

Antonio Bertoni

portfolio



Antonio Bertoni (Faenza, 1999) graduated from the State Art School of Forlì and later earned a degree in Painting from the Academy of Fine Arts in Bologna. A programmatically figurative painter, he employs the color black to compose works that are both respectful and deeply aware of the great artistic tradition. Among many paths and possibilities offered by contemporary art, Bertoni has chosen the figurative approach in order to remain firmly anchored to art's original humanistic vocation. His figures reaffirm the sense of the subject's insignificance and the anti-heroic attitude that characterized XIX and XX century art. Intimate secrets, moments of wonder, the unexpected, that brief span of time in which everything feels perfect, the memorable instant, something to grasp and preserve, as well as the intersection between everyday life and theatricality, between the ordinary and the extraordinary, are, ultimately, the true subjects of his work.

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Self-portrait in the faucet, 2026, oil on paper, 150x100 cm

Solo exhibitions

PAINTED ENCOUNTERS, curated by Paola Babini and Carmen Lorenzetti, Cultural Center Market, Argenta, 2026

Palazzi Marini, Danilo Melandri Studio, Faenza, 2026

BY CHANCE, curated by the Cassa di Risparmio Foundation Gallery, Imola, 2026

Paint alone Is not enough, water is needed, curated by Alessandro Mescoli, Wundergrafik Gallery, Forlì, 2025

I saw it, curated by di Paolo Melandri, Bottega Bertaccini, Faenza, 2025

The firefly flickers on and off, curated by di Marisa Zattini, Ridotto Gallery, Cesena, 2024

...shall we go?, curated by Aldo Savini, Michelacci Gallery, Meldola, 2024

Figures and color, curated by di Paola Babini, FaroArte Gallery, Marina di Ravenna, 2023

Figures IV, curated by di Roberto Pagnani, Pallavicini 22, Ravenna, 2023

with HAND, text in the catalog of Luca Piovaccari, Manica Municipal Art Gallery, Brisighella, 2023

Figures III, curated by Alberto Mingotti, Baroni Gallery, Milano, 2022

Figures II, curated by Gian Ruggero Manzoni, Vicolo Contemporary Art Gallery, Cesena, 2022

Figure, curated by di Silvano D'Ambrosio, Ugonia Museum, Brisighella, 2021

Portraits, Prometeo, Faenza, 2019

Group exhibitions

City of Faenza Prize, Molinella Municipal Gallery, Faenza, 2026

Free wall, Ex Bar Cristina Gallery, Cesena, 2026

Crowded, Baldassarri House, Bagnacavallo, 2025

Possible tomorrow, curated by Filippo Maestroni, Studio Neri, Faenza, 2025

Connections 2, Ugonia Museum, Brisighella, 2025

Youthful presences in a Romagna collection, curated by Aldo Savini, Villa Ortolani, Voltana, 2025

PAINTINGS 2, curated by Simone Gheduzzi, PIETRO Gallery, Bologna, 2024

Faentina ceramic rest in peace, curated by Art Motel and Art Facts, Fontanone, Faenza, 2024

The Pre-Raphaelite Era between Modern and Anti-Modern, curated by Alessandra Righini, Manoni 2.0, Forlì, 2024

Artistic Interpretations of the Constitution, curated by Orlando Piraccini, Ridotto Gallery, Cesena (FC) – Maritime Museum, Cesenatico (FC) – Mercato Saraceno Exhibition Space, Forlì (FC) – Captain's Palace, Bagno di Romagna (FC) – House Museum, Tavollicci (FC) – Plautus Study Center, Sarsina (FC), - "Mario Bertozzi" Exhibition Hall, Forlimpopoli (FC) – Shrine Of The Fallen, Forlì (FC), 2024–2025

Mud Painters, Bottega Bertaccini, Faenza, 2023

Artists with Grace, curated by Orlando Piraccini, Municipal Art Gallery, Cesena, 2022

Reflections, Fabbrica delle Candele, Forlì, 2017

Prize

"City of Faenza Prize" Painting Biennial, Faenza RA, 2026 – Under 35 Prize

Carlo Rambaldi Prize, Vigarano Mainarda, FE, 2025 - First Prize



PAINTED ENCOUNTERS, Cultural Center Market, Argenta, 2026



Here we are, 2026, oil on paper, 150x200 cm





Excerpt from the exhibition text for "PAINTED ENCOUNTERS", Cultural Center Market, Argentina, 2026

Entering the world of Antonio Bertoni means crossing the threshold into the darkroom of a soul. His painting not merely represents reality, but seeks to perform an act of salvation.

In an era dominated by the speed of digital images, ephemeral and disposable, Bertoni chooses the path of slowness and layering. His gaze rests on fragments of life that evoke the great tradition of Italian Neorealism - that high-contrast, sincere black-and-white style capable of portraying humanity in its most stripped-down, everyday truth - yet he revisits this legacy with an exquisitely contemporary sensibility. His works are not mere references to the past; they are acts of reactivation.

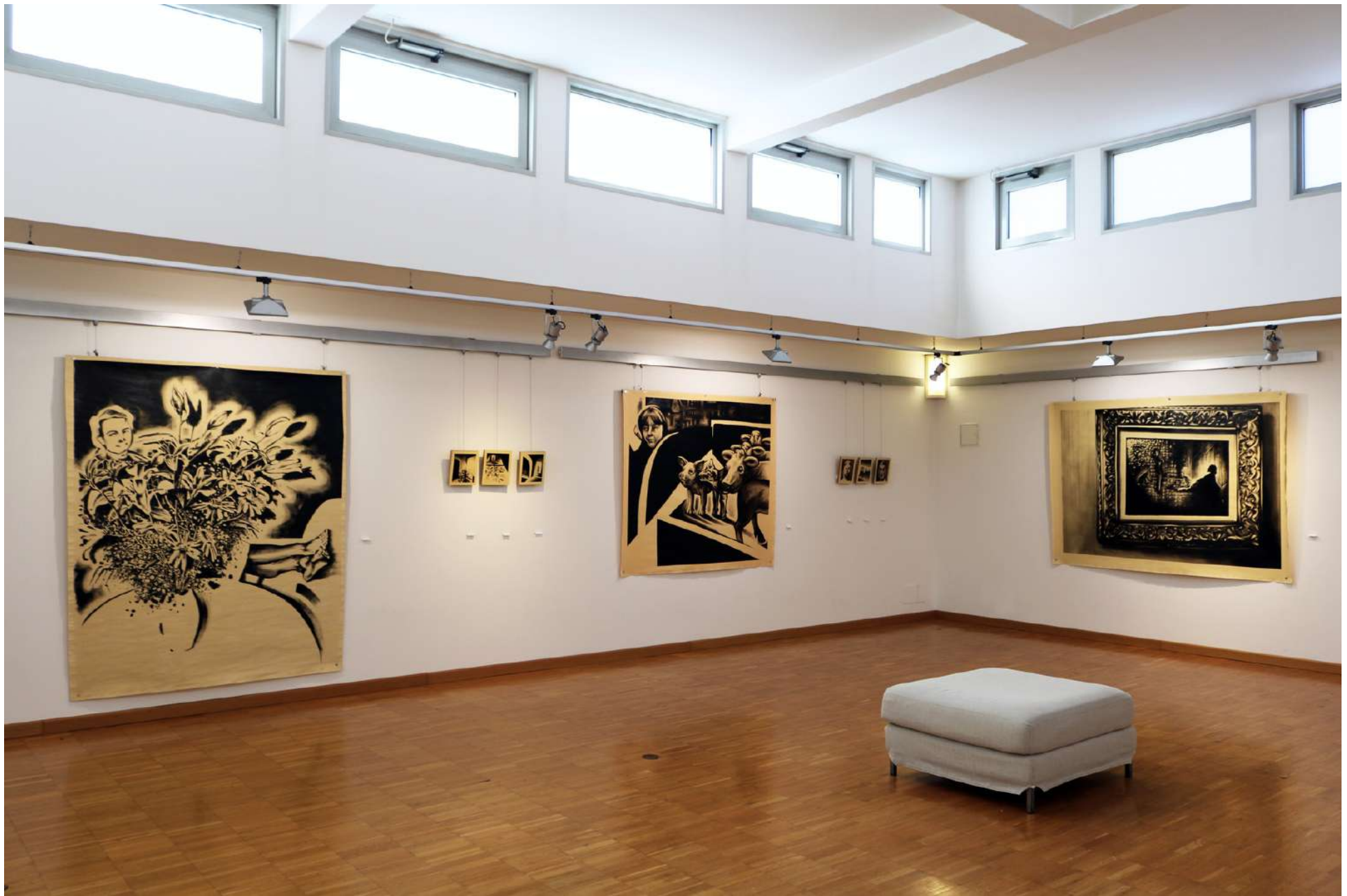
Through this series, "Incontri Dipinti", the artist creates a constant tension between the "past" of photography and the "present" of painting, transforming the mnemonic trace into a vivid and living experience.

Bertoni does not copy a photograph; he extracts its essence, frees it from the noise of time, and projects it into a suspended dimension, where the encounter between subject and viewer unfolds in a field of pure light.

Paola Babini

At first glance, Bertoni's painted scenes appear to belong to everyday life: interiors, figures, ordinary situations. Yet, little by little, something begins to fracture the apparent normality of the image. Animals emerge unexpectedly, proportions become distorted, gestures remain suspended, and enigmatic atmospheres introduce a dimension that hovers between the surreal and the fairy tale. It is as though the everyday were quietly permeated by an elusive presence, never fully explained, that transforms each scene into an ambiguous, open-ended narrative.

Carmen Lorenzetti



PAINTED ENCOUNTERS, Cultural Center Market, Argenta, 2026



Behind, 2021, oil on paper, 200x160 cm



Installation view - *BY CHANCE*, Cassa di Risparmio Foundation Gallery, Imola, 2026



Confused, 2026, oil on paper, 150x209,5 cm



Start over, 2026, oil on paper, 150x200,5 cm



Installation view - *BY CHANCE*, Cassa di Risparmio Foundation Gallery, Imola, 2026

From Valerio Zanotti's interview with Antonio Bertoni on the occasion of the exhibition at the Cassa di Risparmio Foundation Gallery of Imola, 2026, www.leggilanotizia.it

VZ: In your works you use exclusively black color, where does this choice come from?

AB: I did a lot of engraving during high school, so this inclination toward black partly stems from the fact that I used only black ink. Beyond this, however, I am convinced that if I were to use another color, I would not know where to begin, I would not be able to express my intentions as I do with black, a color I like and find fascinating. I am drawn to black marks, to shadows; they fascinate me in a way that other colors don't.

VZ: Moreover, black has a long history in painting...

AB: A color that is at once simplifying, ambivalent, and doubtful, capable of best highlighting fundamental questions (origin, meaning, life, and death) that, despite everything, have yet to find a solution. Its strength lies in its ambiguity, in being the product of opposites (the absence of color, with zero frequency, and the combination of all primary colors), in the questions it is still capable of raising, and in the irreplaceable lights it continues to offer.

VZ: Indeed, plays of light, gradations, and shadows abound in your works.

AB: In my early paintings I used only the brush and ivory black, whereas now, in many works, I also use kneaded eraser to carry out precise removals, chiaroscuro, and detailed work. I paint with black, then remove it to bring out the whites, I also use cloths and lightweight paper to achieve the right shades, the half-tones.





Consolation, 2026, oil on paper, 150x227 cm



Installation view - *Paint alone is not enough, water is needed*, Wundergrafik Gallery, Forlì, 2025



Where are you going?, 2025, oil on paper, 180x200 cm





Excerpt from the text of the exhibition *Paint alone is not enough, water is needed*, Wundergrafik Gallery, Forlì, 2025

"I believe Antonio's is a social drawing, capable of embracing the familiarity of the "family" ritual and elevating it to a higher, almost mystical value; a drawing that adapts to the contours of each of our lives because it invokes ourselves. Like a tide, likewise the romagnolo artist moves through high and low moments, drawing upon a series of over-lived, stratified experiences. Moving between the objective and the spiritual, between the desired and the fortuitous. Antonio's is not a chiaroscuro drawing, but a drawing that is light, dark, and familiar. A sequence of images that carry our memories more than those of the artist. A strongly evocative drawn experience that leads the viewer, within a phenomenon of regression, to unravel instantaneously our lived experience in search of analogies."

Alessandro Mescoli

Installation view - *Paint alone is not enough, water is needed*,
Wundergrafik Gallery, Forlì, 2025



The Din Don river, 2025, oil on paper, 150x200 cm



They are still far away, 2025, oli on paper, 150x200 cm





Excerpt from the text for the exhibition *I saw it*, Bottega Bertaccini, Faenza, 2025

"Within Antonio Bertoni's exceedingly lucid system curious rotations unfold behind open eyes - highly varied, highly free, yet nonetheless bounded changes - lights akin to those cast by a magic lantern carried by someone through a house whose windows are visible in the night, like distant festivities, like nocturnal fairs; yet which, if one could draw nearer, might reveal themselves as bus stations, or as circus cages, or terrible misfortunes, or else truths and revelations... Bertoni's vision is so upright, so pure is his representation, and his mastery so flawless, that one understands him from outside the world to the silent word; and from the formless thing one desires upon rising, along familiar fibres and ordered centres, we are there, we respond to one another, we mirror and reflect one another, we tremble with the infinity of mirrors - and we are made of glass."

Paolo Melandri

Installation view - *I saw it*, Bottega Bertaccini, Faenza, 2025



Battles of Urbino, 2026, oil on paper, 150x200 cm

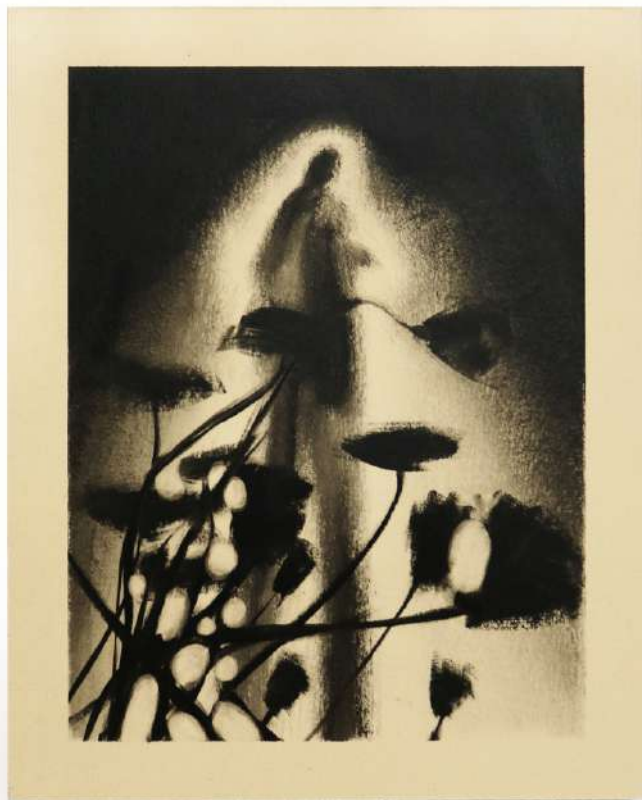




Installation view - *I saw it*, Bottega Bertaccini, Faenza, 2025



Jawa sparrow, 2025, oil on paper on panel, 25x20 cm



On the field, 2025, oil on paper on panel, 25x20 cm



Clandestine dinner, 2025, oil on paper on panel, 26,5x20 cm



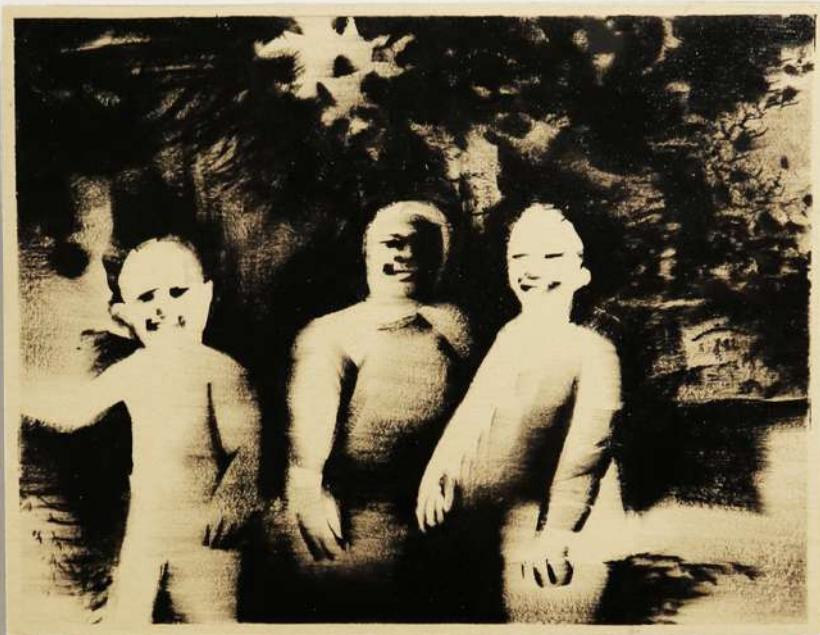
zzzzz, 2025, oil on paper on panel, 25x22 cm



Installation view - *Connections 2*, Ugonia Museum, Brisighella, 2025



At the table, 2022, oil on paper, 230x200 cm



By the river, 2025, oil on paper on panel, 23,5x17,5 cm



Trip to the countryside, 2025, oil on paper on panel, 20x26,5 cm



Dog and owner, 2025, oil on paper on panel, 26,5x20 cm



Excerpt from the text for the exhibition *PAINTINGS 2*,
PIETRO Gallery , Bologna, 2024

“Antonio's figures withdraw from time and from the concerns of adult life; from them it is possible to glean whatever one prefers, yet their black remains impenetrable, admitting only the presence and the eroticism of volumes. And yet, the addition of further forms and new elements is charged with evolution and change: by now, the images have begun their journey. These representations «arise from the need to connect with the world», they seek «to remain firmly anchored to an original humanistic vocation of art» and strive through «painterly coherence», to develop their message as a precise and incisive trace would. An act of resilience born from a complex and polyphonic dialogue.”

Tommaso Ortolani

Installation view - *PAINTINGS 2*, PIETRO Gallery, Bologna, 2024



Thanks Francois Boucher, 2024, oil on paper on panel, 95x99 cm





Installation view - *PAINTINGS 2*, PIETRO Gallery, Bologna, 2024

Excerpt from the text for the exhibition *Possible Tomorrow*, Studio Neri, Faenza, 2025



“Paper is the undisputed protagonist, a noble material, a vehicle of knowledge and beauty, painted with the utmost elegance by Antonio Bertoni. An artist in dialogue with the time that was and with the time to come. An observer of an arid present, yet one enriched by the work of his hands, like a farmer striving to keep a sick plant alive, at times a prophet of terrible futures, where Herculean putti emerge from dark blobs of oil.”

Filippo Maestroni





Installation view - *The firefly flickers on and off*, Ridotto Gallery, Cesena, 2024

Excerpt from the text for the exhibition *The firefly flickers on and off*, Ridotto Gallery, Cesena, 2024



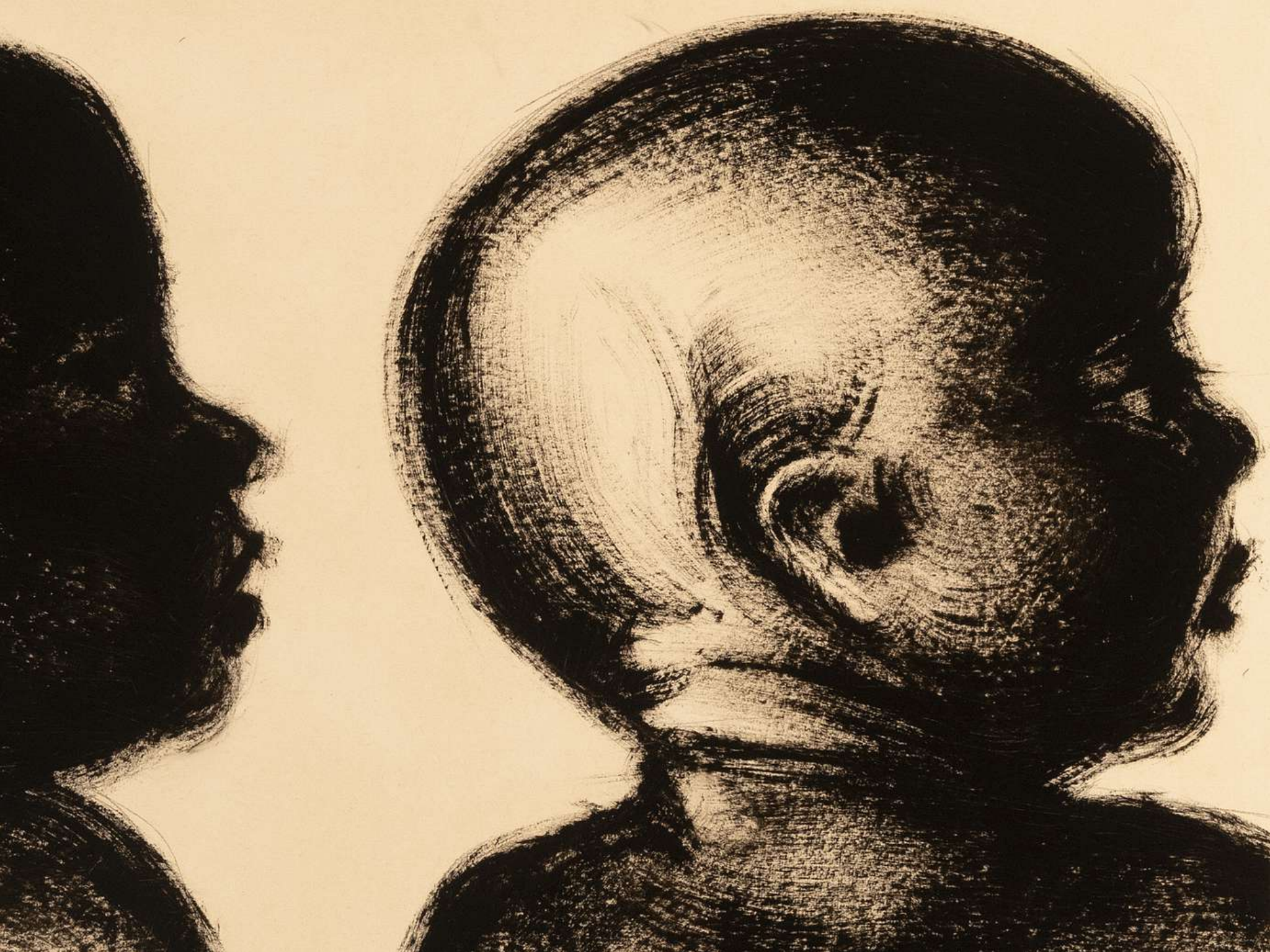
"His figurative rigor, the coherence of a gesture and of a sign that is recognizable and profoundly personal, makes us participants in his exuberant inner vitalism. It is a single thematic season articulated in osmosis, through communicating vessels dense with subtle vibrations. A play of interweavings and condensations in which form is already color. A single medium, the color black, so that light may become a harmonious unicum. In the rapidity of the mark is reflected the fluidity of a stroke without hesitation, a prodigious technical skill combined with the flow of the brushwork; figural vortices that reveal a primal energy in which the imaginative rhythm bursts forth among reminiscences, and where everything becomes beauty in an enchantment without artifice. All his works, developed cyclically, express the vibrant melody of his soul, which reveals itself to us first in his eyes, even before in the works. The expressive, pulsating center and node thus become these small bodies of children, bodies whose somatic volumes are rendered with plastic clarity, dense with wonder, with archaic mystery, and vibrating with feeling."

Marisa Zattini



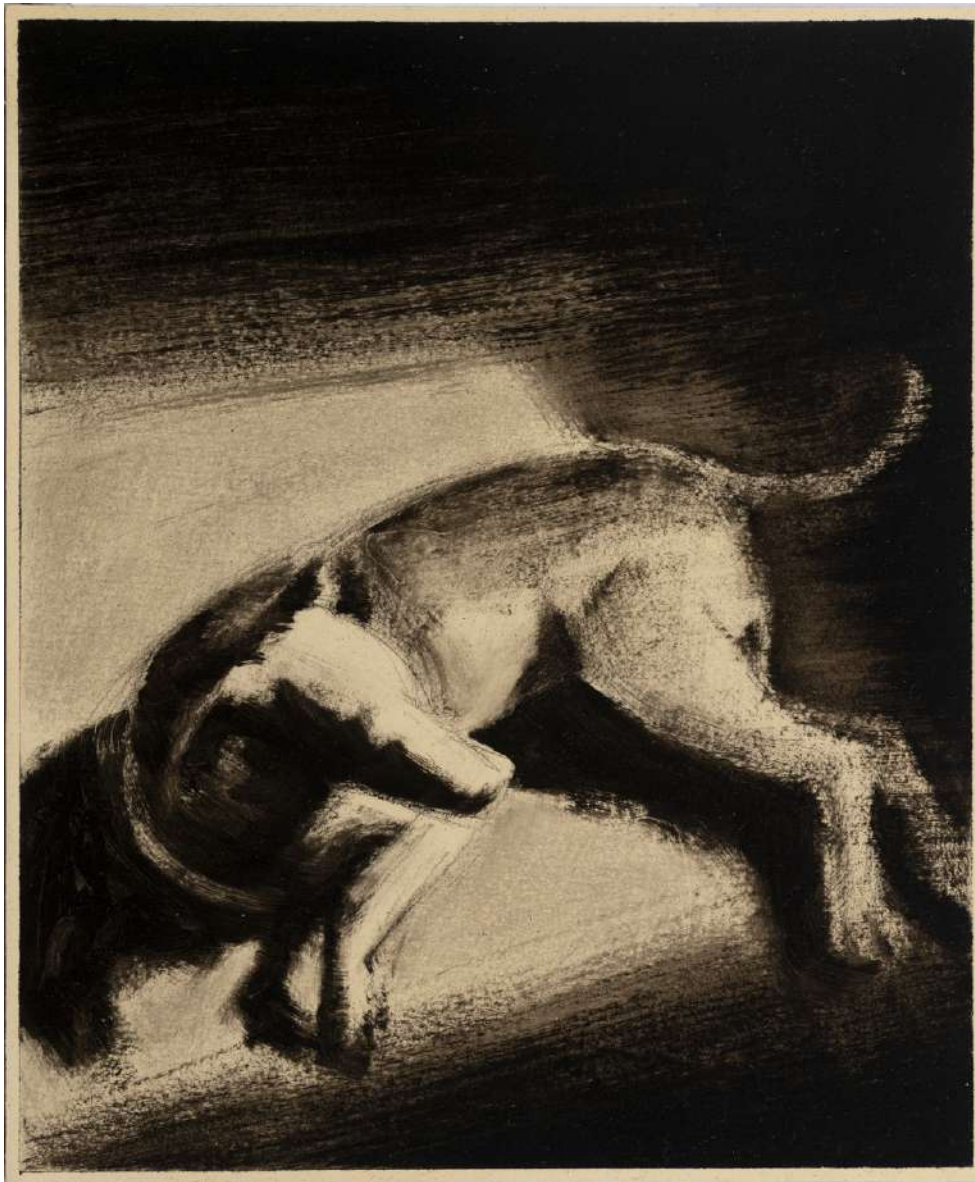


Two figures, 2024, oil on paper on panel, 95x99 cm





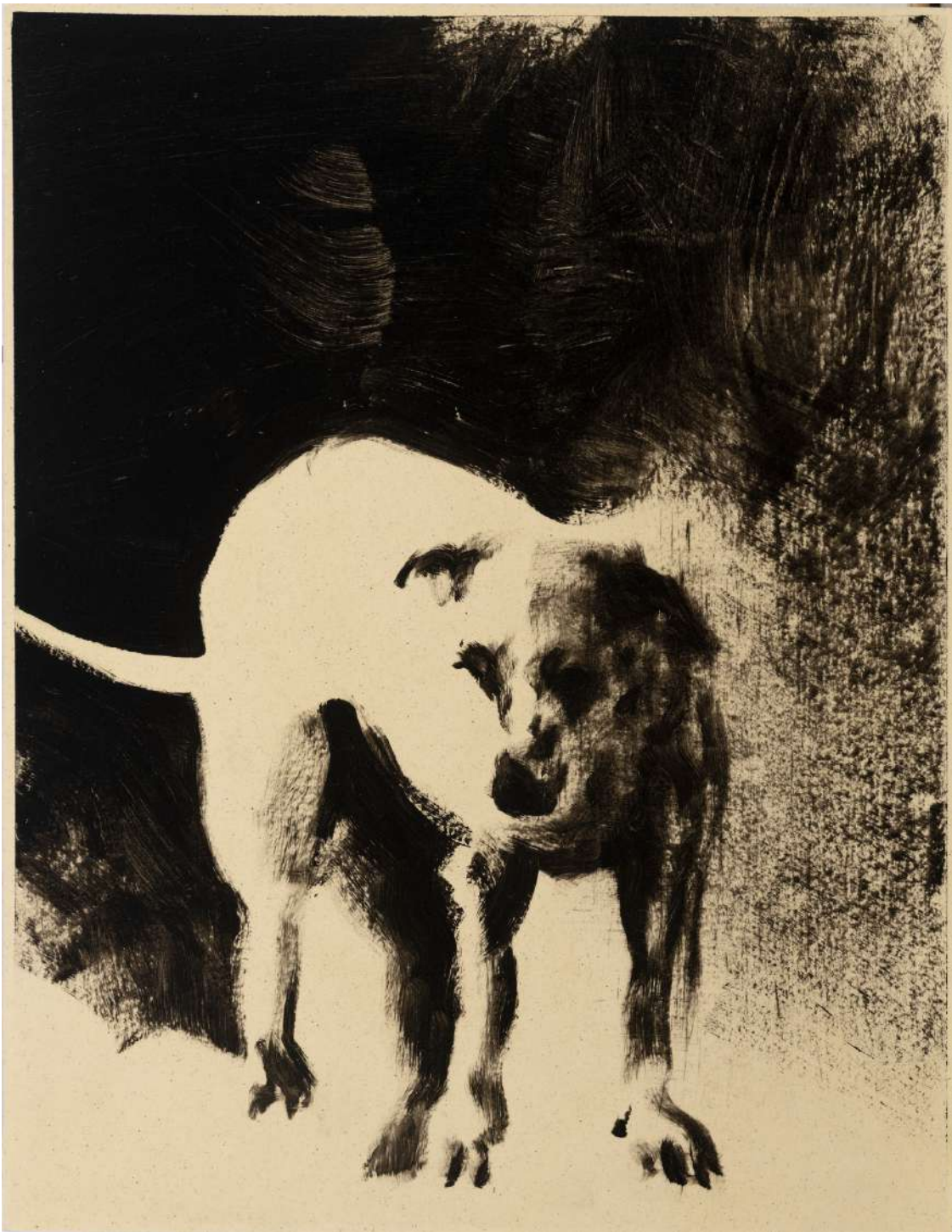
Installation view - *...shall we go?*, Michelacci Gallery, Meldola, 2023



"It is inevitable to associate the monochromatic works that make up the exhibition "*...Shall we go?*" with Francisco Goya's Black Paintings cycle at the Quinta del Sordo, a private residence to which access was not readily granted. Not so much because there is a direct relationship or a conscious derivation, but rather because a simple association imposes itself through affinities: both Goya's and Bertoni's works are forms of intimate painting that delve into the depths, and the depths can only be black, where, in the unconscious magma of loss, no distinction is permitted between desire and sacrifice, between unease and memory, between positive and negative. His "images" evoke the chance rediscovery of analogue family photographs, in which a dog always appears, forgotten somewhere, yet inevitably capable of stimulating his imagination and the resulting emotional engagement linked to the recovery of a past likely destined to remain in the realm of oblivion. From those photographs depicting a family group in many situations and contexts, a process of research and rediscovery began, aimed at revealing what might lie hidden beyond appearances; thus, the realistic detail, with the dog's recognisable physical features, has given way to outlines and silhouettes that reveal the need to achieve a centrality and autonomy of their own, between figuration and the unravelling of the image."

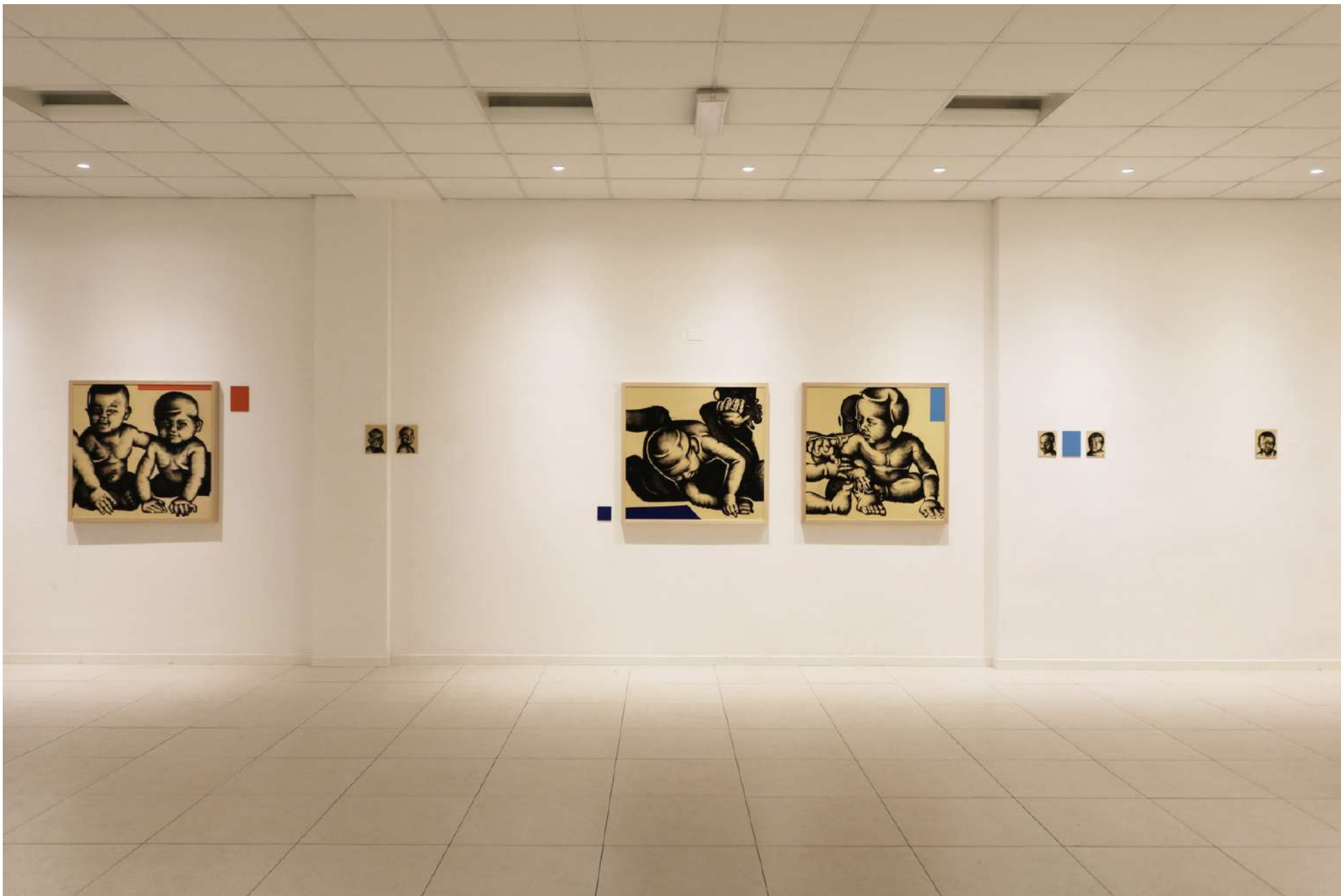
Aldo Savini





Untitled, 2023, oil on paper on panel, 25,8x20 cm





Installation view - *Figures and color*, FaroArte Gallery, Marina di Ravenna, 2023

Excerpt from the text for the exhibition *Figures and color*, FaroArte Gallery, Marina di Ravenna, 2023



"In a trajectory that is in part expanded and renewed, Bertoni is drawn to black, but not a minimal, absolute, or synthetic one, rather, a Baroque black, enriched with something to be observed and listened to, tending to express a sense of mystery as void, as the fearful absence of a vital center. His is a painting simplified in its mark and increasingly less descriptive, a parallel world of pure forms, of bodies and plastic volumes sculpted by light. The expression of the depicted faces becomes rigid, powerful, and overwhelming. The compositional structure of the works assumes a sense of absolute solidity, from which light removes gradations and empties forms of all artifice and ornament. All this leads to an emotional, yet not sentimental, reading of his work."

Paola Babini



Installation view - *Figures IV*, Pallavicini 22, Ravenna, 2023



Untitled, 2023, oil on paper, 13,2x12,1 cm

"Their smile is only apparent, and they unsettle the viewer insofar as they lack a childlike contentment, as though there were a "genetic" mark that has already rendered them adult in expression, despite their not yet being grown. Bertoni paints an allegory of life in which the two ages, youth and maturity, come to merge into a single body, thus creating atemporal entities."

Roberto Pagnani



Untitled, 2023, oil on paper, 19,5x12,5 cm



Untitled, 2023, oil on paper, 13x7 cm



Installation view - with *HAND*, Manica Municipal Art Gallery, Brisighella, 2023

Excerpt from the text for the exhibition *with HAND*, Manica Municipal Art Gallery, Brisighella, 2023



"I often find myself looking to gestures, to the movement of hands, in order to understand what is true and real in people's words, at times, they may conceal unexpected states of mind. On this subject, Aristotle also reflected, defining them as the organ of organs. I like to think that behind every work there is always a motivation, yet at times works are nothing other than what they convey to each of us, and in different ways. I will not ask the author what their origins are. It is true that each of us carries the experiences of our own life, and the hands of Antonio Bertoni, to me, more than the anatomical ones of Michelangelesque drawings or of paintings from art history, when I observe them quickly and simultaneously, recall certain images by Vito Acconci. Bertoni's hands can narrate our present in a more radical way, those seen on television screens, associated with the raw force of poetry which, if decontextualized in order to make us reflect, can also tell us something more."

Luca Piovaccari



Hand, 2023, oil on paper on panel, 24x18 cm each
Next page: *Hand*, 2023, oil on paper on panel, 18x24 cm





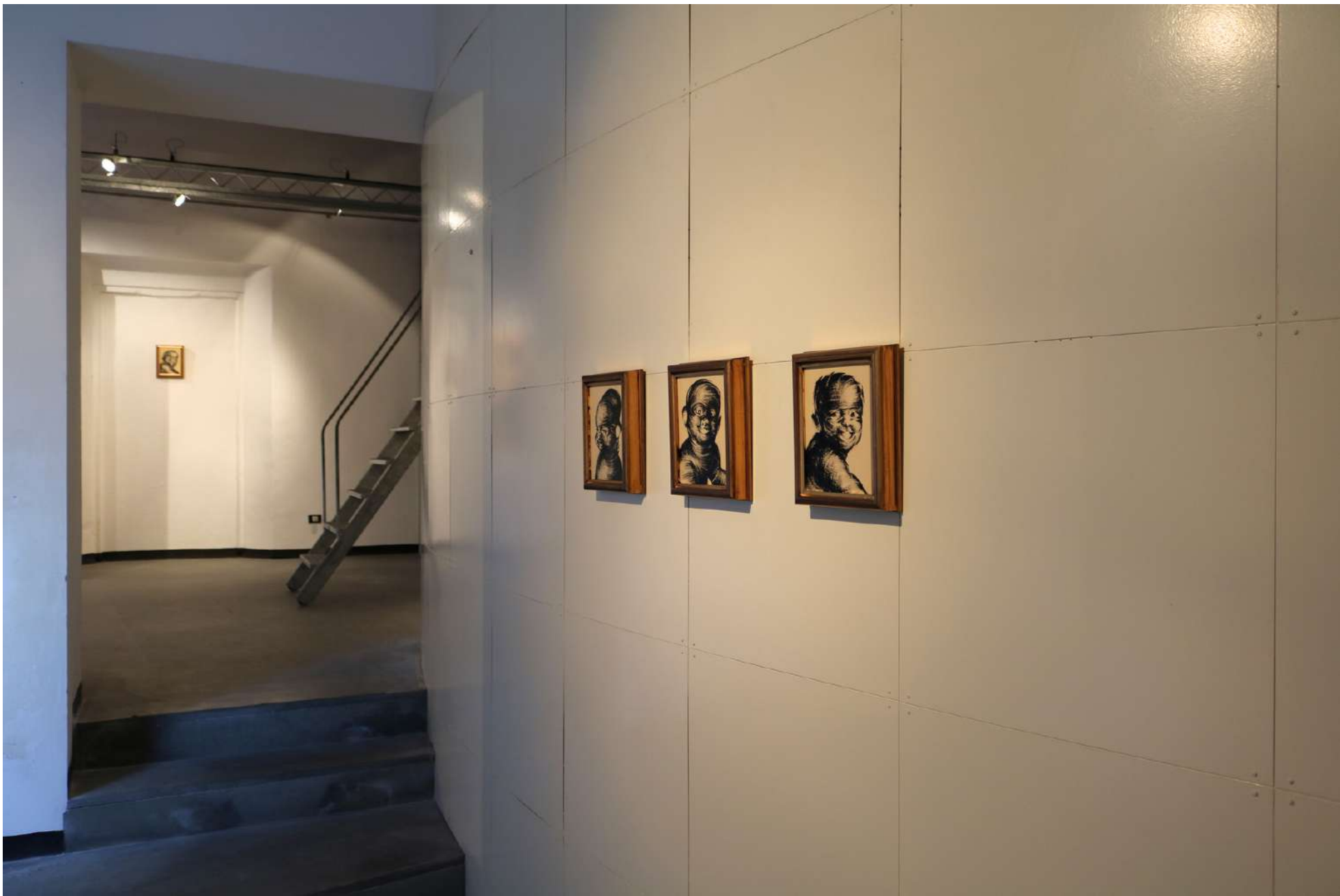
Installation view - *Figures III*, Baroni Gallery, Milano, 2022



"Bertoni paints works rich in historical content. In his practice, he draws upon the memory embedded in painting as constructed by artists of the past. Although operating within the realm of figuration, his is not a referential or citation-based painting, but rather an art composed of intimate, interior images that elude any precise chronological reference. His images seem to be made of a substance that is now distant, yet not extinguished. What human beings have entrusted to language, even if forgotten, is not erased, but continues to live through time. With this universe of visual memories, Bertoni interweaves his own personal experiences. The painter's gaze connects the memory of his childhood to the language of painting. In doing so, he extends its history, transforming it."

Alberto Mingotti





Installation view - *Figures II*, Il Vicolo Contemporary Art Gallery, Cesena, 2022

Excerpt from the text for the exhibition *Figure II*, Il Vicolo Contemporary Art Gallery, Cesena, 2022

"Bertoni's "theatre of shadows", traced upon the surface with swift gestural brushstrokes, with undeniable architectural balance and with a mastery one might dare call Eastern, leads us into a place of lost memories, of distant wonders, of suspended moments, of sudden revelations, of connections with dreamt images, whispering to us that (perhaps) we, Western human beings, have lost something important, and that even a fragment of recovered memory might reassemble that mosaic which the collapse of ideals, the loss of classical values, and the death of the sacred have reduced to a heap of useless fragments."

Gian Ruggero Manzoni



Half figure, 2022, oil on paper on panel, 24x18 cm



Installation view - *Figures*, Ugonia Museum, Brisighella, 2021

Excerpt from the text for the exhibition *Figure*, Ugonia Museum, Brisighella, 2021



"Black monochromatism, which Antonio employs in this exemplary cycle, is dreamlike and induces reminiscence, and just as the people who speak to us in dreams have no need to open their mouths, so these figures convey a sensibility that requires no words, because black painting is an intelligent silence, full of voices and of a will toward light."

Silvano D'Ambrosio

Four figure, 2020, oil on paper on panel, 95x99 cm





Five figures, 2020, oil on paper on panel, 95x99 cm



Head, 2021, oil on paper on panel, 19x14 cm each