



### Dalton Gata

**Dreams in surrealism, non-conformity and curiosity.**

**Born in Cuba, educated in the Dominican Republic and now living in Puerto Rico, artist Dalton Gata probes curiously at our obsession with sex, fashion, faces and masks.**

*Q: Your work explores faces and characters and people in a beautifully unique way - who, or what, is your inspiration for these characters? Are they your friends? Your enemies? Your dreams?*

The characters in my work my versions of people that I find mostly on social networks. They are also friends, lovers or completely invented characters from my memory. It has never been my intention to literally portray anyone, nor do I even try to make my characters resemble the people I reference. Sometimes I have the feeling that, in a way, they are all me. All my alter egos. All self-portraits.

*Q: You studied Fashion Design and worked as a designer before turning to fine art, which explains the graphic nature of your work as well as your wonderful use of color, fashion and accessories on your subjects. What compelled you to make this change, is there a difference between fashion and fine art to you?*

Fashion is a complex, elegant and cocky puppet, with many arms and legs that constantly changes its silhouette. It is always hungry, and it needs an army to help it to walk. Fine Art, on the other hand, is a lonely monster, also conceited and elegant sometimes, but simply not as complex and right now it only needs me to walk.

*Q: Your work has drawn comparisons to Surrealism, but there are also some similarities to German art in the early 1900s - the work of Christian Schad and Otto Dix, for example. How does the history of art inform your work?*

In 2008 I was designing for a Dominican Jeans brand, and from time to time, I had to travel to the middle interior of the island. In one of those trips, I missed my bus back home and decided to walk into a bookstore where I came across a book about Otto Dix. It was a triggering, clarifying experience. I was absolutely fascinated by him. On my way back to Santo Domingo, I was looking through the book, amazed, I felt very connected with the faces in his work, it was so refreshing to see this world with these familiar characters that I already knew! These characters were not the popular idealized aesthetic, they were such real characters, so human, so monstrous, I was deeply hooked on that "new objectivism". Otto Dix is undoubtedly one of the painters I turn to when I get tired.

# PERES PROJECTS



*Q: Talk to us a bit about your process of sketching and creating your art.*

My process varies depending on the medium or technique. I always have a file of images that I save along the way; they are images that catch my attention for different reasons, either for the theme, or the textures, or the fashion, the gestures, the incredible facial features, any image that manages to capture my attention I must keep.

When I start to produce I always go to that file, and I digitally assemble a very basic sketch of what I intend to paint later. Although I'll admit, I rarely paint exactly what I sketch, many changes happen along the way, but this is one way my process starts.

Other times, I start painting directly from my memory onto the canvas, and then if I need a specific reference, I go to my file or google the word which describes exactly what I need. This is how I make my linear black and white diptychs. I like them so much because of how simple my process is. There is a sincerity and strength to them as pieces, because I feel they invite a more detailed reading, a more extensive conversation. The same can be said with what happens in many of my drawings, only on a smaller scale. In fact it is funny that people are surprised when they see the diptych in person because on Instagram, for example, the black and white diptychs look like drawings on paper, when in fact they are acrylic on canvas.

*Q: In some of your more recent work, the faces of your subjects are obscured by masks, large sunglasses or heavy makeup and image manipulation. You've mentioned before that you like to play with the idea of "beauty" and "ugliness", do you think we have changed the way we look at ourselves today? How?*

I think we are a hypocritical society, as human beings we are self-conscious, also liars, and we have always been attracted to the idea of becoming someone else, whether it is in acting, or with makeup, or through surgeries, or masks. Non-conformity and curiosity is in our DNA, hiding behind characters we invent for convenience, or perhaps just for pleasure. It can be just as fun as it can be dangerous and even deadly. This is something that I have wanted to be reflected in my work.

*Q: A day in the life of Dalton Gata?*

When I'm working or preparing for an exhibition my days are basically the same; I get up at 5am in the morning almost every day, I have coffee, I go out for a run, I take a shower and by 7am, I am already in my studio. It is literally around the corner from my apartment. I prepare a simple breakfast and then start working until 11 or noon. Afterwards, I return to the apartment, prepare lunch, take another shower, sleep 10 to 15 minutes, prepare another coffee and at approximately 2pm, I return to the studio until about 5 or 6pm depending on the amount of work I have.



# PERES PROJECTS



SELECTED PRESS: MASTHEAD MAGAZINE, July 2020