

Form-Given Poetry Mario Trimarchi's Radical Landscapes

An interview with Mario Trimarchi



Portrait: Mario Trimarchi – Photo © Fabio Viganò

Words: Éva Molnár

Mario Trimarchi's art is deeply philosophical and poetic. The world that unfolds in his black-and-white drawings comes to life in his sculptures. Heavy, raw materials—stone, wood, steel—enter into dialogue with fragile, airy elements—glass, feathers, synthetic fibers, in a timeless harmony. Brussels Design September welcomed the Compasso d'Oro-winning Italian designer as its Guest of Honor. His first solo exhibition in Brussels, Radical Landscapes, opened on September 11 at A. Galerie. Ahead of the screening of Ten Times Black, a documentary on his practice, at the Italian Cultural Institute, we sat down with Trimarchi to talk about landscapes, fragility, and the rhythm of drawing.

WHAT INSPIRED RADICAL LANDSCAPES, AND HOW DOES IT RELATE TO THE THEMES EXPLORED IN THE EXHIBITION ?

I spend half my time working with companies to create objects that people can live with every day. But the other half of my time belongs to my own research—experiments that are not dictated by marketing or necessity, but by questions. Over the years I realized that these explorations, these combinations of unlikely materials, slowly started to build landscapes.

That is how the six collections of this exhibition were born: Close to the Edge, Silent Storms, Fragile Dialogues, Stones that Breathe, Echoes of Light, and Suspended Natures. Each is a fragment of this larger landscape, each a way of exploring the tension between weight and lightness, permanence, and fragility.



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Barricades. Per sfiorare le nuvole – Photo © Santi Caleca

For me, a landscape is created when two objects begin to interact—with each other, with space, and with people. These are not landscapes to be judged or admired, but ones that ask questions: Where does art meet design? Where does nature meet the artificial? What will survive us—our fragile lives, or the humble glass that can last thousands of years? These are the questions I wake up to every morning.

COULD YOU HIGHLIGHT ONE FROM THE DIFFERENT COLLECTIONS WHICH IS PARTICULARLY MEANINGFUL TO YOU ?

Yes, one that resonates deeply is Close to the Edge. It reflects our condition today: we are all living at the edge. The works in this series are extremely fragile, sometimes just a thin glass that a child could break in seconds. Yet even in this fragility, the pieces seem to whisper to one another, asking questions that ultimately return to us.



“I inherited a very elastic sense of time. A day in Sicily can last 48 hours—or five minutes. Greek and Roman mythology feels as if it happened yesterday”

La stanza dello scirocco, 2012 – Ink on paper, Mario Trimarchi

YOU WERE BORN IN MESSINA, SICILY. WHAT ASPECTS OF YOUR HOMELAND AND FAMILY HAVE YOU CARRIED WITH YOU, AND HOW DO THEY CONTINUE TO RESONATE DEEPLY IN YOUR ART?"

From Sicily, I inherited a very elastic sense of time. A day there can last 48 hours—or five minutes. Greek and Roman mythology feels as if it happened yesterday. This perception of time shapes how I work: not in a linear way, but as if I am in conversation with centuries. It is like Japanese martial arts: you are fighting against emptiness. If you succeed, it is beautiful. If not, it is struggle. Growing up on an island also teaches humility. Islands often feel like the center of the world, but they are also in the middle of nowhere. That duality—being central yet peripheral—always stays with me.



**“I draw every day.
Everything—the rain,
the wind, the trees.
When I draw, I am not
the subject of the
operation. I become
the drawing”**

Barricades. Per restare in equilibrio – Photo © Santi Caleca

**YOUR WORK OFTEN BEGINS WITH DRAWING. WHAT IS THIS
PROCESS LIKE FOR YOU ?**

I draw every day. Everything—the rain, the wind, the trees. When I draw, I am not the subject of the operation. I become the drawing. Usually I choose one song—four or five minutes long—and listen to it on loop for hours. The rhythm of the music carries into my hand, into the scratches of the pen on paper. The drawing is not planned, it grows fluidly, like a melody.

**WHAT KIND OF MUSIC ACCOMPANIES YOU WHILE YOU WORK ?
CLASSICAL ?**

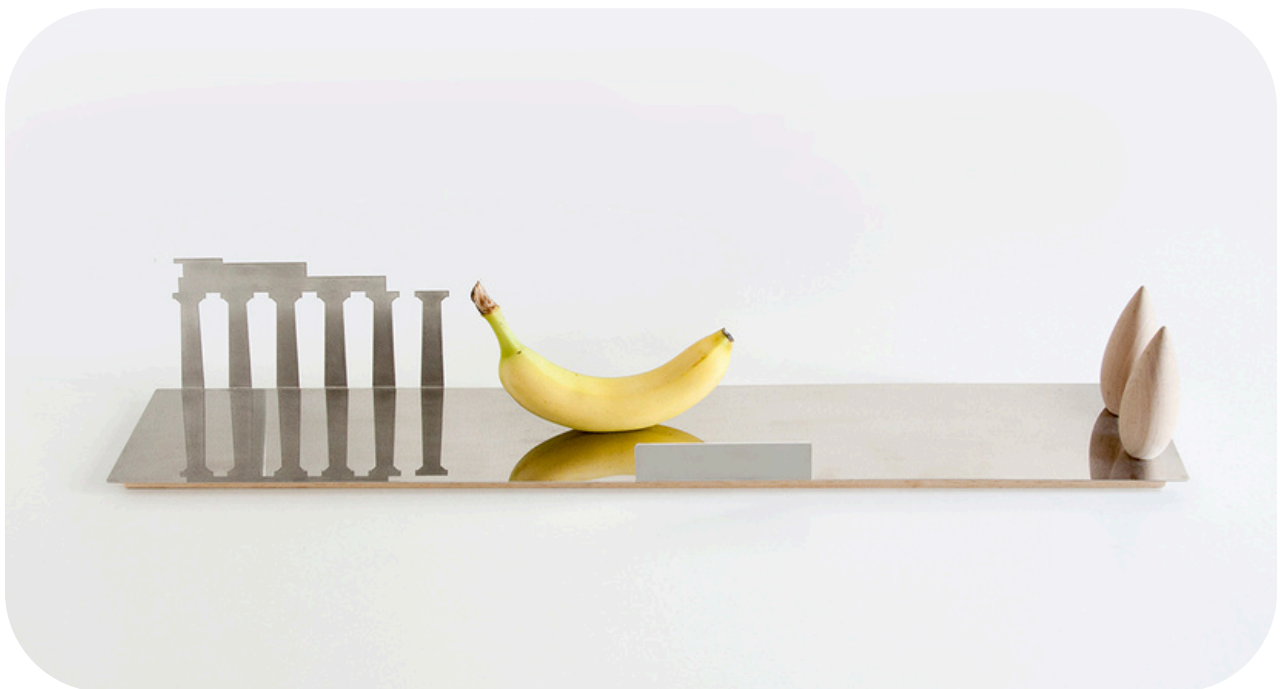
Not necessarily. It can be anything—from Mark Knopfler to Pink Floyd. The important thing is not the genre, but the rhythm. The rhythm sustains my hand and keeps the drawing alive.

HOW DO YOU FEEL ON THE EVE OF THIS EXHIBITION, AND WHAT IS COOKING AHEAD ? WHAT IS MOVING YOU MOST AT THIS MOMENT ?

I am excited, of course. But the moment something is finished, my mind already moves to the next project. Tomorrow I will think about outdoor furniture for a commission in Colombia. I will travel there soon. I often tell my students: to be good at something, you must first forget everything you know about it. Only then can you build your own voice. When I moved to Milan, for five years I refused to show anything. I was paralyzed. First, I had to find my own way. And even today, I might change direction tomorrow. That's the beauty of it—each chapter is just the beginning of the next.

The exhibition Radical Landscapes is on view at A. Galerie, Brussels, until the 3 of October:

<https://designseptember.be/fr/artiste/radical-landscapes-mario-trimarchi>



Strawberry Fields Forever. Kaos – Photo © Frutta