

# ELEPHANT

## Venice Biennale 2022: Key Painters from Cecilia Alemani's Headline Show

*From disarming photorealism to a queer reinterpretation of Botticelli's Venus, explore Elephant's selection of the standout painters at the 59th Venice Biennale*

Holly Black

### Roberto Gil de Montes

Seashells, sandy beaches and tropical plants are found throughout Roberto Gil De Montes' paintings, giving a loose sense of dreamy delight. However, on closer inspection, darker elements reveal themselves, whether through a shadowy smudge that alludes to a ghostly figure, or the troubled stare of a man surrounded by a swirl of flowers and water.



Gil De Montes relocated to Los Angeles from Guadalajara in western Mexico as a child and there was influenced by the creativity of the Chicano movement, as well as pre-Colombian and Huichol symbolism. The alluring palette and flattened perspective also betray references to the Mexican modernist canon. Erotic subversions are a running theme, particularly in *El Pescador*, which features a nude man standing on a clam shell in the style of Botticelli's *Venus*.