

Spotlight: Swiss Artist Not Vital Creates Vivid Sculptures Inspired by His Mountainous Hometown

The artist's recent sculptures and paintings are on view at Alfonso Artiaco in Naples, Italy.

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Not Vital in Bataan, Philippines. Courtesy of Not Vital Studio.

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About the Artist: The Swiss artist Not Vital (b. 1948) has spent his life traveling the world and living a uniquely peripatetic existence. Now located in a remote locale in the Swiss mountains, the artist has, over the years, lived in a variety of far-flung places—Paris, Rome, New York, Lucca, Cairo, Niger, Beijing, Chilean Patagonia, Riode Janeiro, and the islands of Flores in Indonesia and Tonga

in Oceania. These destinations have served as the inspirations behind many of his works; made in materials such as plaster, bronze, marble, silver, and gold—the sculptures often reference the terrains of the natural world. Right now, a range of the artist's recent works is on view in "[Ad agosto ritornano le rondini](#)," an exhibition with Alfonso Artiaco gallery in Naples, Italy.

Why We Like It: Not Vital's sculptures are both surreal and conceptual, making use of materials in unexpected ways. Many of the works on view in this exhibition make specific reference to the artist's birthplace in Switzerland's Lower Engadine valley. The region is surrounded by mountains that constantly draw the gaze towards the alpine summit, and his works do much the same. A series of pole-shaped sculptures lean against the gallery wall as if they were agricultural tools or signposts found along the local mountain trails. Another work, *Piz Ajüz* (2022), meanwhile makes reference to the artist's favorite peak of the same name, strikingly visible from his hometown.

According to the Gallery: "Not Vital's nature is a visionary artist whose research always leads him to test himself with audacious projects. Not Vital belongs to that group of radically innovative modern sculptors in a lineage of artists such as Brancusi, Schwitters, Fontana, Christo, and Smithson. As with the latter two, Not Vital felt a strong link between territory and nature. However, there is an enormous passion for the material, whether it is marble, silver, gold, bronze, steel, glass, plaster, or soap. Vital strives to show the beauty of materials and to use them in unexpected ways by testing their limits and thus making the sculptural form more distinctive, and often surprising."

See images from the exhibition below.



Not Vital, *House to Watch the Sunset* (2016). Courtesy of Not Vital Studio. Photo: Eric Gregory Powell.



Not Vital, *Totò* (2022). Courtesy of Not Vital Studio. Photo: Eric Gregory Powell.



Not Vital, *Piz* (2011). Courtesy of the artist and Alfonso Artiaco.
Photo: Eric Gregory Powell.

“Not Vital: Ad agosto ritornano le rondini” is on view at
Alfonso Artiaco through November 19, 2022.