

ANN IREN BUAN

SLIVERS

29 May – 30 October 2026

APALAZZOGALLERY is pleased to present *Slivers*, a solo exhibition by the Norwegian artist **Ann Iren Buan**. The show is accompanied by a **text written by Claudia Buizza**.

The exhibition brings together a significant body of work that investigates the processes and dynamics of decay and destruction. Monumental yet delicate and sensual, Buan's works are characterised by their strong sculptural quality and three-dimensionality, achieved through her masterful manipulation of paper. By pushing the material to the verge of collapse, the artist explores the possibilities and tensions of the two-dimensional surface, questioning the very notion of drawing while expanding its expressive potential.

Within Buan's artistic vision, colour plays a pivotal role, serving as a conduit for emotion and sensory experience. For the works featured in *Slivers*, Buan presents a palette of dry pastels ranging from ochre to prussian blue and maroon. Through deep, intense tones, the artist evokes physical and psychological dimensions, shaping stormy, seductive and profoundly melancholic chromatic atmospheres.

Buan's work invites viewers to confront the fragile complexity of human existence.

“Entitled *Slivers* — shards, fragments, splinters — the third exhibition of Ann Iren Buan at APALAZZOGALLERY unfolds as an investigation into the idea of the monument and monumentality as vulnerable forms, traversed by time, memory, and instability. By using cardboard paper as her primary material — cut, torn, soaked, scratched, saturated with pigments and dry pastels — the artist has created a group of new works subverting notions of permanence, grandeur, and authority, asking how to think about the monumental once stone, bronze, and marble are removed.

As is often the case in the artist's practice, the exhibition space is a decisive starting point. The two rooms of the palazzo present almost opposite challenges. On one side, the Hall: vast, austere, vertical, marked by emptiness. On the other, the Golden Room: dense, ornamental, saturated with history, moldings, frescoes, and signs of prestige.

In the first room, with its eight-meter-high ceiling and cotto floor, Buan installs a monumental sculptural work that immediately acts as a gravitational axis within the space. The viewer is confronted with an obelisk over six meters high, erupting from the ground like a tectonic fragment. The sculpture appears simultaneously stable and unstable, rooted yet in motion. Is it growing? Collapsing? Re-emerging after centuries underground? Or slowly sinking back beneath the palace floor? Its verticality can recall Constantin Brancusi's *Colonne sans fin*: the same aspiration upward, the same attempt to transform the monument from a closed mass into a continuous movement. In Brancusi's work, the column became a form of cosmic ascension; in Buan's hands, this elevation appears more fragile, almost precarious, as if its momentum might collapse beneath its own weight at any moment. One may also think of Yggdrasill, the cosmic tree of Norse mythology, whose roots descend into the underworld while its branches reach the heavens. Yet here there is neither sacred wood nor eternal stone. The monumental form remains intact, but the material composing it refuses the very idea of permanence. The emptiness surrounding the sculpture plays also a fundamental role. Monumentality resides not only within the object itself, but within the tensions it establishes

with space and the bodies moving through it. The visitor is invited to circulate around the work in a kind of silent choreography. Moving bodies, but also bodies' marks: the artist's body remains visible everywhere across the sculpture's surface. Cuts, scratches, tears, abrasions all testify to an intense physical relationship with matter. The cardboard begins to resemble skin: wounded, scarred, vulnerable. Monumentality ceases to signify immutability and instead becomes associated with erosion, fragility, and exposure to collapse.

At the same time, Buan's sculpture evokes the monument as an unstable ideological structure. Far from neutral commemorative objects, monuments often reveal political desires, exclusions, and collective beliefs. Buan's works seem to interrogate the invisible infrastructures of power that monuments continue to carry long after their original meanings have eroded. Who decides what deserves commemoration and elevation? Which narratives are solidified into public memory, and which are erased, marginalized, or rendered invisible? What happens when the values they embody begin to fracture or lose consensus?

In recent years, monuments across the world have become sites of contestation, removal, and re-evaluation, exposing the fragility of the narratives they once appeared to stabilize. Within this context, Buan's work appears less as monument itself than as proposition of another kind of monumentality: one that acknowledges instability and contradiction. The monument no longer appears eternal; it trembles and becomes uncertain of its own legitimacy.

In the smaller golden rooms, the artist adopts a different strategy. Here, the wall-based works coexist with a décor already saturated with history and symbolism. Unlike the first room, where the sculpture asserted itself as a strong vertical presence, the wall works enter into a subtler, almost infiltrative dialogue with the architecture. Colors oscillate between deep reds, golden yellows, and dreamlike blue greens. This palette also establishes subtle correspondences with the environment: yellows resonate with the palace's gilded ornamentation, while dark reds and cool greens seem to extend the chromatic tones of the mythological scenes within the frescoes. Yet these echoes remain unstable, almost ghostly, as though the works absorb and then return the chromatic memory of the site.

These works are constructed as diptychs, composed of two distinct sheets of cardboard joined in a single frame. The visible seam dividing the surface creates a sensation of friction and unstable movement, reinforcing the broader tension running throughout the exhibition where cohesion and fracture coexist simultaneously. The surfaces reveal an intensely textural approach: reliefs, scratches, and layers of pigment evoke interior landscapes, geological strata, or painted cave walls. Once again, the use of cardboard creates an immediate tension with the opulence of the historical décor, and degradation becomes a method of revelation. Through this dialogue between material fragility and enduring architecture, the perception of the palace itself begins to shift. The building suddenly appears vulnerable too, traversed by time and exposed to disappearance despite its historical claims to permanence.

Throughout *Slivers*, the artist develops a reflection on the monument no longer as a triumphant object designed to impose a singular narrative, but as a sensitive and fragile structure permeated by doubt. Monumentality becomes an emotional and sensory experience rather than a demonstration of dominance. In a moment when historical, political, and symbolic certainties appear increasingly fractured, Buan suggests that the true monument is not what survives untouched through time, but one that continues to speak through its ruins. "

- Claudia Buizza, May 2026

Ann Iren Buan

(b. 1984, Stjørdal, Norway)

Lives and works in Oslo, Norway

In her practice, Buan explores the notion of decay and destruction through drawing and sculpture. Monumental, delicate, sensuous and haptic, her work investigates the materiality of drawing in a three-dimensional sculptural expression. Her sculptures are in a continuous process of ruination, a process further reinforced by her choice of materials. Edging towards a point of collapse, the works insist on a continued existence and are often used as elements in new artworks in a cycle of decay and renewal. In a similar vein to how contemporary and ancient ruins affect our experience and reading of architectural space, Buan's sculptures occupy physical space and add to the space's historical narrative. Buan experiments with conceptual aspects of drawing and is interested in the limitations and possibilities of the two-dimensional surface. With monumental works made by using materials including soft pastel, paper and plaster, she challenges the conception of what drawing can be. Her sculptural expression retains the meditative quality of drawing and adds corporeality to the medium.

She graduated with an MA degree in 2011 from the Oslo National Academy of the Arts. She has also studied at The Royal Academy of art, Stockholm and China Art Academy, Hangzhou.

She was included in numerous exhibitions in international galleries and institutions, such as: APALAZZOGALLERY, Brescia, Italy (2026); Siegfried Contemporary, London, United Kingdom (2026); Kunstnerforbundet, Oslo, Norway (2024); Museum for Papirkunst, Blokhus, Denmark (2024); Nils Aas Kunst Verksted, Norway (2023); Sandefjord Kunstforening, Sandefjord, Norway (2022); Entreé, Bergen, Norway (2021) Studiolo Artphilein Foundation, Lugano, Switzerland (2021); Kristiansand Kunsthall, Kristiansand, Norway (2021); Kunsternes Hus, Oslo, Norway (2019); Trondheim Kunsthall, Trondheim, Norway (2019); Charlottenborg Kunsthall, soloview OSL contemporary, Copenhagen, Denmark (2019); APALAZZOGALLERY, Brescia, Italy (2019); The Vigeland Museum, Oslo, Norway (2018); Palazzo Mazarino, Palermo, Italy (2018) and Trøndelag Center of Contemporary Art.



On view

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Opening

Friday, 29 May 2026

6-8:30 pm

APALAZZOGALLERY

Piazza Tebaldo Brusato 35

25121, Brescia, Italy

For further information, please contact:

General inquiries: art@apalazzo.net

Press inquiries: press@apalazzo.net

t. +39 030 3758554

www.apalazzo.net