Fig.1,9 The coast between Liguria and Tuscany where the artist collected some samples for the research, c-prints, 120x100 cm, ED 3+2 AP, 2021

Minerals, Ongoing

Minerals, a series of ten large-format gelatin silver prints, explores the interplay between light and matter by depicting minerals with diverse optical properties. The series ranges from the pure white of Selenite to the translucent black of Obsidian, actually a volcanic glass. The specimens between the two extremes are: Calcite, Manganoan-Calcite, Mica, Gallite, Franklinite, Hematite, Green Tourmaline, and Black Tourmaline.

The ten shades of gray reference those of the Zone System, a photographic methodology created by the famous American photographer Ansel Adams in the mid-twentieth century. This approach has defined the practice of black-and-white photography, influencing its development worldwide both on a professional and amateur level. Based on the author's total control over the medium, this theoretical-practical method centers on the idea of pre-visualization of the final image.

Del Conte's work, instead, aims to reframe photography as an interaction between light and material surfaces, rather than an act of subjective interpretation. Each photograph highlights the intrinsic qualities of the minerals — how they reflect, absorb, and transmit light. By focusing on these physical and chemical interactions, the artist shifts the emphasis from human interpretation to the inherent properties of the materials. The series challenges traditional notions of photographic representation, presenting the medium as a straightforward record of light's behavior when it encounters different forms of matter.

Through *Minerals*, the viewer is invited to consider photography not as a means of storytelling or personal expression, but as a medium grounded in the fundamental principles of physics and chemistry.

Fig.2 Selenite, gelatin silver print, variable dimensions, ED 5+2 AP, 2022

Fig.3 Obsidian, gelatin silver print, variable dimensions, ED 5+2 AP, 2022

Fig.4 Franklinite, gelatin silver print, variable dimensions, ED 5+2 AP, 2022
Fig.5 Hematite, gelatin silver print, variable dimensions, ED 5+2 AP, 2022

In the next pages:
Fig.6 Installation view, Paolo Pessarelli Studio, Milan, 2022
Fig.7,8 Installation view, V/MSP gallery, Brussels, 2025