

*Curated by Donatien Grau*



George Rouy, *Meditations II*, 2026 (detail)

© George Rouy / Courtesy the artist and Hannah Barry Gallery, London, UK  
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George Rouy's work unfolds through a constant layering of images and meaning. One surface is covered by another surface, and the figures that rise from the paint become part of a palimpsest. His paintings are texts in their own right, designed to be read.

For *Conciliazione 5*, the painter undertakes a radical new departure at the same time as he unveils the very center of his creative process, addressing its palimpsestic nature. In a new type of abstract work, he manifests the status of the canvas as a surface open to inscriptions to be deciphered by the viewer. He confronts the layering as a form in itself and invites us to engage with the very act of reading a painting as if it were a text, of looking at traces on the canvas that bear the trace of previous and future presences.

The painting he has made especially for *Conciliazione 5* will be displayed within the exhibition space in such a way as to induce viewers to sense the presence of the marks on the surface of the painting, albeit not being properly able to interpret it. Reading acts as a gate to contemplation: once one agrees to open one self to experience, meaning manifests itself, in its collective and individual nature. This work by George Rouy encapsulates his confrontation to textuality. The painter's work has often been described as an invitation to presence after the constant erasure imposed by the digital world. Reading is not a process of erasure of the recent by the new, nor by the past by the present, but rather an invitation to accepting the power of presence within the multiplicity of inscriptions and in the unicity of one's being. The process is similar to clearing or emptying the painting itself, revealing its private architecture of time, mental absorption and physical resilience.

George Rouy's personal practice follows the tradition of oral reading. He consistently listens to audiobooks as he paints – making the painting a testimony of all the texts he has listen to while completing a particular work. Painting is the crystallization of the spiritual experience of listening to text being read, which occupy the subconscious of the artist as he realizes the very images he paints. Especially for *Conciliazione 5*, the artist has kept a record of the audiobooks he has listen to while making this painting.

Concurrently with his painting practice, the artist has been working with sound and creating music, collaborating with leading musicians and performers. Confronting this practice for the first time, George Rouy has conceived sound piece to accompany the experience of the painting, made from the audiobooks which have filled his unconscious in the process of making this work. Therefore, the experience of a text being read and the experience of reading the painting are finally connected – for the first time at *Conciliazione 5*. This sound piece will be released once a day on the street and will be accessible on site.

As an expansion to the exhibition at *Conciliazione 5*, a digital collaboration will be featured as a collaboration between the program and the artist's Instagram platforms. Each month, a video will give a privileged entry into the work, showing its surface in combination with the sound piece. It will bring the depth of meaning and the polyphony of texts and paint into the digital realm – as a contradiction and an opening.

As Saint Bonaventure wrote, «the whole world is shadow, way, trace, and it is a book written from the outside.» From the outside, one will aim to decipher the traces of George Rouy's text – one that manifests itself in completing signs, from the materiality of the painting as text to the sound in the air.

