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THE RETURN

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What it opened did not.

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Coming back to Los Angeles did not feel like returning from Europe as much as arriving with more of myself. I had been gone for three months, but Palermo was still in the canvases, Barcelona was in the paper, and Lisbon had changed the pace of the work. The trains, beaches, hunger, exhaustion, conversations, and long stretches of silence came back with me too. They were no longer separate memories from separate places. Somewhere along the way, they had entered the interior life of the work.

The residency ended when I landed. What it opened did not.

Nothing about those months feels random now, although plenty of it felt random while I was living it. The temporary rooms were not always romantic. Neither were the long trains, the missed plans, or the days when I had no idea what I was doing next. I learned to adapt because there was no other choice. Fasting sharpened everything. The beaches restored a sense of scale. Conversation allowed me into lives I would never have known otherwise, while being alone gave me time to hear what was happening underneath my own.

I needed both. Adventure gave those months their voltage, but silence allowed me to understand what any of it meant. Too much movement and the experience becomes distraction. Too much solitude and the private world begins closing in on itself. Moving between the two gave me a larger range, not only as an artist, but as a person.

I keep returning to the idea of the golden goose because it begins long before anyone sees the result. It begins when nobody is watching, when there is no applause, sale, audience, or name to carry the work forward. There is only the private source and the decision to keep working. That source may be quiet, but it is alive. It gathers what you give it.

Adventure brings that private source into contact with the world. It introduces distance, beauty, inconvenience, appetite, desire, strangers, and love. The work is formed in silence, but it cannot remain protected there forever. It has to meet life. It has to be tested by something larger than the room where it began.

Europe also changed the way I recognized love. Most of it arrived without announcing itself. A woman at the cafe remembered my order. Someone made room for me at a table. A stranger remained in front of a painting longer than expected. A curator gave the work real time. Friends checked in from other countries and made the distance feel smaller.

Love was not always comfort. Sometimes it was privacy. Sometimes it was a late train, an unfamiliar room, or a day that refused every plan I had made for it. There were moments when love looked like space, friction, or the realization that I could land somewhere unknown and still remain fully myself. Once I began receiving it in all of those forms, I became more conscious of the attention I was giving back.

Los Angeles was waiting exactly as I had left it. The traffic, ambition, cost, and pressure had not softened while I was away, but my relationship to them had changed. I no longer needed the city to tell me who I was, and I did not need to resent it for the pressure that had helped shape me.

Los Angeles built the engine. It taught me how to improvise, endure, insist, and continue. Europe did not replace that training. It gave the engine more road. One showed me acceleration. The other showed me range. I needed both, and now I understand why.



Monte Pellegrino, Palermo, Sicily, 2026.

When I returned to the studio, those worlds met. The paintings became the place where I could give something back after receiving so much. New work began, old language opened again, and the distance between experience and practice disappeared. Silence, movement, beauty, pressure, solitude, and love were no longer separate subjects. They had become part of the same material.

The work is not a souvenir from Europe. It is evidence that a practice can take in an entire life without losing its center.

That is what the return means to me. Experience becomes form. Solitude finds a voice. Love is received and eventually passed forward through the work. The purpose was never to escape Los Angeles or create another version of myself somewhere else. It was to enlarge what I could hold and become more available to life without surrendering the private place where the work begins.

I am back in Los Angeles with a wider instrument and a quieter certainty. Europe does not need to be recreated. It needs to be honored by what happens next. The residency is over, but I am only beginning to understand its consequence.

The golden goose was never waiting for me overseas. It had been forming in silence the entire time. I carried it through Palermo, Barcelona, and Lisbon without completely knowing it was there. The road gave it range. The people gave it love. The work ahead will reveal what it has become.