

There seem to be no half measures for Radu Oreian (Târnăveni, 1984). His pictorial works are either large or small, and almost completely disregard intermediate sizes. Of the former, for example, we recall *Collective Portrait Under A Palm Tree* (2020) exhibited at La Fondazione in Rome in 2020 in occasion of his solo debut in Italy. The painting, which resembles a tapestry for its size and narrative development, belongs to a limited group of similar creations and, on its own, took up an entire wall of the exhibition space in Rome, completely investing it in both a physical and optical sense. Of the latter, instead, we can remember a greater number of works, some of which are now on show in Florence; a selection of pictorial and graphic proofs realised for the occasion and dated 2020. The paintings – *Collective Portrait II; Côte Bleue; Red Gone Bad; Frioul; Deat at Saint-Jean; Study for Isabelline* – are all part of the so-called “Molecular Paintings” and are realized as oil on canvas or on plexiglass. When set next to each other, their ensemble creates a visually and emotionally complete environment. The linking theme, even in their heterogeneity, is a dense chromatic vocabulary, strongly expressive, in which, at times, matter seems to lump together and blend with other substances until it becomes rugged, sandy, even if, in reality, it’s just the way it’s placed onto a surface (stratified and mixed with brush tip) to cause this effect; just as a shared iconographic repertoire, which goes from physical memory (the reference to the bowels of one’s body or of one’s skin) to the intellectual one (Renaissance painting, the classical one admired in Pompeii and Rome, the calligraphy of the ancient East) of the artist. A common denominator of the works is a reflection that the artist carries out on the value of images in the era of globalization, fallen out of control and deprived of rules and norms, to the point that, on the same plane, we find expressions pertaining to the most intimate sphere of the individual next to others of public domain, causing the loss of their original semantic capacity and, consequently, of any cultural and social identity. A similar orientation is found in his works on paper – *Self Portrait As A Fountain; Study For Basket With Figs; Thinker Of*

*Thoughts II* – in which, compared to the oil ones, due to their technical conformation (graphite on paper), the general setting of the composition emerges with more vigour, as well as its graphic and iconographic structure. This leads to the rise of surprising narrative tracks, at times hidden by the dense and condensed colours, and to the plastic effect, almost in low relief, achieved thanks to the lumped-up pigment that characterises the paintings, which is replaced by a different, more narrative one determined by the drawing distributed on paper like an encoded text, ready to be read and interpreted. Thus the organic element leaves way to the graphic alphabet and matter to the sign, giving rise to dried compositions under the execution profile, but not less elaborate under that of the contents.

This confirms the operative system developed by Oreian, voted, according to an original and subjective interpretation of the surrealist syntax, to the depiction of a personal visual and emotional universe, which, through creative gestures, transforms in a collective experience, sharing its feelings and problems, in particular the sensation of chaos and loss caused by the interference of virtual reality in today's daily life.

Pier Paolo Pancotto