



Con il sostegno del MiC e di SIAE,
nell'ambito del programma "Per Chi Crea"



Curatorial Text

Brucialacrime

by Renato Grieco

Curated by Giulia Pollicita

15 October - 28 November 2026

Brucialacrime is an olfactory and musical work conceived by artist and composer Renato Grieco for the basement of Fondazione Morra Greco, curated by Giulia Pollicita and realised through SIAE's Nuove Opere funding programme. The work takes the form of a multisensory sonic architecture, developed in collaboration with fragrance specialist Niklaus Mettler and with the support of luthier Ciro Marzio, who built and supplied the audio system for its presentation.

Brucialacrime is the outcome of four years of research, during which Grieco gathered images and impressions through numerous journeys across islands, coastal formations and inland territories. Within the work, these Mediterranean geographies take shape as an ensemble of real, simulated and imaginary landscapes. Material collected during nocturnal actions, temporary radio broadcasts, musical and performative improvisations, encounters in harbour bars and forays into the world of local bands has been manipulated and recombined by the artist to create new musical compositions.

Transposed into a multisensory installation, the work unfolds at the threshold of evaporation, immersing visitors in a dissolving atmosphere of scent and sound. Visitors are invited to enter a dramaturgy of images conjured by its musical and olfactory elements. In dialogue with the foundation's basement—an ancient, cavernous space that bears vivid witness to Naples's subterranean fabric—the work acquires further layers, branching out in historical, material, architectural and urban directions. Built in tuff, a stone both durable and friable, the basement of Palazzo Caracciolo d'Avellino belongs to an ancient, long-established building tradition evident throughout the city's historic architecture. Used to construct foundations and excavated to create large cisterns and wells, tuff has played a central role in the extensive development of underground spaces beneath Naples's historic centre.

Within the narrative structure of *Brucialacrime*, five principal musical themes act as five characters. Geological entities, forms of human agency, minerals, simulacra, gossip, myths and tall tales dissolve into the musical composition. The encounter between the work and the tuff crypt of Palazzo Caracciolo d'Avellino contributes to the construction of an imaginary infrastructure in which speculative instrument-making, ancient and synthetic instruments, and



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forms of hyper-folklore coexist. The composition moves between references to folk, Baroque and Byzantine musical traditions. The dialogue with the foundation's subterranean spaces opens up an unconscious dimension, bringing anachronistic impulses into contact with the urgencies of the present. In Grieco's own words: "To treat time not as a homogeneous medium in which objects are arranged in sequence, but as a knot of temporal phases of varying density."

Likewise, the fragment of Graeco-Roman masonry at the far end of the exhibition space serves as a reminder and a further trace of a palimpsest of times, materials and civilisations: fragments continually re-signified through new, overlapping dramaturgies. Palazzo Caracciolo d'Avellino stands at the heart of the site of the ancient polis's theatres, as attested by the nearby Graeco-Roman theatre. A short distance from the foundation, the theatre is embedded among later buildings between Via dell'Anticaglia, Vico Giganti, Vico Cinquesanti and Via San Paolo. The theatrical element returns, winding back on itself like a magnetic tape in motion, generating a paradoxically circular temporal continuity: always the same, yet never identical to itself.

Disjointed and multiple, the narrative rejects a sanitised, idealised image of the Mediterranean, offering instead a dense web of contradictions, clichés, transcriptions of reality and magical realism, reflected in the interplay of harbour odours, arboreal fragrances, and synthetic and industrial components. The bouquet of scents developed by Mettler in close dialogue with Grieco traces an olfactory horizon in which diverse, at times conflicting elements coexist, opening up trajectories of emotion, experience and memory. A series of olfactory activations of the installation, involving performers and artists, is planned over the course of the exhibition. These activations will further explore the questions that shape and sustain the work: human geography, disembodiment, and transhuman and decolonial perspectives on the oral transmission of knowledge in the Mediterranean.

This fragmented and plural narrative, with its cycles and returns, does not seek to offer a softened or idealised image of the Mediterranean temporalities and geographies from which it emerged. Rather, it seeks to evoke, and to linger momentarily within, a web of contradictions and clichés, idealised images and visceral realism, where harbour stench sits alongside arboreal scents and sudden diversions into the synthetic and the industrial. The narrative composition is multiple and syncretic, much like the bouquet of scents developed by Niklaus Mettler in close dialogue with Renato. Here, conflicts persist, generating further trajectories—emotional, experiential and mnemonic—and holding together the ambiguities and fascinations of a place shaped by myth and borders, by hardship, absence and idyll.



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A series of olfactory activations involving performers and artists will take place over the course of the exhibition, opening up critical and poetic reflections on human geography, disembodiment, and transhuman and decolonial ideas surrounding the oral transmission of knowledge in the Mediterranean.