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## Emilio Vavarella at Casa Zegna. The breathing of a code: the other shape of things (AAS47692 / Picea Abies) (<https://www.juliet-artmagazine.com/en/emilio-vavarella-at-casa-zegna-the-breathing-of-a-code-the-other-shape-of-things-aas47692-picea-abies/>)

by PIERMARIO DE ANGELIS ([HTTPS://WWW.JULIET-ARTMAGAZINE.COM/EN/AUTHOR/PIERMARIO-DE-ANGELIS/](https://www.juliet-artmagazine.com/en/author/piermario-de-angelis/))

10 JUNE 2022 ([HTTPS://WWW.JULIET-ARTMAGAZINE.COM/EN/EMILIO-VAVARELLA-AT-CASA-ZEGNA-THE-](https://www.juliet-artmagazine.com/en/emilio-vavarella-at-casa-zegna-the-breathing-of-a-code-the-other-shape-of-things-aas47692-picea-abies/)

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Sometimes looking at ‘the other shape of things’ means to stay in that interval of the gaze where perimeters expand, lines blur, and perception is amplified. It might be understood as an epiphany of porosity: an experience that allows us to discover unexplored associations, and which in the spaces of Casa Zegna – Trivero Valdilana (BI) – can be sensed in the glass walls that refract the vibrations of the

plant world all around, in the light that projects inside the natural physiognomies of the world outside, and in the eponymous exhibition that intercepts the matrices, rhythm and breath of this world, metaphorically breaking that glass, a labile boundary, that separates inside and outside, technology and the human being, the matrix and its expressions.

*The Other Shape of Things* (AAS47692 / *Picea Abies*) is the solo exhibition of the artist Emilio Vavarella (Monfalcone, 1989), on view until 11/13/2022. The exhibition consists of six new works installed in the heart of Oasi Zegna, where, as the press release states, «founder Ermenegildo Zegna planted thousands of spruce trees, transforming the barren land into a lush forest». Vavarella goes straight to the heart of this ecosystem by materializing its paradoxical matrix: the genetic code of the *Picea Abies*, scientific name for the spruce, which is the silent director of this plant symphony and which, with its ever-changing combinations, gives life to the unrepeatable specificity of each individual tree. The artist enters the echo of this propagation by translating the mental image of the plant tissue, the forest, into the material elaboration of its common thread – the DNA – first digitally encoded, then converted into galaxies of pixels processed in six different elaborations through handcrafted embroidery, tapestry and fabric printing. ‘Fabric’ is the key word: the artist shows the hidden weave where the language of art becomes a poetic visualization of a delicate ecosystem, itself swirling around a binary code no longer hidden in the atoms of matter, but itself becomes matter to be confronted with.

Indeed, the DNA of spruce is transferred to BielMonte™ fabrics, produced by Lanificio Ermenegildo Zegna, in collaboration with textile manufacturer BONOTTO and the textile craft platform «mending for good». Human hands and technological automatism interpenetrate as they weave the web at the basis of life, and this quasi-organic cycle, which is itself presented as a complex warp of relationships, finds its final form in the works on display, whose titles not coincidentally orbit the acronym AAS47692: the identifier used to digitally catalog the spruce tree’s DNA. In fact, these are indeed firs, but in a different form. The artist reinforces this aspect by thinking of textured fabrics that evoke a trunk amidst myriads of softly colored pixels. Upon entering the space, the eye is immediately drawn to this familiarity as it encounters AAS47692#0001, AAS47692#0002 and AAS47692#0003, three black metal structures about two meters tall that, like totems, frame the textiles, becoming contemporary textile looms: these structures are normally used to support computer servers in clustering data, which in Casa Zegna Vavarella translates into threads, textures and colors, thus continuing his reflection about the generative potential of binary technology – fundamental, in this case, to the first encoding of the fir tree’s DNA – already started in the 2020-2021 project *rs548049170\_1\_69869\_TT* (*The Other Shapes of Me*) of which the exhibition at Casa Zegna is a prosecution.



Emilio Vavarella, *L'altra forma delle cose* (AAS47692 / *Picea Abies*), installation view, courtesy Fondazione Zegna e PCM Studio. Ph: Damiano Andreotti



Emilio Vavarella, *L'altra forma delle cose* (AAS47692 / *Picea Abies*), installation view, courtesy Fondazione Zegna e PCM Studio. Ph: Damiano Andreotti



As curator Ilaria Bonacossa writes in the exhibition's critical text, «these three structures [...] evoke physical presences whereby our body necessarily enters into dialogue»: Casa Zegna then becomes a poetic space where the relationship between human beings, nature and technology is configured under the banner of an unprecedented alliance, of which the DNA image represents an archaic and original synthesis.

It is there, in the codex as well as in the fabric, that structure and information, root and elaboration, logos and *téchne*, are homologated. Vavarella's fir tree closes the circle: the word codex comes from the Latin, meaning the inner part of the stem of trees, the same that materializes in the large Jacquard tapestry at the center of the space, *AAS47692#0006*, where the mirrored display at the base generates a powerful overlap between the human gaze and the coded fabric. Everyone looks at the code and, in the meantime, looks at himself, in all his unparalleled specificity: the artist thus makes visible 'The Other Shape of Things', a great breath, a great matrix and its innumerable porosities, in which the fabric between plant, technological and human memory is amalgamated following a secret, but fascinating, common thread.

Info:

Emilio Vavarella, *L'altra forma delle cose* (*AAS47692 / Picea Abies*)

22/05/2022 – 13/11/2022

Casa Zegna

Via Marconi 23 – Trivero Valdilana (BI)

<https://www.fondazionezegna.org/casa-zegna/> (<https://www.fondazionezegna.org/casa-zegna/>)



Emilio Vavarella, *AAS47692#0006* (*L'altra forma delle cose*), 2022. Courtesy Fondazione Zegna e PCM Studio. Ph: Damiano Andreotti





Piermario De Angelis (<https://www.juliet-artmagazine.com/en/author/piermario-de-angelis/>)

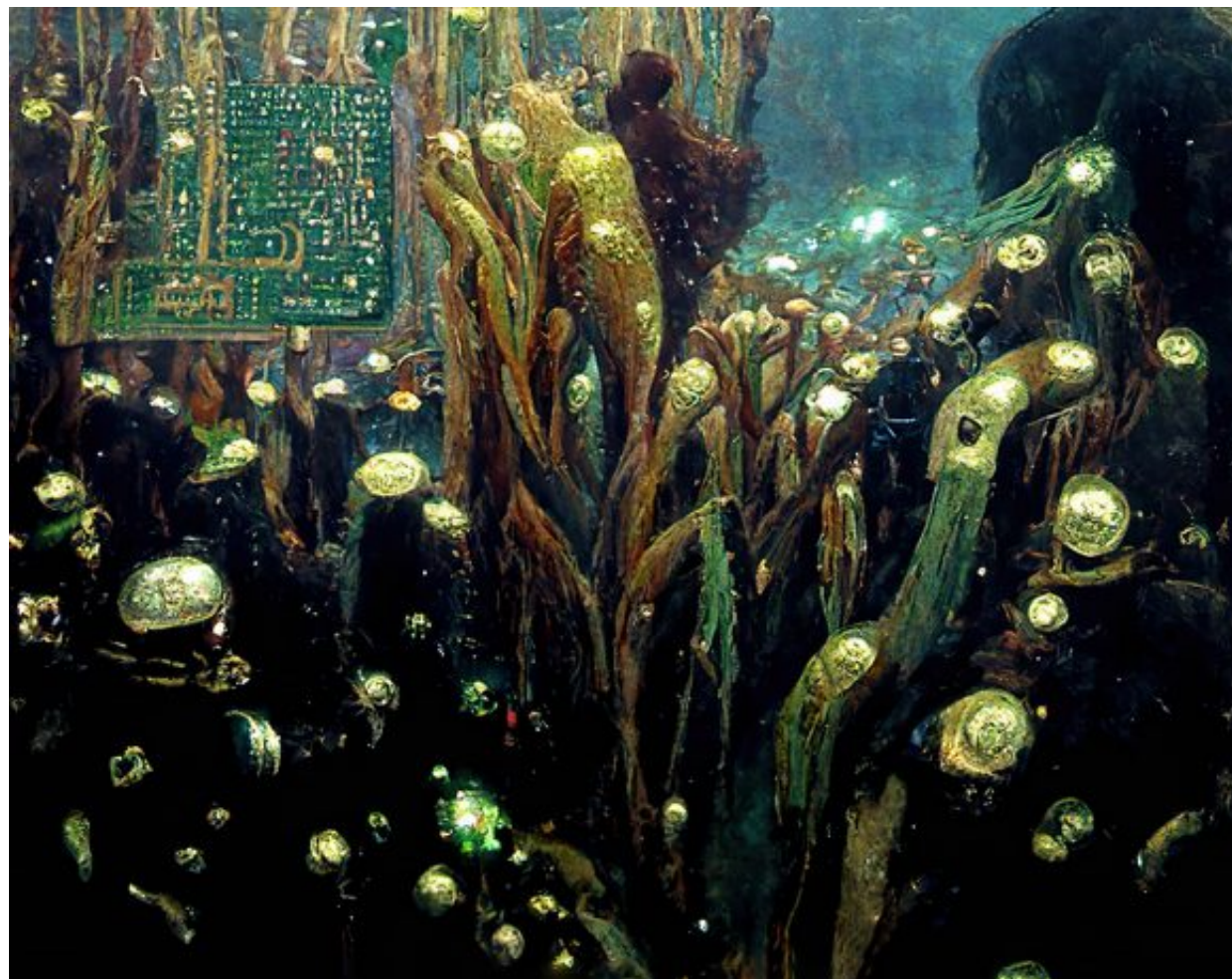
Piermario De Angelis was born in Pescara on 06/10/1997. After graduating from high school he moved to Milan to attend the three-year degree course in Arts, Design and Entertainment at the IULM university. He is currently a second year student of the two-year course of Visual Cultures and Curatorial Practices at the Brera Academy of Fine Arts. He is a contributor for 'Juliet Art Magazine' and 'Kabul Magazine'. In 2021 he co-founded, together with other students of the Brera Academy, the non-profit cultural association Genealogie Del Futuro: a reality that addresses socio-political and environmental issues through alternative community building practices, through an artistic and curatorial perspective. His research aims to be an exploration of the critical potential of art and images in relation to the urgencies of contemporaneity.

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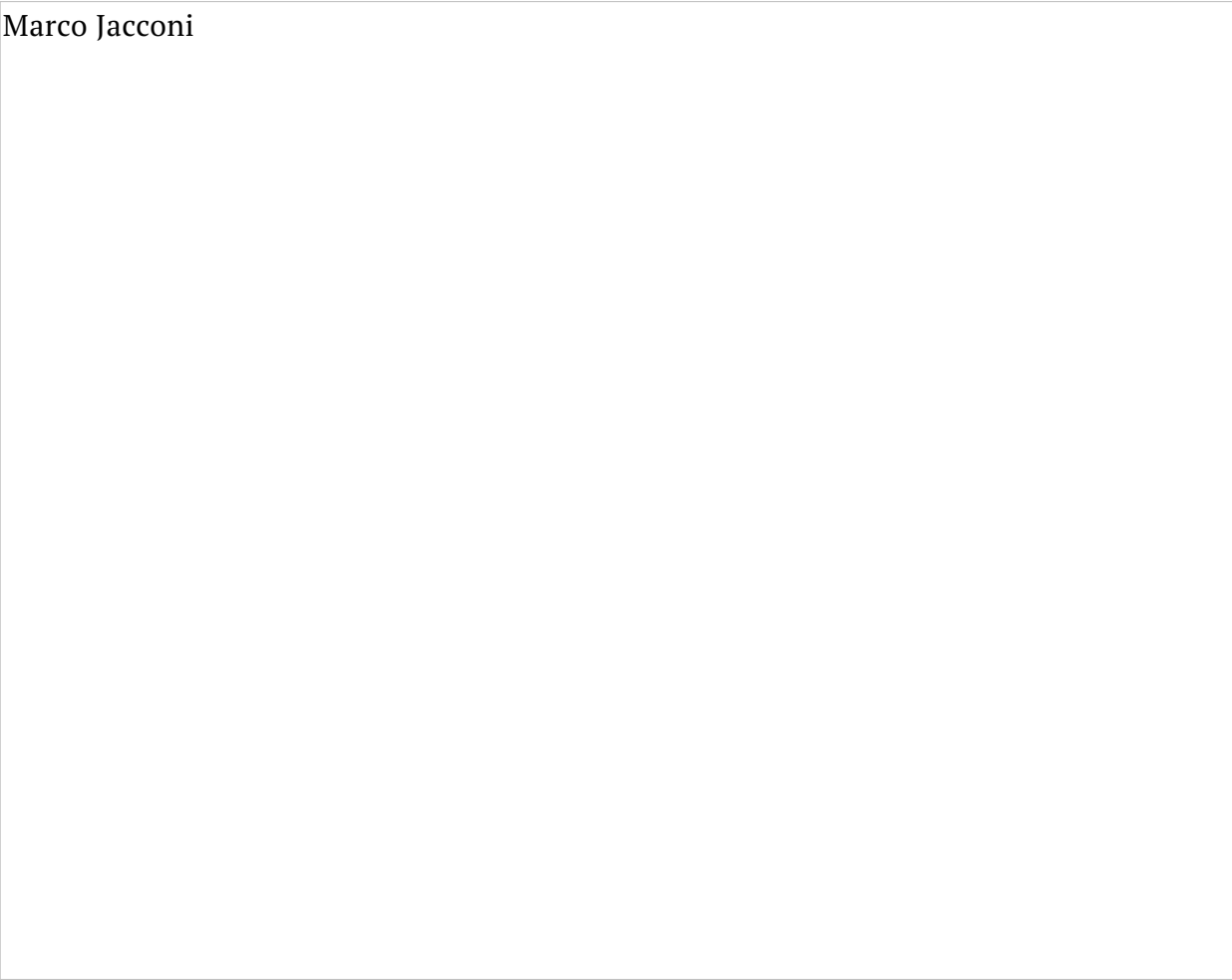
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