

One of the most iconic paintings of the 20th century is the *Porte-fenêtre à Collioure* by Henri Matisse which dates from 1914 but is still enigmatic even today. The composition, in blue, green, grey but mainly black tones, places itself between the representation and non-representation of a known space, vaguely explained by the title - French Window at Collioure - synthesizing the artist's relationship with the abstract, which he never really joined. Therefore, as with other works by Matisse, design and color live in harmony, i.e., none dominates the other, as the aim is to overcome the dichotomy that has dominated the history of painting since the Renaissance.

The black sums up this relationship as it is both line and color. Indeed, it is the center of the composition, what we "see" in the inside (or is it the outside?) of the window, the place where our eye settles, issuing a light that spreads throughout the painting. It is well known that Matisse, the greatest colorist in modern art, was also the painter who most knew how to exploit black as a color – an issuing of light - and created a series of paintings in which this tone plays a central role. If it is true that this painting makes a direct reference to another French masterpiece, *Le Balcon* (1868) by Manet, it also surprises by the complete lack of narrative. What predominates is almost a feeling of suspension of any action and the game between the clearness of the almost transparent colors and the black light. He is the enigma of painting of all times who opened new paths to art.

For me, Renata Pelegrini's production is directly linked to this tradition of modern painting which is currently being enthusiastically resumed by a number of contemporary painters. However, this is being done in a way that is much more visual than intellectual, as it does not mean thinking of the painting in a conceptual way, as many artists did after 1960, but rethinking this question from the point of view of the act of creation itself. For this reason, her latest production, the research of which originated in the drawing, conveys a striking graphic quality to the canvases and presents an enormous coherence.

Her drawings, made in charcoal, red chalk, graphite and chalk, bring a special ambiguity that will mark the use of black as a color: at one moment, there are lines that structure the spaces, at another there are stains, often reached by the gesture of erasure. There is a special balance in them between the recognizable space and the abstract but also between the weight and the light of the black that mesmerizes the eye and the experience of lightness through the blurred zones of transparent colors.

In the case of her canvases, black remains a source of light that serves as a magnet of composition although it exists side by side with tones that are equally strong: blue, yellow, ochre, green, grey, terracotta, red and pink, amongst others. If, on one hand, the construction of the space looks more obvious (and she often starts with a photographic observation), the composition is never exactly closed or fully recognizable. A game gets going between the movement of the diagonal outlines, as if suggesting the vanishing point, but which is constantly made tense, to a certain extent, by forms or masses of almost abstract color. What we have is the temporary balance,

accentuated by the exploration of elements that suggest the unfinished, like paint spilling over or the sign of the brushstroke gesture.

The not so calm world of Renata Pelegrini's paintings is often traversed by a fine line that is almost imperceptible, made with a sharp object that scratches the surface of the canvas. These strokes become protagonists in the composition, pushing our view in new directions. In fact, these are strong lines that destabilize the instant recognition of what an image would be from what is real. In this situation, they add to the feeling of the construction and deconstruction of the space and, as a result, our relationship with it which is one of the main qualities of her work. It reminds us that the art that matters, whether pictorial or not, is always an enigma.