

# PAULA SEEGY

## GALLERY

When comparing contemporary sculptural practices, one constant emerges: the artwork is not merely the result of a technical gesture, but the product of an ongoing dialogue with the material itself. This dialogue takes on different forms depending on the chosen material, yet retains a common core consisting of listening, resistance and response. In this exchange, the artist acts as an interpreter and translator of the physical properties, cultural histories and social memories that the materials carry with them; the works thus emerge as records of a dialogue, registers of resistance and acceptance. From **26 May to 30 June 2026**, the **Paula Seegy Gallery** is pleased to present “**Dialogues of Matter: Benedini, Coletta, Cuschera, De Marchi, Ōki**”, curated by **Luigi Sansone**. In the evolution of this curatorial journey, the current exhibition marks a crucial departure from the first show, in which each artist’s stylistic signature appeared closely anchored to a chosen material that was almost an identity marker. Today, the selection of works bears witness to a deliberate openness towards heterogeneity and formal cross-pollination: Gabriella Benedini, whose practice transcended two-dimensionality to take shape as a multi-material ensemble that went far beyond pure wooden sculpture – the current landscape definitively breaks free from any categorical rigidity. Historical reference materials are not rejected, but integrated and placed in dialogue with new media and substances. This paradigm shift is clearly reflected in the exhibition selection: the viewer is confronted with the unprecedented, polished rigor of aluminum and Plexiglas, which redefine the spatiality of Riccardo De Marchi’s work, as well as with the vigorous, structural presence of Pietro Coletta’s iron sculptures. The artwork thus ceases to be the fetish of a singular technique, transforming instead into the setting for a more fluid, process-oriented experience. This event is not an isolated episode, but rather the concluding act of a trilogy of explorations that has marked the first part of the exhibition season at the Paula Seegy Gallery. The creative partnership between Gabriella Benedini, Pietro Coletta, Salvatore Cuschera, Riccardo De Marchi and Izumi Ōki has, in fact, traced a coherent narrative arc:

**The Debut:** The season opened with the group exhibition ‘Five Artists for Five Materials’, curated by **Luigi Sansone**, offering an initial encounter with the purity of matter.

**The Evolution:** The project continued at Villa Arconati with the group exhibition ‘Light’, curated by Diana Segantini and organised by the Augusto Rancilio Foundation from 19 April to 5 July. An immersive experience where matter became diaphanous, engaging in a dialogue with the intangibility of light radiation.

**The Synthesis:** With “Dialogues of Matter”, the artists return with a new selection of works in the gallery spaces, integrating the chromatic component and dynamic tension into an aesthetic that unites concept and execution.

The exhibition focuses on a selection of small-scale works, where the reduction in scale allows for an intimate, almost tactile experience of the artistic process. Through the use of diverse materials such as iron, steel, wood, copper, aluminum, Plexiglas and glass, the exhibition explores with surgical precision the dialectical relationship between form and color, emphasizing the intrinsic dynamism of the materials’ varying materialities. Matter is no longer understood as a passive medium, but as a vibrant entity capable of reacting to spatial and chromatic stimuli. Considering these artists’ practices together allows us to see how matter, in its manifold meanings, shapes not only formal choices but also the conceptual frameworks through which contemporary sculpture is conceived and practiced.

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In **Gabriella Benedini's** work, wood appears as a living interlocutor: the grain, the scars and the grain direction are not erased by human intervention but cultivated as narrative elements. Her surfaces bear the marks of tools and the passage of time, and her practice recognizes a biography within the material that deserves to be respected. Benedini's wood sculpture does not aim for the absence of traces; on the contrary, the artist's hand becomes a form of writing that engages with the material's natural lines, stitching together fragments and emphasizing joints so that the object retains a dual belonging: to a natural history and a human history. **Pietro Coletta** transforms copper into a sensitive field where light, oxidation and surface interplay. His work highlights chemical transformation as an aesthetic agent: the patina that arises from the encounter with time and the atmosphere is not a flaw but an integral part of the meaning. Coletta's copper surfaces record, absorb and reflect environmental histories, offering an exploration of durability that manifests through color and luster. The malleability of the metal also allows for the modulation of planes and thicknesses that play with light, transforming the body of the work into a device of perception. Copper, worked in this way, becomes imbued with the memory of craftsmanship and an aesthetic restlessness that affirms the beauty of becoming. **Salvatore Cuschera** places iron at the heart of his work, treating it as a symbol of weight, resilience and industrial heritage. The corroded surfaces, visible welds and structural tensions speak of a relationship with the material that is also a relationship with labor and with the landscape shaped by industry. In Cuschera's iron, rust is not merely a physical phenomenon but a narrative code that evokes production practices, abandonment and social transformation. **Riccardo De Marchi**, working with steel, presents another facet of metallicity: steel, with its association with modernity, technology and structural strength, becomes a material of precision and mechanical elegance. De Marchi exploits the qualities of steel's luster and ductility to construct forms that speak of order, calculation and constructive possibility. Unlike iron, "which bears rust as a sign of time", steel often returns to a controlled patina, whether mirror-like or satin-finished, where the surface tends to play with reflection rather than corrosion. This choice does not eliminate the discourse on time, but reformulates it. In each of these cases, the artist does not limit the material to a mere medium: he interrogates it, establishes rules for coexistence and then allows himself to be surprised by the responses he receives. Izumi Ōki concludes the exhibition with glass, a material that embodies contrasting tensions: it is fragile yet resilient, like tempered glass forged by visual experience; it is transparent yet capable of trapping light and memory. In her work, glass becomes a surface of suspension, capable of multiplying the view and layering perceptions. For Izumi, glass is also a meditative practice: its transience evokes sensations of the ephemeral and of melancholic beauty, grounding the plastic discourse in a tradition sensitive to the transience of things. The dialogue with the material thus becomes an epistemic practice: knowing the world through its resistance, its times, its openings. The poetic effectiveness of Benedini, Coletta, Cuschera, De Marchi and Ōki lies precisely in their ability to make this process perceptible, ensuring that each work is simultaneously a result and a question, a presence and a promise of change.

**Title:** Dialogues of Matter: Benedini, Coletta, Cuschera, De Marchi, Ōki

**Curated by** Luigi Sansone

**Venue:** Paula Seegy Gallery, via San Maurizio 14 - Milan

**Dates:** 26 May 2026 – 30 June 2026

**Vernissage:** Tuesday 26 May, 6 pm

**Opening hours:** Tuesday to Saturday, 12pm-7pm

**Public enquiries** [paula@paulaseegygallery.com](mailto:paula@paulaseegygallery.com) – mob. +39 340 4215312 [www.paulaseegygallery.com](http://www.paulaseegygallery.com)