

## **Gonzalo García: Artist Statement**

*A four-time grantee of the FONCA (National System of Creators) scholarship, Gonzalo Garcia studied Visual Arts at the Instituto Allende University in Guanajuato. His figurative works lie at the intersection of sexuality and culture, often pulling from 20th-century Mexican history. The artist lives and works in Mexico City.*

My work as a figurative painter examines my experience as a gay male living in Mexico today. My early paintings and drawings are more explicitly erotic in that they focus exclusively on human flesh, depicting the vulnerability of self-portraiture through the lens of intimacy and sex. Over time, I began to paint my friends in similar states of being—leveraging a seductive, mystical realism in the works to evoke each subject’s physicality and overarching sense of desire. While these self-portraits allowed me to explore, and ultimately uncover, who I was as a gay male artist, lately I’ve been compelled to work more metaphorically and bring to life more subdued sexual motifs like flowers, complete with varied textures and colors that echo the human body but allow the viewer to draw their own conclusions.

In both portraits and still-lives, key themes tie the works together. These include the body, sexuality, fragility, and undertones of violence. The latter lies beneath the surface of the scene featured on the canvas, inviting the viewer to take stock of the composition and only then dig deeper into the painting’s history. After receiving Mexico’s coveted FONCA (National Fund for Culture and the Arts) scholarship, I began to research and subsequently fictionalize elements of Mexican history, particularly milestones from the ‘60s, ‘70s, and ‘90s, blending past and present to inspire a sense of contemplation regarding where the nation is today. Death, culture, and Mexican folklore come together alongside notions of identity, nationalism, and progress, with the goal of creating an entirely new atmosphere that captures the viewer’s eye in a near-superstitious fashion. There’s a sensory obsessiveness regarding the shapes, colors, and textures at play within the works. A muted color palette and anatomical approach enable me to experiment thematically while maintaining my artistic voice as I experiment with memory.