



COSMIC SYNTROPY:  
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Penelope Chiara Cocchi

ZURICH



## **“COSMIC SYNTROPY: SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT”**

22 October 2024

Liceo Artistico - Kantonsschule Freudenberg Zürich - Schweizerisch-italienisches Kunstgymnasium

Durational performance

Artist: Penelope Chiara Cocchi

### **General Organization**

Italian Consulate General, Zurich

Italian Cultural Institute, Zurich

Liceo Artistico Italo-Svizzero, Zurich

### **Project and realization**

Luca Valenziano, Scientific Attaché, Italian Consulate General, Zurich

Antonella Del Rosso, Physicist and Science Communication Expert, CERN

Penelope Chiara Cocchi, Artist

# THE PROJECT

Syntropy is opposed to Entropy and indicates the **tendency to create ordered structures**, typical of human behaviour. Throughout their history, human beings have been looking for rules, order, self-organization. The human mind constantly looks for rational explanations to the events that occur in life and in the nature around us. This distinctive tendency is what **prompted the creation of societies, cities, organizations, schools, families, nations**. Since the beginning of history, humankind has been looking for both social and mental order. This is why, everywhere in the world, organizations have sprung up to train new individuals to reflect that mindset and larger society, cities, institutions, laws, rules have sprung up.

However, Science tells us a different story: according to a very fundamental principle (second law of Thermodynamics), the Universe, everything that surrounds us, from the smallest particles to the largest galaxy, is going – and it will always go – towards an increase in entropy, that is, disorder, unorderedness, disorganisation.

Designed as an artistic convergence between these two opposite tendencies, this project aims at using democracy, debate, collaboration as tools for reaching a common understanding.

## THE PROJECT: ROUND TABLES TO TRAIN FOR DEMOCRACY

A series of participatory performances in which people of various backgrounds, cultures and origins are called to sit in a circle. An exchange of ideas, **a round table of human beings**, during which the participants try to find some order among **free thoughts on a common subject, of global significance for humankind**. The whole point is to build democracy through a bottom-up process.

The etymology of "**democracy**" comes from the Greek *dēmokratía*, composed of *dêmos* 'people' and *kratéō* 'command' = command of the people. The performance stems from a reflection on the primordial concept of democracy and is deliberately provocative: it instils doubt on the existence of a true democracy as the etymology suggests, by spontaneously staging an exchange of ideas between people who are not involved in the political sphere. The work critically probes the conviction that the complexity of global issues is so great that they can only be addressed by a **team effort that seeks the truly common good and truth**.

A project with the potential **to probe major issues of universal significance for human beings** in a shared way and always respecting the role of Science and its universally valid rules. Each performance is recorded in a documentary video.

COSMIC SYNTROPY IN ZURICH

Cosmic Syntropy will perform in the city of Zurich on October 22, 2024.

Featured in the **Contemporary Day** program, the event will be part of the "**Zurich in Italian**" project. The performance will take place in the **Liceo Artistico - Kantonsschule Freudenberg Zürich - Schweizerisch-italienisches Kunstgymnasium**.

Cosmic Syntropy works on **social awareness**, on the **free development of thought**, on the **construction of global citizens** fully aware of their choices, both individual and linked to the community. The project wants to bring all this to the future citizens, that is, young people, in the place where they can develop the roots of their knowledge and their approach to reality and society.

#### **"Zurich in Italian"**

"Zurich in Italian" is the most significant Italian-speaking cultural event in Zurich. It encompasses a diverse array of events, meetings, and performances dedicated to the Italian language and culture, organized by various academic and private institutions and associations in Zurich, under the patronage of the Italian Consulate General in Zurich.

#### **Liceo Artistico - Kantonsschule Freudenberg Zurich - Schweizerisch-italienisches Kunstgymnasium**

The Liceo Artistico is the only public high-school with an artistic focus in the Canton of Zurich. The school allows students to obtain a bilingual high-school diploma, in German and Italian, valid in both Switzerland and Italy.

TOPIC:  
THE UN 2030 AGENDA  
FOR A SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT



The themes covered in the various performances of the Cosmic Syntropy project concern social aspects, reflections on the world around us, possible future scenarios, ideas for a sustainable development, the creation of true democracies.

Many of the themes present in the Cosmic Syntropy program are included in the project designed by the **United Nations** and **called 2030 AGENDA FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS**.

With the aim of opening the doors to **a representation of an ideal democracy** to a group of students from a high-school class, it was decided to broaden the reflection to the Agenda 2030 tool and its vast contents with the aim of allowing young people to range in different areas of knowledge.

The Liceo Artistico Svizzero-Italiano in Zurich will host the performance, offering a combination of artistic and educational environment in the city of Zurich.

**The first part of the performance will be reserved to the students, young citizens and possible future artists.** In this way, we aim at maximising their **freedom of expression, both verbal and artistic**. They will be provided with **materials** such as colours, white sheets, blank canvases, clay, in order to allow them to express their ideas both through words, typical of the Cosmic Syntropy performances, and through the tools of their future job. Increasingly socially engaged, art must be able to capture and express the energy of its time, and this performance will allow young people to experience creative expression arising from dialogue and prompted by the comparison with others.

**The second part of the performance will involve in the circle scientists and professional figures** from the society, partly selected by the organizing committee, on the basis of their field of expertise, as well as their communication and relational skills. The purpose of this selection is to provide a rich content base to the exchange of ideas. **The young artists can also participate**, if they wish, and interact.

**The public will complete the performative circle:** those who actively participate in the temporary parliament will become an active part of the work of art.

The procedure will be **by show of hands**, each person will have a few minutes, and **dialectical comparison between participants will be encouraged**. **The artist will play the role of mediator**, allowing people to talk, asking questions, marking the rhythm of the performance.

The performative work will be of a **durational** type: its duration is not defined beforehand. **The circle will gradually narrow as participants leave the stage**, and **the artist will remain present as long as there is even one person** willing to engage in dialogue.



PAST

EVENTS

THEME: WATER

Solo exhibition, performative and participatory experimental project

Title: "Cosmic Syntropy: WATER"

Event organised in collaboration with Arts at CERN

Curated by Giacinto Di Pierantonio

Venue: Italian National Research Council (CNR), Area Territoriale di Ricerca di Bologna, Biblioteca Dario Nobili, Bologna.

13 January-29 February 2024

Performances: 13 January 2024, first performance; 3 February 2024, second performance.

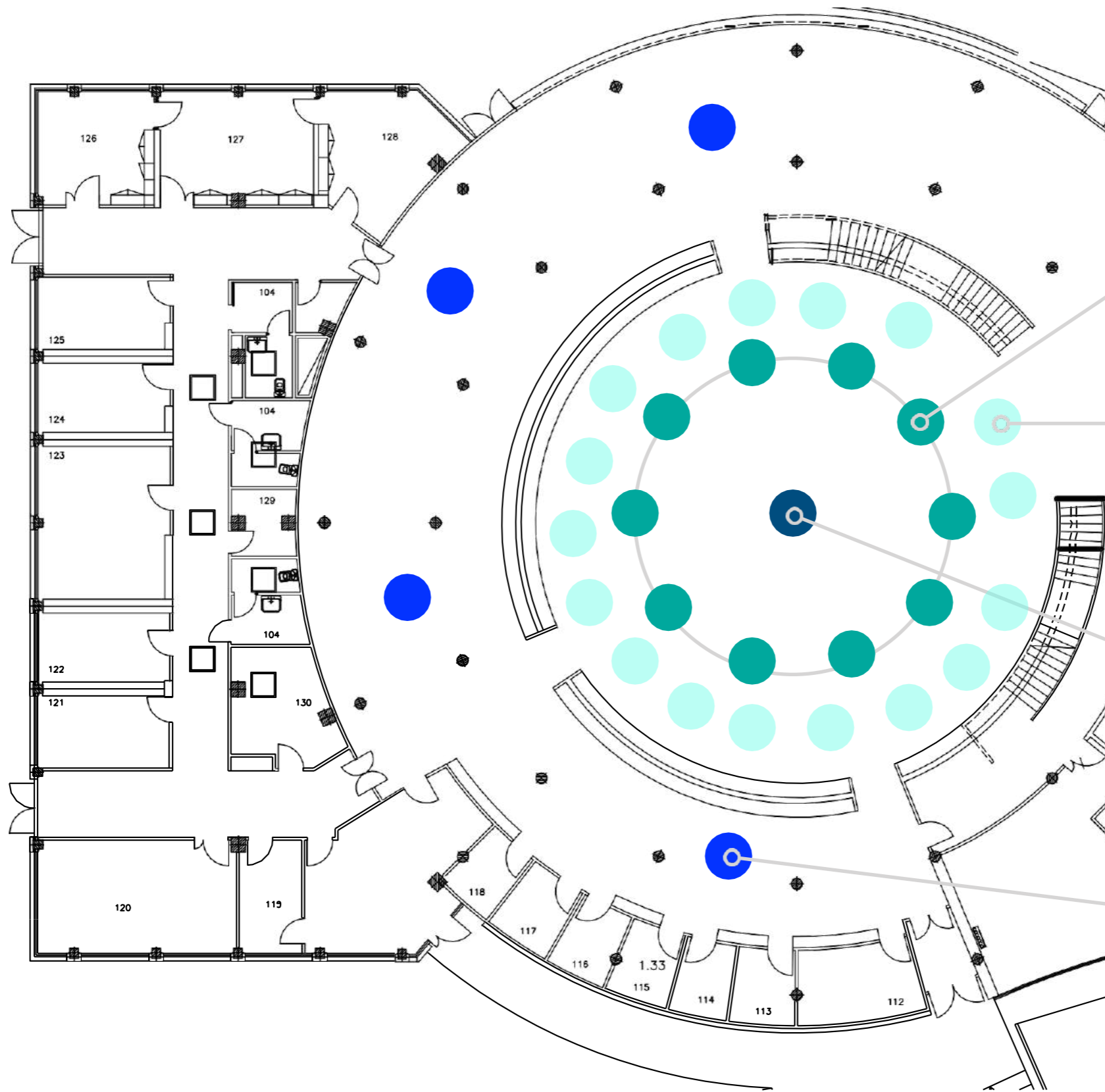
Art City, ARTEFIERA Bologna

The artist is invited by the CNR in Bologna to realise an exhibition of her works from the "Dinosaur's Pee" and "Balance Chessboard" series and, at the same time, to realise the performance of the "Cosmic Syntropy" series.

The architecture of the CNR library in Bologna spontaneously suggests the geometry of the round table. A large venue, that accommodated the core group and an audience of several dozen people.



La prima performance del 13/01/2024



The invited experts arranged in a circle in the central round table

The audience arranged around the central circle, called upon to participate throughout the performance

In the centre of the circle, the artwork 'Balance chessboard'.

The artworks in the series "Dinosaur's Pee"

CNR Library (Bologna) - ground floor plan

## **FIRST PERFORMANCE**

DATE: 13 January 2024

TYPE: Invited roundtable involving nine professionals, including the artist

Duration: 1h 44m

On 13 January 2024, the first performance involved a group of experts invited by the artist. They discussed about the theme of water by looking at it from various specific points of view. In this type of performance, the public and the artist ask the questions and trigger the exchanges on the given theme.

The experts:

Cristina Cocchi, occupational sociologist - H.R. Profexa Consulting

Cristina Dell'Acqua, classical languages teacher, Mondadori author

Antonella Del Rosso, Physicist, CERN

Roberto Di Caro, journalist

Giacinto Di Pierantonio, Curator

Franco Farinelli, Geographer

Laura Guerrini, Tenente Colonnello, Comandante Gruppo Forestale Modena, Arma dei Carabinieri

Vincenzo Levizzani, Physicist, CNR



La seconda performance del 03/02/2024

## **SECOND PERFORMANCE**

DATE: 03/02/2024

TYPE: Participative roundtable

Duration: 5h 24m

The second performance on 2 February 2024 involves a first group of professionals; after 60 minutes of exchanges within this first group, the participants move their chairs out of the inner circle and mix with the audience. From then on, the exchange takes place in the outer circle, freely, partially mediated by the artist. The performance has an evolution that depend on the behaviour of the participants: as they leave the table, the circle shrinks. The event has a natural and spontaneous duration: the artist remains present until the last participant remains in the circle.

The experts:

Antonella DelRosso, physicist, CERN

Roberto Di Caro, journalist

Giacinto DiPietrantonio, curator

Franco Farinelli, geographer

Laura Guerrini, Tenente Colonnello, Comandante Gruppo Forestale Modena, Arma dei Carabinieri

Vincenzo Levizzani, physicist, CNR

# THE ARTWORKS

"Balance Chessboard"  
Installazione  
Materiali: Legno  
Dimensioni: Ø110x H50 cm  
Anno: 2024







'Balance Chessboard' is the artwork positioned in the centre of the roundtable circle. A chessboard with a circular shape, with pawns belonging to a single team: a short circuit for an impossible game.

A game that is impossible to play without self-annihilation.

A metaphor for the balance of the human race, belonging to a single team, but always engaged in a battle fought within the 'walls' of its only planet, and which in our days has come to an end: only by possessing the atomic bomb can a country truly win. However, it is an illusory victory, capable only of self-destruction.





"You are drinking Dinosaur's Pee"

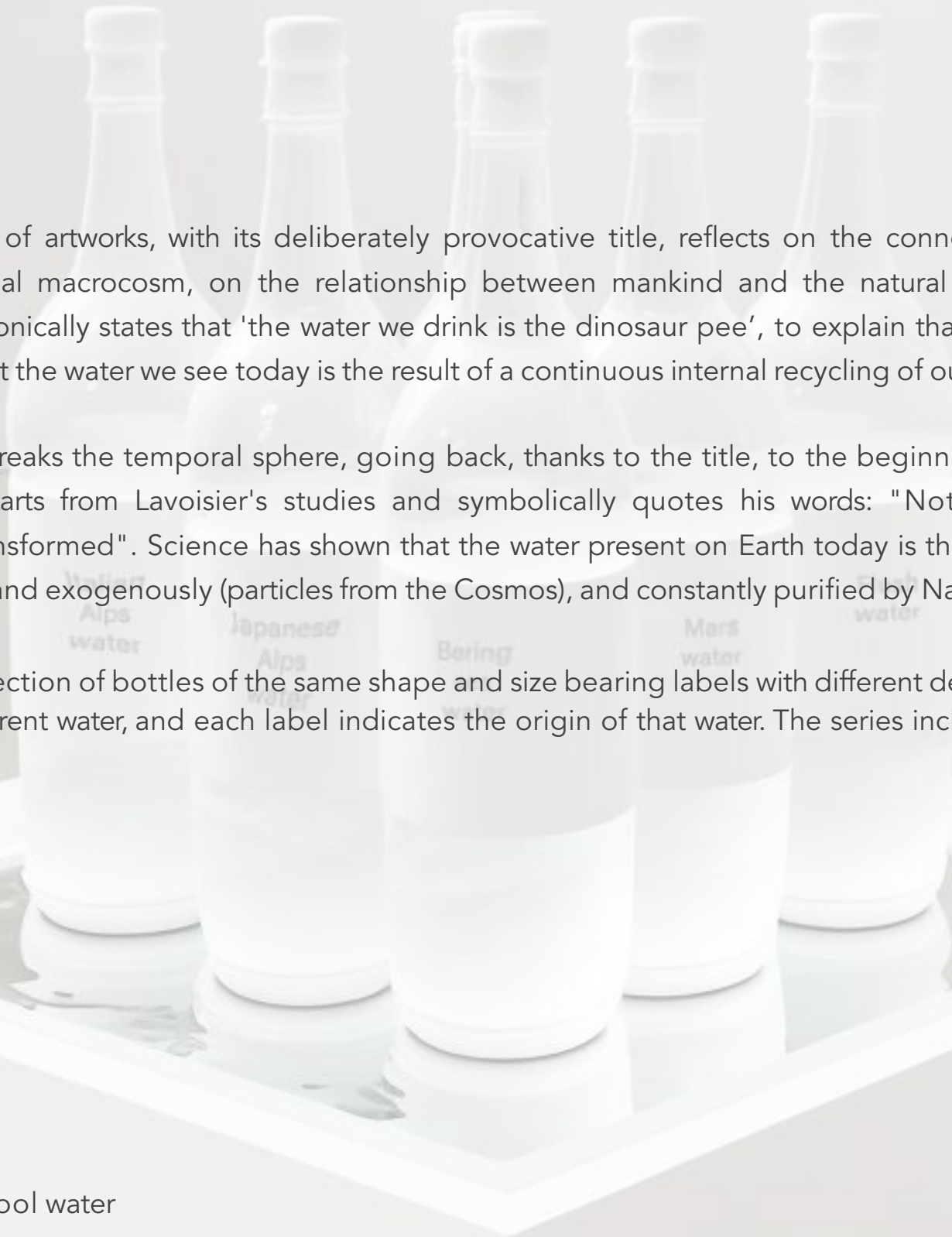
Serie "Dinosaur's Pee"

Installazione

Materiali: Bottiglie di vetro, acqua,  
etichette

Dimensioni: varie

Anno: 2024



The 'Dinosaurs' Pee' series of artworks, with its deliberately provocative title, reflects on the connections between the human microcosm and the terrestrial macrocosm, on the relationship between mankind and the natural world, often interpreted as separate entities. Science ironically states that 'the water we drink is the dinosaur pee', to explain that water has a common origin for the whole planet and that the water we see today is the result of a continuous internal recycling of our vital element.

The reflection deliberately breaks the temporal sphere, going back, thanks to the title, to the beginning of the Earth's history. The main topic of the series starts from Lavoisier's studies and symbolically quotes his words: "Nothing is created, nothing is destroyed, everything is transformed". Science has shown that the water present on Earth today is the same since the Genesis, as it is created endogenously and exogenously (particles from the Cosmos), and constantly purified by Nature.

The artwork consists of a collection of bottles of the same shape and size bearing labels with different descriptions. Each bottle contains transparent water, and each label indicates the origin of that water. The series includes several bottles with the following labels:

- Amniotic Fluid
- Mariana Trench Water
- Mediterranean Sea Water
- Italian Alps Water
- Japanese Alps Water
- Bering Sea Water
- Mars Water
- Flush water
- My neighbor's swimming pool water
- Toilet Flush Water / Pure water
- Pure water

WHAT'S NEXT

The 'Cosmic Syntropy' project aims at **bringing together scientific institutions with contemporary art institutions**, thus encouraging the dialogue between the STEM and the humanities.

This is an **inclusive and participatory project**, tailored each time on the local realities, always in collaboration with the institutions involved locally.

Each performance will create bridges between institutions - from the scientific and from the artistic fields - that are **geographically close**, from the same city or the same region, in the same way as the CNR and MamBO (Art City) institutions were brought together in Bologna.

The themes and methods of realization of the performances will be adapted to each venue, respecting the geography, the architectures and possibilities made available by the institutions. Details will be discussed between the artist, the curator and the institutions. Curators will be chosen locally and agreed between the artist and the institutions.

**The project includes various artworks**, including **participatory performances** (see next page) and **artworks, videos, photographs and paintings**, created by the artist on the given theme.

### **Potential performance dynamics:**

- Roundtable with invited experts
- Roundtable with participants without specific invitation
- Roundtable with visitors registered according to lists of required professions
- One-to-one dialogue with the artist

### Subjects for future performances:

- Democracy
- Around the SDGs
- The nuclear bomb
- Ecology
- The wealth distribution
- The Globalization
- Technology and life
- Reality and fiction
- Beauty and Truth
- Health and science: the body equation
- The Universe and Us: Stardust
- The intelligence: natural and artificial
- Motherhood

The audience will be invited to suggest topics of their interest for future performances.

# THE ARTIST



# PENELOPE CHIARA COCCHI

Born 1983, Cento (Ferrara), Italy

Lives and works between Bologna (Italy) and the USA

## MAJOR EXHIBITIONS

- Solo exhibition, experimental performative and participatory project Cosmic Syntropy, curated by Giacinto Di Pietrantonio. Event organized in collaboration with Arts at Cern, CERN, Geneva. CNR Area Territoriale di Ricerca di Bologna, Biblioteca Dario Nobili, Bologna, Italy, 13 January – 29 February 2024.
- Group Exhibition Combat Prize 2023, Selected artwork of the exhibition of the ten finalists, Section Graphics, Museo Civico Giovanni Fattori, Livorno, Italy, 2023.
- Group Exhibition: The Looking Glass and Through it. MISP Museum, Museum of Saint Petersburg 20-21 Century Art (with the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Consulate General of Italy in Saint Petersburg and the Italian Cultural Institute of Saint Petersburg), Saint Petersburg, Russia, 2020.
- Solo Exhibition: Penelope Chiara Cocchi: Atelier, MACRO Contemporary Art Museum of Rome, Rome, Italy, 19- 24 November 2019 (catalogue).
- Group Exhibition: Combat Prize 2018, award of distinction and selected artwork in the Sculpture and Installation section. Villa del Presidente, Livorno, Italy, 2018.
- Group Exhibition: Star Gate in The Friendship Project. The Venice Art Biennale, National Pavilion of the Republic of San Marino, Venice, Italy. 2017.
- Group Exhibition in the Spoleto Art Pavilion, Venice, Italy. 2017.
- Double Solo Exhibition with Erwin Wurm Star Gate. Palazzo Dandolo. On the occasion of The Venice Art Biennale, Venice, Italy. 2017.
- Solo Exhibition: Avatar. International Museum and Library of Music, Bologna, Italy. 2016.
- Solo Exhibition: We Are All Made of Stardust: Paintings on Natural and Mysteriously Found Objects. The Italian Cultural Institute of San Francisco, The Italian Consulate. 2015.
- Solo Exhibition: Forgotten Spaces: All That Is Left Behind. Palazzo Dandolo. On occasion of The Venice Art Biennale, Venice, Italy. 2015.
- Solo Exhibition: Driftwood Series. The Ringling Museum Art Center, Englewood, Florida. 2014.
- Group Exhibition: Ringling Underground. The Ringling Museum of Art, Sarasota, Florida. 2014.

## AWARDS

2023 Combat Prize 2023 Livorno, Italy Selected finalist – Section Graphics

2021 Canal Convergence – Water+Art+Light Scottsdale, Arizona, USA Selected artist Phase

I 2021 Premio Comel, Latina, Italy Selected artist Phase I

2020 The Looking Glass and Through it, Italian Cultural Institute of Saint Petersburg

Exhibition of the winners in Museum MISP (The Museum of St. Petersburg Art 20th–21st centuries), St Petersburg

Winner

2018 OfficinARS Award, Reggio Emilia, Italy Winner

2018 ARTDEX Art Competition, New York City, New York, USA

Winner 2018 Combat Prize, Museo Fattori, Livorno, Italy Finalist

2017 Premio Arte Laguna, Venice, Italy Finalist

2016 Trees Price. Bologna, Italy Winner

2010 Festival delle Arti (Festival of the Arts), Bologna, Italy Finalist

2009 San Vitale Photography Contest. Bologna, Italy Winner

2009 Art and Science Prize, Fondazione Marino Golinelli. Palace Re Enzo, Bologna, Italy.

Finalist 2008 MAGI 900 Museum, Pieve di Cento, Bologna, Italy. Finalist

[Link to the artist's complete CV](#)

[Link to the artist's website](#)

