

Man calls Man

By Deodato Salafia

Anthropology studies the human being and his relationship with himself and how he chooses to transform and perceive himself, in practical terms.

If I were to think of the opposite of anthropology I would necessarily think of something that is the farthest from this definition, hence I could think of nothing but Gnosticism, which, on the contrary, tries to transcend man in that it considers him as a sub-product in a world of flawless fallen angels. While anthropology deals with the human being here and now, Gnosticism deals with the original and the ultimate reality of the human being and sees man as temporarily trapped in the physical world. José Molina is certainly an anthropologist, he never abandons his discussion on the human being. Each and every work of his tells about a man making a choice affecting him non-accidentally, but intentionally, symbolically, until it almost converts into a sacrament. In his works José Molina observes man and celebrates his behaviour, though always bearing in mind that his behaviour is dictated by free choice, a choice José often disagrees with, or considers to be perilous for mankind. The artist experiences the mystery and the absurdity that man often treats himself to. The freedom and wickedness of man's choices are elements that several of José's works illustrate in an exceptionally symbolic synthesis. Every painting is a sacrament, a gift to man, a goblet at times sweet at times bitter, that José himself is the first to drink and cynically has us all drink. The time spent talking with José about the human being always flies. I – being also partly gnostic – can never succeed in having him become detached from the human being and the “mess he makes”. I can never, although I relentlessly try, have him accept at least once: “that’s how it goes”, “that’s life”, because to José “that’s just the way it is” is not an answer. Just like a child seeking truth, he never stops confuting and refuting, repeating as if in a mantra: “(but) why?” For us all, lovers of his paintings, this is lucky, because every “why” of his becomes a piece of art that he is compelled to create. Once he told me that he never decides when a painting is finished, the work itself determinates its own completion just like a good question: any good

question carries its answer, because every good question determinates itself. Before I met José I had very clear in mind the idea that in terms of determination of human existence, esotericism should have a higher role than exoterism.

Over the last few years, after having spent time working with him, I have been forced to reconsider everything. Every time I look at a new work by José Molina, I am projected to an exoteric aspect of man and there I must stay, because exactly there – José reminds me – man is with man. In José's view one does not frees all, for him every single one of us is necessary to set everybody free.