

SCHLOSSGASSE 5  
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PHILIPP@PHILIPPZOLLINGER.COM  
WWW.PHILIPPZOLLINGER.COM**NICOLA MARTINI  
and welded skin**ZÜRICH  
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For his first solo exhibition in Switzerland, Milan-based artist Nicola Martini presents a new body of work. Known for his sculptural practice, in which he experiments with dissimilar materials, such as organic and synthetic liquids, minerals, metals and different kinds of plastic, Martini reveals often previously unseen, as well as unexpected compositions. The chemical and physical material properties guide the artist, allowing him to reconstruct and sometimes reconfigure different substances.

Using a blowtorch, Martini heats up artificial sand to the point of melting. Owing to the fact that each grain is covered with a coat of phenolic resin, the high temperature causes the thermal material to expand and therefore bind with other grains. Through this process, the substance documents its context (the ground underneath and the pressure of the fire outlet) as well as the chemical reaction (the pile of sand turning into liquid, before becoming solid). Like parched earth, the uneven surface evokes a physical tension, whilst revealing an archaic appearance of welded skin. Thus, subtracting the affordance of movement: the material, lines and shades imply states of flow; yet paradoxically seem held in a moment.

The sculptures are presented vertically on the wall and appear to hover over the ground, as if frozen in time and space. Acting as mementos, they are representations and documentations of an umpteenth type of creation – chance versus intended actions – thus becoming part of an erratic archive of petrified forms of crystalized thermal sand. Nevertheless, in Martini's artistic practice nothing is static, but rather in transformation: often the end result is not final and solely indicates a transient state.

Martini perceives every work to be part of a bigger, expanding reality. However, in order to decelerate this process, he reverses the action and deconstructs his own sculptures. He grinds them down to a different material state and then combines with other recycled sculptures, from earlier periods. Mixed with liquid and sometimes clay, the substance is poured into shaped acrylic containers, thus folding time and space. Independent from the author, the materials collide in an uncontrollable formation, before turning into sediment.

Consequently, Martini anticipates a new understanding of reality via the making and unmaking of materials. Rather than revealing entropy (a gradual decline into disorder), his artistic practice indicates fusion through moments in time, in order that substances are allowed to enter cycles of permanent regeneration.

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Nicola Martini, born 1984, in Florence. Recent solo-exhibitions include at Dittrich & Schlechtriem (Berlin, 2018) and Kaufmann Repetto (New York, 2015). In addition, he has participated in numerous two-person and group shows, such as at Villa Medici (Rome, 2019); Palazzo Fortuny (Venice, 2017); 16th Quadriennale di Roma (2016) and Triennale Museum (Milan, 2015).