

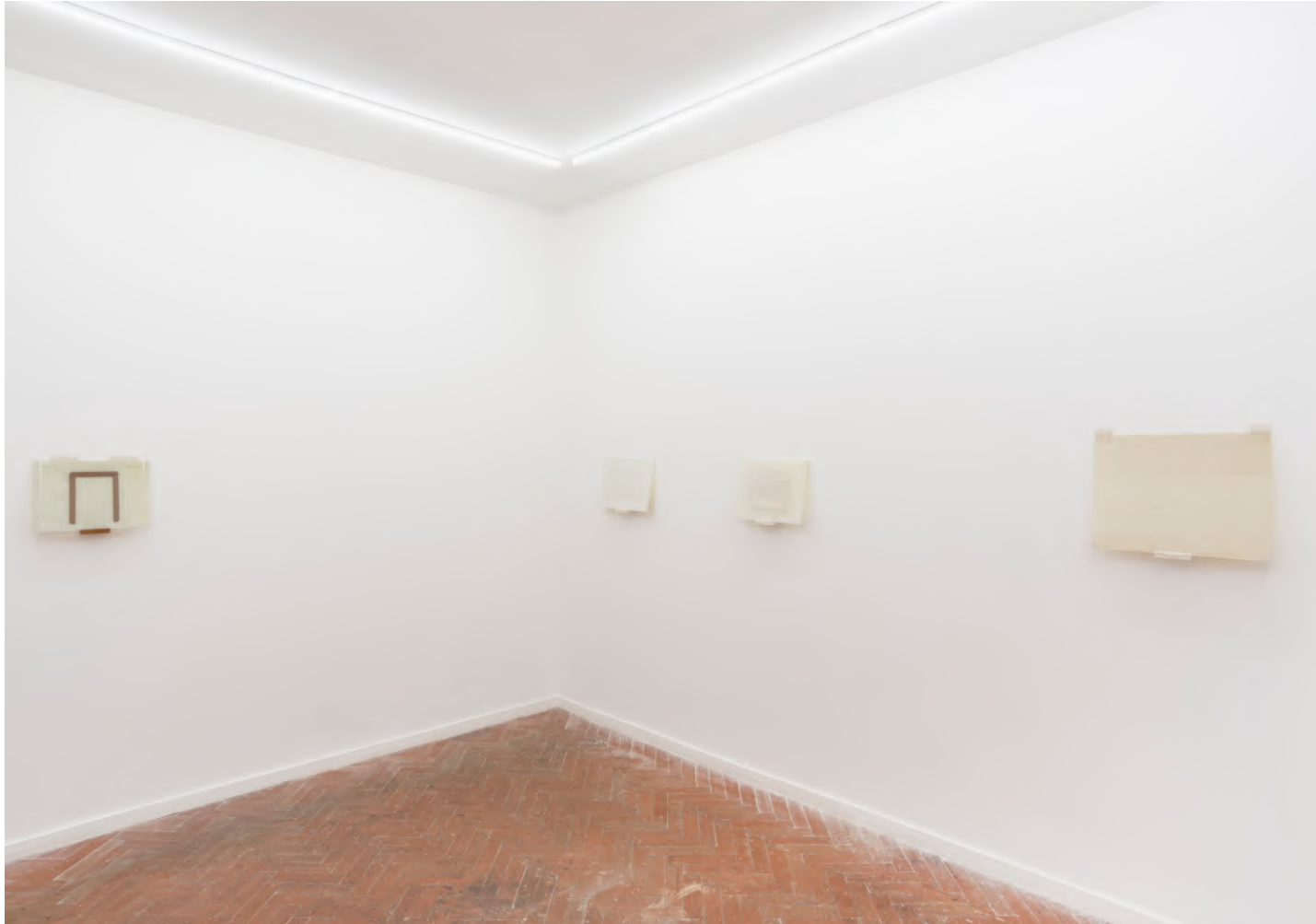


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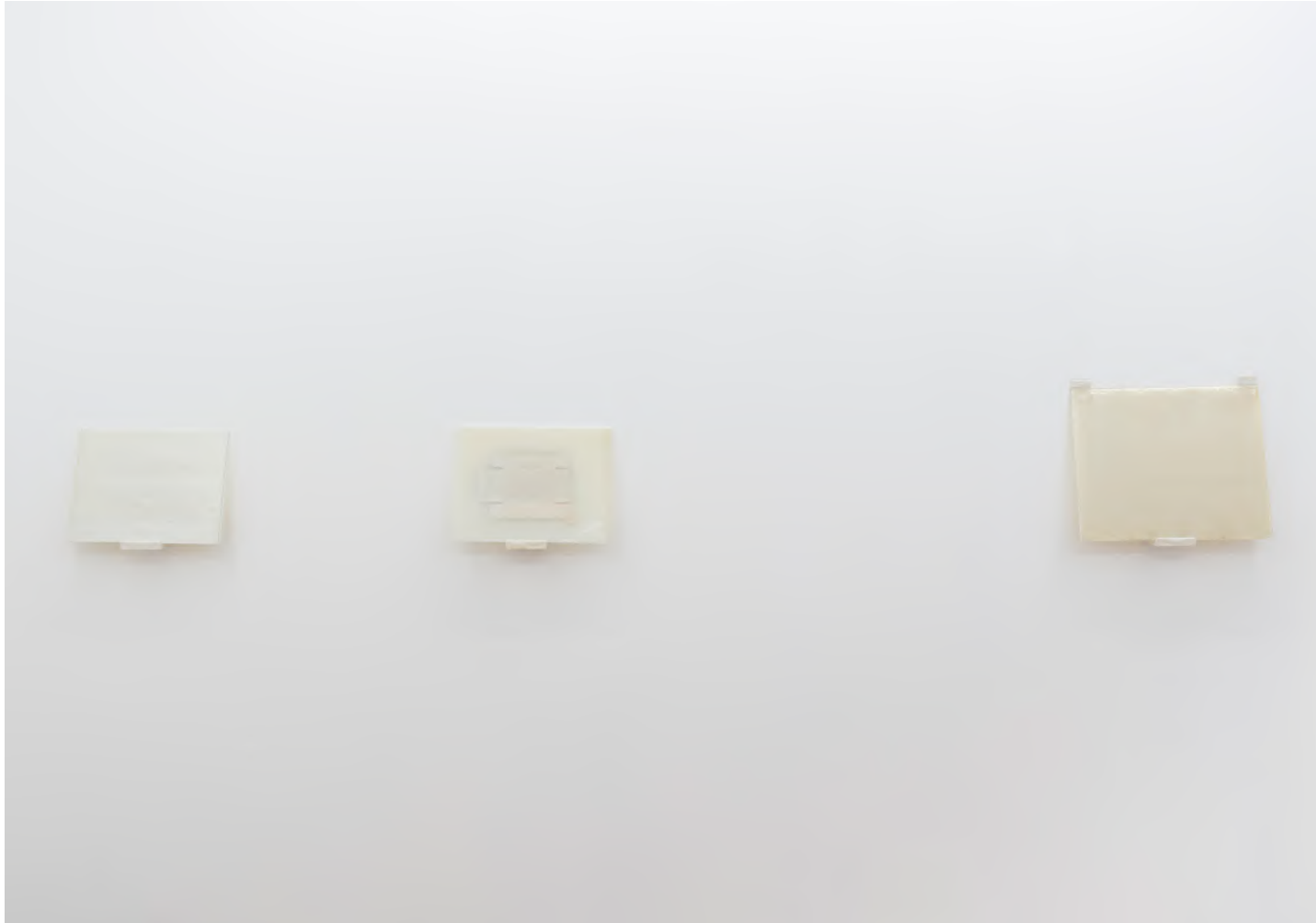
**BEATRICE BONINO**  
KILL YOUR DARLINGS  
21.03.2024 - 05.05.2024



Beatrice Bonino, Kill your darlings, 2024, exhibition view, Ermes Ermes, Rome



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Beatrice Bonino's background is in ancient languages and in particular in the duality – philosophical and grammatical (therefore structural) – of the *Mādhavīyadhātuvṛtti*, an ancient commentary on the grammatical roots of Sanskrit. The vestiges of an attention towards the morphological and metaphysical doubleness of things can be gleaned between the fog-like layers of what look like elevations of materials which might have otherwise been lost. Bonino's first solo exhibition at *Ermes Ermes* reflects upon the dynamics of disappearance and that which lingers in the wake of dissolution, in spirit or material form. In fact, it seems as if the stratified matter in Bonino's compositions are memories now embodied through the works on view.

The evanescent forms and materials employed by Bonino elude definition and are manipulated by the artist in an effort to verticalize and hang what would naturally rest differently. A white silk curtain segment is incapacitated by a sheet of glass. This replica of the curtain that has always hung in the bedroom of the artist's grandmother, presents with an un-mended hole. Despite Bonino's grandmother being the seamstress who made the curtain, the gash has always been there suggesting that sometimes the material results of an accident can be the proof of a life lived. While developing the exhibition, Bonino came across a text written by Mike Kelley in which the artist elaborated on the differences between a ghost (someone who disappears) and a spirit (a memory or something that is not there, but is). One result is a text-work in which Bonino lays out her own interest in the nuances of existence in relation to action, suggesting some connections between Kelley's ideas and ancient Indian philosophical thought. The viewer too is invited to contemplate on different notions—of being and of doing as well as of accident, and on how these relate to the memory and preservation of one's existence. Each time the artist visits her grandmother, something new in her bedroom has vanished: one half of the bed and the handwritten notes which used to populate the surfaces of the room are now gone. Like in a dance between inanimate things – a *Fantasia* – the sight is disorienting, leaving a strong sense of the presence of an absence. The curtain remains.

“Kill your darlings” is part of the methodological wisdom that comes from creative writing processes. The advice is to coolly edit out any writing that doesn't serve the wider purpose of the narrative, to renounce to and shed any prose that doesn't fit, no matter how exquisite it sounds – regardless of whether it got you to where you are now – it can be sacrificed. Bonino often finds herself killing her darlings, storing them for the next time. While waiting for a more appropriate context in which to exist, they live on within the artist's desire.

Chiara Siravo, 2024



Beatrice Bonino  
*Orlo* (2024)  
Glass, silk, plastic  
30x40cm (11,8x15,7")

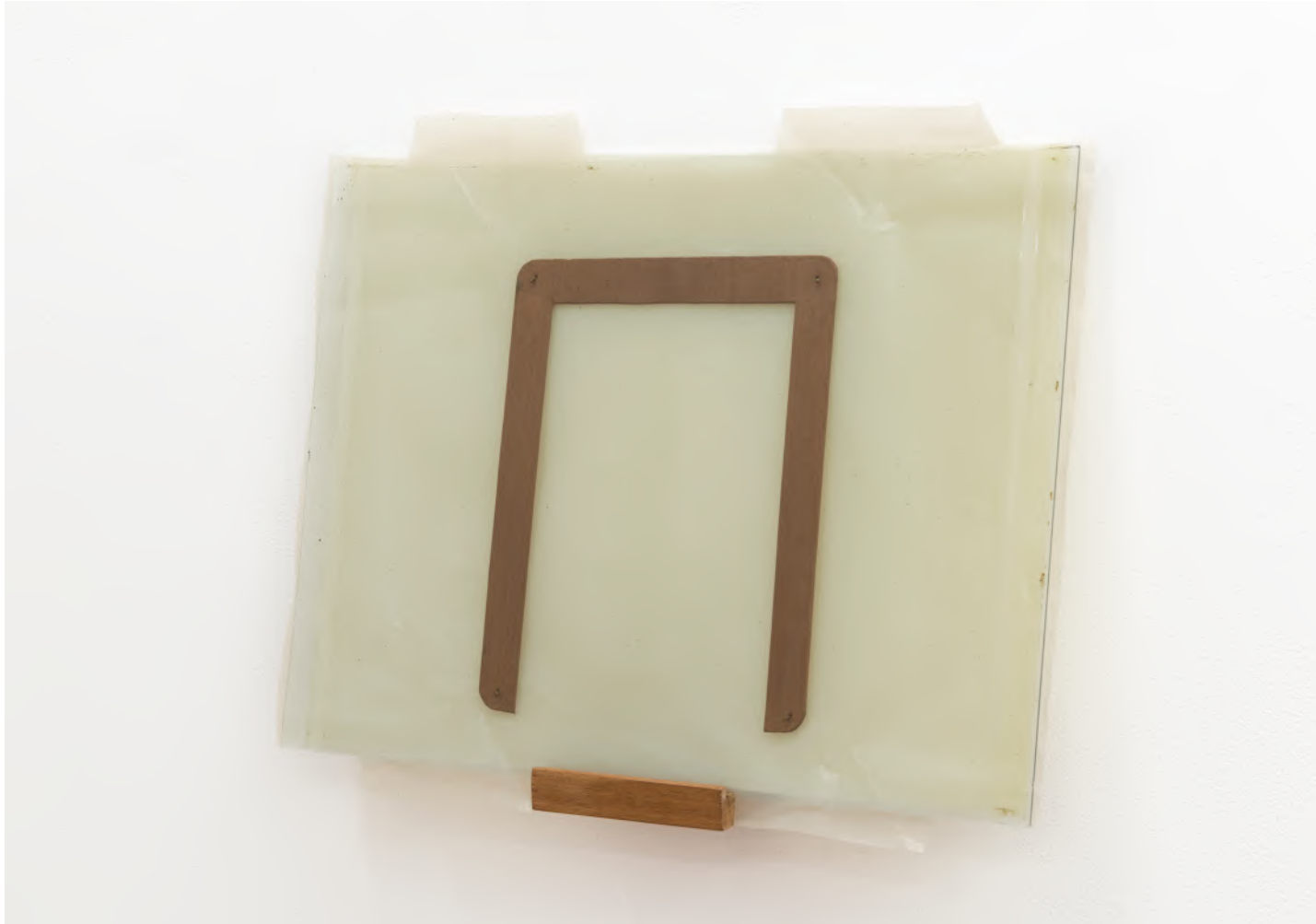


Beatrice Bonino  
*Senza titolo*, 2024  
Plastic, glass, cardboard, paper, crystal glass  
30x40cm (11,8x15,7")



Beatrice Bonino  
*Senza titolo*, 2024  
Glass, plastic, rubber  
40x50cm (15,7x19,6")





Beatrice Bonino  
*Senza titolo*, 2023  
Moiré, nylon, plastic, glass  
34x40,5cm (13,3x15,9")



Beatrice Bonino, Kill your darlings, 2024, exhibition view, Ermes Ermes, Rome



Beatrice Bonino  
*Letto*, 2024  
Glass, plastic, silicon  
30x40cm (11,8x15,7")



Beatrice Bonino  
*Oinops pontos*, 2024  
Found photographic print, plastic  
20x30cm (7,8x11,8")





## On the notion of existence

I saw a vase drawn on page five of Mike Kelley's Existence Problems. The glimpse of a seemingly dormant memory: the vase is mentioned as archetypal object of existence in countless ancient philosophical Indian texts. This is certainly due to its common presence and clear functional purpose; it is also more specifically considered to be a particular type of object. In Sanskrit this object is called *vikāryam*, it involves the appearance of a new quality in the matter which is subjected to that transformation. Just like in the example, he transforms gold into a bracelet, in the same way he transforms clay into a vase. It is an object which exists only in its final phase – after the transformation of the original matter – but also all along the action involving its creation since the intention is present in the maker from the very start. In Kelley's letter, the vase is represented as falling off a surface, he wonders what is being displaced by that vase taking up that space, he calls it 'the living dead' and wants to knock it off. I won't be any longer.

This is not it. A few years back I translated a late medieval Indian commentary about the notion of action and, in particular, that of existence as action. The author says that the verb 'to be' (*bhū-*) is employed in the sense of 'existence' (*sattā*) and that this existence can be explained as 'the fact of carrying one's own self' (*ātmabhāraṇam*). I was, again, struck when, in his letter, Kelley writes of 'self perpetuating' when he is concerned with proving his own existence through the mirrors which are the others. What is existence if not the the continuation of one's self?

While I can't neglect that the starting point of Kelley's reasoning is an ontological (and visual?) one, I for once want to enjoy the freedom of not making any specific point. The ancient Indian philosophers in question were considering the linguistic aspect of it all but I can't help but notice a similarity between the dialectic tools that both they and Kelley employ while demonstrating what existence is. Indian philosophers distinguish between general and specific actions, the first being actions such as doing and being, and the second such as cooking or walking. When someone asks 'what is he doing?', the answer cannot be 'he is existing'. Not because existing is not an action – the philosophers have proven that existence is the action par excellence because presupposed by any other action. But it is not a particular one, such as the one expressed by 'he cooks' etc. One asks for the specific, unknown activity of something whose existence is, on the contrary, already known, and not at all for the known existence of someone. For this reason, one cannot reply 'he is existing' since existing is also a general action just like doing. Kelley unconsciously (?) makes use of this meant-to-be flawless question-answer method in his letter:

hi 1) fine, what have you been doing?

2) not much. Just hanging around yea, just being here

1) just existing

2) yes, I exist

me too

There is only one exception, according to the philosophers, for which one is allowed to answer 'he exists' to that question, namely if one is concerned with the disappearing of one's self, through death. If existing is understood as I am still alive, I have not disappeared yet, I linger. Is it possible Kelley had this in mind while questioning existence? And don't we all.

This unrequired comparison finds its reason in a simple appreciation for common and time transversal mental human categories.



Beatrice Bonino (b.1992, Turin) lives and works in Paris; holds a PhD in Sanskrit at Université Sorbonne-Nouvelle.

Solo and group exhibitions: 2024 (upcoming) Cosetta at Bonner Kunstverein, DE; Galerie Molitor (solo show), Berlin, DE; Post Scriptum. Un museo dimenticato a memoria at MACRO, Rome, IT; 2023 Living Spaces at Galerie Molitor, Berlin, DE; Cosetta at MMXX, Milan, IT; If I did, I did, I die at Jacqueline Sullivan gallery, New York, US.