

THE SHAPE  
OF SOUND

Francesco Pellisari

musiche di  
Christopher Chaplin





## The Shape of Sound

The Shape of Sound is a work that captures the invisible, ephemeral aspects of its spatial context and returns its own abstract representation. To do it, the author, Francesco Pellisari, uses the elements most familiar to him. Primarily the sound, a phenomenon that exists in the absolute otherness, being dependent on the medium that conveys it. Its physical and material essence is recovered and its sequences, timbres and patterns, common to organic forces, are revealed. Then the water, where the sound is visible in mimesis and continuity with



“the other” reflection; on its surface is captured the surrounding represented in the charm of the twilight and the blurring of detail. The liquid matter lives in its depth, activated by the vibrated echo of the acoustic phenomenon. The evanescent and the transitory around is represented, restoring to perception an unusual intensity. The performance comes to life through the ambient sounds created by Christopher Chaplin. The textures woven by threads of clear sounds interweave a dialogue with their physical manifestation culminating in a fascinating creative interaction. Finally, the omnidirectional sound source, fragmented into iridescent ceramic elements; scattered, they occupy the space not only with their acoustic emission, but also with their physicality.



A practice that engages space itself into the work. The Shape of Sound therefore awakens within the viewer an emotional, synesthetic state through the encroachment of sensory experiences, arousing a feeling of affinity and belonging to the place and phenomena that inhabit it.



"My interest stands where form,  
space, matter and sound merge.  
There my creativity conveys".

Francesco Pellisari

"There is something uncanny and organic about seeing sound  
frequencies manifesting in water patterns. They seems to  
appear randomly, there is no sense of really control. That is the  
beauty of the relationship between the music and the visual,  
the sound you create and how they appear in the water".

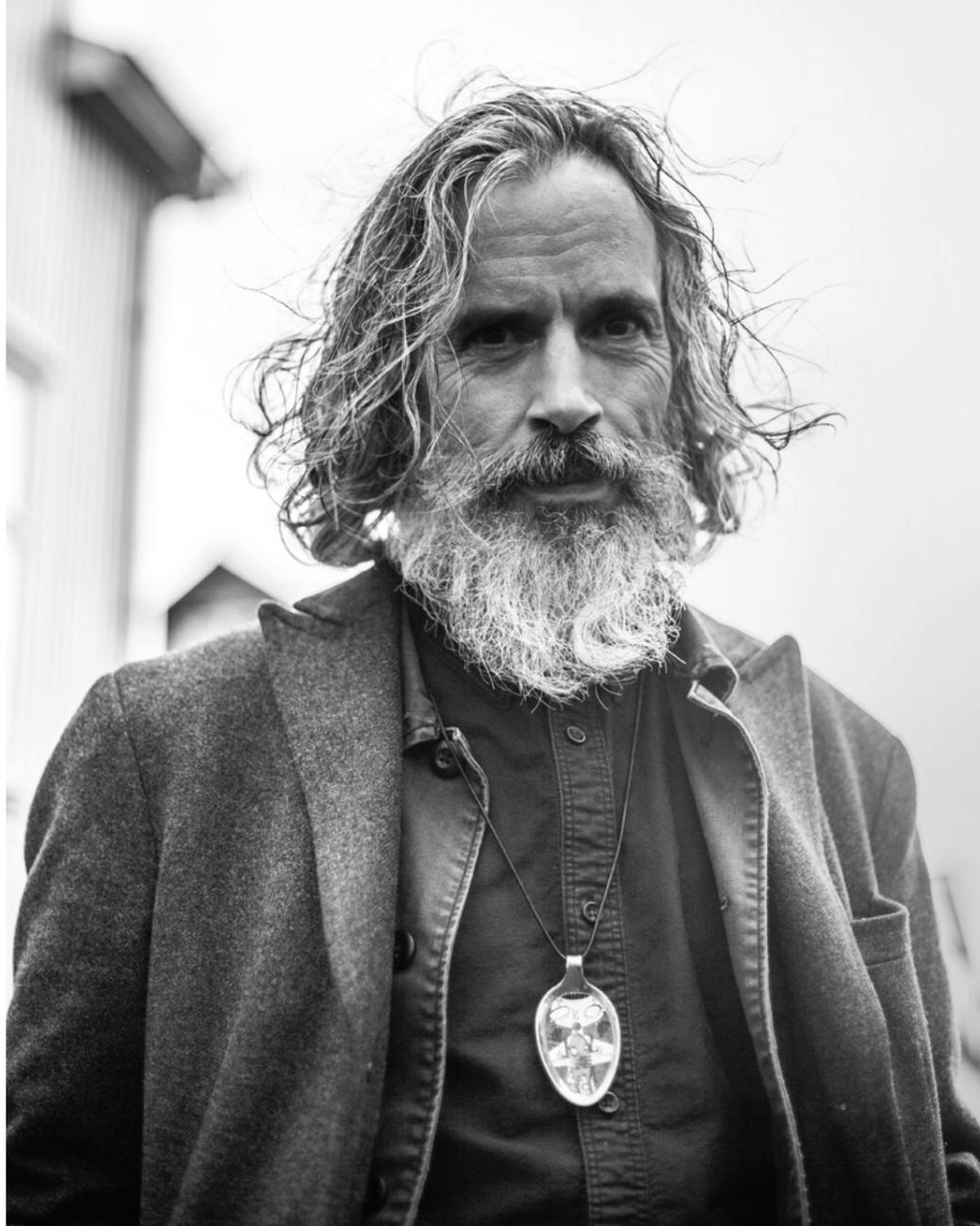
Christopher Chaplin



Francesco Pellisari

They gave me just three lines to describe Francesco but in just three lines it's not an easy task. You could say he has a gift (some may say a curse)....He can actually see sounds in space, in the environment and he can guide them so that they reach you rich and intact in their entirety. This is his art.





## Christopher Chaplin

He is a Chaplin by name and by nature; indeed just a little smile from him is enough to see that. The rest is more complicated, intangible and sometimes painful. He is a musician, a composer, an improviser and one who loves Gitana music that dances around a fire but when he plays it ventures into the unknown: darkness, sunny highlands, dusty moors. He brings an extra line in his scores and consequently a space.



## How it All Began

It's stressful... I already regret introducing Francesco to Christopher, no one forced me but I couldn't help doing it. Francesco is irrepensible: he talks to you, answers the phone, disappears in the middle of a conversation, reappears with another, laughs, asks, answers, jumps from one branch to another, he does and undoes but then, and this is incredible, everything fits together. If he was an element it would be water, undisciplined water, whirling around but ending up perfectly filling the vessel that contains it. When I see the stunning geometrical forms he outlines with his electronic devices, I am hypnotized. Francesco captures frequencies and returns them to us in the form of abstract batiks.



An aerial photograph of a large, rectangular stone structure, possibly a well or a cistern, with a prominent vertical crack down its center. The stone is weathered and covered in patches of green moss or lichen. A spiderweb is visible on the right side of the structure. The surrounding area is a mix of green grass and brown earth.

Christopher is the opposite. He is an old friend, let's say from my youth, and since then he has surprised me by being absorbed, contemplative, inquiring. If he too were an element, he would be water, but quiet, gentle, a slow river with no banks that widens and narrows, depending on the lay of the land, but which nevertheless creeps into cracks and holes, filling and inhabiting them, at times overwhelming them, just for a while though, just passing through. When I listen to his music, the sensation of perpetual motion searching of some balance pervades me, something that touches you, caresses you, scratches you and then goes away and you don't remember it anymore. Visiting the Cavea Arcari I couldn't resist thinking of those two: Francesco and Christopher, two artists together. It would have been nice to have, in that place of water, rock, stone and wood, a place that is the work of man - something fairly recent and yet primitive.



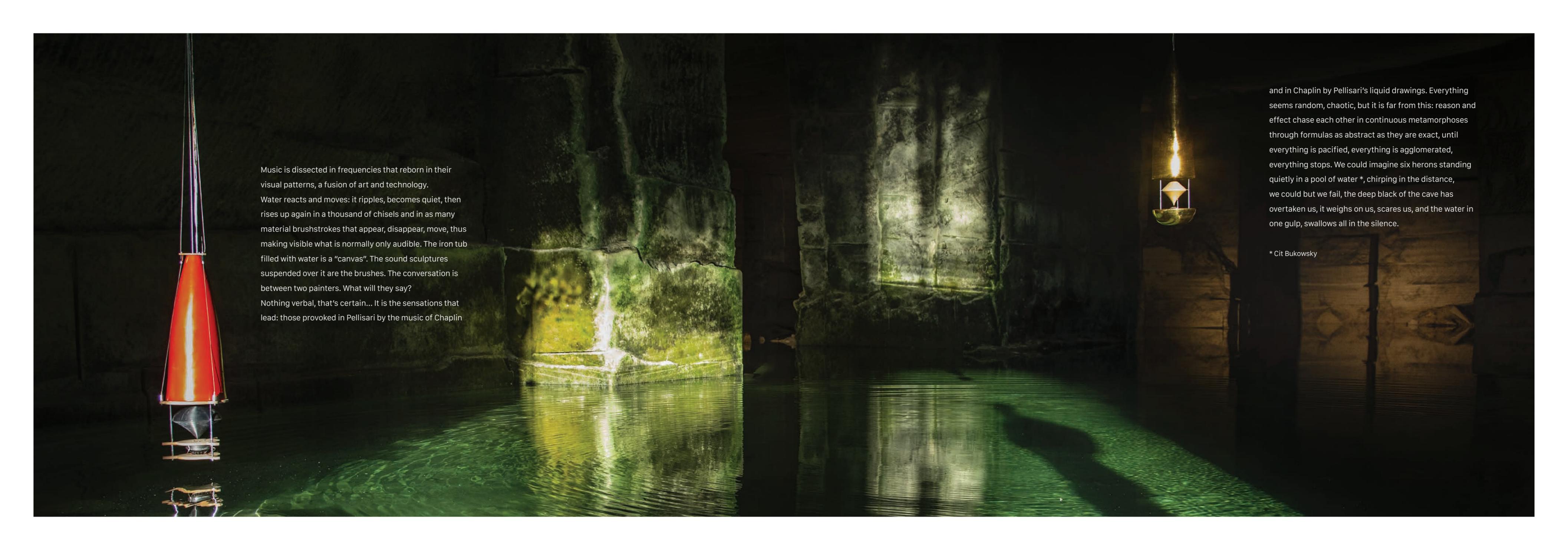
The podiums and the steps of the magnificent restoration refer to ancestral rituals, to that which is sacrificial as well as theatrical, the rest is green water lost in the darkness. The cool and humid void, in which the sun creeps at sunset triggering a thousand reflections soon to be filled with sounds, those from the sound sculptures of Pellisari, strange seductive fruits also made of stone and wood which, suspended over the water, flood the silence. Christopher's music and Francesco's sound interpretations would have made a great impression. The belly of the mountain would naturally have welcomed its strange guests and their sound. So I ventured: "but one day could we not....?" ...and here we are. It was hard work, let's face it, for all those who worked with their arms and minds. We thank them, it was worth it.

Alberto Pinato



## Liquid conversation

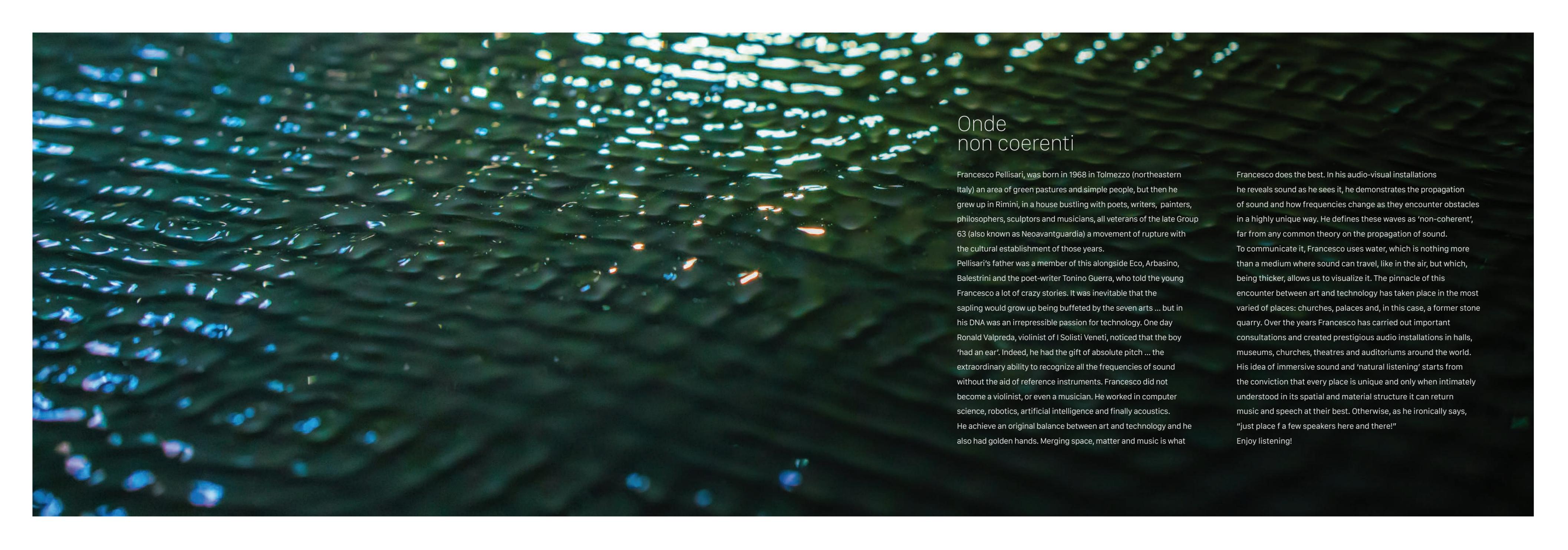
It is a sort of rap duet that evolves between the two artists, their dialogue is marked by what surfaces from the water. Chaplin, with his keyboards, improvises on winding roads, sometimes sweet and sometimes harsh; Pellisari intercepts those sounds and reinterprets them, capturing their intimacy, playing with them, transforming them, and above all revealing them in the water.



Music is dissected in frequencies that reborn in their visual patterns, a fusion of art and technology. Water reacts and moves: it ripples, becomes quiet, then rises up again in a thousand of chisels and in as many material brushstrokes that appear, disappear, move, thus making visible what is normally only audible. The iron tub filled with water is a "canvas". The sound sculptures suspended over it are the brushes. The conversation is between two painters. What will they say? Nothing verbal, that's certain... It is the sensations that lead: those provoked in Pellisari by the music of Chaplin

and in Chaplin by Pellisari's liquid drawings. Everything seems random, chaotic, but it is far from this: reason and effect chase each other in continuous metamorphoses through formulas as abstract as they are exact, until everything is pacified, everything is agglomerated, everything stops. We could imagine six herons standing quietly in a pool of water \*, chirping in the distance, we could but we fail, the deep black of the cave has overtaken us, it weighs on us, scares us, and the water in one gulp, swallows all in the silence.

\* Cit Bukowsky



## Onde non coerenti

Francesco Pellisari, was born in 1968 in Tolmezzo (northeastern Italy) an area of green pastures and simple people, but then he grew up in Rimini, in a house bustling with poets, writers, painters, philosophers, sculptors and musicians, all veterans of the late Group 63 (also known as Neoavanguardia) a movement of rupture with the cultural establishment of those years.

Pellisari's father was a member of this alongside Eco, Arbasino, Balestrini and the poet-writer Tonino Guerra, who told the young Francesco a lot of crazy stories. It was inevitable that the sapling would grow up being buffeted by the seven arts ... but in his DNA was an irrepressible passion for technology. One day Ronald Valpreda, violinist of I Solisti Veneti, noticed that the boy 'had an ear'. Indeed, he had the gift of absolute pitch ... the extraordinary ability to recognize all the frequencies of sound without the aid of reference instruments. Francesco did not become a violinist, or even a musician. He worked in computer science, robotics, artificial intelligence and finally acoustics. He achieve an original balance between art and technology and he also had golden hands. Merging space, matter and music is what

Francesco does the best. In his audio-visual installations he reveals sound as he sees it, he demonstrates the propagation of sound and how frequencies change as they encounter obstacles in a highly unique way. He defines these waves as 'non-coherent', far from any common theory on the propagation of sound. To communicate it, Francesco uses water, which is nothing more than a medium where sound can travel, like in the air, but which, being thicker, allows us to visualize it. The pinnacle of this encounter between art and technology has taken place in the most varied of places: churches, palaces and, in this case, a former stone quarry. Over the years Francesco has carried out important consultations and created prestigious audio installations in halls, museums, churches, theatres and auditoriums around the world. His idea of immersive sound and 'natural listening' starts from the conviction that every place is unique and only when intimately understood in its spatial and material structure it can return music and speech at their best. Otherwise, as he ironically says, "just place f a few speakers here and there!"  
Enjoy listening!



**"Liquid conversation"**  
Water on Iron – 573x141cm

Francesco Pellisari  
Christopher Chaplin

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