

ANDREA FESTA

Gianna Dispenza
Sala Nova: The Sports Archive
May 14th — July 2nd, 2026

Andrea Festa gallery is pleased to present The Sports Archive, an exhibition of new works on paper by Gianna Dispenza at Sala Nova.

On the occasion of the opening, the gallery will host a reception on May 14, 2026, from 6 to 9 pm at Lungotevere degli Altoviti 1, Rome.

Part of the broader, ongoing project The Sports Section, the exhibition examines how sporting environments uniquely authorise forms of physical and emotional expression among men that are often constrained in other social contexts. Dispenza's practice engages painting, drawing, and sculpture to investigate how gestures—particularly those tied to intimacy, vulnerability, and physical contact—are conditioned by cultural framing.

The works presented are derived from an evolving archive of images collected by the artist, documenting moments across various sports. Organised into categories such as HOLDING, CRYING, COMFORTING, DANCING, and KISSING, this image bank functions as a visual taxonomy of repeated gestures and emotional release within the structured arena of sport.

In their original contexts, these gestures are legible and culturally sanctioned. Dispenza's artworks, however, deliberately reduce or remove contextual markers, isolating the figures from the environments that would otherwise validate their behaviour. What remains are bodies absorbed in acts of embrace, consolation, or emotional overflow—gestures that, outside of sport, become newly ambiguous, even

Through this subtle but decisive shift, the works question how meaning is constructed: whether it resides in the gesture itself or in the conditions that frame it. By stripping away the codes that render such interactions acceptable, Dispenza invites a reconsideration of how norms surrounding masculinity, intimacy, and emotional expression are upheld, suspended, or reinterpreted.

The Sports Archive does not present a closed body of work, but rather a partial view into an ongoing investigation. The archive continues to expand and may take on multiple forms, while the works on view offer one articulation of a broader inquiry unfolding across media.

BIO

Gianna Dispenza (b. 1990, Washington State, USA) lives and works in London. She holds an MA in Painting from the Royal College of Art (2020) and a BFA in Sculpture from the San Francisco Art Institute (2014).

Her practice spans painting, drawing, and sculpture, with a focus on materiality and the conditions through which social and cultural norms are constructed and performed. Her work often isolates moments where expected behaviors falter, revealing tensions within systems of identity and representation.

Recent solo exhibitions include *Dreamlets*, Charles Moffett Gallery (2026); *Triangles*, Cedric Bardawil (2025); and *Round Table*, Charles Moffett Gallery (2024). Selected group exhibitions include Artissima (2025), Thomas Ammann Fine Art (2024), and Frestonian Gallery (2023).

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