

The Garland/Muñoz Mural



In search of a concluding sequence for his documentary about these two artists, filmmaker Michael Jacobsohn asked James Garland and Hugo Muñoz to collaborate on a joint venture: Each would paint only half the canvas in his own manner, to which they agreed. The mural, titled *The Passage*, emerged as a remarkable 16-foot finale to the feature-length film.

James's center panel is his rendition of The New York Times team photographer Sergey Ponomarev's 2016 photograph of Syrian refugees crossing the Mediterranean. Hugo's panels, which convey the refugees' emotions, were fashioned in the tradition of the Surrealists and Mexican muralists.

About his process, Hugo says, "My style could be defined as dreamy, subconscious, or free-floating. I never plan what I am going to draw. All I do is stand in front of the blank canvas; then I just let it flow. I don't know exactly who, how, or where the force comes from. I just allow myself to be played like instrument, and I'm happy."

In contrast, James's artworks are often the "props" of a performance artist: Many of his canvases become part of an outdoor show sold to passersby for cash, sometimes even before the paint is dry. On occasion, as with this mural, he becomes profoundly engrossed in his creative process.

A 5-minute documentary about the making of *The Passage* is available at: <https://vimeo.com/192840353>
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