La sua residenza artistica alla Nanjing University stava volgendo al termine, grazie al quale Barbieri ha scoperto di essere uno spettatore. Tuttavia, è risaltato la necessità di superare quell’obbligo che gli si è posto, e riuscire a condividere con il soggetto quello spazio intermedio tra l’arte e la vita. Attraverso la sua opera, Barbieri ha iniziato a trasformare le sue esperienze personali in un modo di esprimersi che lo rende sempre più coinvolto nell’arte. La sua personalità è diventata un riferimento, e la sua capacità di trarre spunto dalle urbe cinesi ha permesso a Barbieri di esplorare temi comesistemi e tecniche. Tuttavia, è riuscito a superare brillantemente quelle difficoltà, chiudendo il cerchio di questa parte della sua carriera e raggiungendo una piena maturità come artista.

Attraverso il suo lavoro, Barbieri ha rivelato di essere uno spettatore. Tuttavia, è risaltato la necessità di superare quell’obbligo che gli si è posto, e riuscire a condividere con il soggetto quello spazio intermedio tra l’arte e la vita. Attraverso la sua opera, Barbieri ha iniziato a trasformare le sue esperienze personali in un modo di esprimersi che lo rende sempre più coinvolto nell’arte. La sua personalità è diventata un riferimento, e la sua capacità di trarre spunto dalle urbe cinesi ha permesso a Barbieri di esplorare temi come la tradizione e la modernità, luce e oscurità, e la natura.
"I didn’t know it before, but I’ve always painted Chinese cities." That’s what Francesco Barbieri told me when his residency at Nanjing University was coming to an end. This insight – an “epiphany” of some sort – not only conveyed a great deal of the artist’s personal evolution, but also revealed his sensitive and perceptive eyes. Barbieri is often described as a skillful watercolorist and an elegant amateur of photography, but this time, his vision of Nanjing was both more humane and more profound. His eyes were not fixed on the city’s architectural beauties or monumental structures, but on the life and culture that lie within them.

Through an in-depth study of the Chinese metropolis, Barbieri has explored the world he imagined in his paintings, discovering new ways of representing it. His work has evolved from a simple reproduction of the cityscape to a more complex interpretation, where the city becomes a metaphor for the artist himself. Barbieri has discovered that the city’s architecture, streets, and people are all connected, forming a whole that is greater than the sum of its parts. This realization has led to a change in his artistic style, which has become more expressive and less formal.

In his journey through an alien culture and through his different voices, Barbieri has found the fundamental note that harmonizes all his creative endeavors. This note is the city itself, the place where he has found his true identity. Barbieri’s art is a reflection of his own search for identity, a search that is both personal and universal. His artistic view has become wider, his style braver, and his pictorial gesture firmer.

In his studio parts of the city: interstitial elements like cans of house paint abandoned around construction sites, or torn posters in the streets. Barbieri turns these elements into his painting tools, creating a dialogue between reality and art. The city is not just a background for his paintings, but a source of inspiration. Barbieri’s art is a mirror, reflecting the city’s life and culture.

Through his art, Barbieri has found a new way of representing the city, a way that is both more personal and more universal. His art is a dialogue between reality and art, a dialogue that is both complex and simple. Barbieri’s art is a reflection of his own search for identity, a search that is both personal and universal. His artistic view has become wider, his style braver, and his pictorial gesture firmer.

Andrea Baldini