



Palazzo
Chigi Zondadari

BIANCA BONDI

Earth, Coral, Clouds

Curated by Fiammetta Griccioli and Cloé Perrone

CORTEMPORANEA

Fondazione Palazzo Chigi Zondadari

Via Banchi di Sotto, 46, Siena

18/05 – 8/12 2025

"Earth isn't just a blank sheet for the projection of human desire: the desire loop is predicated on entities (Earth, coral, clouds) that also exist in a loop form in relation to one another and in relation to humans."

Timothy Morton, *Dark Ecology*

The fourth edition of CORTEMPORANEA presents the exhibition *Earth, Coral, Clouds*, the first solo show in Italy by artist Bianca Bondi, curated by Fiammetta Griccioli and Cloé Perrone.

Bianca Bondi transforms the courtyard and rooms of the eighteenth-century Palazzo Chigi Zondadari into a dynamic interplay of organic and inorganic forms in constant flux. The exhibition title, **Earth, Coral, Clouds**, draws inspiration from philosopher Timothy Morton's *Dark Ecology*, a text that challenges conventional ecological thought and invites us to confront darkness, the unknown, and the uncomfortable truths of our existence within the natural world.

Within the context of Palazzo Chigi Zondadari, the exhibition amplifies the contrast between human intervention and the natural world, raising urgent questions about preservation, loss, and the future of our planet. In Siena, where history is embedded in materials — from *bottini* (underground aqueducts) to the timeless facades of palaces — Bondi's work resonates with a layered and living past. Here, her pieces interact with the architecture not as inert objects but as evolving systems. The palace itself, steeped in memory, absorbs and reflects the introduced materials, reinforcing the idea that space, like nature, is never static.

The exhibition opens in the ballroom with the installation ***The Nymphaeum (2025)***, a large copper basin filled with salt water, whose chemical reaction produces a turquoise pigment that distorts light, creating an illusion of depth and density. The water's reflection acts as a mirror, evoking the connection with the third eye found in ancient rituals, here symbolized by the monumental chandelier. Water — a recurring symbol in Bondi's work — invites viewers to reflect on the archetypal function of the collective unconscious. The installation, which recalls both a ritual chalice and an ancient nymphaeum, channels the ancestral relationship between water, ritual, and transformation, engaging in a dialogue with Roman-era statues like a sacred oracle site.

From the primary archetypal reference of water, the exhibition transitions into the dreamlike world of the ***Bloom (2025)*** vitrines. This ongoing series, which the artist has been developing for several years, is inspired by the sessile life of the crustacean *Megabalanus tintinnabulum*. Its interdependence with the surface to which it adheres, in the warm depths of the sea, becomes for Bianca Bondi a point of reflection on the stillness of dormant life. Just as memories and desires settle during sleep, the "blooms" inside the vitrines take on an esoteric symbolism as they are crystallized through chemical processes. Constantly evolving, the vitrines are referred to as "blooms" for their apparent vitality, sustained by the organic matter that slowly transforms and envelops objects from other times. Among these,

Palazzo Chigi Zondadari
Via Banchi di Sotto 46
Siena - 53100 - Italia

@palazzochigizondadari
++39 0577 1394407
fondazione@palazzochigizondadari.com

CORTEMPORANEA



books from the past evoke the image of an ideal activity before falling asleep. In the palace's bedrooms, the *Bloom* vitrines are nestled among existing furnishings, while in other rooms they are supported by curious columns that emphasize their hieratic permanence.

In the palace's dining room lies the site-specific installation ***What grows after us (2025)***. The impression of a meal never consumed — corroded by the oxidation of the tableware — emerges in the abandoned gesture of a silk tablecloth that, dragged toward the floor, lets fall the remnants of a vanished presence. Like in a calcified seabed, the circular-shaped relics interact with the laurel wreaths painted on the Venetian stucco floor.

The two tapestries on the walls, from the ***Lorelei (2024)*** series, sublimate the idea of a saline aquatic environment by evoking its undulating surface. They are manipulations of photographs of copper amphorae submerged in water, translated into woven textile compositions and enriched with flowers such as amaranth, jasmine, and hydrangea — chosen for their symbolic value of spiritual protection.

The visual continuity of the evergreen moss extends from the dining room into the gallery, where two works from the ***Cabinets (2025)*** series are on display. The collection of found objects housed within them — carefully selected by the artist — recalls small pharmaceutical containers and alludes to the preparation of healing potions. The cabinets become micro-ecosystems animated by organic materials such as shells, salts, and moss. The final work in the exhibition, the cabinet *Buio Liquido*, circles back to the purifying ritual of combustion evoked by the outdoor installation ***Procession for the lost and found (2025)***.

From the arcane and ritualistic medical practices of *The Nymphaeum*, evocative of ancestral rites in the forest, the exhibition arrives at the quintessence of therapeutic art with the *Cabinets*, which ideally complete the curatorial circle, reconnecting us to the most intimate and symbolic dimension of healing.

CORTEMPORANEA, initiated in 2022 by Flavio Misciattelli, President of the Fondazione Palazzo Chigi Zondadari, has established itself as a platform for dialogue between contemporary art and historical heritage. Italian and international artists are invited to create site-specific works in the courtyard and rooms of the palace. Following editions dedicated to Pietro Ruffo (2022), Paolo William Tamburella (2023), and Zhanna Kadyrova (2024), Flavio Misciattelli has invited Fiammetta Griccioli and Cloé Perrone as visiting curators to select the upcoming artists.

Bianca Bondi (Johannesburg, South Africa, 1986) lives and works in Paris. Multidisciplinary in approach, her practice involves the activation or elevation of common objects through chemical reactions, primarily using saltwater. The materials she works with are chosen for their transformative potential or their intrinsic and symbolic properties. Her aim is to create experiences that go beyond the visual and sustain the life of matter, with a focus on interconnectedness, transience, and cycles of life and death. Passionate about ecology and occult sciences, Bondi combines these elements into transformative multidisciplinary works where the aura of objects plays a central role. Often site-specific, her poetic outcomes are deeply connected to the places in which they exist. She graduated from the École Nationale Supérieure d'Arts de Paris-Cergy in 2012, after previously studying at the WITS School of the Arts in Johannesburg.

Palazzo Chigi Zondadari

Opening hours

Corte e Bianca Bondi *Earth, Coral, Clouds* : Monday - Friday ore 8.00 - 19.00

Casa Museo:

private and group tours by reservation: prenotazioni@palazzochigizondadari.com

www.palazzochigizondadari.com