

for immediate release

December 11, 2015 - January 23, 2016

GIOVANNI GARCIA-FENECH *New Paintings*

I wanted to make work that communicated something personal rather than intellectual, something that wouldn't protect me from embarrassment or rejection—so I decided to start painting myself. Not how I looked, but how I felt about myself and my body. – Giovanni Garcia-Fenech

Giovanni Garcia-Fenech's first solo exhibition at Postmasters features a selection of the artist's most recent revealing self-portraits, the unflinching focus on himself leavened with a healthy dose of self-deprecating humor.

Six of the paintings present the artist's naked body awkwardly crammed into L-shaped canvases that simultaneously bring to mind the tortured figures of medieval crucifixions and the shaped paintings of formalists like Frank Stella and Kenneth Noland. Other works depict the artist writhing between two circles—"two problems," as he calls them—in which these shapes can be read as symbolic black orbs of ominous foreboding or, more literally, formal problems.

I improvise without the aid of a mirror. That makes me rely on how I perceive myself, rather than copying what I see. It also keeps me from over-thinking the work, and it forces me to remain engaged with the painting from beginning to end. The unpolished results add another layer of candor: what you see is the best I could do at the time that I did it.

Garcia-Fenech's works are one-shot improvisations, painted directly on the canvas without preliminary sketches. His work takes inspiration from a wide variety of sources, including tribal art, Byzantine icons, outsider art, illuminated manuscripts, German Expressionism, hard-edge and colorfield abstraction, and '80s figurative painting. The results encompass a number of contradictions: a combination of grace and awkwardness, of realism and distortion, and of narcissism and embarrassment.

Giovanni Garcia-Fenech lives and works in New York City. He received an MFA from the School of Visual Arts and BA's in psychology and art from Austin College. His artwork has been exhibited throughout the United States, as well as in Iceland and the Netherlands.

