terror and wonder. Drawn to the unknown and the unseen, the female figure shows no sign of concern: the abyss is both a terrifying, magnetic depth and a potential catalyst for new discoveries.
Andrea Mantegna's *Battle of the Sea Gods* reveals what may lie beyond the Sirens' song: conflicts and turmoil unleashed by Envy, figures clashing astride monsters of the deep, wielding the bones of aquatic creatures. This chaos mirrors the terrestrial world, exposing humanity's deepest and most unacknowledged instincts. Yet, in this underwater realm – the repository of our most imaginative projections – the gods possess the means necessary for life beneath the surface, unlike human beings. The daring woman must adapt and confront the hidden whirlwind beneath the surface, a tangle that can unsettle and ensnare those who venture into it, much like the intricate network of forms arranged by **Erik Saglia** in his Dürer-inspired work.

This is the ordeal faced by those who venture onto the seabed, a realm in which it is increasingly difficult to find one's bearings. Just as the contemporary world we inhabit, we cannot glimpse a clear horizon here either. In photographs taken dozens of metres below the surface, **Jonàs Forchini** makes this transformation of perception tangible: the stable awareness of the body, a clear sense of direction and sharp definition of contours give way to disorientation, unease and obscurity. By choosing to undertake an exercise in *Apprentissage du trouble* — learning to embrace disorientation — we must therefore turn to other tools to cope with the proliferation of once-singular images and the dissolution of the boundaries that have shaped our understanding of the world.

In **Sebastiano Impellizzeri**'s ink drawings, the reversal of perspective is complete: we imagine the submerged part as the fish-shaped half of a hybrid body – a kind of inverted mermaid. In the depths we traverse, as in the present we inhabit, uncertainty, mystery and disorder prevail.

Even elements of the landscape, such as dead and gnarled wood, can undergo transformative processes that leave their mark. **Maggi Hambling** explores this metamorphosis in *Aftermath*, a series of totemic bronze sculptures. From forms originally gathered in nature, smoothed by water and altered by salt deposits, the artist conjures the likenesses of imaginary beings that seem strangely familiar.

In **Leonor Serrano Rivas**'s works, evocatively titled *Allí donde esperamos encontrar flores*, mutant plants and flowers undergo processes of electrolysis involving plant-derived acids, culminating in a crystallisation process in which the organic and the mineral coexist. Does their surfacing mark the beginning or the end of their existence?
As if by magic — *Malìa* — the existence of **Enrico Tealdi**'s submerged statues continues to unfold, unseen. Faces and busts, forever sunken and forgotten in the depths, will endure beyond time through an underwater enchantment. Algae will gradually envelop their inorganic skin, while inanimate matter, inextricably bound to organic residue, will dance to the ceaseless movement of the currents.

Whether we will be able to challenge the stable, immutable image we have constructed of ourselves remains to be seen. The plaster cast covering **Kiki Smith**'s face becomes a test of breath-holding, an act of endurance in the descent towards darkness, a first encounter with our own being. What now lies before our eyes? The mask of a silent siren, revealing nothing of whatever lies beneath the water's surface, or a double signifier leading towards an ultimate revelation: is what lies above nothing more than the reflection of what lies below?
Francesco Carone's sculptures exist within this duality of identity and simulacrum. On one side, an assemblage comprising a sharply profiled head, a pair of rubber boots and a flexible tube suggests artificial respiration through a paradoxical machinery of survival for the explorer of the underwater world. On the other, resting upon a makeshift, weathered plinth, a fragmented female figure in plaster hovers between timeless archaeology and everyday fragility.

At the end of the journey, we are confronted with the manifestation of the unfathomable, beyond all familiar and ordinary boundaries. We must now venture through it, face the abyss and, as though gazing into one of **Nan Goldin**'s mirrors, look upon our own reflection with its flickering contours and barely perceptible nuances. What emerges is a figure that still appears unfamiliar to us, an image of ourselves yet to be unveiled.