

Farewell to the Thinker of Thoughts

Solo Exhibition of Radu Oreian

Galerie Isa proudly presents the first solo exhibition of Romanian artist, Radu Oreian in India. Under the title *Farewell to the Thinker of Thoughts*, Oreian assembles new artworks that array from small and medium sized drawings with graphite, gold leaf and oil up to large scale oil paintings on canvas, displaying the broad range of techniques, interests and skills the artist draws upon. The exhibition reflects Oreian's ongoing preoccupation with ancient painting techniques, sacred scriptures, medieval legends and contemporary narratives. It demonstrates an extraordinary artistic talent that guides the viewer through a labyrinth of form, paint and structures in a color spectrum that spans skin, bone and flesh to be confronted with the inner self.

The artworks in *Farewell to the Thinker of Thoughts* puzzle the viewer with a new visual imprint of a peculiar density that appears to exist in a pulsing state of tension and relaxation. Oreian achieves this density through interweaving human thoughts and fragmented corporeality, through the depiction of chaos and order which he manages to synchronize after all, and finally through a collaging of figuration and abstraction that leads to the creation of something beautifully organic and compressed.

In *Vectorial Study I, 2018* we encounter large, abstract oil painting that stands out through its delicate and elegant little curls formed of mindful paintbrush application. The artwork belongs to a series of paintings the artist refers to as vectorial paintings: it evokes a hypnotizing effect through the little paint curls that leads us to recognize that the act of repetition builds a comforting order within the chaos. We further discover a different set of oil paintings, the so-called collective portraits that reveal a somewhat organic state of mind, which transforms between figuration and abstraction. While *After a portrait of Walt Whitman, 2018*, for example, is alluding to depicting the facial features (and possibly hat) of an American poet, Oreian only insinuates a portrait by providing some human contours. What we get in the name of a portrait, seems to be the inner state of a being, masterly sketched by abstract elements that form an organic world that obeys its own orders and structure. The drawings on paper in the exhibition demonstrate two more characteristics in Oreian's oeuvre: His use of graphite on paper comes with an intensity and a dynamic which is clearly reminiscent of the most prominent painters of the European Renaissance, Michelangelo and Tizian. By scarcely accentuating his graphite drawings with gold leaf and oil, the paper works remind us of medieval miniatures sketches, still waiting to be filled with color.

Especially his diptych titled *Study about the hack of language V*, reveals the artist's training in graphics, as well as his interest in depicting and implementing medieval legends in the present-day. At a first glance, we may make out fragments of the figure of St. George on a horse, a prominent martyr of Christianity. Instead of re-narrating the legend, the artist lets its fragmented figures drown in a grey sphere of intertwined abstract patterns, metaphorically referring to the way present day information is being circulated and manipulated: bits and pieces of thoughts, speech and language constantly being changed and altered through human beings and their media.

Another, exceptionally distinct and abstract work, *Farewell to the thinker of thoughts*, which serves as the eponymous work of the exhibition, highlights repetition as a recurring motif in Oreian's series of works. Unlike in his abstract vectorial oil paintings, the artist draws a sharp, dense grid as a visible structure that he meditatively condenses with pitch-black dots. Whereas he gradually fills his vectorial paintings with a paintbrush he dips into different colored oil before applying to the canvas, Oreian creates the dots by drilling with a graphite bit directly onto the grid: Differently shaped, concave but easily confused with being convex, and somehow harmoniously in a seemingly perfect order. For this series of works, the sacred scriptures of the Upanishads inspired the artist. In creating an abstract pattern of differing points in a structure, Oreian visualizes the idea of the infinite division of the seeds of the soul and the eternal structure of the holy order.

With this exhibition, we not only accompany Oreian in a working process of repetition and meditation but also witness the artistic composition of a density that creates visibility, awareness, and ultimately knowledge about who we are, how we are structured and encounter the world we live in.

Radu Oreian is born 1984 in Tarnaveni, Romania, and lives and works in Marseille, France.

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