

ABC • ARTE

# Alan Bee

## *Correspondances*

Curated by by Cesare Biasini Selvaggi

ABC-ARTE ONE OF, Milan

**Opening: Thursday 9 April 2026**

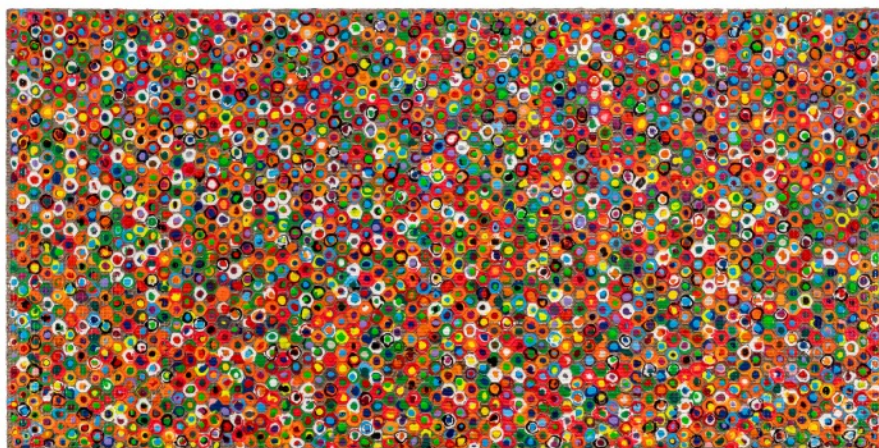
9 April - 9 May 2026

ABC-ARTE is pleased to present **Correspondances**, the first solo exhibition by **Alan Bee** at the gallery's Milan venue, curated by Cesare Biasini Selvaggi.

Within the contemporary art landscape, anonymity has often become a marketing strategy, a brand in itself. While the smokescreen surrounding Banksy's identity now appears to have thinned under the pressure of the media system, the case of Alan Bee (1940–2018) belongs to a different category. Here, silence was not a device to increase market value, but an act of protecting creative freedom. For decades, Bee operated within the shadow of a double life: a man of finance by day, a “hero of painting” in the secrecy of a Bavarian studio. If Banksy revealed himself through public action, Bee chose to reveal himself only through a testament, allowing the works to speak for him only after his passage “beyond the world.” His mystery remains intact because it is not biographical, but aesthetic: the mystery of a man who traded his own name for that of an insect in order to rediscover the essence of painting.

The exhibition **Correspondances** presents a selection of 20 paintings that reveal how Alan Bee's work stands as a rigorous and organic response to the individualistic fragmentation of contemporary society. In an age that exacerbates atomized individualism, Bee elevates the bee not as a bucolic subject, but as an operative and political model. The hive, as seen in the large-scale painting *Freedom* (1997), created through the use of hexagonal metal meshes submerged in layers of wax and honey, becomes the matrix of the world. Bee's hexagon is not a cold or imposed geometry, but a natural form that organizes space from within. In these dense, wax-laden surfaces—such as the evocative *The Night Has Memory* (1991)—the artwork takes shape as a collective organism: each cell is an individual act, yet its existence only gains meaning in relation to the overall system of the painting. Bee suggests that beauty resides in cooperation, in the sedimentation of gestures which, like the tireless work of a hive, construct a cathedral of meaning greater than the sum of its parts.

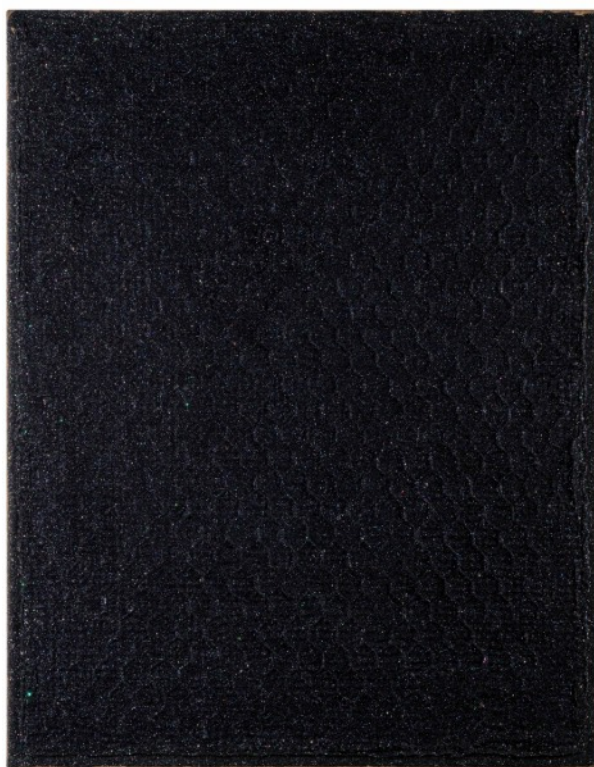
**Correspondances** will be on view from April 9 to May 9, 2026 at **ABC-ARTE ONE OF**, via Santa Croce 21, Milan. The opening reception will take place on **Thursday, April 9 from 6:30 pm**.



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The title of the Milan exhibition, recalling Charles Baudelaire's *Correspondences*, highlights how Bee transforms the canvas into a system of invisible relations. There is no opposition between nature and culture; they coincide within the pictorial process. While Joseph Beuys imbued honey with shamanic and conceptual value, Bee internalizes its evolutionary logic. He does not "paint" nature, but adopts its generative principle. Color—fluid and vibrant, as seen for instance in *Saint Tropez* (1998)—expands through modules and variations, recalling the legacy of German Informal painting, from Emil Schumacher to Bernard Schultze, while shifting toward a biological dimension. His works are surfaces that "exude" life, where honey and wax are not merely materials, but witnesses to a time of slow transformation.

"Today, speaking about bees means speaking about survival. The extinction of this insect would represent the collapse of our ecosystem, and Alan Bee's painting takes on an urgent, almost prophetic ecological significance. For the artist, the hive is a place of vital solidarity. His art invites us to resist extinction—not only biological, but also ethical, at the foundation of any democratic social pact. The 'nourishment' produced by the bee for the community is the same that art should provide to society: a symbolic binding agent capable of fostering the growth of a cohesive human community. Through his pseudonym and a body of work long kept hidden from the world, Alan Bee leaves us with a legacy that stands as a warning: to survive the drift of the present, we must learn the 'lesson of the hive', rediscovering in the other the essential cell for building a possible future," states the exhibition's curator, Cesare Biasini Selvaggi.



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Mar-Sab: 15:00 - 19:00

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## Alan Bee

Alan Bee (Karlsfeld, 1940) is the pseudonym of a prominent artistic figure who, over the years, has carefully and cleverly constructed a fully developed persona, providing it not only with a name but also with a set of plausible biographical suggestions entirely consistent with the physical body of his work—from a fascination with German art, particularly Joseph Beuys and Emil Schumacher, to a specific passion for the natural world, of which bees are among the most universal symbols.

The body of his work, substantial and of remarkable quality, makes Alan Bee a significant figure within the European art scene of the past decades. The biographical information surrounding him is not first-hand, but rather inferred from the development of his artistic practice: Bee has shaped his own identity almost narratively, allowing a veil of mystery to remain over his true personality.

What remains absolutely certain is the world of his works, and from this perspective it is clear that we are dealing with a major European author, one who belongs among those artists who, in the post-*Informal* period, pursued a fundamental path within contemporary painting.

Alongside his passion for painting, Bee has always cultivated a deep interest in bees and their world. A lover of the Bavarian natural landscape and influenced in his youth by Joseph Beuys's experiments with honey, he combined these references with a profound sensitivity to materials and object insertions, echoing the research of Carl Buchheister, Emil Schumacher, and Bernard Schultze, artists who explored the expressive possibilities of matter in painting with striking results.

Critical texts attached:

- Flaminio Gualdoni, *Where the Unmeasurable Meets the Measurable*
- Flaminio Gualdoni, *Alan Bee*
- Luca Bochicchio, *Alan Bee*
- Domenico De Chirico, *Alan Bee*