

FRANCESCO PATRIARCA
Clay Ghost & The Spiral Stairs

2 December 2025 – 10 January 2026

Maggiore g.a.m. | 208 Boulevard Saint Germain – 75007 Paris

Galleria d'Arte Maggiore opens its Parisian space to present around fifteen works by the artist Francesco Patriarca that explore his poetics through the language of photography. The philosopher Hadrien France-Lanord writes of him: "These photographs transform our gaze, moving it away from the role of consumers hungry for spectacular images, establishing between them and us the gentleness of a visual porosity that connects us to their reality and touches us—literally." Influenced by the world of cinema and theatre, Francesco Patriarca's works stage the duality between presence and absence, black and white, true and false, and thus between reality and fiction.

The exhibition restores the most authentic essence of Francesco Patriarca's poetics, founded on a softness of out-of-focus - deliberate and subtle - that invites the viewer to move beyond the simple recognisability of the photographed object and instead question light, waiting, and perception. At the same time, these photographic series reveal the thread that Patriarca follows throughout his work: the staging of a duality and a tension, whether it oscillates between black and white, presence and absence, or within the illusion of authenticity.

In the *Clay* series, populated by "clay ghosts" that seem to emerge from a distant past, contemporary terracotta vases appear like remnants of an Etruscan or Greek antiquity, suspended perfectly between memory and history. Seriality, in Patriarca's practice, is never repetition but breath: a way of shifting the gaze from the object to the manner in which it is seen. Thus, through photography, the vases regain a new presence capable of resonating with the echo of ancient myth in the contemporary world. Alongside this cycle, silent and uninhabited architectures are revealed in the *Rooms* series, created in the empty rooms of *Villa Giustiniani Odescalchi*, where scenes from Federico Fellini's iconic film "*La Dolce Vita*" were once shot. Here, light and shadow reveal impalpable presences: doors, fireplaces, thresholds and passages as interior architectures—not merely places, but suspended presences where emptiness becomes the measure of time. Part of the same research is the composition *The Spiral Staircases*, whose protagonist is the architecture of another significant building: the Seylanov in Tbilisi, Georgia. Admiring its majestic frescoes and richly decorated staircases, Francesco Patriarca decides to let the quasi-phantasmal fictional character from his text *The Seylanov Brothers* evolve as if on the stage of this monument, between presence and absence, between light and darkness. Patriarca's technical approach is inseparable from the poetic tension that animates his work: the Polaroid is chosen for its intrinsic ability to preserve an alchemical force, a chemical reaction between light and matter that manifests itself in the density of black and white, transporting the viewer into a timeless dimension. Each image is born from a slow, almost meditative process, in which the photographic matter becomes an integral part of the work.

Biographical notes:

Born in Rome in 1974, Francesco Patriarca develops his research between photography, painting, and music. Since 2002, the year of the publication in Paris of his first monograph *L'appartement*, he has exhibited in galleries, museums, and institutions across Europe, Asia and the United States, including The Goss-Michael Foundation (Dallas), The Dactyl Foundation (New York), Fondazione Pastificio Cerere (Rome), the Museum of the Trajan Markets (Rome), the Musée Carnavalet (Paris), the Rencontres Photographiques en Sud Gironde, the National Gallery of Art of Tirana, MAXXI – National Museum of 21st Century Arts (Rome), MAMbo – Museum of Modern Art of Bologna, the Royal Palace of Caserta and the Rencontres d'Arles. His photographs, reportages, and portraits have been published in newspapers such as the *International Herald Tribune*, *Courrier International*, *La Repubblica*, *Corriere della Sera*, *Il Giornale dell'Arte*, *The Observer* and *L'Officiel*. His project *Clay Ghost* (2024–2025) has been the subject of several presentations and exhibitions in Rome, Paris, London, New York and Tbilisi.

His work emerges from personal experiences that transform into suspended visual narratives, between abstraction and figuration. Each series constitutes a chapter of an ever-evolving archive, a mental mosaic in which fragments of life touch and find new balances through artistic creation. Alternating high and low definition, sharpness and blur, his images never seek a consolatory effect: they are revelations, entrusting the viewer with the responsibility of interpretation—inviting them to cross an image that presents itself as a silent presence, almost an apparition.

Francesco Patriarca lives and works in Rome.