



Natalia Martinez

Spring 2026

Capstone - Painting

Department of Art and Art History

**Artist Statement:**

My paintings explore the relationship between cultural memory, mythology, and everyday life through narrative scenes where pre-Columbian Mesoamerican imagery and contemporary Mexican life coexist. Growing up in Denver, Colorado, I have been deeply influenced by my Mexican heritage, and my work reflects an ongoing exploration of identity, ancestral memory, and cultural continuity. I create narrative scenes that bring together pre-Columbian Mesoamerican imagery such as Aztec deities, masks, and sculptures with moments from contemporary Mexican life, imagining a world where past and present coexist. In these works, ancient figures move naturally through ordinary spaces, not as intruders but as familiar presences. By placing these ancient figures within contemporary settings, I explore how inherited stories, beliefs, and histories continue to shape personal and collective identity.

My fascination with Mesoamerican culture developed through both personal experience and research. A shared curiosity with my father about ancestral stories and traditions inspired me to study Mesoamerican artifacts, architecture, symbolism, and visual culture more deeply. As I became captivated by the complexity and beauty of these visual languages, my work evolved into imagining how these figures might exist within today's world and contemporary life. Through my paintings, I combine mythology with ordinary moments, often using nostalgia and humor to create scenes that feel both familiar and timeless.

I work on large wooden panels using acrylic paint. My process begins with research and gathering references from ceremonial objects, sculptures, and artifacts, but the paintings develop intuitively through layering, color, and experimentation. I am drawn to moments of familiarity and dignity, using them to reflect the continuity of culture across time. Ultimately, I aim to create spaces where mythology and daily life intertwine, inviting viewers to recognize the persistence of culture, memory, and identity within the everyday.

**Title****Original Format**

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Figure 1: La Dignidad de lo Simple	Acrylic, Wood Panel, 5' x 4'
Figure 2: De Dónde Te Conozco?	Acrylic, Wood Panel, 3' x 4'
Figure 3: Mi Padre El Sol, El Corazon Del Jaguar	Acrylic, Wood Panel, 35" x 44"
Figure 4: La Pila	Acrylic, Wood Panel, 47" x 32.5"
Figure 5: El Luchador	Acrylic, Wood Panel, 42" x 54"
Figure 6: No Te Levantes Honey	Acrylic, Wood Panel, 2' 7" x 4' 5"
Figure 7: Intertwined	Acrylic, Dirt, Creamer, Wood Panel, 4'3" x 3'12"
Figure 8: No Seas Metiche	Acrylic, Wood Panel, 32" x 4'
Figure 9: En Algún Lugar	Acrylic, Wood Panel, 34 ½" x 4'
Figure 10: Doña Tzinacantli	Acrylic, Wood Panel, 32" x 22"
Figure 11: Lion Dance, Quetzalcoatli	Acrylic, Wood Panel, 4' x 3'
Figure 12: El Corazón Mío	Oil, Canvas, 36" x 48"
Figure 13: Un Puño De Tierra	Woodblock-Print (Black Ink, Colored Mulberry Paper), 26" x 26"



Figure 1: La Dignidad de lo Simple



Figure 2: De Dónde Te Conozco?



Figure 3: Mi Padre El Sol, El Corazon Del Jaguar



Figure 4: La Pila



Figure 5: El Luchador



Figure 6: No Te Levantes Honey



Figure 7: Intertwined



Figure 8: No Seas Metiche



Figure 9: En Algún Lugar



Figure 10: Doña Tzinacantli

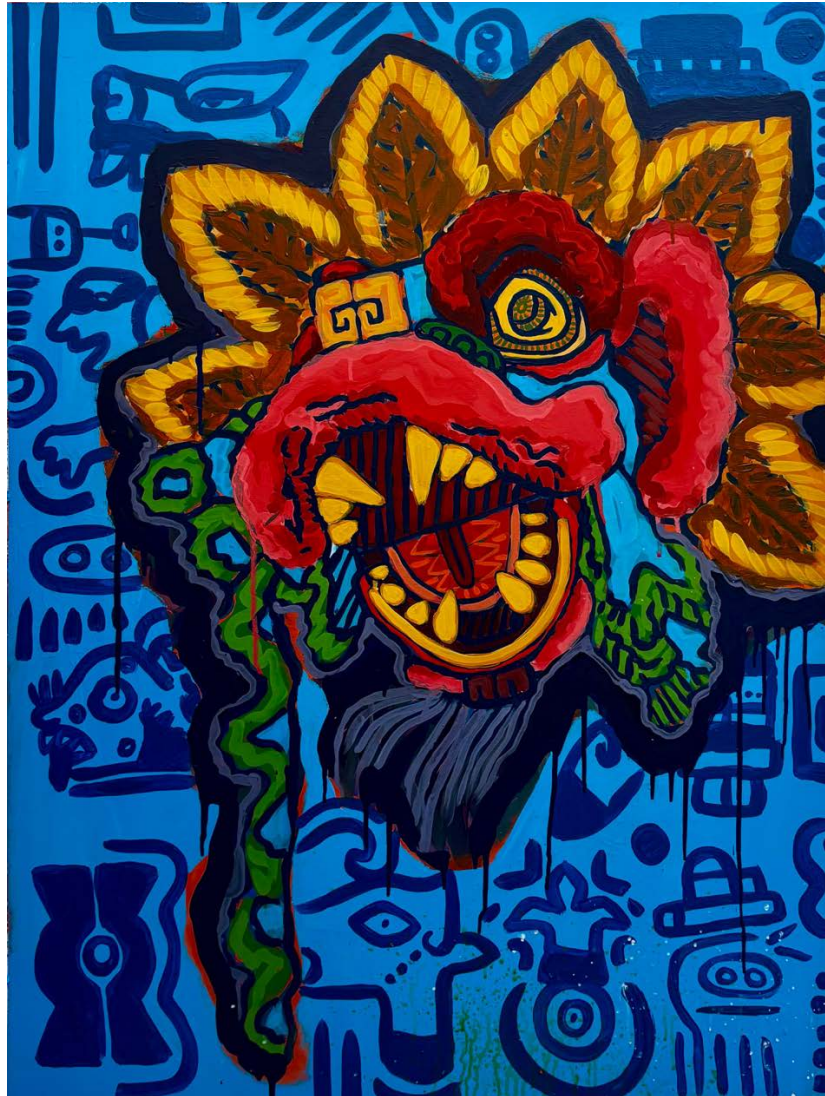


Figure 11: Lion Dance, Quetzalcoatl



Figure 12: El Corazón Mío



Figure 13: Un Puño De Tierra