PRESS RELEASE

Seeds of Time

a cura di Marco Scotini
15.05.2025 – 19.10.2025

On **Thursday 15 May** 2025, PAV Parco Arte Vivente will be presenting ***Seeds of Time***, the first institutional solo exhibition by **Alan Sonfist** in Italy, curated by Marco Scotini. Born in 1946, the American artist Alan Sonfist's work has always focused on the relationship between art and ecology, pioneering a dialogue that has been influential both for contemporary discourse and in the historical context of the Land Art movement. *Seeds of Time* explores the formative years of Sonfist's career, focusing on the 1960s and 70s, and highlighting the groundbreaking nature of his work.

In his work, Sonfist expands the concept of community to include non-human beings and sees his installations as "public monuments" that no longer commemorate human history alone but celebrate the entire natural ecosystem. In doing so, he revitalises environmental history and the various species in any one location. Describing himself as a visual archaeologist capable of bringing the past into the present, Sonfist frequently collaborates with scientists, biologists, policymakers, urban planners, and architects in a collective process that can last several years before reaching full realisation. In contrast to other Land Art artists, Sonfist has always focused on the interaction of nature within urban ecosystems—a concept considered radical at the time—leading him to view the present as a complex ecosystem rooted not only in human history but also in that of plants, animals, and minerals.

Seeds of Time opens with a newly commissioned installation by Sonfist for the exhibition. *Growth Between the Cracks* (2025) which emerged from the active involvement of the local community invited by the artist to collect soil samples from the cracks in the asphalt, the gaps in pavements, and other liminal, often overlooked spaces around the city of Turin. The installation is part of a broader research that the artist has been pursuing since 1969, which began with photographing nature making its way into the urban landscape of New York, in order to find traces of ancient forests. In the current version produced in Turin, the plants and seeds contained in the soil brought to PAV create a fragmented map of the city—a drilled down sample that tells the story of a street or a neighbourhood through the presence of native flora or species that are evidence of ancient migrations across distant geographies or eras.

The exhibition also places a strong emphasis on the photographic documentation of Sonfist's early performative works, in which the artist sought for a physical, corporeal connection with elements of nature. He embraces trees of various sizes to test the relative proportions between his body and theirs (*Myself Becoming One with the Tree*, 1969); or he identifies with a tree trunk by comparing its bark to his skin (*Myself Becoming the Tree*, 1970). In other photographic series, Sonfist uses himself as the subject in order to study animal behaviour, turning into an animal—a tiger in *Tiger Chance Kill* (1972–74), or a gorilla in *Territorial Gorilla Invasion* (1972–73).

Seeds of Time also features a selection of Sonfist's early environmental interventions, beginning with the renowned *Time Landscape* (1965–ongoing): a rectangular plot in Lower Manhattan, New York City, where, over a period of 13 years, the artist worked with a large community of experts, local politicians, and residents to study and recreate a forest populated by pre-colonial plant species. Not a park or a nature reserve, but a living, evolving public monument, *Time Landscape* continues to be subtly shaped by birds, the wind, and the presence of humans. In *Circles of Time* (1986), one of Sonfist's most ambitious and complex projects, the artist documents the history of the Tuscan landscape through seven concentric rings, each representing a new phase of land use and revealing the intricate relationship between human beings and the earth.

Alan Sonfist (New York, USA, 1946) lives and works in New York City. A pioneer of Land Art, his recent, most notable exhibitions include *Celestial Landscape* at the Parrish Museum, South Hampton (2026 upcoming); *Indigenous Landscape* at the Beijing International Art Biennale (2025); *Microorganism Landscapes* at Triennale Milano (2025); *Burning Forest* at the Contemporary Art Centre, Raleigh (2024); and *Working with Nature – Environmental Landscapes* at Wave Museum, Seoul (2023). Amongst his most well-known site specific works are the Landmark sculpture *Time Landscape* (1965–present), New York City's first urban forest artwork, and *Ends of the Earth: Land Art to 1974* (MOCA Los Angeles & Haus der Kunst, Munich, 2012). His artworks are present in major museum collections including MoMA, the Whitney Museum, and the Ludwig Museum. He exhibited in the Documenta 6 and the Venice Biennale. In 2023 he founded Land Art Forward, which aims to unite artists, scientists, and engaged citizens in the collaborative creation of environmental art projects. The foundation's mission is to raise awareness of pressing ecological issues through innovative, site-specific artworks that foster a deeper connection between people and the natural world.

As part of the exhibition, on 15 May the **AEF/PAV** (Activity Education Training) will host a special event with Alan Sonfist and the participants in the artist's call to action who contributed to the creation of *Growth Between the Cracks* (2025). The event, open to the public, includes a guided tour of *Seeds of Time* with the artist, followed by a group discussion about the themes of the exhibition—offering a chance to exchange ideas and reflections from diverse perspectives.

Seeds of Time has been sponsored by the Compagnia di San Paolo, the Fondazione CRT, the Regione Piemonte, and the City of Turin.
The exhibition echoes the program of ***Exposed, Torino Foto Festival***, 2025

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