

Curatorial Text:

Rhizomes of Energy and Matter

"Any point of a rhizome can be connected to anything other, and must be."

— **Gilles Deleuze & Félix Guattari**, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*

While the second half of the twentieth century—largely through the impetus of the Italian *Arte Povera* movement—restored the centrality of raw, tangible matter to art by placing it outside traditional aesthetic canons, Marco Angelini's research ushers in a new phase of this history. The artist belongs to a pioneering circle that has transformed photovoltaic panels and solar cells into an autonomous expressive *medium*, seamlessly weaving the very components of the energy transition into the lexicon of contemporary art. For over a decade, Angelini has consistently investigated their structure, formal potential, and cultural resonance. He approaches these materials not as mere ready-mades or ecological symbols, but as living testaments to the transformations of our civilization. In his practice, energy is transmuted into an aesthetic substance—a new language capable of mapping the intricate relationships between humanity, nature, and technology.

The exhibition *Rizomi di energia e materia*, hosted by the Italian Cultural Institute in Brussels, continues a long-standing investigation into technology, energy flows, and the memory of matter—themes previously explored in depth during his major solo exhibition at the Wrocław Contemporary Museum (MWW). On that occasion, within a highly complex framework, the artist staged a dialogue between painting, technological structures, and reflections on the future coexistence of humans and the natural world. The Brussels exhibition expands upon this trajectory, focusing on energy as a generative principle and on the invisible linkages that connect biological, technological, and cultural processes.

Angelini refrains from constructing a post-apocalyptic vision of the world, nor does he subscribe to the aesthetics of ecological alarmism. He is not interested in a future fueled by the fear of waste or by anthropocentric dominance. Instead, his enduring benchmark remains nature: the ultimate, flawless system of shifting forces, memory, and interdependence, capable of operating seamlessly for millions of years. Within this worldview, technology is not the antithesis of nature, but can rather become a tool for a profound understanding of biological processes. This prompts Angelini to dissect photovoltaic panels, analyze their architecture, transform them, and reassemble them to yield new meanings. Within them, he uncovers an unexpected aesthetic potential, inviting us to view technology itself as the new plastic component of contemporary art.

This process finds its most accomplished expression in painting, which forms the true backbone of the exhibition. Fragments of photovoltaic cells and panels are embedded within bold chromatic compositions, where lines, points, geometric subdivisions, and organic fields engage in a continuous dialogue. The works strike a harmonious balance between biological order and technological logic, stimulating the imagination while directing the viewer's gaze toward the invisible patterns that structure reality. Here, light transcends its status as a mere physical phenomenon, becoming the very substance of visual narrative and a metaphor for knowledge. From this perspective, the photovoltaic cell ceases to be a functional construction element; instead, it emerges as a symbol of contemporary culture—a testament to the quest for a harmonious synthesis between natural forces and human ingenuity.

The *Rhizome* series occupies a pivotal position, invoking the concept of the rhizome as a structural model for modern energy systems, technological networks, and the circulation of knowledge. Resisting closed or hierarchical frameworks, these works function as organisms in constant flux,

continuously generating fresh pathways of connection. Vibrant, colorful threads unfold around the canvases, extending the pictorial discourse directly into the three-dimensional exhibition space. They trace an invisible cartography of relations, suggesting that both nature and technology operate through an inexhaustible network of profound interdependencies.

Rather than dominating the exhibition narrative, the installations subtly expand its boundaries. A transparent Plexiglas pyramid, housing a photovoltaic cell alongside a 3D-printed heart, symbolizes the intimate intersection of biology and technology. A second installation introduces hearts rendered on two distinct scales: a large plaster heart evoking human agency and visceral strength, contrasted with 3D-printed models that replicate the organ's true somatic scale. In their serial, almost anonymous nature, these elements construct a shared narrative of community, emotional memory, and empathetic solidarity. Far from merely illustrating the paintings, both installations open up new fields of meaning, guiding the visitor away from mere physical tangibility toward a profound contemplation of life's vital energy.

The exhibition's overarching narrative culminates in the video work *Solaris in fabula*. Within this piece, the city manifests through soundscapes even before its architecture becomes visible. The auditory texture of footsteps, conversations, traffic, street signs, and everyday rhythms transforms into sensory impulses that reactivate dormant emotions and memories. In dialogue with Angelini's canvases, they shape an environment in which painting ceases to be a static object of contemplation and becomes a dynamic universe of signs and symbols instead. Image, light, and sound complement one another, generating a fertile tension between the visible world and that which can only be intuited. It is precisely within this relationship that the deepest dimension of Angelini's research comes to light: the conviction that reality is not composed of atomized, isolated elements, but is rather woven from a dense fabric of connections that the language of art uniquely makes perceptible.

Marco Angelini's artistic research charts a definitive course wherein art does not merely comment on the present, but actively participates in shaping it. By imbuing photovoltaic panels and cells with a new aesthetic and symbolic dimension, the artist broadens the horizons of contemporary expressive inquiry, incorporating elements that until recently had remained entirely outside the periphery of artistic interest. His paintings and installations thus weave themselves into the cultural heritage of contemporary life, serving as a reminder that every era leaves behind not only a legacy of ideas, but also its own specific plastic and material vernacular.

This theoretical reflection finds its ultimate fulfillment in the installation *Il Futuro è stupido* ("The Future is Stupid"). This work suggests that the future is not merely a predictable, linear consequence of technological development, but rather a space of perpetual wonder, punctuated by unresolved questions and continuous discovery. Within this precise context, the word "stupid" sheds its colloquial, pejorative connotation to reclaim its original etymological root—derived from the Latin *stupere*—which is intimately bound to amazement, intellectual astonishment, and a radical openness to the unpredictable.

— **Jan Kozaczuk**, exhibition curator
(translation: Romina Fucà)