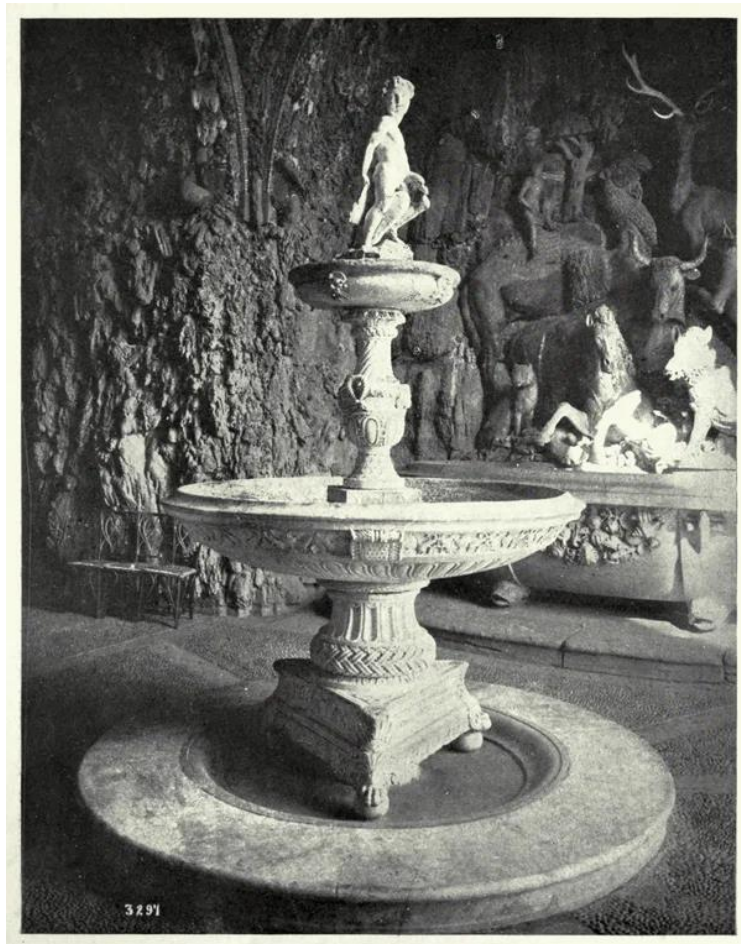
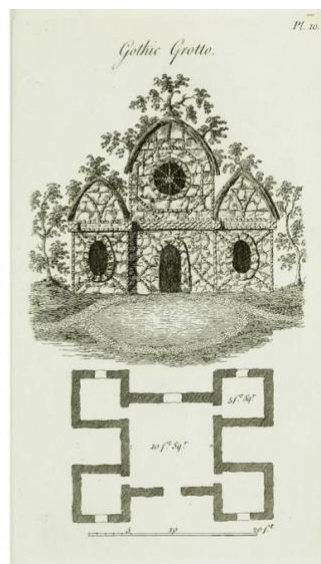
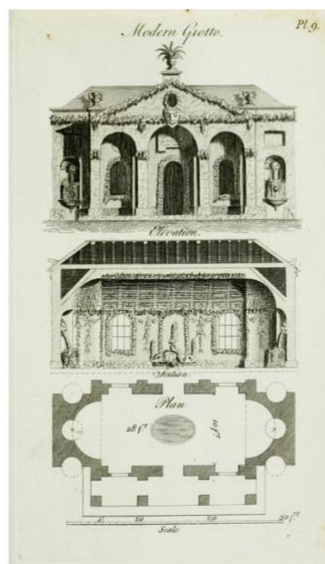


THE  
GROTTO



The temperature shifts. Echoes of water drops from damp ceilings ping on craggy walls. Shells, corals, pebbles, and mosaics fill every skerrick of space. Nymphs appear from rocks, while algae and moss creep across their surfaces, enhancing the fusion of the natural and human world.

It is not surprising that creatures like nymphs featured so prominently in grotto decoration. Their power to traverse between the divine and human realm, with their sexual lure, made them particularly suited to the mysterious aquatic universe conjured by grottoes. Nymphs in Ancient Greek mythology were semi-divine spirits, cherished for holding a powerful knowledge that was intimate and localised specific to their home.



Grottoes appear throughout history in Arcadian idylls, Greek myth, Ancient Roman architecture,

in the gardens of Renaissance palaces, and later as rooms concealed within the Baroque palaces of queer monarchs.

It is this same duality, a hidden space that offers freedom to become oneself, while also holding a cultural knowledge so particular to its home, that runs through the work of Èrresh (Ruslan Reshetov).



Spanning painting, sculpture, video, and performance, Èrresh's practice draws on mythological figures and deities, employing materials as varied as stone and bone to create works that traverse the ancient and the contemporary, the symbolic and the personal.

Èrresh is Sydney-based, of Russian nationality and Tatar heritage, a lineage that has passed through one great absorption, as Tatar language, custom, and belief were folded and erased into a larger Russian and Soviet identity, and is now living through a second, quieter one, in diaspora, at a distance from both. Furthermore, his queer identity in Russia is illegal, implicated by the state, expected to sit invisible in the shadows of a dominant culture. Like many minority cultures folded into larger political powers,

Tatar traditions, spiritual beliefs, and cultural practices have been displaced. As dictatorships swallow smaller cultures and identities, what remains is their cultural knowledge, just without a home.



*The Grotto* draws a parallel with nymphs in caves, whose home is the source of their divine knowledge. However, Èrresh explores what happens to this knowledge once it no longer has a home?

Èrresh's work proposes it needs a private space in which to exist without being made to justify itself. *The Grotto*

proposes a submerged, interior retreat where fragments of identity, cultural, ancestral, and sexuality, can sit alongside one another without resolving into a single, coherent narrative. Like the scrolls that hang in the exhibition, a traditional art form that has been employed throughout Asia

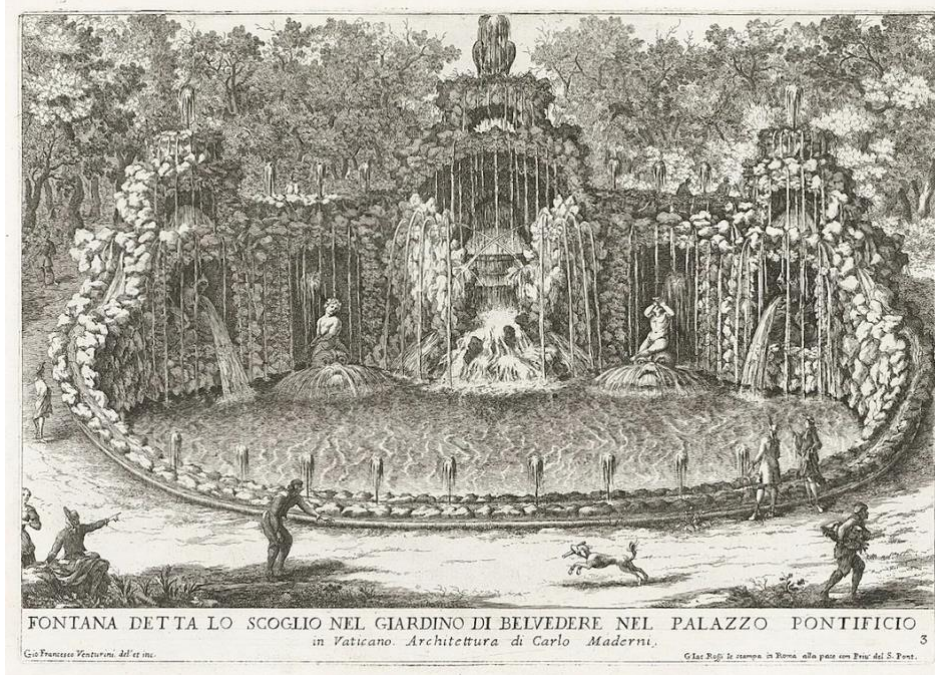


as vast as Türkiye to Korea, Erresh's scrolls symbolise cultural traditions that have never been linear.

In his sculptures, deliberate ageing of surfaces, cracks, faded pigment, the mimicry of organic growth, echoes the way sediment performs the passage of time in a real cave. He fires his clay in a Japanese tradition, the kiln drawing out cracks as mutable forms, half-petrified, often ambiguous of time.

Within the exhibition's circular structure, conceived as a grotto, Erresh's sculpture *Guardian of Memory* is constructed around a bull's skull the artist found inside a cave on Sydney's Northern Beaches. Rather than discard the skull, Erresh honours its former life and history by reimagining it

within the mythology of a deity, evoking the Oracle of Delphi.



Èrresh's work answers this question of where knowledge goes when it no longer has a home, it must continue beyond geography, create its own

home, one that is shaped by its diasporic movement and inevitably influenced by other cultures. Not preoccupied with one history and one knowledge. It persists. And in the face of erasure, one must remember, the sea does not stop at the cliff, it carves through it into grottoes.

Written by Ashleigh Jones.





THE  
GROTTO

Solo exhibition of Érresh,  
curated by Ashleigh Jones

8 Wall Gallery

July 17 – August 1 2026

