



Martina Zanin

EVERY CARESS, A BLOW

19/02/2026 - 18/04/2026

curated by Antonio Grulli

Fondazione Pastificio Cerere, Rome

MARTINA
ZANIN

EVERY CARESS, A BLOW

A CURA DI
ANTONIO GRULLI



THE EXHIBITION

Deeply rooted in the autobiographical dimension, Martina Zanin's work investigates complex relational dynamics shaped by absence, memory, trauma, tension, and power. Through the use of different media — from photography to sculpture and installation — the artist explores the subtle threshold between protection and control, placing vulnerability at the heart of her practice. Her research also extends to the relationship between human and animal, activating metaphors and parallelisms.

EVERY CARESS, A BLOW invites viewers to linger within that charged line between care and control, affection and power, inheritance and possession. The exhibition examines how the body and identity take form through relations of power and affective domination, which bind the subject to those who protect it. What renders these relations truly unsettling is not their overt violence, but that which is internalised and guarded while remaining invisible, continuing to act within both the social sphere and the intimate, physical realm.

At the intersection of psychology, ethology, spirituality, and personal experience, Zanin presents a body of work spanning photography, installation, and architectural elements. The predator–prey dynamic is central to her research. The hawk and the hare become symbolic and totemic presences, linked to ancestral power and to the relationship between ferocity, instinct, tension, and vulnerability.

The exhibition opens with a series of photographs from the project *Please, don't ever come down* (2020 – ongoing), which present, in fragmented form, gestures, animals, body parts, actions, and idyllic visions. These evocative images establish an immediate dialogue with the viewer and guide the reading of the subsequent works, where their echo re-emerges in more subtle forms, as an invisible force traversing the entire exhibition space. This is followed by *Oh, whistle, and I'll come to you #1* and *#2* (2026). The two works are composed of falconry gloves arranged in a rigid, alternating pattern, evoking a ritualised, repeated gesture bordering on the military: a constant tension between command and obedience. The title alludes to a falconry technique, the whistle used to call the hawk back to the glove.

The third room houses a brass sculpture titled *A Predator is a Predator is a Predator...* (2026), which depicts a sequence of hawk talons, as if an attack were frozen in time. The forms appear to generate one another in a cyclical movement that evokes the chain of power: a system in which every predator is also prey, and no body can be said to be entirely free. The work recalls Foucauldian reflections on power as a dynamic force that is not possessed but exercised and inscribed upon bodies.

In the fourth and final room stands the installation **AMBIENTI. TANE – *Rabbit Hole*** (2026), constructed from organic and industrial materials. The work originates from the idea of the body as burrow, exploring its ambivalent nature as both refuge and trap. Conceived as an architecture emanating from another dimension, suspended between the futuristic and the archaic, the structure presents itself as an inverted anatomy: the skeleton on the outside, the skin on the inside. The central envelope invites the viewer to hide within it, to slip beneath the skin, to immerse themselves in their own body by undertaking an inward journey, or to venture into another. Entering this structure evokes a primitive, embryonic dimension in which protection and entrapment coexist; a state of incubation that opens onto the possibility of transformation.

Antonio Grulli





The only way to get to know you

2023

inkjet print on Hahnemühle Photo Rag Pearl,
mounted on aluminium panel,
canaletto walnut wood frame

122 x 82 cm (with frame)

Edition 1/3

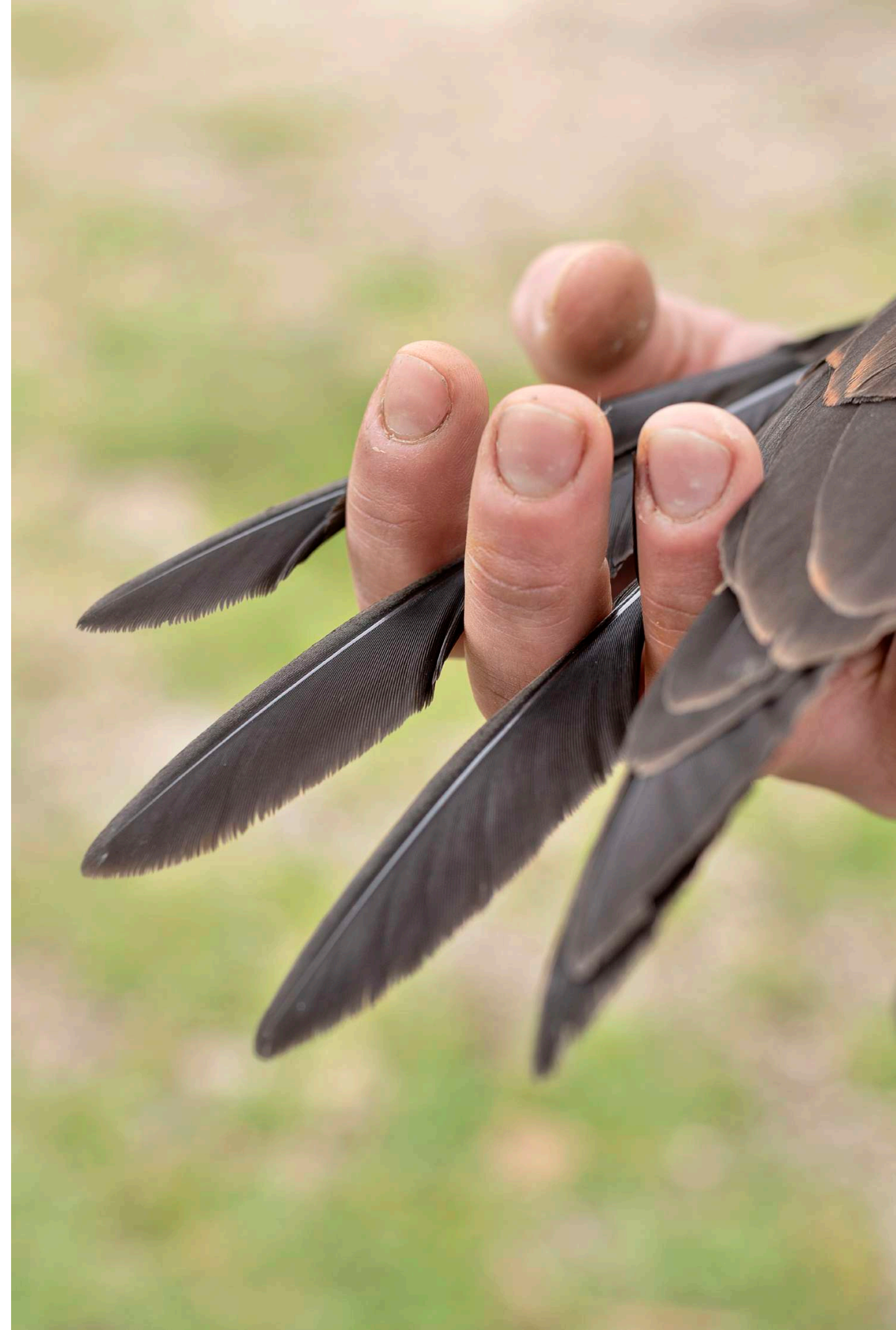
Metamorphosis

2023

inkjet print on Hahnemühle Photo Rag
Pearl, mounted on aluminium panel,
canaletto walnut wood frame

122 x 82 cm (with frame)

Edition 1/3





Fury

2021

inkjet print on Hahnemühle Photo Rag Pearl

mounted on aluminium panel,

canaletto walnut wood frame

82 x 55 cm (with frame)

Edition 1/5

Static Turmoil

2021

inkjet print on Hahnemühle Photo Rag

Pearl mounted on aluminium panel,

canaletto walnut wood frame

82 x 55 cm (with frame)

Edition 1/5





Tears of rage

2021

inkjet print on Hahnemühle Photo Rag Pearl
mounted on aluminium panel,
canaletto walnut wood frame
82 x 55 cm (with frame)
Edition 1/5





Always on guard

2021

inkjet print on Hahnemühle Photo Rag

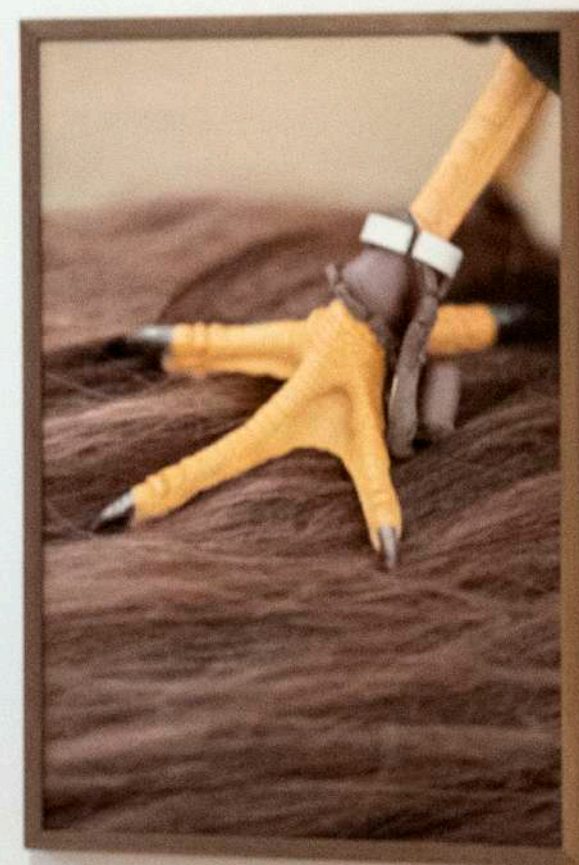
Pearl mounted on aluminium panel,

canaletto walnut wood frame

55 x 37 cm (with frame)

Edition 1/5







Caress
2023
inkjet print on Hahnemühle Photo RagPearl,
mounted on aluminium panel,
canaletto walnut wood frame
82 x 55 cm (with frame)
Edition 1/5

Oh, Whistle, and I'll Come to You #2

2026

falconry gloves

100 x 63 cm

Edition 1/3





Oh, Whistle, and I'll Come to You #1

2026

falconry gloves

106 x 58 cm

Edition 1/3

*A PREDATOR, IS A PREDATOR, IS A
PREDATOR...*

2026

polished bronze sculpture

65 x 5 cm

Edition 1/5





AMBIENTI. TANE – Rabbit Hole

2026

leather, tubes, joints

330 x 380 x 450 cm

(variable structure size)

Edition 1/3



BIOGRAPHY

Martina Zanin (San Daniele del Friuli, 1994) lives and works between Rome and Milan. Zanin's practice spans photography, writing, installation, sculpture, and artist books.

Her work has been exhibited in solo and group shows both nationally and internationally, including Fondazione AGO, Modena (2025); GNAMC – Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Moderna e Contemporanea, Rome (2024); IIC Toronto (2024); Cassina Projects, Milan (2024); Palazzo delle Esposizioni, Rome (2023); Foto Forum, Bozen (2023); Fondazione Orestiadi, Gibellina (2023); Benaki Museum, Athens (2022); IIC Abu Dhabi (2021); FMAV – Fondazione Modena Arti Visive (2021); BACO – Base Arte Contemporanea, Bergamo (2021); galleria studiofaganel, Gorizia (2021); Fotografia Europea, Reggio Emilia (2021); Goethe Institute, Rome (2017).

In 2024, she is among the finalists of the Talent Prize InsideArt. She won the Premio Terna 2023 (youth) with her installation Dear F. In 2021, she won the first prize of Camera Work, and was among the recipients of Giovane Fotografia Italiana and Cantica21. Italian Contemporary Art Everywhere, promoted by the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation (MAECI), the Italian Ministry of Culture (MiC). Zanin is the author of the photobook I Made Them Run Away, published by Skinnerboox, and Older Than Love, a self-published artist book.

Her works are part of public collections such as MoMA Library (New York); Haas Library, Yale University (New Haven); Fondazione AGO (Modena); MEP – La Maison Européenne de la Photographie (Paris); Fondazione Orestiadi (Gibellina). She has been a guest lecturer at Hong Kong Baptist University, RUFA, University of Trieste, NABA, and FMAV – Scuola di Alta Formazione.



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