

## Press Release

**Isabella Costabile**

***It appears to be solid***

**April 16 – May 24, 2025**

The sculptures in *It appears to be solid* are assembled from objects as ordinary as the Earth is round. Some objects are explicitly mundane, like a shower head, others less so, like the unnameable rims, funnels and welded bits of metal. We know we've seen these objects before although we cannot exactly remember where, just like we know that the Earth spins around the Sun although we can't exactly explain why.

Astronomers constructed devices and models such as astrolabes, telescopes or loxocosms to explain why. Costabile's sculptures recall the forms of these instruments – their spheres, orbits, and upright postures – though they do not explain anything. Looking at them, we're not even sure if the world that they refer to even has moons or stars.

Historically, the materiality of astronomical instruments – stone, metal, wood – was less important than the immaterial forces of the universe they measured or modelled. In Costabile's sculptures, air, light and planetary movement become fan guards, lampshades and bicycle parts unearthed from garages or saved from the streets. Although these objects' existence is the very result of modern physics' industrial application, the miraculous mastery of gravity and time lies illegible upon their surfaces.

Contemporary satellite networks and GPS systems have long since replaced mechanical cosmological models. Where our experience of our place in the universe was one mediated by metal, wood or stone, there now appears to be “nothing”: code, lasers, neural networks. Our cosmos has been “dematerialised”. Costabile's sculptures, although obviously material, are also made of nothing, a different kind of nothing, the nothing that threatens to reduce objects to trash.

Nothing is a colonial fiction as old as the very first astronomical instruments. *Res nullius, terra nullius*, nobody's thing, nobody's land, nothing. A “nothing” that allows a continent to be “discovered” or a planet to be conquered. Against the fantasy of unmediated “objectivity” that has animated Western science's expansion into the universe, Costabile's works do something else with this “nothing”. Making her sculptures from the latent and unthought content of objects – be they ordinary or celestial – Costabile shows us a “nothing” whose materiality and mythology require new systems, and many new worlds, in order to measure its solidity.

Aodhan Madden

**Isabella Costabile** (b. 1991, USA) lives and works in Milan and Grosseto. Recent solo exhibitions include *le vite*, Milan, 2024; *Almanac*, 2023. Her work has been included in group exhibitions at *le vite*, Milan, 2024; Palazzo Re Rebaudengo, Guarene, 2023; *zaza'*, Naples, 2023; Casa Masaccio, San Giovanni Valdarno, 2022; Palazzo delle Esposizioni, Rome, 2020.