



February 1 - March 7, 2020

# GIOVANNI GARCIA-FENECH

## *A Mala Hora*



*Spindle VII*, 2019; 85 x 85 inches

Postmasters and PostmastersROMA announce two concurrent solo exhibitions by New York-based painter Giovanni Garcia-Fenech. This is the artist's second solo exhibition at Postmasters and his first at PostmastersROMA. It is also the first time we present one artist in both our locations simultaneously.

The subjects in his paintings may change from abstract to figurative and back again, but the foundations of Garcia-Fenech's work remain the same: improvised composition, a tightly restricted palette, close attention to negative space, and a delight in flow



*Temet Nosce* (Latin for “Know Thyself”) at PostmastersROMA picks up where Garcia-Fenech's previous exhibition of nervous self-portraits at Postmasters, New York left off. These self-portraits are more agitated, showing the artist tormented by unspecified forces, crushed, exposed, thrown about. And then the figure dissolves. The nudes are replaced by sinuous ghosts. Gone is the architecture of musculature, fat, and bones. Arabesques completely take over, swirling, shaped only by the edges of the tondi. Are they still self-portraits? Are the paintings representational if they depict something that doesn't have substance, that doesn't exist? Are they a wink to the Spiritualist-inspired pioneers of modernist abstraction, to the earnest strivings of Hilma af Klint, Wassily Kandinsky, Paul Klee?

In *A Mala Hora* (a phrase in Spanish meaning “at an unfortunate time”) in Postmasters New York, Garcia-Fenech's paintings turn yet more abstract. The monochromatic ghosts become colorful spindles, diamond-shaped compositions whose layers seem to be held together only by centrifugal force, threatening to collapse the moment they stop. Sharing the same vocabulary of forms but expressing very different results, there are the widows: a procession of black curved silhouettes in poses simultaneously suggesting mourning and despair or celebration and sensuality. The new work evinces Garcia-Fenech's recurring *mélange* of influences—classic modernism, medieval illumination, outsider art—plus new interests, including Pre-Columbian pottery, American abstraction of the 1930s, and Islamic calligraphy.