

Francesco Pacelli
nineteeneightyseven

22 November, 2025 - 7 February, 2026

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What happens before anything happens.

nineteeneightyseven turns toward that suspended, pre-human interval where matter hasn't yet committed, where form is still negotiating its own arrival, where time has not yet stepped forward. The year preceding the artist's birth becomes a lens, a way of examining the world as pure potential.

Pacelli engages this territory with precision rather than mysticism. The exhibition gathers five wall pieces and three sculptures, each one emerging from a different technical universe. Colored-pencil drawing, mark-making, wood engraving, metal casting, Raku ceramics, and hybrid material processes sit together without resolving into a single style. Their dissonance is intentional: each technique behaves like a separate hypothesis about what matter might do before it becomes matter-as-we-know-it.

The wall works read like fragments from parallel systems, small portals with their own internal laws. Some suggest surfaces stabilising for the first time; others feel like artefacts from an early stage of consciousness, before representation attaches itself to memory or narrative.

The three sculptures on the floor complicate the field further. They are not monumental, yet they exert a dense gravitational presence - objects that seem caught mid-transition, as if arrested between one state of being and another. Metal, clay, composite structures: all of them feel slightly unanchored, as though still testing the rules of their own formation.

There is no pursuit of formal unity here. Pacelli intentionally fractures his vocabulary, allowing each work to articulate its own logic. Yet the exhibition never drifts into chaos. Subtle framing, recurring spatial gestures, and a shared atmosphere of suspension bind the pieces into a loose constellation. It's coherence without closure, structure without simplification.

What emerges is a lucid ambiguity, a space where origins do not function as singular events but as a series of thresholds. The works sit on these thresholds, alert to the strange intelligence of materials before they choose their final shape. They examine the world not as it is, but as it might be in the quiet instant before becoming.

nineteeneightyseven is not a reconstruction of the year before the artist's birth. It is a proposition: that the "before" is never past, never closed. It continues to hum beneath everything - a field of beginnings that remain unfinished, and perhaps must remain so.

Text by Maria Valeria Biondo



Francesco Pacelli

(b. 1988, Perugia, Italy) lives and works in Milan, Italy.

Francesco Pacelli graduated in Design from Politecnico di Milano. His artistic journey started from an interest in materiality and technology before transitioning into contemporary art. He assisted artist Roberto Cuoghi during the making of the exhibition *Putiferio* at Hydra Slaughterhouse, Deste Foundation for Contemporary Art in Greece. He was also involved in the artistic direction of *Dimora Artica*, a project space in Milan.

Pacelli's work spans various mediums, including ceramics, synthetic materials, metals, drawings, and light. He creates sculptures, immersive installations, and drawings that explore themes such as the intersection of science and spirituality, the relationship between nature and artifice, and cosmic narratives. His creations often merge into fantastic and alternative environments, offering viewers an escape into unreal yet plausible scenarios.

Through his work, Pacelli invites viewers to question the boundaries between reality and imagination, offering a space for reflection on the complexities of the contemporary world.

His recent exhibitions include *Dark Forest* at El Chico in Madrid (2024), *Stones and stars and spells* at Des Bains in London (2023), *Holobiont Rapsody* at Eastcontemporary in Milan (2021), *Notturmo* at UnaVetrina in Rome (2020), *Fishy Fishy Fishy X* at Rehearsal in Milan (2019), and *Abisso Elastico* at Current Project in Milan (2019). He has also participated in group exhibitions at venues such as Haus N in Athens (2022), Manufacture et Musée National in Sèvres (2022), Spazio Volta in Bergamo (2021), Musée National Adrien Dubouché in Limoges (2019), and Nerve Visual Gallery in Londonderry (2016).





Tempesta, 2025
engraved wood
42 x 30 cm



Wind, exhausted, not yet, 2025
acrylic spray on paper
42 x 30 cm





Time before time (Fuoco), 2025
series, wood boxes, epoxy resin, Raku ceramics, cellulose fibers, vinyl glue, plaster
70 x 100 x 4 cm







I promise I've heard a stone whispering, 2025
soft pastels on paper
93 x 69 cm



Time before time (Luce), 2025
dried sphagnum moss, ceramics, LED light
75 x 30 x 8 cm





Adele (particles colliding), 2025
ink on paper
42 x 30 cm



Transmutation of a seashell into a butterfly, 2025
coloured pencils on paper
42 x 30 cm



Time before time (Suolo), series, 2025
wood box, epoxy resin, wood chipboard, clay, pewter
70 x 30 x 4 cm









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