

April 10 | May 24, 2026

Riddle: I grew so well last summer that I would like to do it again, but, well, a gigantic hand takes me, tears me off, and my last thought is: I hope they put me in a nice vase. I can still feel the tingling on my back of a thousand busy insects, they work a lot, they go so fast that sometimes I believe my skin is a road. I see all the seasons, and all these moons make me shine. Now the sun acts on me, it makes me dry more and more, crumble in silence, I become smaller and smaller, I shatter, I am multiplying, soon I will be a bit here and a bit there. They say I think too much, and I think badly, but I stopped doing so definitively since Ernesto, one night, asleep beside me and speaking in his sleep, asked an invisible interlocutor: where does light begin? From the lightbulb or from the eye?

I love traveling at night, this time I bought myself two seats so I could stay comfortable, but above all because I have found that I am too sensitive to the smells and the heat of strangers. I would like to fall asleep immediately and wake up already at destination, but I cannot fall asleep. I would sleep more willingly in the company of my sisters, of my brothers, and make ourselves beautiful in the morning for the sun. Someone could walk on my head and take away everything that is there, I hope so. Then I swam a lot, so much that I moved away forever from the place I knew and in which I would never return, with the house on my back that became bigger and heavier, so for a while I stayed there, on the sand, until finally I broke and a part of me rolled into the seabed for a long time. I softened, I became tiny, and finally I returned to the shore, a shore unknown to me, someone picked me up and left me here.

From here I see everything, indeed, I cannot see more than this, except with thought, I move a little further and a new scene composes itself. But here it is on the road! It runs from one side to the other. I go down quickly and take it, down in a dive faster and faster, faster and faster. With a silent boom I crash against the earth, no sound followed, no one reacted. And here I am, after long years, turning like a music box, even though I have become quite fat, much shorter, and alone. Every now and then, when we are all in line next to each other, it seems to me that we are going to war, we look like an immense army, with the lances pointed to the sky, marching toward the battle. The first time they crushed us I feared that I would never get up again, but then, promptly, they were all standing again and the wind moved us. What a wonderful day!

And I am also out of tune. I am out of tune but I sing anyway. I know I am out of tune because I am not yet deaf and I can hear myself, and I sing, not for pleasure, but because I feel that I must do it, I don't know how to say it, as soon as I see her I sing, and I sing also when Ernesto leaves. All of a sudden an electric discharge invades my nervous system, it expands and makes its way in me, like boiling sap that wants to gush out from every pore, as if it wanted to tear my body away and bring it back home, its true home. From a deep height I remain suspended for a moment and then the continuous, hammering, irresistible dive resumes. And after having been chewed for a few minutes, here I am again: a tasty trap for insects. What am I?

Diego Gualandris (Bergamo, IT, 1993) lives and works in Rome, IT. He graduated in Painting in 2018 at the Accademia Carrara, Bergamo. Recent and upcoming solo exhibitions include: 2026 - ADA, Rome, IT. 2025 - Studio Pesca, curated by Arianna Pavoncello and Carolina Latour, Milan, IT. 2022 - ADA, Rome, IT; Istituto Italiano de Cultura Ciudad de México, curated by Matteo Binci, Mexico City, MX. 2019 - ADA, Rome, IT. 2018 - Tile Project Space, with Riccardo Sala, Milan, IT. Recent group exhibitions include: 2026 - Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Moderna e Contemporanea, Rome, IT. 2025 - Museo MACRO, curated by Luca Lo Pinto and Cristiana Perrella, Rome, IT; Proyecto Nasal, Mexico City, MX. 2024 - Studiolo, curated by Maria Chiara Valacchi and Antonio Di Mino, Milan, IT. 2023 - Triennale Milano, curated by Damiano Gulli, IT; Panorama L'Aquila I ITALICS, curated by Cristiana Perrella, L'Aquila, IT; CURA. Basement, Rome, IT; Galerie Kandlhofer, Vienna, AT; Museo MACRO, curated by Luca Lo Pinto, Rome, IT; Mai 36 Galerie, curated by Antonio Grulli, Zurich, CH. 2022 - Proyecto Nasal, curated by Matteo Binci, Mexico City, MX. 2020 - Quadriennale d'arte 2020, curated by Sarah Cosulich and Stefano Collicelli, Palazzo delle Esposizioni, Rome, IT. In 2026 he has been awarded the Connessioni Urbane competition, promoted by Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Moderna e Contemporanea, in collaboration with Techbau S.p.A, Rome, IT; in 2020 the Pollock-Krasner Foundation Grant, New York, US.