Artist’s Statement on *The Art of Healing*

Those of us who have confronted the sudden possibility of death or faced a health or physical threat in our lives have one thing in common: a bigger appreciation for life than we had before and a new awareness.

When I was asked to do a series of portraits of people who had been in some sort of health distress, perhaps even facing the possibility of dying, I immediately became interested. The whole experience was too familiar to me: I had been there.

So I took on the project, moved especially by one common denominator that outweighed all the rest: the experience of survival, of recovery, of healing. In short, the experience of life on a different level; one that has a new meaning and a new purpose.

In 2016-17 I painted eight portraits of people of all ages, genders and cultures, including one of myself. All I had were their photos and the spirit carried by their powerful stories which related to mine in the sense that we all seemed to have one thing in common: we wanted to live.

From personal experience I have discovered that anything is possible when you want it badly enough and work towards achieving it. The universal power of intent is immense. In our case, the universe conspired, and we had the willingness, the thirst for life, the means, and when the doctors appeared, the medicine. We were ready. We wanted to live. Life showed up.

The colorful faces, the different hues, the explosion of color, are all parallel to the universe: we are all one and moving as one. The cells move, the stars and the galaxies move, the thick ubiquitous strokes of oil paint are frozen as they move, propelled by the palette knives onto the canvas like meteorites in the vast universe.

In my palette, color is beauty, and beauty is life itself. The warmth of humanity makes itself evident in the canvas. Our true nature is not abstract as our brain sketches it. Our true nature comes from the deepest silence within, from happiness, from love. The spirit thrives on our true nature.

The portraits painted for the “Art of Healing Surgical Care Report” are a eulogy to our true human nature, to the light of our beautiful spirit and to its healing powers. Healing is an art performed by the body and the spirit: the true artist in us.

—Arturo Garcia

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