

## JOHN ANDRO AVENDAÑO (b.1959)

### *HOMAGE: Influences Of The Past To The Present*

What was initially proposed at the start of the year as a show of new works by Avendaño, quickly morphed into a survey of the artist's oeuvre from early influences to his current paintings, when visiting his studio and seeing the rich backlog of paintings from the mid 1970s to paintings recently completed, still wet, the rich smell of oil paint filling the room.

***HOMAGE: Influences of the Past To The Present*** illustrates the artist's journey; from the early influence of Paul Cezanne and Pablo Picasso to the present and his admiration for the work of Francis Bacon, Gerhard Richter, and Lucian Freud. ***"I admired the solitude and concentration of Cezanne, and Picasso was also an inspiration for me, not only for what they did, but the way they did it; changing their styles and showing me a whole new way of looking at shapes."***

His artwork has evolved over the years, beginning with Impressionist influences and plain-air, which he studied first hand when living in France, and moving towards more abstract forms and figures, which we see in paintings like ***The Bathers*** to the ***Alchemist Series*** paintings.

His love for nature began in the colorful garden of his mother, Anastasia Orozco, as a child and later led him into the Los Angeles hills with his drawing pad and pencils, to ultimately explore the world, living in France, Italy, and Spain. This is particularly evident in his plein-air paintings included in this survey, ***19a Rue Canard***, (ca. 1975-1979), ***Tuscany***, and ***Ashenbrenner Park***, in Olympic National Park, WA.

In ***A Parrish Afternoon***, painted in the mid-2000s on the Washington coast, there's the unconscious if unmistakable influence of American, Maxfield Parrish (1870-1966). (Avendaño gave me permission to suggest the title.) As he continues to explore new techniques and subjects, Avendaño's artistry remains a reflection of his diverse interests and experiences.

His solo show, ***Chaos In Order***, July 2022, proved to be yet another breakthrough in which Avendaño's abstracted figures, many with collage, expressed his opposition to the violence and disorder, that followed the pandemic domestically and globally, specifically with the onset of the Russian invasion of Ukraine and war. He drew upon his own memories of growing up in L.A. as a young Latino, and the violence which always felt so close and threatening. The result was brilliant paintings, rich in multiple layers of colors, ebbing and flowing from the surface, and integrated with collage. ***"I admired (Gerhard) Richter's layering of color and then scraping, and (Francis) Bacon, digging deep, even if it's a place you would rather not go."***

The most recent, ***Dancing Shaman*** and ***The Elders*** from his ***Tribal Series*** are inspired by his Mexican roots, referencing indigenous and Mexican culture and spirituality. His heritage includes his great-uncle, ***Jose Clemente Orozco***'s legacy as one of the leaders of the Mexican Muralism movement, along with Diego Rivera and David Siqueiros, and one of the most famed painters of 20th century art. Avendaño constantly challenges himself to progress, to learn, and push himself in his painting and now, in his recently introduced ceramic sculptures.

***"I'm not satisfied with getting somewhere others have gone."***

