

## I DIDN'T NAME MY PAINTINGS AS HYPERREALIST

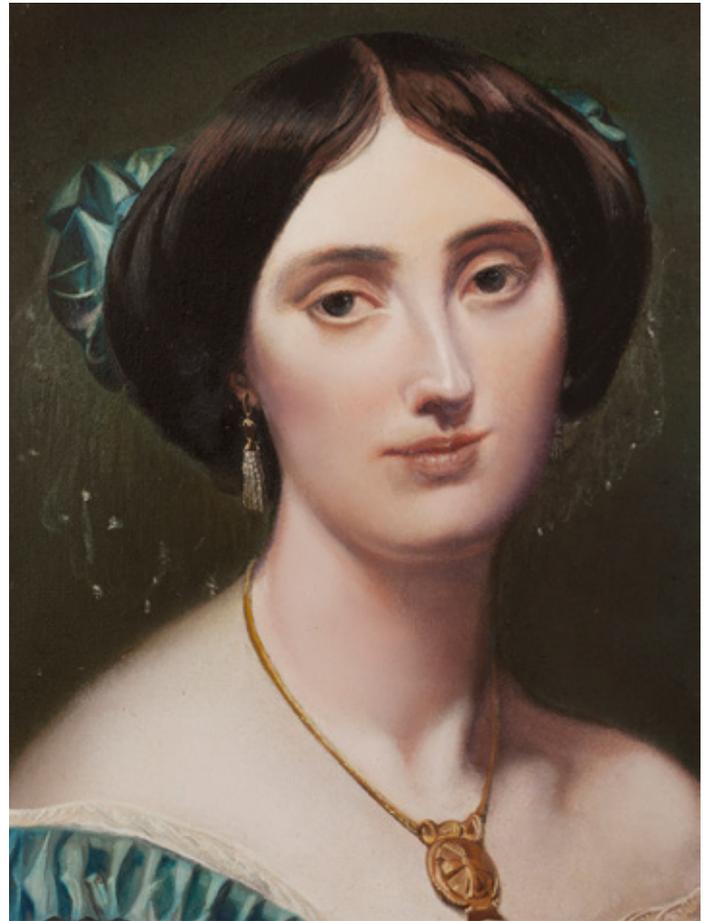
Ceylan Onalp



We talked to Taner Ceylan about his artwork “Il Quarto Stato” being exhibited in the biennial, his new exhibition “We Must Now Say Goodbye,” the hyperrealist approach he adopted, and working with a foreign gallery. We spoke about the exhibition that started its journey when two souls were freed and said goodbye to each other, and various portraits regarding art.

**Your painting Il Quarto Stato being exhibited with a Volpedo portrait in the biennial offers a fascinating performance indeed. It is really interesting that the installation of your latest exhibition on the same line of work, “We Must Now Say Goodbye,” is complementary to your biennial performance. Both your performances considered, could we say that Ingres’s princess and Volpedo’s villagers are mirrors of different, but actually similar conditions?**

Both installations are part of a new series I started called Family Series. It’s based on Oscar Wilde’s quote, “every portrait that is painted with feeling is a portrait of the artists, not of the sitter.” It would be incorrect to say that Volpedo’s villagers and the Princess are directly mirrors of similar situations, but considering the artists and the artist’s painting, there are surely parallels. When he painted his painting, Volpedo was never appreciated; in fact the technique he used was not respected nor found importance in the art circles of his time. But when you look at it today, it is one of the most valuable symbols of Italian history. On the other hand for Ingres’s Princess de Broglie, Ingres drew reaction to overshadow the Princess’s glamor and importance with his technique. There is a similarity in this sense. Another similarity could be the connection between the artist and his artwork. While the artist



draws apart from the painting in the Ingres project, Volpedo watches his painting and in a way, unites with it.

**The keystone to your latest exhibition takes its base from the famous number Alabama Song of Brecht's renowned Threepenny Opera. As a music enthusiast when I first heard it, it reminded me of the different covers of the piece, by artists such as The Doors and David Bowie. What was the reason you named your exhibition "We Must Now Say Goodbye"?**

Actually, the name of the exhibition was formed by the relationship I established with the artworks. In the exhibition, Ingres's own portrait is shown instead of Ingres's Princess. While the artist generates himself in the painting, where he should be, Princess de Broglie gets out of the painting, which she was in a sense didn't belong to, and looks at it. The two souls, Broglie and Ingres, become free; and finally come to terms with the fact that they have to say goodbye. It sounds romantic, yes. I think that I liberate them this way. "We Must Now Say Goodbye" in this respect is a name I chose because it corresponds to exactly how I feel.

I believe that the soul of Alabama Song, with its legacy from David Bowie to The Doors, as you said, is united with my painting. In addition, David Bowie's undefined position in between two genders actually overlaps perfectly with what I do.

**Thinking of the installations of your previous two performances as a kind of reflection and mirroring technique, it reminds me of the selfie madness of present day. The whole world is publishing**

**the different reflections of their own physical and emotional states by taking selfies. However open to question their reality, it is known that the selfie is a movement that made its way into the museum collections. What are your thoughts?**

What I did with "We Must Now Say Goodbye" is, in truth, creating a co-centric state by placing my own portrait into Ingres's drawings. I am proposing a co-centric interpretation by situating myself within the drawings as the owner of the exhibition, while pointing out that the artist is the subject of his painting by placing Ingres inside his painting. This is my art, after all; so there is a proposition here that I'm the subject too.

On the other hand, fashion design is important to me. There is so many, and perennial things to produce with the historical references and data of fashion. The 'selfie' is an important fashion movement for me. It will surely leave its place for something else when its time comes and its task is done. With a different interpretation, it's possible to view all the installations as a selfie.

**I would like to talk a bit about hyperrealism and self-portraits. The artworks from your latest exhibitions and your last work that met the audience during ArtInternational Art Fair are extraordinarily realistic, and its visual language is superb. Can you talk about how your path crossed with hyperrealism in your artistic journey?**

I didn't give its name to what I paint. I always painted realistic, I instinctively didn't want to see the texture of paint within the painting for as long as I've known myself. My paintings significantly evolved within themselves in time, and they are still transforming to this day. It is no doubt that I have so much more to do on the canvas. But it doesn't happen in flashes. I watch myself too, and wait in wonder. I really care about the paintings that draw near abstraction. But my studio, or with a better account, post-studio is the computer. Namely, the painting sketch does not happen with paint in my case.

All the same, my connection with hyperrealism is a connection that formed itself. Whatever I do, the most important thing is principally to persuade myself.

**You are known to support young artists that only started to make a name for themselves in the art world, and Signs of Time is one of them.**

I wasn't easily accepted in the art circles as an art student or as a graduate. I was young and I was productive, but to make oneself in this field quickly is not simple, however powerful your work might be. Therefore, keeping my past in consideration, I believe that being supportive of young artists is crucial. I'd like to stand by them as much as I can. I try to help them morally and materially; sometimes I answer someone who asks about my brushes or a detail about my technique, and sometimes I provide contact by introducing them to professionals working in this field and recommending them. Guidance is very important along with disciplined work and production.

**Finally, I would like to ask you about your experience with working with a foreign gallery. You have been working with the Paul Kasmin Gallery in New York for some years. What are some things that**

## **stand out when you compare your experiences with a foreign gallery to one in Turkey?**

Paul Kasmin proposed to work with me at Art Basel art fair, one year before I left Galerist, who represented me in Turkey. One year later when I part ways with Galerist, Paul Kasmin's interest was still ongoing. After evaluating the other offers that came in the meantime, I saw that the only gallery that could fulfill my needs was Paul Kasmin, and that's how I decided to work with them. For me, a gallery that can pay attention to its artists closely was more important than a gallery in London or New York with 80 artists in their portfolio. So I thought that working with a gallerist who has a one-on-one connection with his artists would be better for my paintings and my artistic process. I am seeing better now what a right decision that was. You have to be out of Turkey, or at least have relations out there for international visibility, new projects, or any kind of exhibition or representation you can think of. The Paul Kasmin team makes great effort with me to actualize the things I picture for the sake of my art, and we are moving step by step.

