

HECTOR DIAZ

Edgar Mendoza

The Legacy Narratives | Vol. 3

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Edgar Mendoza:
The artistic odyssey

By Héctor Díaz

Introduction

Maestro Edgar Mendoza, originally from Durango and currently residing in Spain, offers us a deep dive into his artistic universe through this revealing interview. His unexpected beginnings in painting, driven by a search for opportunities in his youth, marked the start of a trajectory dedicated to contemporary realism. Throughout his training, both in Mexico and through his own discipline, Mendoza absorbed valuable lessons about the importance of constancy and fidelity to his own vision, cementing the foundations of a distinctive style that dialogues with the pictorial tradition while exploring new perspectives.

The influences of great masters like Vermeer and the artists of the Italian Quattrocento are evident in his work, but it is his experience as an "emigrant realist painter" that grants him a palpable uniqueness. His style, constantly evolving towards synthesis and expressive honesty, does not seek absolute fidelity to reality, but a personal interpretation loaded with introspection and melancholy. Photography plays a crucial role in his creative process, acting as a contemporary translator of reality that serves as a starting point for his elaborate compositions, where the human figure stands as an essential element to transmit his complex and evocative narratives.

From his perspective in Spain, Mendoza reflects on the differences between the Mexican and Spanish art scenes, highlighting how distance has intensified his appreciation of Mexican identity. His work has found a positive reception among the Spanish public, establishing an enriching dialogue between his Latin American pictorial language and the European artistic tradition. In his reflections on contemporary art, he advocates for a union between realism and conceptualism, emphasizing the enduring value of realist painting in a digital world and its capacity to evoke profound emotions in the viewer, seeking a “harmony of sensations” that invites contemplation and reflection on existence.

–Héctor Díaz
April 2025

Interview

Origins and training:

1. Edgar, your beginnings in painting were somewhat unexpected, finding your path through a poster in Durango. What prompted you to take that first step, and how would you describe those first years of training? Desperation prompted me, hence the importance of the offering and development alternatives that a society and its organizations offer to young people. I was lucky to find a constructive invitation. Even so, given my background and concerns, my beginnings were intense and powerful with the energy one has when someone wants to give more than 100%.

2. Your first steps were marked by the guidance of teachers in Durango, and then a search for knowledge that took you to Cuernavaca. What fundamental lessons did you learn? I highly valued the discipline they taught me and the one I forged myself; without it, it would have been very complicated to achieve my goals; it is also important to be faithful and believe in what you want to be.

Influences and style:

3. What artists or artistic movements have been your biggest influences? Johannes Vermeer of Delft, and all the worldwide artistic movements that have interpreted the vision of reality throughout history.

4. Beyond the obvious influences, is there any lesser-known artist or aesthetic current that has molded your vision of realism? I don't usually mention them much, but their languages continue to influence me. Several Italian painters of the Quattrocento: Piero della Francesca, Mantegna, Botticelli, to name just a few.

5. How would you describe your personal style within realism? What distinguishes you? Contemporary realism. Perhaps what distinguishes me is being an "emigrant" realist painter, which surely expresses itself with certain codes of different identity.

6. How has your style evolved from when you started painting until now? Undoubtedly, I have synthesized my structures in general terms, and more clearly understood the idea of the honesty of what I want to transmit.

7. Is your realism a search for absolute fidelity or a personal interpretation of reality? Where do you find the limit between representation and expression? It is just one more interpretation of reality, without absolutes. The limits do not exist; creation turns everything into one.



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



***Ophelia**,* 2015, Oil on Canvas, 56 x 90 cm © Edgar Mendoza

Creative process:

8. What techniques and materials do you prefer to use in your work? Oil paint and fabrics that have a very fine but resistant weave, like linen.

9. How do you choose the subjects you represent in your paintings? I choose them as carefully as possible since I am going to invest a lot of energy and time in executing them.

10. What role does photography play in your process? Is it a support tool or a starting point for reinterpretation? A fundamental role, photography is not just a support, it is a contemporary translator of how we see reality in our days, even for current naturalist artists.

11. What is your creative process from the conception of a work to its finalization? I conceive the idea and design rigorously to improvise as little as possible in the technical execution that demands all my attention.

12. How do you decide which details to include and which to omit in a painting? What elements are essential to convey your vision? My narrative must be coherent between the concepts and the images, even in ideas that aim to confuse the spectator. With experience, what to remove and what to put in is perfected; in my case, I seek synthesis and balance to avoid saturation. The human figure is essential.

13. Your subjects often evoke a sense of melancholy or introspection. What do you seek to capture in those moments of stillness? In stillness, emotions are experienced better and calmly, which is what I intend to provoke.

Life in Spain and perspective:

14. Has living in Spain given you a new perspective on Mexico? When you are an emigrant, you value your identity more and acquire a more self-critical and constructive perspective. Mexico is even more wonderful with its pros and cons from a distance.

15. How has your life in Spain influenced your perspective as an artist? Between Spaniards and Mexicans, we have many things in common, and at the same time too many differences that end up defining you more intensely as the artist you aim to be.

16. What differences do you find between the Mexican and Spanish art scenes? My disconnection with Mexico prevents me from being objective about the scene over there, but the issue of security and violence in our country must generate an incomprehensible perception for many Spaniards or Europeans; we see life very differently.

17. Have you found a dialogue between your art and the Spanish public? Are there differences in how your work is received compared to Mexico? "When in Rome, do as the Romans do." If you have the capacity to do it without losing your essence, it is ideal for incorporating yourself and being seen. In Spain, I have been accepted wonderfully; I hope my effort will also be valued in my beloved Mexico.

18. What elements of Spanish art, classic or contemporary, have resonated most with you and filtered into your own pictorial language? Spain is a world power in art; it was definitive for me to come and learn directly from Spanish artists. My answer could be summarized in what they themselves say about my painting, "that I paint technically like them, but with a Latin American language."

Reflections on art:

19. What role do you think realism plays in contemporary art? Current realist painting is perhaps one of the artistic expressions with the greatest capacity to create a union between an age-old art that has been able to endure and evolve, and a new art that basically tries to function only with conceptualization but unfortunately is beginning to show signs of exhaustion with only a century of existence. I believe that realism can give the physical body that current conceptual art needs to transcend, at least in one of its directions, without having to justify itself with a radical discourse of the ephemeral. United, contemporary realism and conceptualism could generate new expectations that allow them to evolve and continue to transcend.

20. In a world dominated by the digital image, what do you think is the enduring value of realist painting? In an imaginary science fiction language, we idealize machines with feelings and memories. The codes we use when we paint, however primitive and basic they may seem, carry our feelings and memories attached. Every tool we use, however sophisticated, still shows a very complex formula of what it means to be a human being. The digital world is simply no more than a new and very interesting tool.

21. What is your biggest challenge as a realist painter today? That my pictorial technique continues to show my aptitudes and talents achieved so far, but adapted to my updated vision of reality. It is inevitable to mature and with that generate the changes that make us who we are every new day.

22. What message do you hope to convey through your work? I want to convey, with equal importance, physical realist paintings that express themselves through concepts and generate sensations, feelings, and emotions.



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



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

Projects and future:

23. What artistic projects are you currently working on? My characters and their narratives still belong to the same universe; however, they show different environments or stories between one painting and another; one could say they are inhabitants of the same community. I am creating networks of connection so that they reflect familiarity between the various stories, including new elements and expanding new versions through “series” and variations with other techniques. I am working on the “Transparencies” series, where I intend to paint “Symphony No. 2.”

24. What are your goals and aspirations for the future as an artist? I am at a point in the road with sufficient preparation to begin my process toward artistic maturity with dignity. I believe I have the necessary elements to aspire to a deserved recognition that allows me to take my profession to another level. I am at that moment where I must combine and take full advantage of the path traveled and at the same time put new learning into practice. I want to create well-being for my maturity to make my new projects a reality.

25. What advice would you give to young artists looking to follow a path in realism? Realism requires a lot of time and dedication; it is a very complex and difficult technique to execute. To achieve the intended results, you have to have a lot of tenacity and patience because you have to repeat the same procedures thousands of times, being conscious in each one. Young people should take advantage of that vital force that characterizes them to learn, perfect themselves, and if possible, travel to the nerve centers to receive information firsthand; learning English will help them a lot.

Connection with the public:

26. What emotions do you hope your work evokes in the viewer? Do you seek contemplation, reflection, or provocation? I want the viewer to dialogue with themselves, to perceive the sense of their existence in the smallest details of simple narratives with complex reflections. I seek a harmony of sensations, I seek the consciousness of disorder. Many times, being conscious does not solve things for us, but it solves our sense of acceptance.

27. How do you handle criticism of your work? We are all influenced by the category of the criticism, depending on who it comes from, but I have enough openness to receive and learn from criticism, even the not very well-intentioned or unfavorable ones.

Personal reflections:

28. What does art mean to you? In my journey as a painter, art has gone from being a cluster of sophisticated theoretical meanings to becoming a true experience from my own perspective. For me, art is experiencing the capacity of a thought or an idea and the emotions that are achieved and generated with it. The more versatile and sophisticated that experience is, the greater its scope and transcendence will be. That is why there is nothing like art to express the testimony of what "humanity" means in all its expression and complexity.

29. What is it that you are most passionate about in painting? What drives you to keep creating? Its versatility and technical-conceptual characteristics to adapt and survive. Personally, I like life... I increasingly like my own life and circumstances.

30. If you had to define your art in a single sentence, what would it be? Paintings that reminisce about past procedures but still manage to capture attention in a dizzying world of virtual digital realities.



***The surgeons**,* 2008, Oil on Canvas, 97 x 130 cm © Edgar Mendoza

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CONCIENCIA EN EL ARTE

>"LA DISTANCIA AGUDIZA EL AMOR POR MÉXICO"

DESDE DURANGO A MADRID:
LA ODISEA ARTÍSTICA DE EDGAR MENDOZA

Por **Héctor Díaz**

En un estudio madrileño bañado por la luz de la tarde, el pintor mexicano Edgar Mendoza, originario de Durango, da vida a lienzos que fusionan el alma de México con la melancolía de España. Sus pinceladas, herederas de Vermeer y el Quattrocento italiano, tejen narrativas realistas cargadas de introspección.

Radicado en España desde hace años, Mendoza ha conquistado al público europeo sin renunciar a su identidad mexicana. En esta entrevista el artista revela cómo su viaje, desde un cartel en Durango hasta las galerías de Madrid, ha moldeado un estilo único que dialoga con el pasado y el presente del arte.

ORÍGENES Y FORMACIÓN

Héctor Díaz (HD): Edgar, tu camino en la pintura comenzó de forma casi fortuita, con un cartel en Durango que te abrió las puertas al arte. ¿Qué te motivó a dar ese primer paso, y cómo recuerdas esos años iniciales?

Edgar Mendoza (EM): Fue la urgencia de encontrar un rumbo. Crecí en un entorno donde las oportunidades no abundaban, y ese cartel, que anunciaba un taller de pintura, fue como un faro. Mis primeros años fueron un torbellino: pintaba con una energía desbordante, como si quisiera demostrarle al mundo y a mí mismo que podía ser más que mis circunstancias. La pasión y la necesidad me empujaron.

HD: Desde Durango hasta Cuernavaca, buscaste maestros y conocimiento. ¿Qué lecciones te marcaron en esa etapa formativa?

EM: La disciplina fue clave. Mis maestros en Durango me enseñaron a trabajar con rigor, pero en Cuernavaca aprendí a creer en mi visión. Ser fiel a lo que quieres expresar, incluso cuando el camino es incierto, es lo que te define como artista. Sin esa constancia, no habría llegado lejos.

Influencias y estilo

HD: Hablas de Vermeer y los maestros del Quattrocento como grandes influencias. ¿Qué te atrae de ellos, y hay algún artista menos conocido que haya moldeado tu obra?

EM: Vermeer tiene una luz y una calma que me fascinan; captura lo eterno en lo cotidiano. Del Quattrocento, admiro la precisión de Piero della Francesca y la narrativa de Mantegna. Menos conocidos, diría que los retratistas flamencos del siglo XVII, con su atención al detalle, me han inspirado a buscar profundidad en lo aparentemente simple.

HD: Tu realismo contemporáneo se siente único, especialmente como "pintor emigrante". ¿Cómo defines tu estilo, y qué lo distingue?

EM: Mi estilo es una interpretación personal de la realidad, no una copia. Busco sintetizar emociones y conceptos en imágenes que respiren. Ser un emigrante me da una perspectiva doble: mis obras llevan la nostalgia de México y la introspección que España me ha enseñado. Esa tensión entre dos mundos es mi sello.

HD: ¿Cómo ha evolucionado tu enfoque desde tus primeras obras hasta hoy?

EM: He aprendido a simplificar. Antes llenaba los lienzos con detalles; ahora busco la esencia, la honestidad. Cada pincelada debe decir algo, transmitir una verdad que conecte con el espectador.

Donald Trump y su guerra comercial con los aranceles, factores claves en el nuevo orden económico global.

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PROCESO CREATIVO

HD: La fotografía es central en tu proceso. ¿Cómo la integras, y hasta qué punto la transformas en tus pinturas?

EM: La fotografía es mi punto de partida, un traductor de la realidad contemporánea. No la sigo ciegamente; la uso para capturar una idea o un momento, pero luego la reinterpreto con óleo, ajustando luces, colores y emociones. Es una herramienta, pero la pintura es donde ocurre la magia.

HD: Tus obras suelen evocar melancolía e introspección, con la figura humana como protagonista. ¿Qué buscas transmitir en esos momentos de quietud?

EM: Quiero que el espectador se detenga y sienta. La quietud es el espacio donde las emociones se revelan: un gesto, una mirada, un instante que dice más que mil palabras. La figura humana es mi vehículo para explorar la complejidad de la existencia.

HD: ¿Cómo decides qué incluir o excluir en una pintura para lograr ese equilibrio?

EM: Con los años, he aprendido a buscar la síntesis. Invierto mucho tiempo en planear la composición para que cada elemento—un pliegue, una sombra—sume a la narrativa. Si algo no aporta a la emoción o al concepto, lo elimino. La coherencia es clave.

VIDA EN ESPAÑA Y PERSPECTIVA

HD: Vivir en España, ¿ha cambiado tu forma de ver México y tu identidad como mexicano?

EM: La distancia agudiza el amor por México. Desde España, valoro más su riqueza cultural, pero también soy más crítico de sus desafíos. Ser emigrante te enseña a llevar tu identidad como un tesoro, pero también a adaptarte y crecer en un nuevo contexto.

HD: ¿Cómo ha influido el arte español, clásico o contemporáneo, en tu trabajo?

EM: España es un crisol artístico. De los clásicos, la intensidad de Goya y la luminosidad de Sorolla me han marcado. Del arte contemporáneo, admiro la valentía de los españoles para experimentar. Mi pintura, aunque técnica como la de ellos, sigue hablando con un acento latinoamericano.

HD: ¿Encuentras diferencias en cómo el público español y mexicano recibe tu obra?

EM: En España, el público aprecia la narrativa y la técnica, pero a veces busca un simbolismo más abstracto. En México, siento una conexión más emocional, como si reconocieran los códigos de mi identidad. Ambos diálogos me enriquecen, y en España he sido muy bien recibido.

Reflexiones sobre el arte

HD: En un mundo saturado de imágenes digitales, ¿cuál es el valor de la pintura realista hoy?

EM: La pintura realista tiene una cualidad humana que lo digital no puede replicar. Cada pincelada lleva intención, memoria,

"Mis primeros años fueron un torbellino: pintaba con una energía desbordante, como si quisiera demostrarle al mundo y a mí mismo que podía ser más que mis circunstancias. La pasión y la necesidad me empujaron".

"Mi estilo es una interpretación personal de la realidad, no una copia. Busco sintetizar emociones y conceptos en imágenes que respiren".

emoción. En un mundo acelerado, el realismo invita a pausar, a contemplar, a reconectar con lo que nos hace humanos.

HD: Abogas por unir realismo y conceptualismo. ¿Cómo imaginas esa fusión?

EM: El conceptualismo aporta ideas frescas, pero a veces carece de cuerpo. El realismo puede darle forma, materialidad. Juntos, podrían crear un arte que hable al intelecto y al corazón, un arte que trascienda modas y conecte generaciones.

PROYECTOS Y FUTURO

HD: Háblanos de tu proyecto actual, la serie "Transparencias". ¿Qué exploras en ella?

EM: "Transparencias" es un viaje hacia la conexión entre historias. Mis personajes forman un universo donde cada pintura es un fragmento de una narrativa mayor. Uso el óleo para explorar texturas casi etéreas, buscando una "sinfonía visual" que invite al espectador a encontrar vínculos entre las obras.

HD: ¿Cuáles son tus metas como artista en los próximos años?

EM: Quiero consolidar mi voz artística y llevar mi obra a nuevos públicos. Aspiro a un reconocimiento que me permita seguir creciendo, pero también a crear proyectos que dejen una huella, que hablen de la experiencia humana desde mi perspectiva mexicano-española.

HD: ¿Qué consejo darías a un joven pintor realista que empieza su camino?

EM: Sé paciente y tenaz. El realismo exige tiempo, práctica y disciplina. Aprende de los maestros, viaja si puedes, y nunca dejes de cuestionarte. Hablar inglés y moverse a centros artísticos también abre puertas.

CONEXIÓN CON EL PÚBLICO

HD: ¿Qué esperas que sienta el espectador al ver tus obras?

EM: Busco una armonía de sensaciones: que se sientan interpelados, que reflexionen sobre su propia existencia. Quiero que mis pinturas sean espejos donde cada quien vea algo personal, un eco de sus emociones.

HD: ¿Cómo manejas las críticas a tu trabajo?

EM: Escucho con apertura. Las críticas constructivas me ayudan a crecer; las destructivas, a fortalecer mi confianza. Lo importante es aprender sin perder la esencia de lo que quiero expresar.

Reflexiones finales

HD: Si tuvieras que definir tu arte en una frase, ¿cuál sería?

EM: Pinturas que capturan la memoria de lo humano en un mundo que corre demasiado rápido.

HD: ¿Qué te impulsa a seguir pintando, día tras día?

EM: La vida misma. Cada día trae una nueva perspectiva, una nueva emoción que quiero traducir al lienzo. Pintar es mi forma de entender el mundo y de compartir lo que siento.

Mientras el sol se oculta tras las ventanas del estudio, Edgar Mendoza limpia sus pinceles con la calma de quien sabe que cada obra es un paso más en un viaje sin fin. Su arte, un puente entre México y España, entre el pasado y el presente, nos recuerda el poder de la pintura para detener el tiempo y hacernos sentir. Con proyectos como "Transparencias" en el horizonte, Mendoza no solo pinta: construye un legado que trasciende fronteras.



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HECTOR DIAZ

Cover:
Edgar Mendoza © Edgar Mendoza

Back Cover:
Ophelia, 2015, Oil on Canvas, 56 x 90 cm © Edgar Mendoza

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