

This once stood erect among mortals, stood at the heart of destiny, within the annihilating one, at the heart of the not-knowing-whither, almost existent, and bent stars toward itself from heavens made secure. Angel, to you I show it still, there! In your gaze may it at last be saved, now finally upright. Columns, pylons, the sphinx, the spire that grayly yearns, from a declining or foreign city, of the cathedral.

Rainer Maria Rilke

In the Duino Elegies, Rilke speaks to us of an invisible world within a visible one. Of love and death; of life and its undoing, but also of its beauty and of the terror that dwells within both permanence and change. In the Seventh Elegy — perhaps the most luminous of the ten, where lament and anguish for human fragility seem suddenly to redeem themselves in a vital surge — within the close-pressed dialogue with the Angel, Rilke offers the signs of an earthly life exalted through the forms that resist time. It is a gesture of vindication that passes through a gaze lingering also upon architecture and sculpture: columns, sphinxes, cathedrals, raising themselves toward the sky in an attempt to withstand the annihilating power of destiny that will translate them into ruins, and which the poet ultimately entrusts to the Angel's memory and protection.

Moving beyond human despair and anguish, one of the most celebrated lines in all the Elegies, "Hiersein ist herrlich" (being-here is glorious), implies the accidentality of life and the endurance of its beauty through all its traces. Thus, even after man, the ruin is a fulfilment in act, a sublimation of change that continues after the loss of every primordial function. It is still desire, and that which has been consumed, withdrawn, carries within itself a beyond. In the process of subtraction, in certain ways and for certain forms, there exists a condition of appearing to which some forms of nature belong, independently of their anthropization.

Lunaria annua belongs to this genealogy; its definitive form coincides, in fact, with loss. When the seed falls and the matter retracts, what remains is a thin membrane, a silvery disc that holds back nothing but its own transparency. It is something that seems to have crossed time through erosion, as though a ruin; a vegetal ruin. This designates a device, an epistemic figure, even before being an iconographic motif. It is what remains when the content has evaporated, what survives as casing and imprint, calling to mind the mullioned windows opened beneath moonlight, the pylons left to support the stars, or those spires of a cathedral, thorns that pierce the sky, which Rilke entrusts to the Angel. The ruin, as Georg Simmel wrote, is the place where nature re-enters human work and reabsorbs it without entirely destroying its intention. Lunaria is the specular inverse: it is nature that produces its own ruin, an organism that surrenders itself to form when life withdraws.

The exhibition is constructed upon this threshold — between fullness and void, between function and relic; between the wonder of Hiersein (being-here) and the dread of Nirgends (nowhere). The works take on its logic, and as with ruins, or with Lunaria annua, they configure themselves through desiccation, through the lightening of their own mass, or through an outright change of state.

At the centre of Francesca Polizzi's research, for years now, lies raw wool used as a residual medium: through felting, she orders its fibre, amalgamates fragments, obtaining a fabric — and with it the echo of a function — which is then further processed through digital printing and encaustic painting techniques, as in the Tillite series, or through silkscreen with rust-based inks.

In the ceramic series titled Elegie, wool also becomes binder and structure, used to reinforce the clay. A practice that recalls those of past sculptors' bozzetti, as in Michelangelo's River God, but which in this case also confronts the firing process of terracotta and the subsequent glazing. The animal fibre consumes itself, leaving in the clay the imprint of its own absence, generating volumes and surfaces that take shape as scorched remnants of architectural carcasses, glistened by the ceramic's vitreous skin.

The bond with architectural motifs — the study of the archaic forms of sacred places, of vestibules but also of the deepest explorable cavities of the earth — returns in the two columns of In Antis/2: two long stalactite verticals, erected from floor to ceiling, pallid and barely translucent, like inverted Trajan columns, with a descending narration of geological history. Volta takes up the scheme of cross vaulting and inverts its orientation. The evocation of a ceiling that repeats the sky becomes a debris of plaster collapsed to the ground, with its capitals and its columns, from which forms and animal scoriae emerge, close to the Simmelian vision on the destiny of nature's anthropization. Slender and desiccated, the Lunarie that give the exhibition its title appear as relics of barely perceptible thickness, emptied even of the weight of the bronze and brass from which they are made. Their flickering reflection, together with the light reverberated from the small ceramic ruins and that filtered through the tall limestone columns, seems to guide us into a night now nearing its end, in which we seem to perceive the glimmer of an approaching dawn, shortening the minutes and seconds of a marvellous obscurity.

Daniele Franzella

FRANCESCA POLIZZI

LUNARIA

Opening with the artist present: Saturday, May 9, 2026 - 6:00 PM to 9:00 PM

Until: June 20, 2026

Opening days and hours: Tuesday to Saturday, 3:00 PM to 7:00 PM

RizzutoGallery, Palermo - Via Maletto, 5

RizzutoGallery is pleased to present *Lunaria*, a solo exhibition by **Francesca Polizzi** (Palermo, 1988).

The exhibition—accompanied by a text by Daniele Franzella—marks a milestone in the artist's research, presenting a body of previously unpublished works that explore the concept of natural ruin and the process of subtraction as a generative principle of form.

The exhibition project begins with a reflection on *Lunaria annua*, a plant whose final configuration appears to be the result of a process of subtraction. When the fruit dries, the seed falls, and the matter empties, a thin membrane remains, a transparent disk that retains only the traces of its own existence.

Through references to Rainer Maria Rilke's *Duino Elegies* and the aesthetic reflections of Georg Simmel, the exhibition explores ruin not as simple dissolution but as an active form. If for Simmel, ruin represents the reabsorption of human work by nature, in Polizzi's vision, nature itself produces its own ruin, surrendering to a dimension of pure, lyrical apparition when biological life seems to retreat.

Francesca Polizzi's research is distinguished by an archaeological approach to natural materials—raw wool, wax, rosin, brambles—transformed through rigorous manipulation.

A series of raw wool felts printed with images of architecture and natural caves are then treated with the encaustic painting technique. This process achieves a layered concealment of the image, reducing its documentary value and restoring it as an opaque vision, a partially re-emerged mnemonic trace.

In her unpublished ceramic series, raw wool is mixed directly into the unfired clay. During firing, the organic component burns and disappears, leaving cavities and imprints in the ceramic body that evoke fragments of vanished civilizations, portions of walls, exedras, and broken arches where the dialogue between matter and absence becomes tangible.

The works on display thus present themselves as relics of a profound sensorial dimension, the results of a transformation in which the fragment and the shell become acts of presence and permanence.

Francesca Polizzi (b. 1988) lives and works between Palermo and Düsseldorf. Trained at the Academy of Fine Arts in Palermo, her research has received international recognition, including a residency at the Cité Internationale des Arts in Paris (2025) and the acquisition of her works for the permanent collection of the Stadtmuseum in Düsseldorf (2024). Recent exhibitions include the *Beringia* project for Gibellina, Capital of Contemporary Art 2026, and the *Pinakothek'a* exhibition at Palazzo Sant'Elia in Palermo. Since 2022 she has been represented by RizzutoGallery.