

**HECTOR DIAZ**

**Héctor Díaz**  
Interviews

# HECTOR DIAZ

## Interviews to Héctor Díaz

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## ***“In Mexico, there are few galleries and many art stores”:*** **Héctor Díaz**

**Media outlet:** El Economista

**By:** J. Francisco de Anda Corral

**Date:** January 23, 2025

**Link:** <https://www.eleconomista.com.mx/arteseideas/mexico-hay-pocas-galerias-muchas-tiendas-arte-hector-diaz-20250123-743290.html>

The gallerist and curator from Chihuahua reviews the contemporary art market in Mexico and shares the process of internationalization of his gallery, which is about to turn five years old; Art Week *“is a visual spectacle, a farce disguised as glamour,”* he asserts.

Héctor Díaz is one of the youngest dealers in Mexico's pictorial art market. Ah, but that is where the identifying characteristic of our interviewee lies—he doesn't just sell artworks; he considers himself a *“builder of artistic careers and collections.”*

Born in Ciudad Juárez in 1986—*“in a border city in the middle of the desert; very far north of Mexico and very far south of the United States,”* he says with a certain pride—Díaz grew up in a binational culture, studied Business at Tecnológico de Monterrey and IPADE, and in 2020, at 33 years old, he embarked on the adventure of founding his own art gallery in Zapopan, Jalisco, under the seal of his name: HECTOR DIAZ; thus, in capital letters and without accents, *“an international and universal contemporary art gallery,”* he affirms.

Furthermore, he is an art critic and curator who represents internationally renowned painters in Mexico. On the eve of Art Week in Mexico City, he offers us a fresh point of view on the pictorial market, contrasting with the euphoria that this great showcase of Latin American art unleashes among artists and collectors. In addition, he explains the concept of the gallery that he represents and defends.

***You are a young player in the contemporary art market in Mexico; how do you define yourself?***

I am the first gallerist from Chihuahua, and one of the youngest in the country to start a gallery. I specialize in primary market painting; I am not in the secondary market; I prioritize living artists. I am a young gallerist in age and new to the art industry in Mexico and the world. I believe that one does not seek art, but that it finds you, and captures you forever.

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My career has consisted of representing artists and collectors, and in high-impact cultural and social exhibitions. I never set out to be the best gallery in Jalisco, in Mexico, or in Latin America; no, that would have been a very easy challenge... I set out to be a gallery that competes in the world, even on a smaller scale.

## ***How did HECTOR DIAZ emerge, and what has its itinerary been?***

Upon entering and understanding this industry, I discovered that there are almost no galleries in Mexico; we are very few; what exists are art stores. Sadly, there is a tremendous lack of professionalism in the sector; artists and collectors are not represented, but rather abused; art sellers only look out for themselves; the promotion of artists in the art industry and the global scene is almost utopian.

I also discovered that there are many pseudo-artists who seek fame and a label, but that there are really few true artists per generation with a unique voice capable of transcending and writing the new art books.

I have the honor of representing two great European masters: the realist Javier Arizabalo from France and the Fauvist Stefano Puleo from Italy. They are so great that they call themselves painters and not artists, and they still seek to improve and continue learning, something uncommon in young creators.

## ***What role do collectors, artists, and alliances with exhibition spaces play in your project?***

Representing artists is similar to the process of wine; you need good grapes, a good harvest, and careful aging. Just because a wine is behind a showcase does not mean it is good; the same thing happens with art.

The representation of collectors does not exist in Mexico; art dealers sell to anyone who is willing to buy. In theory, galleries first represent collectors, then artists. I assure you that few Latin American gallerists know who Joseph Duveen was.

## ***Why does HECTOR DIAZ remain outside the major circuits like the upcoming Art Week in Mexico City?***

If you go to an art fair, and there are 100 galleries participating with 10 artists each, well, that's 1000 creators, but not necessarily 1000 artists... it is a visual spectacle, a farce disguised as glamour.

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***Why did you embark on the adventure of setting up a gallery in a tequila factory, why did the project fail, and what lessons did it leave you?***

In 2023, I moved my city gallery—"White Cube" style—to a tequila distillery, in Tequila, Jalisco. I was working there for six months; it was intended to be the first Tequilera-Gallery in the world and one of the largest private cultural venues in Mexico with four exhibition halls. I decided to cancel the project for professional reasons, so I lost both spaces.

It was difficult to cancel our successful Exhibition Program, but I took the opportunity to take my gallery to the next level: implementing institutionalization.

Most galleries—and companies in general—fail to remain in the market and continue in the future due to a lack of institutionalization.

***Explain what that institutionalization consists of.***

Institutionalization allowed HECTOR DIAZ to operate under international standards and represent our collectors and artists in a spectacular way, always adding value to them. It also allowed us to introduce ourselves to the international market and industry, which is where everything really works.

***Do you believe in the idea of the democratization of art?***

I do not believe in the democratization of art in the art industry; I believe in artists and I believe in collectors, but the true ones are scarce, which is why it is a luxury industry. However, I do believe in the democratization of exhibitions for communities, because they are culture.

***In addition to being a gallerist, you are a critic and opinion leader; tell us about that facet.***

I have had the opportunity to write opinion articles in El Economista for years; this has allowed me to share ideas and reflections on the Mexican industry, which is so unknown, so romantic, but also so devastated and forgotten, to generate awareness, hoping that it can improve; the artists deserve it.

***How do you currently perceive the contemporary art market in Mexico and the world?***

Mexico does not lack artists, but gallerists. There are artists creating spectacular art, but there are almost no gallerists creating possibilities.

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Being a gallerist is not just selling art and doing exhibitions; it is building careers and collections.

Few understand what a gallery entails: you sell something that almost no one needs; your buyers are often the richest people in the world; you deal with international artists; you mount high-impact exhibitions; you generate editorial topics; you make alliances with media; you have digital strategies; you offer chic events; you manage international logistics... all at the same time; a gallery's operation is very complex.

Half of the galleries in the world operate in the red... a gallery is almost destined to close... that's why it is important to show that it can be done.

## ***What is your highest aspiration as a gallerist?***

I want to position Mexico in the 21st Century art industry; I want global artists and collectors to feel represented from my country.

## Artists Represented by HECTOR DIAZ

- Javier Arizabalo | France
- Stefano Puleo | Italy
- Daniela Kovačić | Chile
- Francisco Correa | Colombia
- Duma Arantes | Portugal
- Valeria Reyna | Mexico
- Heyder Reyes | Cuba
- Christian Escobar | Guatemala
- Edgar Mendoza | Mexico

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## Reflections on being a gallerist, the art of selling art: Héctor Díaz Gallery turns 5

**Media outlet:** Conciencia Pública

**By:** Gabriel Ibarra Bourjac

**Date:** January 13, 2025

**Link:** <https://concienciapublica.com.mx/2025/01/12/reflexiones-sobre-ser-galerista-el-arte-de-vender-arte-galeria-de-hector-diaz-cumple-5-anos/>

Zapopan, as never before seen, hosted international artists from North America, Central America, Latin America, the Caribbean, Europe, and Africa.

Positioning Jalisco as one of the most important regions in the art world has been one of the gallery's priorities.

*"Being a gallerist is neither a vocation nor a profession; it is one of the most complex trades in the world. It is no coincidence that there are so few of us in Mexico,"* states Héctor Díaz in an interview with Conciencia Pública.

Héctor shares his reflections on being a gallerist and indicates that for strange and unknown reasons, little is known about how galleries operate and about the gallerists behind them; it is an overly hermetic industry, perhaps that is why it is so romantic.

*"I would have liked to read about Mexican gallerists, but there is almost no information available; the media mainly covers artists and exhibitions,"* he points out.

Héctor Díaz presents his brief reflections on the ten areas where he has worked, with the interest of making the work transparent and understanding the effort of a gallerist in action.

### Artists

"A gallerist represents artists; if he only collaborates with them, then he is an art dealer. I feel proud of the representations I have taken on, international talents ranging from Moscow, Russia, in Europe, to Punta Arenas, Chile, in Latin America, or from Costa Rica, in Central America, to Nigeria, in Africa, or from Cuba, in the Caribbean, to Sicily, in the Mediterranean, to name a few regions of the world."

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“No one teaches you how to deal with artists; it requires sensitivity, transparency, trust, a sense of humor, and absolute professionalism—simply: you have it or you don't. The relationship with an artist is similar to that of a family member, very close, and similar to that of a couple, very jealous; it requires a balance; it is only solidified with endless conversations, experiences, and achievements.”

## Exhibitions

“Galleries are distinguished by our exhibitions; they are an art; you require deep knowledge of curatorship, museography, and conservation, in addition to a characteristic aesthetic seal. Good exhibitions are those that, in addition to selling well, strengthen the artist's curriculum and the collector's portfolio.”

“Exhibitions are not for collectors; those are few; they are for the public; they represent a cultural and social responsibility in the community, city, and country where they are presented.”

## Events

“The most glamorous part of the business are the Openings and events, always under a seductive halo of art, press, wine, canapés, music, and personalities from the artistic, cultural, social, business, and intellectual worlds (also influencers and even presumed collectors who come for the drinks, the photo, and the atmosphere).”

“Events must be chic and exclusive; the people who are not invited are just as important as those who are invited; they must be talked about and appear in the social pages. However, they are more of a custom than a true commercial strategy; collectors prefer personalized treatment; they are allergic to crowds and spotlights.”

## Collectors

“The art of selling art is making someone acquire something they don't need, but thanks to the gallerist, they desire it.”

“It is a luxury industry – good galleries, of course –; most gallerists soon discover that placing art requires extraordinary public relations skills to make money; it's not about talking about art, but about wine, travel, cinema, literature, politics... gallerists who lack worldly knowledge and charisma have a big problem.”



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“There are busy collectors who, through a call with their gallerist, invest thousands of dollars in one or several works; there are others who drink your wine for hours chatting with you and spend only a few hundred dollars, sometimes nothing... in practice, you don't know who and how much... but you learn to profile and close.”

## Auctions

“In addition to the sales they can generate due to their broad reach with collectors, they play a very important role in the value of an artist's works, because who prices the art? The artist? No, the gallery, of course, but when an auction house publishes an artist's values in its catalog, then there is additional support from an institution. The adrenaline of the moment is unique, the bidders, the estimates that go up when things go well, or the disappointment when it didn't even exceed the reserve price.”

“Negotiating with auction houses is an art, from the presentation of the artist and the work to the day of the event and its subsequent handling with the media.”

## Media

“No one imagines that a good gallery must be an expert manager of communication media. I don't know of another business that requires publishing so much and so constantly: artists, exhibitions, collectors, collaborators, events, opinion, and more.”

“I have had the opportunity to contribute to the world of ideas by sharing my positions on the art industry through Opinion articles. Managing editors, journalists, and intermediaries is an art; you don't deal with media, but with people; they like you or they don't.”

## Editorial

“A gallerist must know how to read and write a biography (even a short one), as well as an artist's statement, an exhibition history, and a bibliography. The more organized the past is, the easier it will be to present it in the present and project it into the future.”

“It is also necessary to know about the design, publication, and dissemination of art catalogs and books. Galleries are essential in editorial management, both for artists and for collectors.”

“If a gallery does not add value in the editorial world, it should urgently learn how.”

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## Consulting

“Good gallerists identify talent, but in many cases, that is not enough, because the industry requires other skills, so one becomes an artist advisor; and sometimes even an advisor to other gallerists.”

“Being a gallerist is so complex that you must know so much that you can teach any member of the ecosystem.”

“I have advised about 30 artists from various parts of the world over the last 5 years, and one or two Mexican gallerists.”

## Institutionalization

“A gallery is a company, an extremely difficult company, please understand. If you are not good at business—and I don't mean being an entrepreneur or having sales skills, but in the administration of an international organization—you are going to have a very hard time. I strongly suggest implementing institutionalization to smoothly manage operations and to be able to plan and execute the future of the gallery, collectors, artists, collaborators, and partners.”

“My gallery reached the point where, after great introspection and tremendous organization, we operate internally under international standards, with processes as professional and complex as those of a franchise.”

## Industry

“It is not enough to understand the art business; you must understand the art industry. Sales from galleries in local markets will cause them to stagnate or fail, because collecting resides in certain global markets, which requires precise, proprietary, and exclusive strategies for the art market.”

“Understanding the industry opens the doors to the international market and major capitals. The only way to understand an industry is by reading about its market economy.”

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## Painting. Héctor Díaz transforms the art industry

**Media outlet:** Milenio

**By:** Gabriela Gorab

**Date:** April 6, 2024

**Link:** <https://www.milenio.com/cultura/hector-diaz-transforma-negocio-industria-pintura-artistica>

*"In Mexico, there are many art stores that collaborate, but very few galleries that represent; this is a problem in the industry, but also an opportunity in the market", says the gallerist.*

With the aim of achieving dynamic and sustainable organizational growth, Héctor Díaz has decided to finance himself through issuing shares, so he will transition to a corporate focus, led by a board of directors made up of experienced entrepreneurs, moving away from a unidirectional management style.

*"In Mexico, there are many art stores that collaborate, but very few art galleries that represent; this is a problem in the industry, but also an opportunity in the market. Most of the galleries in the country (with some exceptions, mainly in Mexico City) fail to transcend and even disappear due to their business model: the focus is on the sale of artworks, not on the artist's career," shared the innovative gallerist.*

In January 2020, Héctor Díaz established an international art gallery based in Zapopan, Jalisco. He has stood out for representing artists specializing in painting from various parts of the world, as well as for offering museum-quality exhibitions with rigorous curation and exquisite museography.

The collecting market in Mexico is not only vast but also has significant potential, as demonstrated by the import of artists and works from Latin America and Europe. Today, the best Mexican galleries are dedicated to conceptual art and enjoy international recognition.

However, formal galleries specializing in painting are scarce. It is precisely in this market niche that Díaz has focused his efforts. Regarding Mexican galleries, the entrepreneur poses the questions:

*"Which are the best in the field of painting? Which have national or international recognition? Which galleries represent international artists and project them onto the global stage?"*

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## New lifeblood

According to Artsy's Art Collectors Insight 2023, people acquire art primarily for five reasons: to build a collection; to decorate their homes, offices, or spaces; to support artists; to find inspiration; or to make an investment.

The report highlights that 80 percent of art transactions are carried out through digital platforms, reflecting the market's evolution in a post-pandemic world. Currently, physical galleries fulfill additional functions as exhibition spaces, offices, and warehouses; however, local strategies are no longer sufficient, and national and international approaches are required to remain competitive in the global art industry.

Despite operating from Jalisco, Díaz primarily directs his gaze toward broader markets, such as Mexico and the United States, in addition to other countries. His aspiration is to turn the Perla Tapatía (Guadalajara/Jalisco) into a prominent center for international artistic talent, an unprecedented challenge for any gallerist in the region.

*“Local galleries have evolved into an international model, where business management gains more relevance than purely artistic management. In this sense, my gallery stands out by representing artists from various parts of the world and by implementing both local and global strategies to promote my work and that of my artists,”* he says.

In contrast to previous decades, where the focus of Mexican galleries was centered on the owners' benefit, Héctor Díaz Gallery prioritizes the support and promotion of its artists, recognizing the importance of establishing a symbiotic relationship between gallerists and artists to drive success in the international art scene.

*“For me, Héctor represents the new lifeblood that the tree of art needs to keep growing. He is the gallerist most committed to the artist that I have had the pleasure of knowing,”* shares Javier Arizabalo, whose creative practice focuses on figurative themes, emphasizing solid realism techniques.

*“His energy, vitality, and enthusiasm are contagious, always weaving new projects and ideas. However, his disappointment is also notable when expectations are not met with artists who are not up to standard. It takes a great deal of enthusiasm to continue fighting in an environment where everything seems to be against you,”* the artist concludes.

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## **A world of artists**

The gallery, based in Jalisco, represents a select group of international artists, offering a space where they can develop and promote their work in an environment of international standards. Those represented include Stefano Puleo from Italy, Javier Arizabalo from France, Francisco Correa from Colombia, Duma Arantes from Portugal, Christian Allison from Nigeria, Johnny Palacios from Peru, Daniela Kovacic from Chile, and Valeria Reyna from Mexico, among others.

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## HECTOR DIAZ Gallery

***“A space for admiration, contemplation, and collecting”***

**Media outlet:** Legisladores de México

**By:** Gabriel Ibarra Bourjac

**Date:** March 1, 2023

**Link:** <https://legisladoresdemexico.com.mx/hector-diaz-gallery/>

HECTOR DIAZ Gallery is an art gallery based in Zapopan, Jalisco, founded by Héctor Díaz in January 2020; this December 2022, it celebrates its Third Anniversary.

It specializes in contemporary art from the primary market, collaborating with internationally established artists.

The gallery gained notoriety for integrating creators from various parts of the world with unique and solid styles. Its founder challenges and revolutionizes today's gallery management; he firmly believes that an art store is not an art gallery, since the former favors the art dealer but not the artist. Without fear of saying it, Héctor Díaz (columnist for Conciencia Pública and El Economista) shares that the difference lies in the support, promotion, and shared vision with the creator. Selling paintings is easy... developing and consolidating careers is an art in itself.

He explains that one of the main differences between a store and a gallery can be defined by two words: static (exhibiting, selling, and replacing) and dynamic (primarily solo Exhibition Programs for its artists).

The gallery collaborates with a select group because its purpose is not to sell works in the short term, but to represent artists in the long term. The standard for a "pseudo gallery" is to increase inventories, both of artists and works, yet often they do not understand who their own artists are or their artistic proposals.

Jean-David Malat, french celebrity and art dealer, founder of the London gallery JD Malat (considered one of the most important in the world today), with his friendship and advice encouraged Héctor Díaz to truly make a difference, both for artists and for galleries.

HECTOR DIAZ Gallery distinguishes itself by adopting international practices with a strong commitment to the transcendence of its artists.

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Héctor Díaz shares that his Gallery is *“a space for admiration, contemplation, and collecting,”* aiming to position itself as one of the best in Latin America.

## ***Who is Héctor Díaz?***

I consider myself a disruptive and determined entrepreneur; no one taught me to be a gallerist. I discovered this vocation at 33 years old.

I am a proud father of a girl and a boy. Everything revolves around my family and artists.

## ***How did you start in the art world?***

Before being a gallerist, I ran a company called “The Art of Preserving Memories” for 7 years, an organization specialized in preserving stories through Biographies and Documentaries. The last documentary I made was about an artist; my friendship and admiration for her representative led me to discover the art industry, and I found it fascinating. I still believe that an artist not only sells their work, but their story, and in this, I consider myself very good.

## ***What does being a Gallerist mean?***

Many see the glamour of the gallerist, few understand the craft. A gallerist sells art, yes, but also discovers talents, consolidates careers, penetrates and conquers markets, adds value to creators and their works with multiple strategies such as solo exhibitions, international auctions, media appearances, catalog design, administrative, marketing, and financial management with their artists, among so many things. An artist is a Brand in the market; it is my job to make it grow in perception, value, and demand.

## ***What are the challenges for a gallery?***

The most difficult thing for me has been creating/having credibility in the industry. A gallerist is the one who introduces an artist to the market, often determines the values, is the one who negotiates, is the one who leads the expansion and commercial strategy, and so on. It is essential that the artist trusts their gallerist, that they are aware that building a Brand takes time.

## ***What are the satisfactions of a gallery?***

Personally, I really enjoy the craft; being surrounded by art is a luxury. Supporting artists in their different stages is very satisfying. Placing works with collectors who appreciate and value art.

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## ***What is the Gallery's Program?***

Our represented artists have the support of the gallery for solo exhibitions; we also organize group exhibitions. Our Program focuses on the artists but is also designed for collectors; it is easier to satisfy than to create a market.

## ***What is the difference between representing and collaborating with an artist?***

Representing is giving everything, collaborating is pretending. Representing is listening to and understanding the creator's dreams. Collaborating is trying to sell to anyone.

## ***How do you select artists for the gallery?***

Sometimes I invite them, sometimes they arrive, however, in both cases, it is a slow process of mutual acquaintance that must become a partnership and friendship. I try to ensure that the artists do not compete in styles; that is the competitive advantage of each one. I look for spectacular work.

## ***Why do some artists succeed and others do not?***

It is not enough for an artist to produce spectacular work; a strategy is essential. It requires dedication, patience, sacrifice, humility, courage; being an artist is not easy. What works for one does not necessarily work for another. Careers are built little by little; they are adjusted along the way as many times as necessary. Listening to the market is something that not everyone wants to do, but it is strictly necessary, and I do not mean pleasing it, but listening to it.

## ***How important is an artist's theme in the market?***

Every artist has their own voice, but we must admit that certain themes are more feasible in certain markets.

I see a trend toward humanism; perhaps we have too much drama in our lives.

## ***Do artists make works or do works make artists?***

A creator dedicated and committed to their art unconsciously becomes an artist through spectacular works... yes, works make artists.



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## ***Why do people buy art?***

Because they appreciate beauty and want to live with it. Works dress spaces, but they fill our fantasies and illusions. A work of art is daily inspiration.

## ***Who are the so-called “Art Collectors”?***

Anyone who has a work at home or the office is a collector; they possess something unique capable of impacting every gaze. A collector is not an investor; they are a recruiter of beauty.

## ***Is art an investment? Why?***

It is an investment for day-to-day life. I believe one should not collect thinking about the acquisition amounts and future capital gains. It is easier to buy than to sell. Blue Chip Art would be an Investment, in my opinion.

## ***How does an artist achieve capital gains?***

Easy: with demand! Achieving demand implies high-quality production, constant presence in markets, and a lot of credibility in the industry. In short, doing things well for a long time.

## ***What do you think of Auction Houses?***

I think they are an excellent means to support the values of artists. Prices are set by gallerists, but when an artist's value is included in an international auction house catalog, the values are backed by institutions, benefiting the ecosystem: Artist, Gallerist, and Collector. You have to know how to play in Auctions; few understand the processes and timings.

## ***What do you think of Art Fairs?***

Indispensable today to enter new markets and try to win over collectors. It adds a lot of credibility in the industry to a gallery. The investment in a good Art Fair is truly very high.

## ***What do you think of alliances between Galleries?***

Well-structured, it is a strategy that allows the integration of artists into other markets. Achieving a good alliance will depend on the personalities of the gallerists.

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## ***How to stand out in a globalized market?***

If what is being sold is art, then have spectacular art. Good gallery management, presence in various markets, relationships with the Media.

## ***What is the vision that HECTOR DIAZ Gallery aims to achieve?***

Every artist is a responsibility. The gallery is a responsibility. Maneuvering both while pursuing transcendence is the vision.

I do not believe in “good galleries” based on the amount of square meters or artists; it is irrelevant. I believe that a “good Gallery” is one that generates value for its artists and collectors.

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## Jalisco is experiencing a gallery crisis: Gallerist Héctor Díaz

**Media outlet:** Conciencia Pública

**By:** Gabriel Ibarra Bourjac

**Date:** May 15, 2022

**Link:** <https://concienciapublica.com.mx/2022/05/15/jalisco-vive-una-crisis-de-galerias-galerista-hector-diaz/>

*"From the moment we are born, galleries are in danger of extinction," expresses Héctor Díaz, who ventured into the art business world in 2020. "I believe Jalisco has fallen into a crisis, not of artists, but of galleries. There aren't any; those that exist are promoters, they have a short-term vision. Here, we focus on long-term projects," he affirms.*

*"There are good galleries, but they focus on conceptual art. I'm not a fan, but I respect it. I don't understand at what point they gained so much ground in Jalisco, but for painting galleries, I believe we are the only one in the western part of the country that represents artists and has a Program. They tell me it's great, but I wish there were more. Being a pioneer is complicated; there would be more awareness of art. There is a lot of ignorance."*

One of the main challenges for galleries and artists is internationalization; it is no longer enough to have local or national success, but international success, says Héctor Díaz in a dialogue with Conciencia Pública.

*"Whether we like it or not, with the world's opening through the Internet, the artist competes internationally today,"* emphasizes our interviewee, who heads the Héctor Díaz Gallery located in Plaza D' Lucca in Zapopan.

A native of Chihuahua, Héctor decided to settle in Guadalajara just over a decade ago to create his art gallery and stresses the difference between an art gallery and an art store.

*"Art stores are static; they have art, but one piece is sold and replaced. In contrast, galleries are dynamic; they have an Exhibition Program. No matter what, they have their events scheduled, and the exhibition changes every month."*

He emphasizes that the gallery focuses on the artist, while the stores focus on consigned art.

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He elaborates on the challenge he believes the artist faces in this era of the global village—what he calls internationalization—thanks to technology and instant communication through the Internet.

*“How do we achieve this internationalization?” he asks.*

He gives his answer: *“We have an international vocation; it is easy for me to represent an artist from Jalisco and to represent one from Nigeria; we collaborate with artists from Africa, Russia, Colombia, Argentina, and Mexico.”*

## **The interview**

### ***You are very young; how did you start in the art world?***

I am 35 years old. I would have liked to be a writer; I greatly admire Vargas Llosa. I never dared to write. Some time later, everything clicked in my life. I had a Company similar to Clío; I worked as a private biographer and documentalist. It was easy: if a person, a family, or an organization wanted to leave a legacy, who would you go to? There was no one. I had the opportunity to collaborate with personalities, preserving their stories. The last project I did involved making a documentary about a famous artist. I got deeply involved in the industry. That's when I realized that an artist not only sells their work, but also their story. The change was easy.

### ***What did you study?***

I don't have a degree. I was always restless as a child. The closest thing I had to a degree was studying at IPADE. It gave me administrative tools to structure a business. I don't have a degree as such, but I do have an artistic flair.

### ***Is art a passion for you?***

Yes, when running a gallery, you not only share your passion for your business but also the contagious passion of the artists themselves. One person may be demotivated, but another motivates. It becomes a great team. Being a gallerist, one is also sometimes a cheerleader, so the artist doesn't give up. One is a psychologist; you have to listen to them, understand them. It's many things at once.

# HECTOR DIAZ

## ***How did you decide to become a gallerist?***

There is a gallerist I admire very much, a Frenchman who has his gallery in London. I used to do my homework, look at his website, read his social media. At some point, I dared. I told him I admired him greatly; I approached him. He is perhaps the most important gallerist in England and is profiling himself as one of the best in the world—he is Jean-David Malat. I even got to meet him. I once interviewed him for El Economista; he was very grateful. He knows the admiration I have for him.

## ***And how do you view the process of artists exhibiting their works so they become known... starting in group exhibitions...?***

I used to see the subject of collections at his gallery; I started to understand it and saw how it worked. An artist who works piece by piece and exhibits in collective shows will not stand out. Group shows are not the way; nor is their trajectory the way. We know artists with impressive résumés who don't generate money; that's the truth.

## ***Well, many artists want their works in museums...***

Many artists want to be in a museum. Pieces are worth more outside the museum than in the museum. What museums do is devalue art. When the piece is on our side, it has value, but when it enters a museum, it belongs to everyone; it is no longer a collector's. If you analyze it, many artists want to enter; it's a matter of transcendence, yes, but we need to rethink things regarding building collections; an impressive résumé won't help you that much.

I tell artists to put themselves in the collector's shoes. Even a Picasso is decorative; it is inherent to painting. No collector is obliged to understand an artist's whims; the work must be focused toward the market.

## ***How has it gone for you as a gallerist?***

Very complicated. Yes, I live from this one hundred percent, but it is complicated. One of the main challenges for me is not selling art, but having credibility in the market. Who prices art? Not the market. It's sometimes priced by the artist. The price of art is set by industry agents. You see a Picasso in one of the world's best auction houses; it is the auction house's prestige that determines what something is worth. The best galleries in the world don't ask the artist how much their work costs. For me, the most difficult thing as a gallerist is having the prestige to present an artist and say, 'Sirs, this is what this is worth,' or to present myself to one of the best auction houses and tell them what this is worth. For me, gaining prestige in the industry has been

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the most complicated part. I see the need to have a presence in other markets. The gallery is a showroom; the business is not just here. We have to have a presence at fairs to reach other markets. We are not in the business of selling; we are in the business of consolidating careers, because anyone can sell.

## ***How do you decide to organize an exhibition?***

It has to have feasibility: an exhibition project, artistic feasibility, and financial feasibility. That's all. It sounds easy, but it's complicated.

## ***You write about art; this allows you a connection with that world...***

Yes, I had never had that connection. I didn't know what it was like to be published and have the audience like the content. I like opinion articles. Sometimes the profiles are great, but having the opportunity to write opinion has been satisfying. I am writing what I would have liked to read about the industry, because galleries tend to be hermetic; there is this aura and romanticism, and that's not the case.

## ***How do you see galleries in Jalisco and the promotion of art?***

Honestly, in Jalisco, there are some galleries that represent artists and have exhibition programs. There are good galleries, but they focus on conceptual art. I'm not a fan, but I respect it. I don't understand at what point they gained so much ground in Jalisco, but for painting galleries, I believe we are the only one in the west of the country that represents artists, that has a Program. They tell me it's great, but I wish there were more. Being a pioneer is complicated; there would be more awareness of art. There is a lot of ignorance. People ask me if we charge admission, if we are a government entity, if the art is for sale—who would have thought.

## ***It seems that art is for the elite. How do you break that perception?***

By fostering collecting, removing people's fear of galleries. They think we are expensive. People don't know if they will ask an improper question. But it's about bringing art closer to people. I believe Jalisco has fallen into a crisis, not of artists, but of galleries. They don't exist; those that do are promoters, they have a short-term vision. Here, we focus on long-term projects. That's why you see galleries in other parts of the world continuing, even when the artist has passed away. The representation continues; we are in a long-term business with the artist.

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## ***How do you see artistic expression in Jalisco?***

Vibrant, excellent. I believe Jalisco has the best artists in Mexico. Oaxaca has good artists, but the art is very 'Oaxacan.' Here, we have a variety of styles. Jalisco is excellent in terms of art. The artistic community has failed to work as a team. It is complicated; I don't know if it's the egos or the personalities. I think they have failed to launch a joint project. I don't know if the artists will form an association of gallerists, a chamber that looks after the guild. It can be done. I have thought about doing it. In Mexico City, a route is established where galleries can be visited, or an art fair is held with the artists. I see a lot of potential. The issue is that someone wants to take leadership, and they get lynched—'who are you to do it?'

## ***How have you fared in this regard with the disruption you've brought with fresh ideas?***

We are not reinventing the wheel either; we are being faithful to what a gallery should be—it is about representing artists. Even though my base of operations is in Jalisco, I am from Chihuahua, but I consider myself Jalisciense; I have grown professionally and personally here. This is my city. Even though the gallery is based in Jalisco, we don't just operate here. We have some artists in the gallery whose works do not have a market in Jalisco. We have an Argentine artist whose pieces are worth 40 thousand dollars; it is not his ideal market. I have an artist in Nigeria. In Jalisco, it is easier to put up a Virgin of Guadalupe, but that is what we are managing to do: cross artists with different markets, because today, it can and should be done.

## ***And the work of Benjamín Fernández, what value do you place on it?***

He never thought of it as 'work'; he turned a personal passion into something spectacular, and in the process, he helped many artists. I think he doesn't see it as work, but as a passion. Thanks to that, he has a great collection, he has supported many artists. He is one of the most important collectors in Mexico, yes, due to the quantity of works, but also because he is so close to the artists. He is building his museum. I find his case interesting.

## ***What does the future hold for Héctor Díaz?***

To be one of the best galleries in Latin America is our vision. In two years, we would like to be among the best. It's not about the number of artists—we don't collect artists—nor about the square meters; I can have 10 artists. But we want to be the best because of the achievements with both the artists and the collectors. We need to get them featured in national and international media, and ensure that collectors have capital gains. It's about the results with both the artists and the collectors.

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## ***What exhibitions are you preparing for the coming days, weeks, and months?***

The gallery inaugurated with the 'Mona Lisa' project. It was a group show from six countries; each artist created a version of the Mona Lisa. There were artists from Nigeria, Russia, Spain, Colombia, the United States, and Mexico—a very beautiful visual spectacle. We had an exhibition by Francisco Correa, who is said to be the best-kept secret in Latin America. We have an exhibition of 'bombs,' very beautiful, where the discourse is not warlike; it is about the importance of time. An exhibition by an artist from Bulgaria is coming—it will feature works in black. We will bring in Hernán Javier Muñoz, who is one of the best artists in Latin America. We have plans; our program continues to consolidate ourselves.



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## Héctor Díaz and art as a way of life

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**By:** Ana García

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Héctor Díaz has gained notoriety in the international industry for integrating extraordinary artists from around the world.

Héctor Díaz, an entrepreneur and art dealer based in Zapopan, lives in a constant search for great talents to exhibit in his gallery. He studied business at IPADE, which helped him transform his passion for art into a true business.

*"I believe a gallery must be treated as a company. We have to set aside romanticism and see it as the business it is,"* comments Héctor.

Héctor has gained notoriety in the international industry for integrating extraordinary artists from around the world, satisfying the tastes of new and mature collectors.

### ***What is the difference between a gallery and an art store?***

The big difference between a gallery and a store is that stores are static; it's as if I put a hundred works from different artists at different prices in my gallery, to sell them and then replace them.

But no, a gallery is dynamic. To truly be considered a gallery, you have to have three things: represent artists (not just collaborate with them), which means opening the market for them domestically and internationally, getting them into the media, etc. Second, you must have a physical space, and third, you must have an exhibition program.

Every gallery must always have three things in its Program: the exhibition you currently have, the one that was, and the one that is coming.

### ***Where did the motivation to open your own gallery come from?***

I previously worked as a biographer and documentalist, but Jalisco was not the right place for it.

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However, I realized that in the art world, an artist not only sells their work, but also sells their story. So, when I understood that, it was very easy for me to take the step into this world.

My vocation is very focused on the transcendence of the artists rather than the sale of the pieces. Anyone can sell paintings, but helping an artist transcend—that's something else, which is why I decided to open my own gallery.

## ***What are the biggest challenges you have faced over these years?***

As with everything, there are good things and bad things, but the main challenge has been credibility. Some people think the price is set by the market, but that is not true—it's the best auction houses in the world.

So, for me, the most important thing has been to have credibility as a gallerist and as a gallery because I represent the artists and their works, and I want them to be given their fair value.

## ***What part of your job are you passionate about?***

What I am most passionate about is having the opportunity to transcend. There are few industries in which you transcend through what you do, and one of them is art. So, it is very satisfying that everything done day by day, or when a work is placed, you don't know where it will end up, and that is incredible.

## ***What are the short and medium-term plans?***

We are focusing on three areas. First, on our famous Exhibition Program; we want to become one of the best private cultural spaces in the western part of the country.

Next, we are having a lot of presence in auctions—national, Latin American, and international. This allows us to present our artists in other markets. And finally, we are now going to art fairs.

## ***What advice would you give to those people who want to dedicate themselves to art but do not dare?***

For artists, it is very important to have a gallery that represents them. It is important to work as a team; if you are a writer, you need a publishing house; if you are a singer, you need a record label. So, I would recommend that they learn to team up with galleries, and two, that they do not work piece by piece. They have to create collections for their work to truly become known.

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He firmly believes that spectacular collections and enchanting exhibitions are the way to win over the public.

*“And well, many people live from art. More than a dream, I believe it is one of the most secure jobs today if you truly dedicate yourself to it.*

*Furthermore, it is an industry where there is magic in every sense; I couldn't describe it with words.”*

# **HECTOR DIAZ**

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