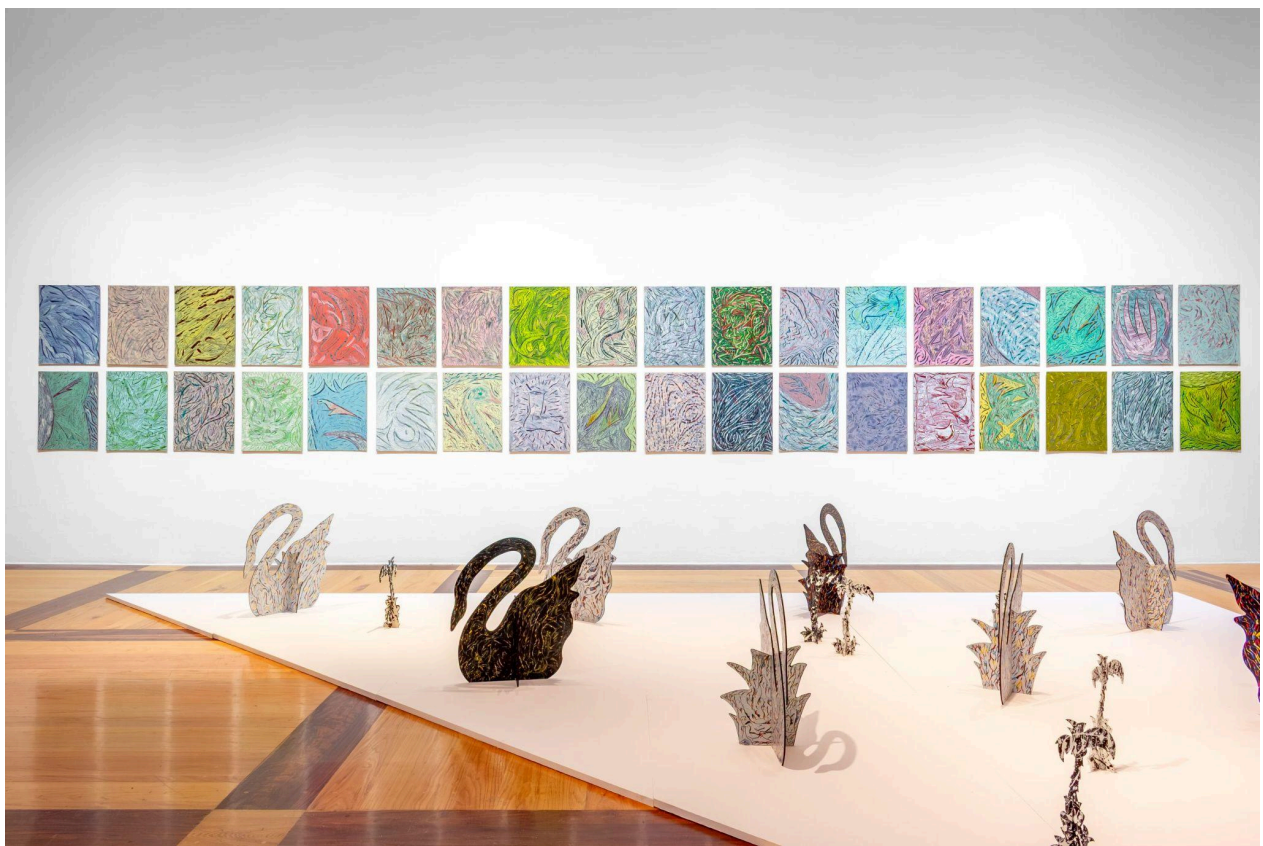


FLAVIO GARCIANDÍA:

AUTORRETRATO NO AUTORIZADO (UNAUTHORIZED SELF-PORTRAIT)



Installation view of the exhibition *Flavio Garciandía: Autorretrato no autorizado*. Museo de Arte Contemporáneo de Monterrey (MARCO), 2026. Photograph: Arthur Mora.

- This is the first retrospective outside Cuba dedicated to Garciandía, a seminal figure in Cuban art history.
- Born in Caibarién, Cuba, in 1954, Garciandía has pursued his artistic career in Mexico for three decades. He lived in Monterrey from 1995 to 2005, then moved to Mexico City, where he now lives.

- His work gained international recognition at the Sydney and São Paulo biennials, the now-defunct Paris Biennale, and the Havana Biennial.
- The exhibition surveys five decades of his work and examines his artistic practice, particularly its dialogue with Modernist painting. Throughout his career, he has challenged the notion of a “single style.”
- Garciandía has used painting as a conceptual medium to explore art history, kitsch, and social issues in Cuba, particularly its socialist system and the government that upholds it.
- The exhibition is funded through the Estímulo Fiscal a Proyectos de Inversión en las Artes (EFIARTES), with support from 7-Eleven Mexico, Ternium, Grupo Cuprum, and Grupo Berel.
- It will be on view at MARCO from Friday, September 25, 2026, through April 18, 2027.
- MARCO receives support from the Government of the State of Nuevo León, through the Nuevo León Ministry of Culture; from Arca Continental, CYDSA, FEMSA, FRISA, Xignux, and Alberto Fernández G.; and from Arte Expuesto, VivaAerobus, and V Media Group.

The Museo de Arte Contemporáneo de Monterrey (MARCO) presents *Flavio Garciandía: Autorretrato no autorizado (Unauthorized Self-Portrait)*, the first survey in Mexico of the work of an artist pivotal to the history of art in both Cuba and Latin America.

The exhibition brings together 90 works dating from the mid-1970s to 2020, drawn from collections in Mexico and abroad. Its title reflects the irony and humor that characterize Garciandía's artistic practice. It also presents a paradox: How could a self-portrait be “unauthorized” when the artist creates it himself? This question lies at the heart of the retrospective and invites visitors to actively interpret Garciandía's work, where personal references blend with fictional elements.

Flavio Garciandía arrived in Monterrey, Mexico, in 1994 as part of an exodus of Cuban artists who came to the country in the early 1990s. These artists had participated in a post-avant-garde movement that emerged in Cuba during the 1980s and quickly gained international recognition through the Havana Biennial. Members included José Bedia, Juan Francisco Elso, Gustavo Pérez Monzón, and Garciandía himself.

Tobias Ostrander (born in Boston, USA, in 1970), Estrellita B. Brodsky, Curator at Large, Latin American Art, at Tate Modern in London, curates the exhibition. Ostrander situates Garciandía within a postmodern generation that radically transformed Caribbean art.

From a post-conceptual perspective, Garciandía's painting moves through distinct periods, each critically engaging with movements that have shaped the Western history of modern and contemporary art. In doing so, he asserts his freedom from any single style or artistic concern. Throughout these shifts, his work remains engaged with Cuba's visual culture and political history, reflecting the ideological complexity that has shaped his thinking.

For Garciandía, exile offered an opportunity to construct an imagined history of Cuban art through dialogues with Western art, particularly American and European art. In doing so, he connects his own practice to the work and ideas of artists ranging from Willem de Kooning to Damien Hirst.

For Garciandía, painting has served as a starting point for exploring his conceptual interests. One of these is the tension between "good" and "bad" taste, expressed through kitsch. In the 1980s, artists across the Americas drew on popular culture and embraced elements often considered exaggerated or extravagant. Garciandía incorporated palm trees and swans, motifs commonly found in Cuban home décor, to evoke a stereotypical tropical landscape. His installation *El lago de los cisnes* (1983/2026) features wooden swan figures interspersed with palm trees, painted with splashes of black, white, and colored paint. It was presented at the first Havana Biennial in 1984. The artist has created a 2025 version for this presentation.

Another of Garciandía's interests is an irreverent reexamination of art history. He draws on earlier approaches to painting and creates fictional narratives, as in *Frijoles blancos o Malevich y Ryman en La Habana* (2014) and the painting *De la serie "Ad Reinhardt en La Habana", No. 15* (2024). These works reference the monochrome paintings of Kazimir Malevich, Ad Reinhardt, and Robert Ryman. Their fields of white, black, and red reveal bean-like patterns up close, evoking a staple of Cuban cuisine. Garciandía imagines Reinhardt visiting Havana and eating this everyday dish. The series reverses the hierarchy that casts art from the "periphery" as derivative of art from the "center." It also gives the monochrome, associated with spiritual concerns in Malevich's and Reinhardt's work, a material dimension: the beans allude to the hardships Cubans faced after the collapse of the socialist bloc.

Garciandía has also addressed sociopolitical issues, particularly in Cuba, at various points in his career. By incorporating sickles, hammers, and machetes, he critiques the Cuban regime through imagery associated with communism. These elements appear in works such as

Tropicalia III (1989-2025), a series of paintings that interweaves sickles with palm-tree outlines against a background of dripping paint reminiscent of Jackson Pollock's work; motifs are also included in *Segundo viaje de Marco Polo* (1992).

The exhibition also features *El Síndrome de Marco Polo* (1986/2026), created for the second Havana Biennial in 1986 and reconstructed for this exhibition. The work profoundly influenced subsequent generations of Cuban artists. It consists of illustrations based on the comic book character Elpidio Valdés, framed by décor typical of Chinese restaurants. Together with three panels reading "Se fue (he left)," "Vio (he saw)," and "Volvió (he returned)," the images tell Valdés's journey to China and his return home. The work alludes to Cuban artists' desire to travel abroad to advance their careers, and to the restrictions and obstacles they face under the island's government.

The exhibition is part of the museum's ongoing effort, over the past seven years, to develop a dialogue between the local and the global. As part of this initiative, MARCO has revisited the work of international artists whose time in Monterrey left a lasting mark on the city's art scene. Other exhibitions in this series include *Gerda Gruber. Entre verde y agua* (2025) and *Charles & Ray Eames: La inusual belleza de las cosas comunes*.

TICKETS, HOURS, AND ADMISSION:

- Open Tuesday through Sunday, 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Extended hours on Wednesdays until 8:00 p.m.
- Free admission on Wednesdays for students and teachers, and free admission for everyone on Sundays.
- General admission: 150 pesos. Discounted admission: 120 pesos (teachers, students, INAPAM cardholders, and children under 15). Children aged 5 and under are admitted free daily.

EXHIBITION INFORMATION:

Title: *Flavio Garciandía: Autorretrato no autorizado (Unauthorized Self-Portrait)* | **Opens to the public:** Friday, September 25, 2026 | **On view through:** Sunday, April 18, 2027 | **Exhibition design:** MARCO | **Curator:** Tobias Ostrander | **Number of works:** 90 | **Galleries:** 1–4, ground floor | **Media:** Oil and acrylic on canvas, mixed media, and drawings.

ARTIST PROFILE

Flavio Garciandía de Oraá (Cuba, 1954)

A 1981 graduate of the Higher Institute of Art in Havana, Flavio Garciandía is a key figure in contemporary Cuban art, both for his artistic practice and for his teaching at the institute. His long and varied career began with awards for his hyperrealist work in the late 1970s. In the 1980s, he began incorporating kitsch into his practice, developing a distinctive artistic vision within the Cuban context. Garciandía came to Mexico as part of a group of intellectuals associated with the Cuban avant-garde of the 1980s. He contributed to the art scene in northern Mexico, particularly in Monterrey, where he lived for more than a decade. He later moved to Mexico City, where he currently resides. In Monterrey, Garciandía organized the exhibition ***Sobre la ola*** at ***Muestra 001***, a precursor to Zona Maco, the international art fair held annually in Mexico City. Muestra 001 is now considered a landmark in Mexican contemporary art for bringing together artists including Mario García Torres, the marcelaygina collective, the Tercerunquinto collective, and Rubén Gutiérrez. Garciandía has received international fellowships from institutions including the Académie des Beaux-Arts in Paris (1983), the DAAD in Kassel (1991), and the Gug Foundation. He has been holding solo exhibitions since 1973. Among his most notable exhibitions are *Vereda tropical*, Galería Habana, Havana, 1982; *Tropicalia I*, The Central Space, London, 1989; *Obra reciente*, Museo Nacional Castillo de la Real Fuerza, Havana, 1989; *New Art from Cuba* (with José Bedia and Rodríguez Brey), Amelie Wallace Gallery, New York, and North Hall Gallery, Massachusetts, 1982; *Tropicalia II*, Centro de Desarrollo de las Artes Visuales, Havana, 1991; *Una visita al museo de arte tropical*, Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes, Havana, 1992; and *Obra reciente*, Museo de Bellas Artes, Santa Fe, 2000. He has participated extensively in group exhibitions. The most notable of these have been *Volumen Uno*, International Art Center, Havana, 1981; the Paris Biennale, 1982; the International Painting Festival, Cagnés-sur-Mer, France, 1983; the first, second, and third editions of the Havana Biennial, 1984, 1986, and 1989, respectively; the Venice Biennale, 1986; the Sydney Biennale, 1986; *Signs of Transition*, Museum of Contemporary Hispanic Art, New York, 1988; *Contemporary Art from Havana*, Riverside Studios, London, 1989; *Kuba OK*, Städtische Kunsthalle, Düsseldorf, 1990; *Los hijos de Guillermo Tell*, Luis Angel Arango Library, Bogotá, 1991; and *La cita transcultural*, Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney, 1993. He won first prize at the National Drawing Salon in Havana in 1977 and the Slovak Visual Arts Economic Prize in 1978.