

ANDREA FESTA

Yann Leto is a French artist based between Rome and Madrid, working primarily in oil painting and sculpture—often incorporating neon, bronze, and wood as expressive interventions. His practice traverses the social, political, and deeply personal, capturing both the spectacle and strangeness of contemporary life with a sharp, ironic eye.

Drawing from televised sports, social media, urban encounters, and overlooked moments of daily routine, Leto collects visual fragments—photographs, impulsively gathered images, street scenes—which he archives and later recontextualizes. Over time, these references shed their original meaning, becoming open-ended signals within his richly layered compositions.

Leto paints with a theatrical logic: he begins not with sketches or studies, but with characters and action. Lighting, space, and background follow. This inversion of classical method is deliberate—it allows the narrative to evolve intuitively, unpredictably. A swimmer may become a pianist; a broker might morph into a boxer. These shifting identities resist logic and chronology, offering instead a strange, destabilized realism, at once poetic and grotesque.

Despite his rejection of preliminary drawing, Leto maintains a deep connection to classical painting, referencing Géricault, Delacroix, and Picasso as structural influences. Their legacy grounds his compositions, even as he distorts them to reflect the absurdity of the modern world.

What emerges are images that feel oddly familiar and eerily detached. His figures, though exaggerated or surreal, carry emotional weight. They feel real—recognizable, flawed, fully human. As fellow artist Manuel Ocampo once noted, Leto's characters seem to exist beyond the canvas, their invented stories resonating as if drawn from life.

There's a distinctly philosophical underpinning to Leto's work: an interest in how perception, satire, and personal observation can illuminate the hidden power dynamics of contemporary society. His art scrutinizes these structures—often caricaturing them, pushing them toward absurdity, yet never losing sight of their human implications.

In a world oversaturated with imagery, Yann Leto offers a different kind of vision: one where reality is fragmented, unstable, and persistently strange. His works invite us to look closer, to find meaning in the banal, and to confront the unpredictable theater of modern life.