

## Art World

# An Italian Artist Auctioned Off an ‘Invisible Sculpture’ for \$18,300. It’s Made Literally of Nothing

“It is a work that asks you to activate the power of the imagination,” Salvatore Garau said of his sculpture.

Taylor Dafoe, June 3, 2021



Italian conceptualist Salvatore Garau, via Instagram.

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From the department of “They sold *that* for *how much?!*” comes today’s story, about an Italian artist who, for the cool price of €15,000 (\$18,300), recently auctioned an artwork that is... well, nothing.

Last month, the 67-year-old artist Salvatore Garau sold an “immaterial sculpture”—which is to say that it doesn’t exist.

To be fair, the artist might disagree on conceptual grounds. For Garau, the artwork, titled *Io Sono* (which translates to “I am”), finds form in its own nothingness. “The vacuum is nothing more than a space full of energy, and even if we empty it and there is nothing left, according to the Heisenberg uncertainty principle, that nothing has a weight,” he told the Spanish news outlet *Diario AS*. “Therefore, it has energy that is condensed and transformed into particles, that is, into us.”

*Lo Sono* went up for sale in May at the Italian auction house Art-Rite. The pre-sale estimate valued the piece between €6,000-9,000, according to AS, but competing bidders pushed the price tag to €15,000.



The lucky buyer went home with a certificate of authenticity and a set of instructions: the work, per Garau, must be exhibited in a private house in a roughly five-by-five-foot space free of obstruction.

“When I decide to ‘exhibit’ an immaterial sculpture in a given space, that space will concentrate a certain amount and density of thoughts at a precise point, creating a sculpture that, from my title, will only take the most varied forms,” the artist went on.

If you thought that was artsy claptrap, he goes on to draw a rather lofty comparison to the work: “After all, don’t we shape a God we’ve never seen?” he added.

The artist didn’t immediately respond to a request for comment.

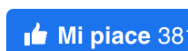


*Lo Sono* isn't the only artwork of its kind in Garau's oeuvre. In February of this year, at the Piazza Della Scala in Milan, the artist exhibited *BUDDHA IN CONTEMPLATION*, a similarly invisible sculpture demarcated by a square of tape on a cobble-stoned walkway. Meanwhile, this week, he installed *AFRODITE CRIES* in front of the New York City stock exchange. The effort, evidenced by an empty white circle, was supported by the Italian Cultural Institute.

"You don't see it but it exists; it is made of air and spirit," he explained in a video documenting the Milan piece. "It is a work that asks you to activate the power of the imagination, a power that anyone has, even those who don't believe they have it."

Indeed, many people on the internet seem to be having trouble tapping into that power. "So you really just taped a square and called that a sculpture?" reads the most-liked comment on the [video page](#).

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