



HECTOR DIAZ

Edgar Mendoza
10 Masterpieces

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Introduction

Edgar Mendoza

B. October 11, 1967 - Durango, Mexico

"I do not intend to create stereotypes with my characters. The appearance, the actions and the scenery they are part of are actually just a pretext to frame the feelings and internal emotions of these people portrayed. They surround themselves with a certain atmosphere to give a certain narrative or symbolic meaning, but, above all, I am interested in observing them internally; I find it interesting that the models express introspection, but also existential vitality. My characters can seek their own self-analysis to obtain answers about themselves, for which they also resort to generating a double with whom they can converse, discuss and reflect".

-Edgar Mendoza

Edgar Mendoza, one of the most outstanding contemporary realists in Latin America, is an artist who transcends the mimetic representation of reality to create dreamlike worlds and visual poems that invite reflection. His work, which is characterized by a style he calls "Actual Realism", is a constant dialogue between reality and his inner world, a universe of emotions and sensations that he shares with the viewer.

Since childhood he has defined himself as a "code reader," a sensitive observer who interpreted the world through his own creative filter. His childhood, marked by games and reflections, nourished his capacity for wonder and his desire to understand the reality that surrounded him. During his youth, he explored various vocations, but finally found his true passion in art, an "accident" that transformed his life forever.

His encounter with painting was fortuitous, but from that moment on his life changed radically. He felt called to create images that reflected his vision of the world and his own life experience. His style, characterized by detailed and evocative realism, allows him to explore both objectivity and subjectivity, the concrete and the abstract, always through realistic figuration.

Throughout his career he has developed his own pictorial language that allows him to communicate his concerns and narratives in an authentic and personal way. His work, which has been recognized

and admired by collectors, artists, art dealers, curators, critics and journalists, is an invitation to look inside ourselves and reflect on our own existence.

He defines himself as an artist committed to his time and his own truth. For him, being an artist in the 21st century means being authentic and faithful to his own voice, creating regardless of trends or fashions. His humility and his connection with the essentials of life are reflected in his vision of art and in his desire to connect with the public through his creations.

He recognizes that his legacy will depend on how his work is rediscovered and valued in the future. His wish is that his paintings transcend time and continue to generate emotions and reflections in new generations.

As a gallerist, I am proud to present an artist of the stature of Edgar Mendoza, a creator who invites us to look within ourselves and appreciate the beauty and complexity of the world around us. I invite you to discover his work, a testimony of his talent, his passion and his commitment to art.

–Héctor Díaz

The following documents:

- Statement
- Biography
- Exhibition history
- Bibliography
- Media

They are available in downloadable PDF format at this link: **Edgar Mendoza**

Edgar Mendoza

Nobody



Nobody, 2021, Oil on Canvas, 81 x 100 cm © Edgar Mendoza



Nobody

2021, Oil on Canvas, 81 x 100 cm

The events that concern me as a creator directly influence my vision and the motifs I wish to depict.

This painting was created between the winter of 2020 and the spring of 2021, in the midst of the process of ending the lockdown forced upon us by the terrible COVID-19 pandemic.

Throughout these months, my priority has focused on a profound reflection on the susceptibility of the human species and the race to become aware as a society of preparing for future major shocks, which we are certain will come.

Certainty, uncertainty, and essence. The clearer we are about our essence, the greater the balance between our identity and who we want to be. Move by who you truly are and not by what you should be.

Being at peace with who you are, so as not to fear uncertainty, and deciding to survive without reproach for as long as it takes, is not resignation, but another version of happiness.

Nobody was conceived after a personal process that has transcended a substantial change in my life and that marked a before and after in my essence that I continue to seek day by day: just for today. For every great change, a transformation is required that exposes us to the point of extinction.

Hitting rock bottom to be aware, and if we manage to survive, to be able to start the path to transcend.

So far, *Nobody* is the painting that reflects my greatest technical advances in tune with a clear and honest personal conceptual vision that I want to convey.

Its message essentially speaks of my personal circumstances translated through a metaphorical scene of this half-naked woman whose serenity wants to convey to us the process she has lived to achieve the self-confidence that allows her to face what could be to come.

The metaphor includes a series of symbols: The origins of *Nobody* go back to four previous paintings linked together whose kinship shows ideas expressed by women wrapped in bubble wrap. Ice and other materials are included as similar substitutes for female models. The creation of these

alternatives also served to convey the necessary transparencies that induce the viewer to look inward.

This series sought to create an entire universe in which human figures and objects coexist, creating a new vision that included, for example, the genre of still lifes, but also intended to show landscapes and narratives that are yet to be developed.

Eleven years of maturation passed between my work *Alternating Current*, *Ice*, and the two still life examples, which showed screws, washers, and wires encapsulated in ice.

The result was this new painting titled *Nobody*, in which I once again pay tribute for the third time to another saga that since I was a teenager marked my creativity through hundreds of drawings that I made, as well as cardboard models, which finally ended up in the trash can back in the 80s: *Blade Runner* by Ridley Scott in 1982, and *Blade Runner 2049* by Denis Villeneuve in 2017. Cult films that I have found in their content perfect suggestions towards my own personal universe concerns.

Part of my process of maturation and honesty over these years has consisted of losing my fear of taking on other people's ideas without complexes or prejudices, processing them in an attempt to create independent images, always with deep respect and the appropriate declaration of the corresponding copyright.

The element itself that I respectfully borrow and incorporate into my painting as is, is the Baseline Test, derived from Voight Kampff's machine, from the science fiction novella *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* by Philip K. Dick from 1968.

In my painting the machine has examined the woman and is also examining the viewer, there are textures and translucent elements that accompany the internal silence of the character and those ice structures that synthesize all the essence of the diversity of lives that we could find in the most unusual structures.

I try to generate a series of reflections on our identity and on how external controls and examinations influence us. A reflection on how this analysis affects us and how it makes us who we are.

Nobody belongs to a series whose project called *Transparencies* aims to develop an ecosystem of paintings on essence, identity, and on the new concepts that can be reborn from this research.

–Edgar Mendoza

Edgar Mendoza

Phenotype I



Phenotype I, 2020, Oil on Canvas, 89 x 130 cm © Edgar Mendoza



Phenotype I

2020, Oil on Canvas, 89 x 130 cm

The painting is technically executed in an extremely detailed style. It involved long and arduous days of work in which patience and concentration prevailed. As a painter I had to use a very complex technique.

The clean gaze is a weapon of seduction and one of the characteristics of *Phenotype I*.

It is a psychological portrait of a character that, using a hyper-realistic pictorial technique, shows in a very detailed way a kind of physical map of the model.

She shows herself directly and objectively to the viewer through her face, but in her greatest need, she needs to be heard, inviting us in her silence to penetrate her inner existence, and read the circumstances and events that have made her who she is.

The purpose of *Phenotype I*, speaks about how our physical features are influenced or modified by our environment and the circumstances that surround us. The character portrayed is playing a role for this purpose, but it has nothing to do with the model, a friend named Carmen who posed to characterize this idea.

The clean atmosphere contrasts with all the extreme hyperrealistic detail on her face, but the character doesn't ask for her exterior to be seen; she wants to converse through her existential vitality, allowing us to observe her introspection, her feelings, and her emotions.

Phenotype I has been my most hyperrealistic painting to date and was the first-place winner in the first edition of the MODPORTRAIT 2013 International Portrait Competition, organized by the ArteLibre Gallery and the European Museum of Modern Art of Barcelona (MEAM). The work belongs to the museum's collection.

–Edgar Mendoza

Edgar Mendoza

Visitor



Visitor, 2020, Oil on Canvas, 89 x 130 cm © Edgar Mendoza



Visitor

2020, Oil on Canvas, 89 x 130 cm

An empty house, a forgotten home, a nakedness that expresses freedom and security, or on the contrary: exposed and vulnerable lack of protection.

A scenario can generate the emotion of feeling alone or accompanied, it makes us reconstruct with memories, the parts that do not exist or that we have lost.

With abandonment, a stage ends but also the possibility of a new beginning is generated. The skin is shed like a peeling wall that whispers its secrets.

The temperature of each season of the year is felt because it filters through those doors and windows that once existed.

Nakedness can be objective when we see it as it is, and subjective even if we see it dressed.

Who is the visitor? The one inside or the one outside?
They observe you from their own perspective.

One under a roof that one day lit up at night, taking the pulse of life that she carries on her arm.
The other, feeling the breath of the house that darkens with the sunset.

–Edgar Mendoza

Edgar Mendoza

Bulbs



Bulbs, 2016, Oil on Canvas, 114 x 81 cm © Edgar Mendoza



Bulbs

2016, Oil on Canvas, 114 x 81 cm

I wanted to show a lot and make it seem like one sees very little.

Without an open horizon and with a wall behind one.

To synthesize so much information from elements, the transparencies of glass and vaporous fabrics were propitious.

If we have a wall, the metaphor of glass can pass through it like an imaginary stained glass window.

I chose light and its whiteness so that it could be the narrator of that character who proposes the following reflection:

"The renewal of creation; the beginning of things is within ourselves."

A nest that has been built so that things can happen if the wind is favorable.

As a child I watched through the rear slits of that first black and white television that my parents bought with great effort. It was a whole world of electronic vacuum tubes that people of my time called "bulbs." I imagined a whole micro system between those little lights, as if they were strange incubators rooting future lives.

How long will the fairies accompany us along the way?

–Edgar Mendoza

Edgar Mendoza

Nest



Nest, 2015, Oil on Canvas, 82 x 105 cm © Edgar Mendoza



Nest

2015, Oil on Canvas, 82 x 105 cm

About dystopian worlds and the visual language that we begin to evoke through films even when we are ignorant or illiterate.

It was inevitable that George Miller would not inspire my limited imagination as a lover of his Mad Max saga, and a romantic of those post-apocalyptic worlds that put man in total survival forced by a destroyed era.

The distance narrates a wide desolate landscape in its own nature.

We do not know the time, it could be dusk or a new dawn, perhaps it is midday, clouded by the swirling dust that foretells a rain of dirt in that wasteland.

The survivor is no longer just the man, but is also a woman, twin, double or cloned showing the two sides of herself.

We read stereotypes as we were taught to look at black and white.

Can we extract from such a magnificent cinematographic work, a piece that breathes on its own?

This is one of my attempts to pay homage and at the same time humbly try to create a new idea by being myself in my need to convey the concept of looking inside ourselves using a certain scenario to generate emotions and feelings through a simple painting.

A nest that symbolizes losing and not having hope so that it allows us to activate the self of survival.

–Edgar Mendoza

Edgar Mendoza

Symphony I



Symphony I, 2014, Oil on Canvas, 162 x 220 cm © Edgar Mendoza



Symphony I

2014, Oil on Canvas, 162 x 220 cm

Inspiration

Symphony I could be part of that controversial polemic about the limits that we should not exceed when we decide to take back someone else's intellectual property.

We all have references that inspire us with their wonderful creativity and vision. History is full of examples and influences between some creators and others that have ultimately resulted in a richer and more extensive creative universe in its multiple versions.

Perhaps the limits are only exceeded when we try to say that we are the original author of an idea that is not really ours.

In 1996 I read one of my favorite novels for the first time, *Perfume* by Patrick Süskind, with it I imagined scenarios that years later I was able to see materialized when I saw the film adaptation of the novel directed by Tom Tykwer in 2006, *Perfume, the Story of a Murderer*.

It was above all the climax scene: the orgy with mass nudity; accompanied by that sublime soundtrack by Johnny Klimek & Reinhold Heil. This scene inspired me to paint *Symphony I*.

With this painting I wanted to pay homage to *Perfume*, trying not to fall into the dangerous terrain of plagiarism.

I already had the setting so that my personal reflections and concepts could be conveyed. When we use an idea or an icon that is already known, we make the viewer subliminally reconstruct a part of the narrative that we are proposing as an environment.

Once the viewer has recognized the symbols in the environment, the next step will be to show characters characterized to transmit messages. This is where the coherent reading that the viewer has been reading visually ends, to then provoke a new reading with other apparently incoherent codes that are not based only on objective images, but that begin to communicate through a sensory and subjective proposal.

Characters

The woman on the left is wearing a semi-transparent fabric, like a camouflage that sticks to her wet body; with her gaze she speaks to us silently.

The woman on the right is tied to a scaffold, she does not observe us, it is as if she were alien or hermetic.

These characters act out a role for which they have been disguised, one could easily free herself from her bonds, the other invites us to recognize her possible story.

In the next section, loving couples interact, as if wanting to impregnate the atmosphere with the meaning of a kiss or a hug.

Then, a clear and empty background unifies through light every detail of the global scene, allowing those independent stories to exist on a single plane.

If these anachronistic protagonists do not have a logical narrative and there is a disconnection between them, there is a great possibility of generating in the spectator the sensation of observing a meaningless scene.

We would therefore be saying that this painting intends to communicate through an abstract language despite its realistic technical elaboration.

The experiment proposed by *Symphony I* is: to stop asking ourselves whether meaning exists and move on to the fleeting realm of the perception of sensations.

Four possibilities or movements that are expressed independently, but that are linked together by the background that unites them.

Does *Symphony I* succeed in making its different sounds share common properties and become a whole?

–Edgar Mendoza

Edgar Mendoza

Mutant



Mutant, 2013, Oil on Canvas, 162 x 114 cm © Edgar Mendoza



Mutant

2013, Oil on Canvas, 162 x 114 cm

Mutant is a painting that can easily be confused with a gore theme, but this is just an excuse to provoke a first impression. It is surrounded by an atmosphere to give a certain symbolic meaning.

It is framed as a highly empowered character, a term closely related to feminism and its ongoing sociocultural reflection.

The character does not seek approval of what she considers her consistency, she carries as a banner the concept and the warning of being protected, the weapon itself seems to be herself, a chainsaw that provides her intentions in her purposes or in her actions.

A model was needed that showed physical strength and firmness of face, that concealed her nakedness with transparencies without complexes or erotic pretensions.

This woman in that first information is presented powerful with her artifact, half-naked to tell us that perhaps she is not what she seems.

Later she takes you to her gaze, which in reality when you observe it, does not threaten you. She wants you to go inside her like the other women in my paintings.

Silence can provide answers to the concerns of a character who wants to cut off what she no longer needs from herself, and which prevents her from moving on to the next stage of growth.

More than an empowerment that wants to fight for something, it's actually having the conviction that to continue evolving, you must leave something behind and sacrifice it.

Are the conceptual nature and psychological and feminine personality of *Mutant* enough to compete with the powerful symbol of that powerful chainsaw?

The painting belongs to the collection of the European Museum of Modern Art (MEAM).

—**Edgar Mendoza**

Edgar Mendoza

Lumen



Lumen, 2012, Oil on Canvas, 89 x 75 cm © Edgar Mendoza



Lumen

2012, Oil on Canvas, 89 x 75 cm

Our culture has created subliminal stereotypes of both men and women that are often unfavorable as symbols.

When I paint a portrait of someone, the first step is to reproduce their physical resemblance, but if I want to create a narrative beyond that, and turn that person portrayed into an independent character regardless of who he or she is, I must create a context and an identity for them. These environments can simulate an artificial reality or a true illusion.

Lumen is the portrait of a woman who shows a medieval stereotype in her clothing, but who contrasts it with a personality of not being an objectified creature, but rather an intelligent, curious human being open to the knowledge of the existence that surrounds her and that is within herself.

She is an architect who asks questions, investigates answers and dares to invent possibilities.

Lumen is the light that a firefly emits not only in the darkness but also in the adversity of the day.

–Edgar Mendoza

Edgar Mendoza

Alternating Current



Alternating Current, 2010, Oil on Canvas, 200 x 200 cm © Edgar Mendoza



Alternating Current

2010, Oil on Canvas, 200 x 200 cm

"Direct current" and "Alternating current" are the two main types of electric currents that we use.

"Direct current" is not so powerful, its transmission is compact and short, as well as being linear and in one direction.

"Alternating current" can be transformed from a high power to a short one in both directions, its undulating movements are transported and connected by means of transformers for its transmission as needed without taking into account the order of the connection poles.

This simple but complex description of the "alternating" electrical method generated in me this symbolic metaphor in which two female characters mutually and alternately feed each other's capabilities.

"Alternating current" to transmit and adapt its purpose needs "transformers", the cages symbolize that function.

A cage is an open mystery, from inside or outside, everything can be looked through.... but being inside is not the same as being outside, which is why cages can be transformative symbols.

Between these two powerful women, there is the capacity to adapt in their communication. Only they know what their internal and secret dialogue is, and although they may seem like similar clones, there are radical differences between them. It is not known which one could be more powerful or dominant than the other, in fact it does not matter, since both have the ability to transform their meaning as needed.

Two characters feeding each other in the middle of a dystopian landscape, apparently inert or inanimate, inviting the viewer to observe and discover their meaning, and beyond a comprehensible explanation, results in a silent and abstract explanation.

They show their nudity not in the erotic sense, but through a veiled, protected and semi-transparent invitation, so that we look inside ourselves, a mirror effect.

–Edgar Mendoza

Edgar Mendoza

The snack



The snack, 2008, Oil on Canvas, 200 x 200 cm © Edgar Mendoza



The snack

2018, Oil on Canvas, 200 x 200 cm

The snack is perhaps the painting of my production that has generated the most controversy among viewers when they see this explicit scene for the first time, which can be unpleasant for some and prevents them from continuing to read the meaning of its message.

A message whose intention is not only to show a gruesome scene without more, but to go further in a conversation that the character has with herself about her inner being that is in constant transformation.

The first aspect to analyze in this painting, would deal with our perception of what should be considered beautiful.

I have always liked the so-called beautiful motifs referring for example to landscapes, still lifes or human models full of harmony. I am convinced that just by painting a well-executed flower, one can masterfully transcend.

Who could not like that long list of themes that awaken pleasant values in us regardless of what fashions and ideals dictate. But my approaches over the years have also found a suitable ground to express many of my concerns in the territory of what is considered incorrect, macabre, twisted or unpleasant.

Ideas that are politically incorrect for some are very necessary for others.

Another characteristic that my paintings in this line must have is that their message must not have a moral sense as a priority, but rather a reflection on the limits of human personalities and their existential readings.

The concept of beauty is relative for each person, what for some may be sharply unpleasant, for others it is an opportunity to expand those aesthetic limits of beauty.

I do not believe that art has to fulfill only the function of pleasing, it can also question and disturb, and if the proposal requires it, one must dare to explore those areas and take the risks to achieve the intended meaning.

This painting marked the end and the beginning of a new stage in my work with a technique and concepts that experienced a change in procedure and language.

The symbolic, fantastic and dreamlike themes that had been feeding my previous paintings inspired by dreams would begin to diminish in 2008 and would gradually be replaced by conceptual proposals directed towards an internal psychological analysis.

A story about doubles, clones, replicas, twins or doppelgangers.

In *The snack* the characters seek their own self-analysis to obtain answers about themselves and for this they resort to a double with whom they can converse, but above all discuss in their privacy about those personalities that we do not want to recognize as part of ourselves but that we avoid talking about because they are unpleasant, contradictory or violent.

The painting aims to be a mirror for the viewer to look at themselves and reflect on the possibility of finding an answer to the whys of their own imbalances.

As a kind of stage design, the painting shows us the theatrical staging of a metaphor starring two women who are actually one, interpreting a story whose experimental genre theme is called *The snack*.

The furniture of the setting accompanies the protagonists through symbols, reinforcing the narrative through a pair of chairs arranged with a table, a white tablecloth, cutlery for eating and drinking, and a clothesline from which X-rays hang in the middle of a green field with a sky full of clouds.

Does the second woman want to eat the first, or is the first woman forcing the second to eat her?

Is the first woman forcing the second to cut off a piece of her arm to eat herself?

Or is the second woman the one who dominates, forcing the first to devour herself?

The fact that one of the women is cutting off a piece of the other's arm to use as possible food is actually only suggested by the series of instruments present, but beyond what this may mean for each spectator, the approach also raises an unknown about what role each of these two characters plays and whether there is a dominant figure between them that guides us to formulate a diagnosis about what is happening to her.

The objects on the table are arranged towards one of the characters, as is the case of the glass of water, which, in addition to indicating who may be the next to eat, proposes the interpretation of water that cleanses and purifies everything.

At this point, it is worth highlighting the symbol that refers to the circular, supported by the shape of the round table that raises a concept of feedback.

The circular symbolizes the constant struggle, the cyclical nature of things, the eternal return of cycles that end and begin.

In a continuous manner and synthesizing the two women as one, the character is swallowing herself, giving rise to the representation of a rebirth of things that never disappear but only undergo eternal transformations.

Finally, the scene symbolically shows some x-rays that confirm the idea of an internal examination of the protagonists, but that by being hung from a clothesline create new and small metaphors within each other.

Some x-rays that hang, drying in the sun and the wind. We have washed them and all that remains is to wait for them to dry.

The explicit metaphor of cannibalism proposed by *The snack* moves within these limits and risks being classified as a mere grotesque image without any further meaning, but that is precisely the challenge that this painting aims to address, that of transgressing not without cause, but with a reason to capture attention and propose a complex analysis.

It is important for an artist to be aware that when we paint a metaphor in a very realistic way, we create the sensation in the viewer that this image is real and true, so we must be careful not to distract the reading and the conceptual meaning that we are proposing with the images; we must seek a balance to transmit the message.

The snack was awarded an Honorable Mention in 2008 by the International Competition of the Foundation for the Arts and Artists of the European Museum of Modern Art (MEAM), and is part of its collection.

–Edgar Mendoza

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