

Nature Series

Aquilino's *Nature Series* explores natural forms with a fantastical zoom, pin-pointing plants and flowers and allowing them to swell to an unnatural size. Where the *Framed Series* played with constraint, with the overcoming and unifying of the boundaries of form, the *Nature Series* finds forms to overpower. Here we have dominating subjects that leave their background blurred as they grow to a triumphant and monstrous size. It is again through a warped perspective that Aquilino draws attention to form, literally plucking a flower from the ground and making it massive in order that we may concentrate on it and it alone. Background does not become unimportant, but is expressed in a change of style that allows the subject a truly egotistical articulation. Grass and sky are strikingly painterly in comparison to the clarity of the plants, a mass of wonderfully textured brush strokes that flutter about their subject. The plants' colours are echoed and reflected across the paintings: lush green in fronds of grass and the blushing pink of petals diluted across the expanse of sky. As colour unified the *Framed Scenes Series*, it does so here. Though a subtle bathing of colour is replaced with a fervent intensity, with each painting glowing with the depths of its concentration. Green is brilliant, bright in its evocative purity, while red burns in fiery and fleshy pink tones. The red is particularly pungent, giving these forms a power that eclipses the wholly natural. *Planta Salvaje's* flaming oranges ignite the untamed curling of its leaves, the same warmth that gives *La Semilla Gigante* a distinctive bestial, almost carnivorous, quality. In *Buscadores de Semillas*, which escapes the red, is softer, more luscious, in effect; reflective of their seeking of life and growth. Indeed these large seed pods are provokingly sexual; their heavy heads stemming from the flower's stigma in stems flushed pink like fallopian tubes. In *Raíces de un Paisaje* the roots that push through the face of the flower are flesh like, the rosy surface soft and internal. These great plants appear personified through these fleshy associations, and by the clear movement and agency betrayed in their reaching and curling stems. Though in *El Sueño de las Flores* they lie still, curled in sleep, the glittering and changing surface of the paint injects the image with life. Here Aquilino's treatment of paint is completely different to the *Framed Scenes Series*; instead of soft airbrushed pastels, paint is filled evocatively with movement. Mottled and teeming with life, colour ripples across the surface of the canvas, mirroring the vitality of the forms it describes. Significantly, figures are also a presence in these fantastical scenes. They are tiny, caught in waves of grass, captured in wandering stems, or impossibly climbing and clinging to the giant flowers. They are figures faceless, diluted of colour, creatures of the earth succumbing to the overwhelming power its nature.

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