

**Matt Klos on Antonio Lopez Garcia**



Antonio Lopez Garcia, *Toilet and Window*, 1968-1971, oil on paper pasted to board, 56" x 37".

*Toilet and Window*, the lesser-known counterpart to *Washbasin and Mirror* - the first Garcia painting I saw in person at the 2008 Boston exhibition - has become my favorite. Both paintings present a dual perspective. In *Toilet and Window*, I've come to see these views as heaven-above and earth-below. Tethered by a gray/violet band.

The painting is classic Garcia. The floor tiles, carefully devised, are replete with textural information, dust, grit, a cigarette butt, and mineral deposits are all there. This is a bathroom that is interesting to look at but one that you'd likely pass up using, save an emergency. Garcia doesn't flinch from the appearance of things. He takes no shortcuts. The window, a sheet of rolled privacy glass, creates an amber rectangle at the top edge. Each tiny dome of the window is distinct, bejeweled with color notes of rose, orange, and teal. Two obscured objects rest on the other side of this portal, hovering in a state between reality and dream.

As a young man, Garcia was about to finish studies as an accountant before events in his life set into motion the artist we have come to know. His dogged pursuit of appearances is an important aspect of his work, but seeing his painting is to see nature in an immaculate order. Each shape and color harmonize and take on a sum far greater than 10,000 marks. His sensibility seems akin to the American Transcendentalists. Through searching, trial and error, and revision, Garcia makes incremental progress toward gestalt. Thoreau's famous "I went to the woods" quotation concludes with "to drive life into a corner, and reduce it to its lowest terms, and, if it proved to be mean, why then to get the whole and genuine meanness of it, and publish its meanness to the world; or if it were sublime, to know it by experience, and be able to give a true account of it in my next excursion."

A central idea about Garcia's work became clear to me while attending a Q&A in 2008 at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, held on the evening of the

opening reception for his inaugural American retrospective. This idea has continued to guide my own studio practice. Toward the end of the event, a question was asked, that, in summary was: “How is it possible that you make the work that you do!?” The translator conveyed the question to Garcia. Garcia responded in Spanish, to which the translator responded back, possibly trying to clarify. After some time, and much conversation in Spanish, one English word came back from the translator. The answer, “Perseverance.” Above all else, this is Garcia’s gift to those of us committed to our art.



Matt Klos, *In the Name of the Father*, 29.5" x 24" size, oil on panel, 2018.

Matt Klos lives and works in Baltimore, MD, is a professor of painting and drawing at Anne Arundel Community College, and co-direct Exeter Gallery, a white-wall exhibition space located in Baltimore's Little Italy.

@mattklospainting, @exetergallery, [www.mattklos.com](http://www.mattklos.com),  
mattklos22@gmail.com