

**Multi-Disciplinary Visual Artist Joseph La Piana
to Debut Site-Specific Exhibition *Frequency*
at Orto Botanico Corsini and Forte Stella**

Frequency

June 8 – August 8, 2024

Orto Botanico Corsini and Forte Stella, Porto Ercole, Italy



Joseph La Piana, Tension Sculpture Numero Due and Tre, ADitalia, Image courtesy of Sebastian Sarmiento

Porto Ercole, IT, May 8, 2024 — Orto Botanico Corsini is delighted to announce a solo exhibition of new works titled *Frequency* by New York-based artist **Joseph La Piana** at the historical **Orto Botanico Corsini and Forte Stella in Porto Ercole, Italy** this summer. *Frequency* is co-organized by **Sebastian Sarmiento** (Senior Director, Marlborough Gallery, New York) and **Georgina Pounds** (Advisor, Orto Botanico Corsini). *Frequency* presents a breadth of new in-situ works by the artist that engage with the historical Orto Botanico Corsini's diverse collection of nearly 1500 species of exotic flora and Forte Stella's 16th-century architecture. The exhibition draws its title, *Frequency*, from Forte Stella's role as a communication tower for Orto Botanico Corsini. Through architectural works operating on a monumental scale, La Piana utilizes simple industrial materials to stage an intervention across two Tuscan sites: the radiant yellows signature to La Piana's works starkly juxtaposed by the blue Tyrrhenian Sea.

“We are incredibly excited to welcome Joseph La Piana to utilize his extraordinary imagination to create ‘Frequency,’ a dynamic exhibition engaging our collection of exotic flora on the Tyrrhenian Sea. Orto Botanico Corsini exists not only as a garden, but as a cultural center welcoming a diverse array of artists to transform our space. ‘Frequency’ is an ambitious and groundbreaking exhibition that will catalyze and launch a series of contemporary exhibition programs at the garden in the coming years.” shares **Alessandro Corsini, President of Orto Botanico Corsini.**

At the Orto Botanico Corsini, six site-specific sculptures recontextualize the garden’s diverse collection of historic foliage. The sculptures are aware of their own expansions and limitations; they interact with the viewer at a scale in contrast to their own. Grounded in a wrapping technique signature to La Piana’s past *Tension* sculptures, the pieces engage with the trees throughout the Orto Botanico Corsini, imbuing the natural elements with latent tensile potential. In doing so, the vegetation transforms from its natural state. Fueled by vibrations, new sounds, and movement, the trees flex against the artist’s bandage-like artwork. La Piana’s use of physical materials—notably, industrial latex and rubber that is pulled taught, wrapped, warped, and stretched — make manifest the pressures that the human condition entails. The ecosystem’s reaction to La Piana’s works – both auditory and kinetic – portrays an activation of a newfound, dynamic life.



Joseph La Piana, *Neon Agathis*, 2024
Image Courtesy of Orto Botanico Corsini Garden



Joseph La Piana, *Subfractal Cumulative Painting 008*, 2022.
Image courtesy of Marco Marroni

“The site-specific installation in Porto Ercole at Orto Botanico Corsini is an emotional representation of my heritage. As a dual citizen of the United States and Italy, I am proud to share a level of intimacy within the context of ‘Frequency.’ In harnessing the history of Orto Botanico Corsini, ‘Frequency’ honors memory, encourages dialogue, and creates a playground amidst the rare and ancient trees,” says **La Piana.**

Nearby, at the historic Forte Stella, La Piana continues his exploration of entropic change with two outdoor large-scale *Tension* sculptures overlooking the Tyrrhenian Sea and a selection of thirteen paintings within the citadel. A parallel to his works at the Orto Botanico Corsini, La Piana’s sculptures at Forte Stella similarly respond to natural forces, a fundamental element to the artist’s practice. Set against the backdrop of the 16th-

century citadel, the dualistic artworks investigate themes of organic vs synthetic, creation vs deconstruction, and dormancy vs action in a setting that both plays host to – and participates in – the installation. At once stationary, La Piana's kinetic works are equally dynamic, their potential made manifest by the gravitational forces at play upon them. *Frequency* explores the parallels between the artist's sculptures and contemporary culture. Tension, as La Piana sees it, is a powerful force: a source of internal and external agonism that brings to the fore questions, real and metaphorical, about countervailing pressures placed on the identity of the collective.

Frequency is open to the public at Orto Botanico Corsini and Forte Stella from June 8 to August 8, 2024.

NOTES TO EDITORS

About Joseph La Piana

Artist Joseph La Piana draws upon many scientific theories to create an ongoing body of work that foregrounds materiality and process while ultimately being deconstructive in aim. For more than two decades, La Piana has been specifically inspired by biology, physics, mathematics, and phenomenology. Working across many mediums, from painting and works on paper to site-specific installations and sculpture, La Piana's practice is defined by sequences and processes—akin to the replication of DNA or the recursion of fractals—applied to their creation. Ultimately, La Piana's work harnesses the physical and elemental forces that define and regulate the embodied world; thus, becoming a methodology through which to interrogate their effects. La Piana's works have been included in numerous exhibitions and site-specific installations internationally, including solo exhibitions at the Robert Miller Gallery (New York, NY) and The Warhol Museum (Pittsburg, PA). His site-specific installations were exhibited at the Venice Biennale in 2011 as part of the Warhol Museum's "The Venice Text Project" and in 2019 his "Tension Sculpture Installation" was featured along Park Avenue in collaboration with the New York City Department of Parks & Recreation and The Fund for Park Avenue.

About Orto Botanico Corsini

Located in Porto Ercole, on the Italian peninsula of Monte Argentario, Tuscany, the Orto Botanico Corsini Gardens (OBC) were founded in 1868 and house over 1500 species of plants. The Orto Botanico Corsini Association is committed to preserving the environment and hosts regular talks and discussions, many of which are organized in collaboration with Galleria Continua and have featured artists such as Carsten Holler and Mimmo Paladino, among others. The gardens invite well-known artists and galleries, as advised by Georgina Pounds, architect and Director of OMR, to participate in site-specific projects each year. Launching June 2024, the gardens will open ORTO Botanico Corsini Sculpture (OBCSculpture); a Tuscan Sculpture Park that will host summer exhibitions from June through September. Previously, the Association ORTO Botanico Corsini presented a group exhibition of sculptural interventions, including artists such as Bosco Sodi and curated by Luia Corsini in collaboration with Massimo Mininni. In 2023, the gardens held an art competition for young Tuscan (under 35) artists and exhibited the winners' pieces at Forte Stella for the first time.

About Forte Stella

Forte Stella is a distinctive 16th Century, star-shaped fortification located near Porto Ercole, overlooking Sbarcatello Bay, it was commissioned by Cosimo 1 de Medici and built by the Spanish. Today, thanks to an agreement with the Italian Ministry of Culture, the Orto Botanico Corsini Association will have use of the fort for the summer of 2024. The association is welcoming a special project by artist Joseph La Piana in a unique utilization of this star-shaped marvel, wherein Forte Stella will be activated in a stimulating and exciting new way.

