

Amalgama

Galerie ISA is proud to welcome back Spanish artist Antonio Santin with a new exhibition titled *Amalgama*.

The title draws from medieval Latin, and its continued use in Italian and Spanish, to describe a magical, mythical medley of disparate elements. *Amalgama* perfectly encapsulates Santin's oeuvre, which consistently defies easy definition or typecasting.

In the centuries old tradition of oil painting, Santin's innovation lies in pushing the boundaries between sculpture and canvas, through densely layered surfaces. Santin has ventured into uncharted territory, the resulting collateral creation spotlights his command of chiaroscuro and the laborious, highly complex process through which each tableau is built. Employing pneumatic extrusions and sfumato layering, Santin hypnotically transforms the traditional canvas into a tactile, almost architectural plane.

Each work takes close to a year to complete, beginning with patterns that do not exist in reality but instead emerge from Santin's disruptive and eclectic approach to the design of specific, distinct motifs. This series—an enduring commitment to bring his ideas of illusion and perception in art to its final consequences—marks the evolution of Santin's artistic, material and sensorial journeys towards defining the unknown. Guided by intuition, he continues to develop a distinct, unspoken language moving further and further into abstraction, in both thought and practice.

Throughout the series, vibrations of colour are almost seismic in their subtlety. Viewers encounter new compositions that echo impressionism and pointillism through monochromes on gold, copper, metallic blue, and white on gold. By layering each work within a singular palette, Santin creates a reflective, illusory patina that deepens shadows and expands the sense of depth, while simultaneously enhancing the viscosity and luminosity of richly worked oil paint. This mysterious, alchemical use of metallic detail evokes a Pollock-like magnetism, yet remains unmistakably Santin through his signature precision.

This studied, exacting approach results in dramatic works that pose a lingering question: does this work exist in your imagination, or is it my reality? To understand and perhaps answer this question, Santin's work is often described as hyperealism, though such a reading can now feel rather simplistic. Earlier in his career, Santin focused on the figurative and the subversive, with distortions of the human body rising to the surface to produce a sense of the sublime. That trajectory has since shifted. The rug has now become an ornate excuse to define what cannot be seen. As a globally recognisable object requiring no explanation or imposed narrative, it becomes an ideal vehicle through which Santin can explore the mysteries of both medium and meaning. It also underscores Santin's conviction that the work is less an object than an experience. The viewer's perception is shaped not by the artist alone, but through their encounter with the surface, where the work comes into being as imagination and feeling converge.

In this sense, Santin's work leans toward meta-realism, operating within the liminal space between perception and consciousness. The realities he constructs are highly sensorial yet

deeply imagined. His textured surfaces do not refer to an external world but are rooted in an internal one, (where perception itself becomes the subject).

In this showcase, Santin debuts his largest work to date: an awe-inducing four-metre painting soaked in colour and complexity. Titled *Galaxia*, the work is inspired by the blue-and-white façades of Portuguese architecture. Encompassing an entire spectrum of blue pigments, gradually degraded by white, the painting unfolds into an infinity of combinations, where colour and perception constantly realign, resisting any single, fixed interpretation. At this monumental scale, the work approaches abstraction, with the micro overwhelming the macro and the idea of a rug receding into the distance. Here, Santin actively separates reference from medium, widening the gap between material presence and psychological illusion. The result is intoxicating, powerful, and mesmerizing. In Santin's work, there is no room for neutrality: every square inch, every layer, both literal and metaphorical, speaks to a larger vision. From a distance, the technique and scale are dizzying, but it is in close viewing that, like a kaleidoscope, the surface fractures into unending combinations of colour, reflection, and depth, drawing the viewer ever deeper into Santin's world.

-Priyanka R. Khanna