

**EGO**  
**SYS**  
**TEM**  
2026



Saul Zanolari

# STATEMENT

*XXY PORTRAITS* represents a transitional body of work within a broader system that evolves into *EGO MASKS* and *GEN1*.

In this series, the portrait is stripped of its traditional function. There is no psychological description, no narrative, and no attempt at likeness. Identity is reduced to elementary signs.

The eyes—historically considered the mirror of the soul—are removed and replaced by sexual chromosomes, XX or XY. The face becomes a surface, a mask, and the image is flattened into a limited and controlled color palette.

These portraits do not aim to represent the subject, but to activate the viewer. Meaning is not embedded in the image itself; it emerges through projection, recognition, and reaction.

Within the *XXY* system, the portrait begins to shift from depiction to device. This shift marks the conceptual passage toward *EGO MASKS*, where identity becomes a constructed interface, and toward *GEN1*, where portraits can merge, reproduce, and generate new entities.

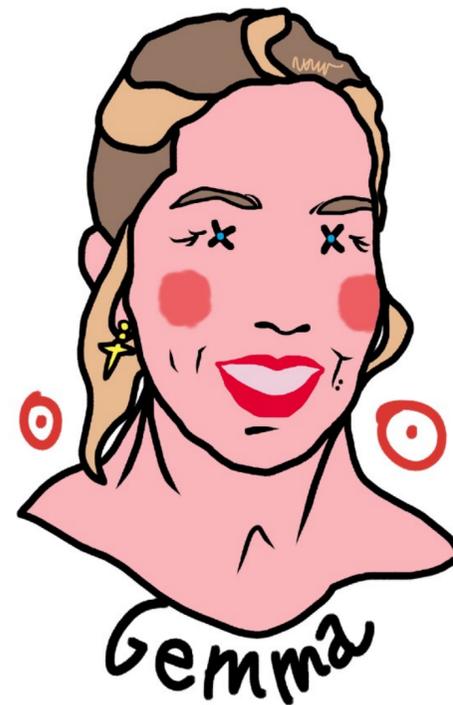
Art operates here as a serious game—where reduction, clarity, and immediacy expose identity as a mechanism rather than a truth.

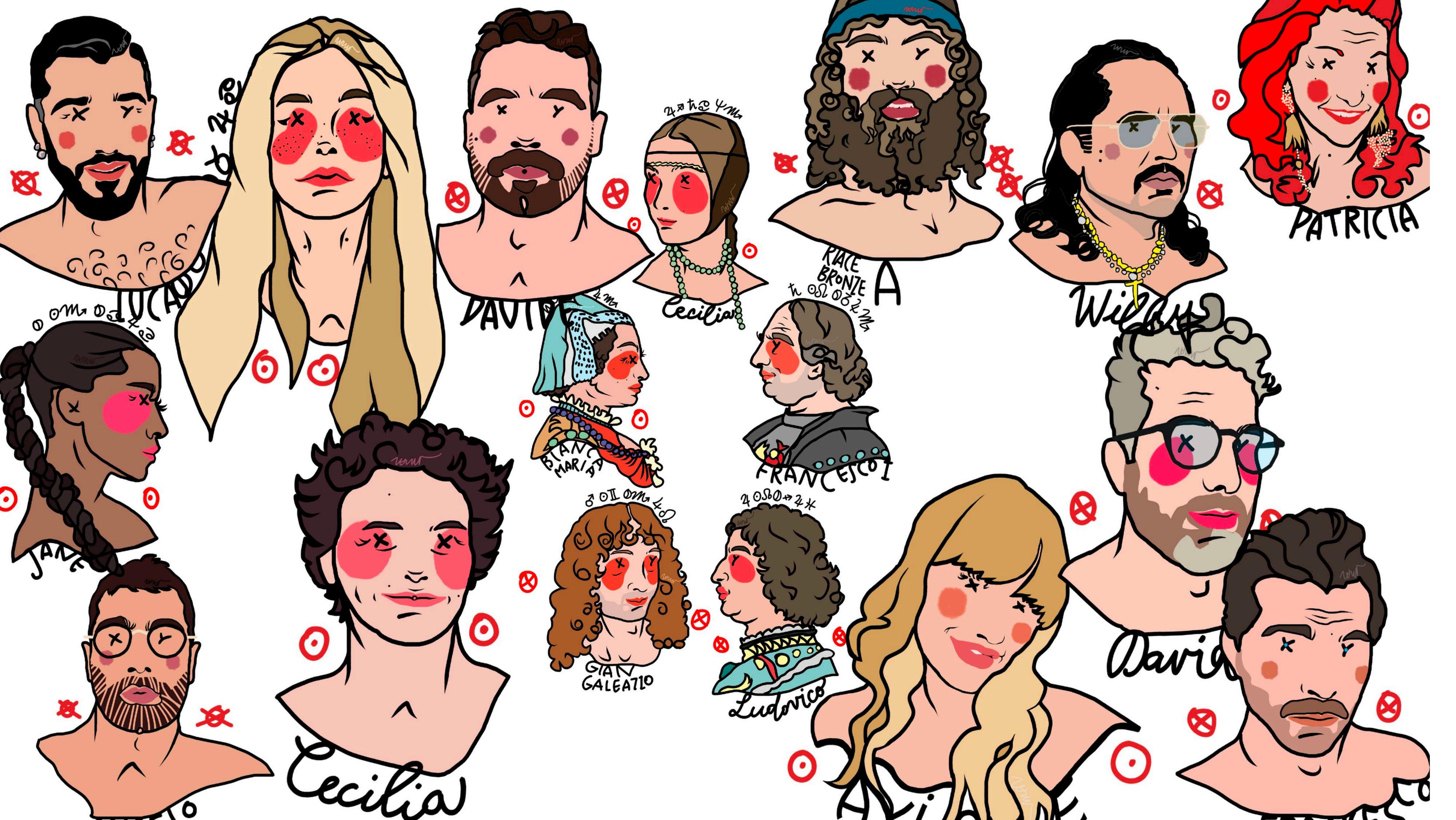
# XXY PORTRAITS

The series consists of essential portraits developed through a radically reduced visual language.

Each image follows strict rules: absence of eyes, use of sexual chromosomes as identifiers, minimal graphic signs, and a palette limited to a maximum of four colors.

Each portrait functions autonomously, yet acquires full meaning only in relation to others. The work is not based on individual storytelling, but on the tension generated by repetition and difference within a closed system.





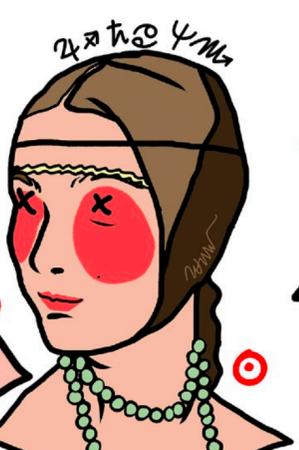
LUCAS



PATRICIA



DAVID



Cecilia



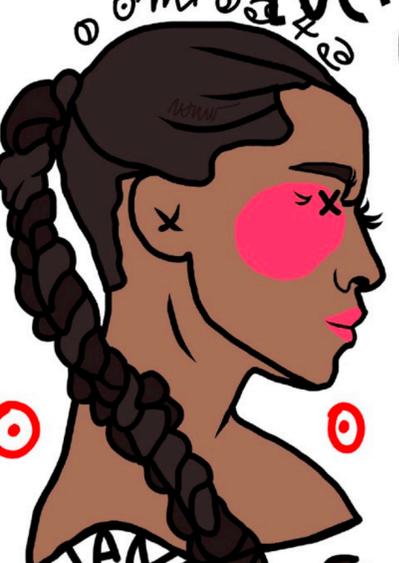
RICE BRONTE A



Willy



PATRICIA



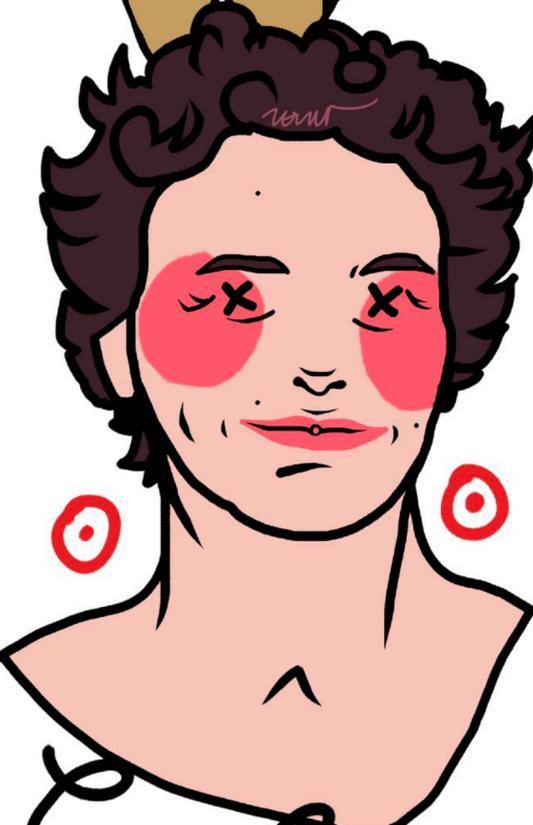
JANE



BLANCA MARIA



FRANCESCO I



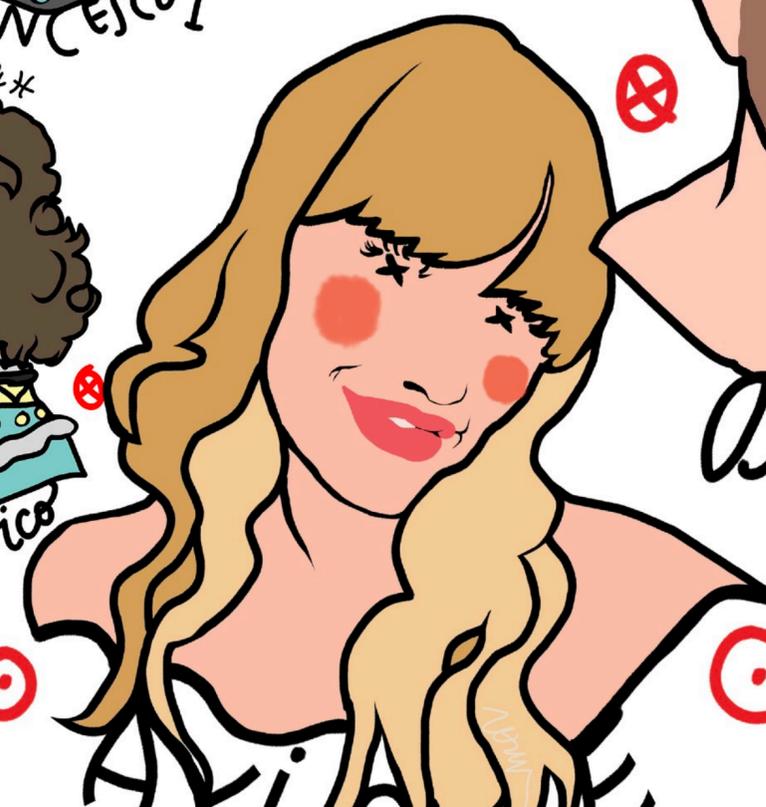
Cecilia



GIAN GALEATTO



Ludovico



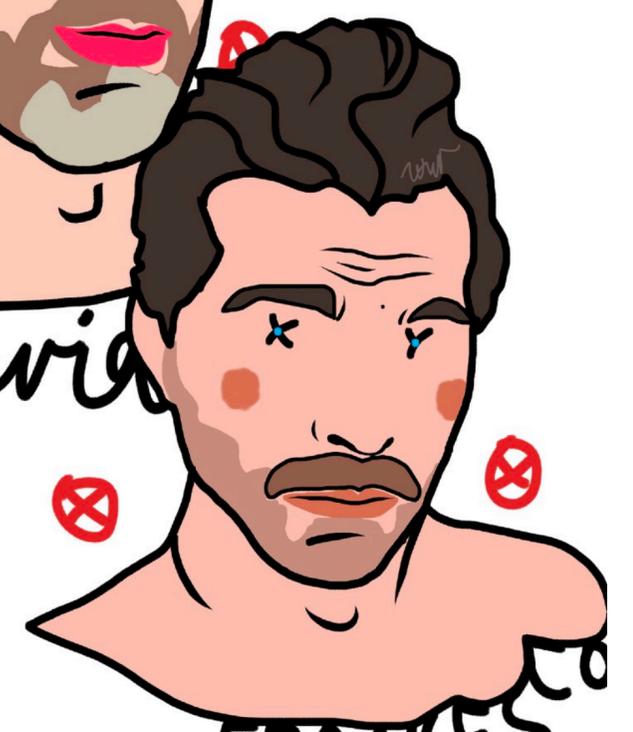
Patricia



David



David



David

# XXY – DE' MEDICI

The *XXY – de' Medici* project applies the same visual language to historical figures associated with the Medici family and their cultural context.

By flattening iconic figures of power, patronage, and modernity into essential signs, the series establishes a direct connection between past and present forms of representation.

The Medici portraits mark the beginning of modern self-image: the moment when the individual is placed at the center of the universe.



**XXY DE' MEDICI**  
Saul Zanolari

Scatola 1		+		+		+		=	<p><b>The Origins of Power</b> The foundation of the dynasty, between finance, politics, and myth.</p> <p><i>Le Origini della Potenza</i> La fondazione della dinastia, tra finanza, politica e mito.</p>
Scatola 2		+		+		+		=	<p><b>The Masters of the Republic</b> A humanist and two popes. Florence at the center of culture and faith.</p> <p><i>I Maestri della Repubblica</i> Un umanista e due papi. Firenze al centro della cultura e della fede.</p>
Scatola 3		+		+		+		=	<p><b>Innocence and Death</b> Youth, passion and oblivion: Beauty, loss, and a mystery.</p> <p><i>L'Innocenza e la Morte</i> Giovinezza passione e oblio: bellezza, perdita e mistero.</p>
Scatola 4		+		+		+		=	<p><b>The Women in Power</b> Key female figures: queens, heiresses, cultural strategists.</p> <p><i>Le Donne del Comando</i> Figure femminili chiave: regine, eredi, strateghe culturali.</p>
Scatola 5		+		+		+		=	<p><b>The New Ducal Order</b> From lords to dukes: succession, control, and splendor.</p> <p><i>Il Nuovo Ordine Ducale</i> Da signori a duchi: successione, controllo e splendore.</p>
Scatola 6		+		+		+		=	<p><b>The Children of Cosimo I</b> Descendants of the founding duke: contrasting destinies between art and tragedy.</p> <p><i>I Figli di Cosimo I</i> Discendenti dal duca fondatore: destini contrastanti tra arte e tragedia.</p>
Scatola 7		+		+		+		=	<p><b>The Intellectual Bloodline</b> Curious minds, cultured spirits, lovers of art and science.</p> <p><i>L'Intelligenza Familiare</i> Spiriti curiosi, colti, amanti delle arti e della scienza.</p>
Scatola 8		+		+		+		=	<p><b>The Hearts of the Renaissance</b> Medici wives and mothers, pillars of the dynasty.</p> <p><i>I Cuori del Rinascimento</i> Spose e madri medicee, colonne portanti della dinastia.</p>
Scatola 9		+		+		+		=	<p><b>The Cardinals and Contenders</b> A path between religion and political ambition.</p> <p><i>I Cardinali e i Pretendenti</i> Una linea tra religione e ambizione politica.</p>



Panoramic view of the XXY – de' Medici installation at the Museo de' Medici in Florence, during the exhibition XXY – de' Medici by Saul Zanolari, June–July 2025.

# EXHIBITION CONCEPT

The exhibition is conceived as a modular system of portraits that functions as a closed visual field.

Rather than focusing on individual identities, the installation creates an environment where images interact, echo, and neutralize one another.

The system adapts to different spatial contexts while preserving internal coherence and conceptual integrity.



# *EGO SYSTEM + BIO*

## **System Evolution**

*XXY PORTRAITS* (2024-202x) constitutes the foundational layer of a system that evolves through subsequent phases.

With *EGO MASKS* (2025-202x), identity becomes a constructed interface.

With *GEN1* (2026-202x), portraits merge, reproduce, and generate new entities.

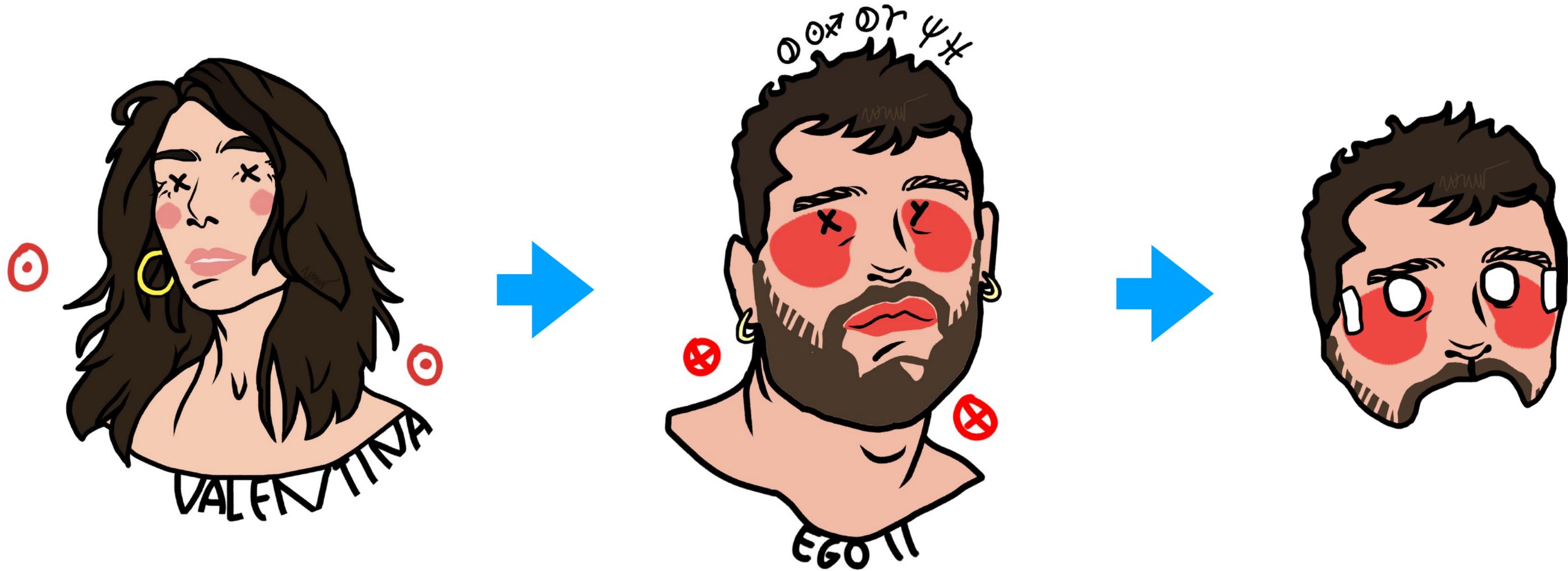
Together, these phases form a continuous system that explores identity as structure, mask, and process.

## ***Biography***

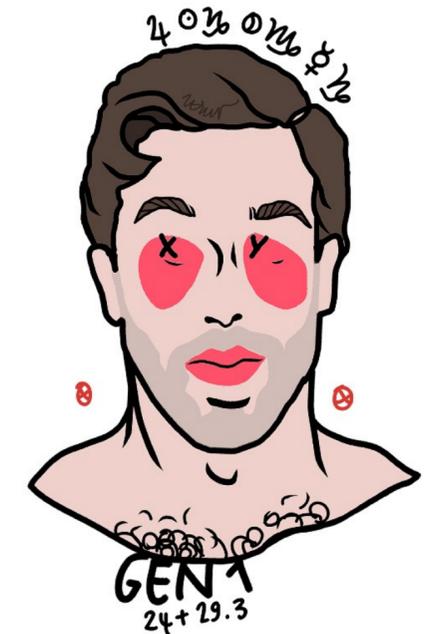
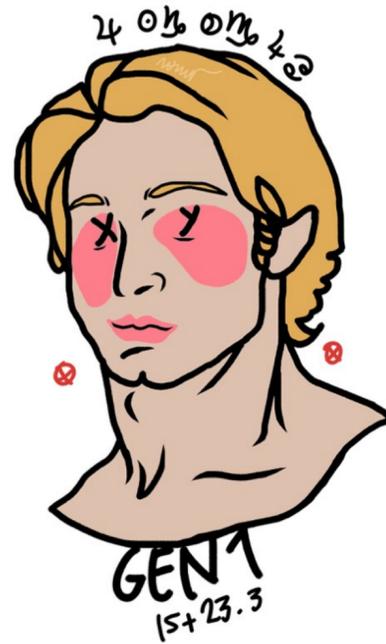
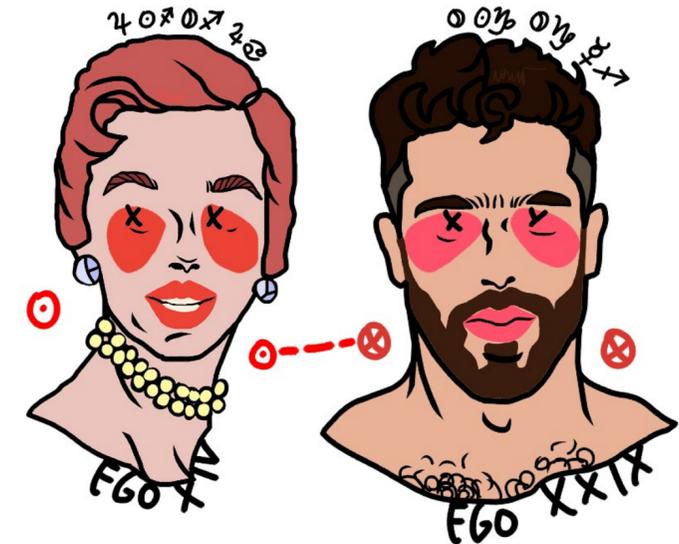
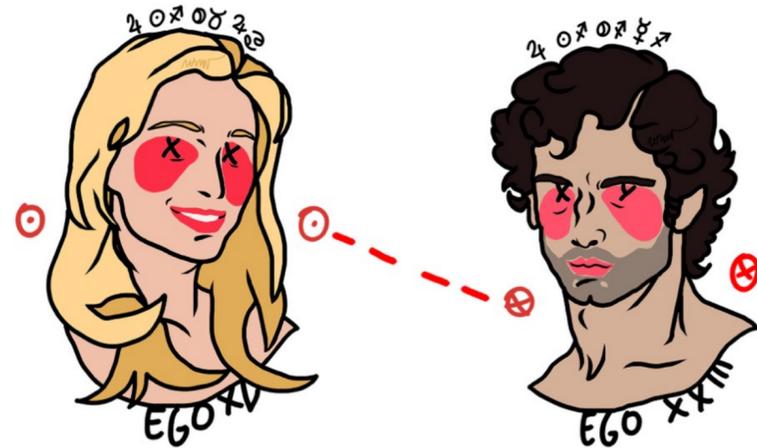
*Saul Zanolari is a Swiss-based visual artist whose work explores identity, power, and representation through reduction and essential visual language.*

*Working across drawing, painting, and installation, his practice is based on systems rather than isolated images.*

# FROM XXY **P**ORTRAITS TO EGO **O** MASKS



# FROM EGO MASKS TO GEN1, GEN2, GEN3, ...



# CONTACT

SAUL ZANOLARI

6830 Chiasso (Switzerland)

[www.saulzanolari.com](http://www.saulzanolari.com)  
[saulzanolari@gmail.com](mailto:saulzanolari@gmail.com)

**+39 351 5619800**