



*W.Garcia*, ferrotype by Curran Broderick, 2017

*Human beings are not placed, they bring  
place into being*

*- Jonathan Z. Smith*

*It seems very clear what it means. I can't  
say it but the painting makes it clear.  
If I don't know, then it's not working. If it  
seems right to me, then it has a meaning,  
but I can't tell you what meaning. I can't be  
more specific than that. It works when it  
means something, when I don't question it  
any more.*

*-Joan Mitchell*

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## Wylie Garcia

b. 1980, Houston, TX, USA

Wylie Garcia (She/They) investigates themes of identity and place through process and material-oriented projects. Using cross disciplinary mediums such as painting, drawing, sound, performance, and textiles, Garcia explores issues related to gender, devotion, and emotional spaces. Through the use of repetitive mark making, as well as using symbolic imagery referencing flowers and embellished surface design, Garcia makes use of layered space as an ongoing metaphor attending to ideas related to connection and belonging and being human.

Wylie Garcia received a BA from the University of Chicago and an MFA from the Massachusetts College of Art and Design. She is the recipient of numerous awards and grants including a Pollock-Krasner Foundation Grant, a St. Botolph Foundation Award, a Sustainable Arts Foundation Artist Award, the Burlington City Arts Barbara Smail Award, and several Vermont Creation Grants. Her work has been shown in solo and group shows in museums and galleries across the U.S. and she has held residencies at the Vermont Studio Center, Fine Arts Work Center in Provincetown, Massachusetts and the Central Academy of Fine Arts in Beijing, among others. Currently resides in Vermont.



*The Future of Plants, A Pleasure Crush, Olfaction Portal, Aeipathy Sillage, 2021*  
60"x72", acrylic on canvas

For over a decade, my work has responded to the question of belonging and how to find comfort existing in- between places. I explore vulnerability and I am interested in the emotional embellishments we use to fortify our own resilience in this world. Feelings such as trust, worthiness, love, joy, fear, doubt, loneliness, and grief and other coping mechanisms are emotions that inspire my process. They show up when addressing ideas related to my own exploration of gender and identity and belonging, which is deeply connected to my own story as a Queer Mexican-Swedish-American who grew up in Texas in the 80's and 90's. Devotion is an ongoing existential concept that frequently appears in my work as meditative, obsessive, pre-occupied mark making. Sometimes these marks are repetitive, familiar; and they often begin one way only to morph into something completely different. This can be seen in my current body of work where I am using floral-like symbols as stand-ins representing repetitive thought patterns and instinctual emotive exploration. I might start out thinking about a specific conversation I had earlier in the day, but end up focused on the overall tone of the day. In my earlier installation and textile work, hash-like-marks or stitch-marks represented overlapping visual conversations that demarcate the time it took to work through or let go of a thought. The flowers in my current work, however, represent giving into intuition and becoming intimate with the overall awkwardness and vulnerability of overlapping empathic information. While formally, I create project based works of art usually in a series based on medium; my goal is to use a visually embellished or layered surface to hold the attention of a viewer in curiosity just long enough to deliver a gut punch/hug of knowingness. Part of my practice as an artist is to create metaphorical containers or place holders for psychological processing. When I lean into or access my own discomfort to inform my process, my art becomes an abstract emotional landscape documenting the tender and complex experiences of existence.

Studio projects currently in process are:

*Flores/Blomma*

*Erasure: Painting and Poetry Pandemic Conversations*

*Philosophical Contemplations on Landscape Transition*

These works reach deep into nostalgic iconography to hold space for processing personal histories. They are an extension of my practice which uses memory of events and people and places as a means for tapping into an emotional state of mind/being. As I paint or collaborate, I attempt to hold onto that memory and create a mark or gesture that corresponds to the feeling. These gestures overlap to create a roadmap of how memory and emotion relate to experience and fix us in a place of fantasy or distortion or nostalgia or longing or grief or vulnerability and so on. Together these marks make up a visual story that connects deeper with my own layered intersections of identity and place.

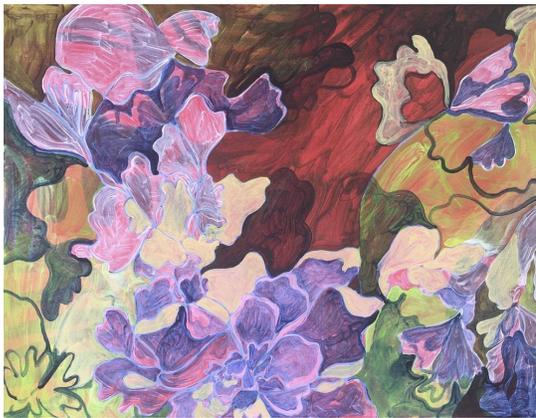
For example, Flores/Blomma is about creating a placeholder for the intersection of cultural identity and while it is partly inspired by Mexican and Swedish embroidered flowers found in traditional designs from both cultures, it is also inspired by floriography an antiquated art of arranging flowers as a form of symbolic visual meaning. However unlike floriography where each flower symbolizes a specific sentiment, in this series, the cutouts are imaginary flowers and the arrangements are invented to create a secret indecipherable personal subterfuge of meaning.

In *Erasure: Painting and Poetry Pandemic Conversations*, I am not wholly certain of the direction of the work suffice to say they feel like more of a spring board for something else. These paintings began as a collaborative idea to record conversations between myself and writer/poet Mercedes/Sadie Williams while she was living in Mexico City and I in Vermont at the start of the pandemic. I would draw/paint the emotive embodiment of our conversations and she would then transcribe selected bits of our conversations into poems. The first few paintings using this process resulted in five small 14"x18" painted panels. Now, as the pandemic continues to unfold, I am gleaning aesthetic fragments from this collaborative process and applying it to the series titled: *Philosophical Contemplations on Landscape Transition*. I am thinking about the metamorphosis of internal emotional landscapes with regards to external shifts/ pressures/ expectations. These paintings are about mimicking emotional responses to mark making. Sometimes the marks are tight, sometimes they are loose, other times they are layered; they aim to capture the internal fluctuations of change and vulnerability. I take long breaks in between quick fast mark making sessions to look at and feel the surface with very calculated intention, to make sure the shapes are talking to one another, with each gesture acting as an embrace to the work as a whole.



*Flores/Blomma , 2021*

Paint marker and acrylic on birch plywood cut outs, displayed on an art farm stand in rural Vermont



*Erasure: Painting and Poetry Pandemic Conversations, 2021*

Acrylic paint on birch panels and/or stretched canvas



*Philosophical Contemplations on Landscape Transition, 2021*

Acrylic paint on stretched canvas