Matèria

Luci di via
Leonardo Zappalà
12.09.2026
curated by Giuliana Benassi

On the occasion of the fourth edition of San Lorenzo Gallery Night, the neighborhood's traditional shared gallery opening event, Matèria inaugurates its new exhibition season with Luci di via. Conceived by Giuliana Benassi, the project has over the years become Matèria's regular opening event for its annual program.
Luci di via renews the light-based intervention that unfolds along the gallery's exterior perimeter.

Alongside the site-specific installations, which remain active for an entire year, the project presents a single work by an invited artist. Each year, the work is installed either within the gallery spaces or, as in this edition, in the street-facing window.

For the 2026 edition, Giuliana Benassi invites Leonardo Zappalà to create an intervention spanning the public dimension and the gallery's exterior light installation. This year's project explores, through animal figures, the symbolic and magical value of transformation. The title Bestie (la notte son botte) alludes to the metaphorical boundary separating night from day, the human from the animal, exploring that suspended space which characterizes the passage into another state; one that eludes definition.

The space of the gallery's street facing Vitrine, developed in dialogue with Federica Roppo, a Rome-based curator, becomes the setting for the tragicomic plunge of the artist's guardian angel. Captured at the moment when its waist touches a swamp-like surface scattered with crystals, the figure evokes a metaphor for the fragmentation of the body and the struggle to maintain self-control.

This edition renews Luci di via's vocation as a space open to the formation of new perspectives, bringing Leonardo Zappalà's artistic research into dialogue with the curatorial practice of Federica Roppo, both part of a new generation active within Rome's contemporary art scene. The decision to place an emerging curatorial perspective alongside an artistic one reflects the shared approach of Matèria and Giuliana Benassi, who conceive the project as a space for research and experimentation, deeply rooted in the fabric of the city and in the people who move through it.

* The exterior lights are on view for a full calendar year, and their activation follows the gallery's public opening dates and times.

Leonardo Zappalà (Rome, 1998) is a visual artist whose practice explores contemporary symbols and iconographies removed from a linear conception of time, expressed also through the use of materials whose decomposition becomes both an aesthetic and meaningful element. Iron, crystals, latex, and wood are recurring materials, incorporated into his works for their transformative potential. His sculptural works emphasize the roughness of cuts, the drama of joints, and the brutality of details, revealing an open and asymmetrical process. The lyricism of his chosen subjects is fueled by a strong autobiographical component and by a Situationist-inflected form of wandering that shifts attention from a universal sensibility toward the extraordinary experience of each individual story.

Based in the neighbourhood of San Lorenzo in Rome, Matèria opened its doors to the public in 2015. The gallery proposes an exhibition programme that touches upon all aspects of Contemporary Art. Since its founding, Matèria's purpose has been the furthering and development of the work of its selected group of Artists. The gallery programme features four exhibitions per calendar year, conceived and produced directly with its artists and often in dialogue with the space through a site specific approach. Matèria's gallery shows strive to further the research and experimentation aspects of artistic practice, with the results of this approach often showcased in a growing list of Italian and international art fairs.

Matèria represents the work of Fabio Barile, Karen Knorr, Mario Cresci, Chen Xiaoyi, Giuseppe De Mattia, Sunil Gupta, Marta Mancini, Joachim Lenz, Francisca Valador, Stefano Canto, Bekhbaatar Enkhtur, Eduardo Fonseca e Silva and Maïmouna Guerresi.

Leonardo Zappalà
Luci di via

12 September 2026

Matèria | Via dei Latini,27 - Roma
materiagallery.com

Matèria

Opening hours
from Tuesday to Saturday
11am - 7pm

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