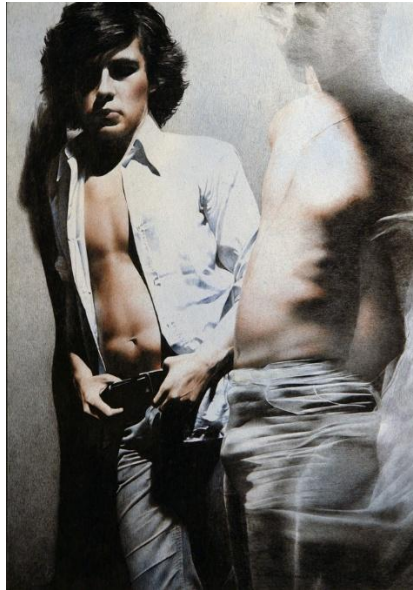


DE LA MANO



Roberto González Fernández (Monforte de Lemos, Galicia, Spain, 1948) is one of our most prolific living artists, with a career spanning over 50 years. A significant part of his work has focused on the representation of homoeroticism, which is the central theme of the present drawing.

From the early years as a visual artist, RGF has approached his practice as a means to explore, from different perspectives, the emotional and psychological dimensions of men in their private lives. He goes beyond traditional depictions of “manliness” tied to the concept of *homo virtus* (strength, courage, honor). From the outset, RGF’s work has remained true to this vision, acting both as a personal testimony and as a portrait of a society whose paradigms have shifted dramatically over time.

With his unmistakable style—something of a free verse within the so-called “New Madrid Figuration”—and his evident mastery of painting, drawing, and printmaking, RGF can be considered a pioneer. At such an early stage, he created a complex, unapologetically homoerotic world unlike anything previously seen in Spain. For many of us who came from later generations, he has been a fundamental reference in shaping the Spanish queer art narrative.

In a rare case among contemporary artists, and from such an early point in the development of modern art, RGF’s portrayal of affection between men breaks away from insinuation. It is shown unapologetically as a natural and accepted reality: beauty, the passage of time, conflict, erotic impulse, desire, love, pain, and intimate relationships between men.

As early as 1973—while the Spanish Law on Social Danger was still in force—Roberto González Fernández began to develop a personal visual language that could have landed him in prison. His approach was entirely new, aligned with what was beginning to emerge in other post-Stonewall Western countries. Many gay artists of the time were gradually moving away from the long-standing strategies of portraying homoeroticism through coded references: reading between the lines, cues for the initiated, nods to classical antiquity and mythology, the art of “saying without saying.”

It was time to call things by their name. This shift happened in Spain too, and at the same time, even if that surprises us. It’s just that pioneering figures like RGF remained somewhat in the shadows, eclipsed by the flashier figures of the *Movida* years that followed.