

A photograph of two men standing in a doorway. The man on the left has a beard and is wearing a dark blue button-down shirt over a green t-shirt and dark jeans. The man on the right is bald with glasses, wearing a blue button-down shirt and blue jeans, and is holding a dark jacket. The doorway is framed by dark wood and a red wall is visible on the left. A sign above the doorway reads "NO SEATING INCOMPLETE PARTIES".

An Evening with
ENRIQUE MARTINEZ CELAYA
Including a Conversation with
MARTIN BREST

Thursday, November 2, 2023
7 p.m.
Ray Stark Family Theatre
School of Cinematic Arts 108

ENRIQUE MARTÍNEZ CELAYA



Photo: Christopher P. Michel

Enrique Martínez Celaya

“I think artists are usually artists of the epic or artists of the domestic. But what I am interested in is the friction between these two spheres: the domestic spheres of our everyday lives—children, families—are sort of a small goal, so to speak; and these larger movements of time and history and God, these kinds of larger ideas. And the two of them rub against each other; and that friction between the domestic and the epic is a source of a lot of my work.”—Enrique Martínez Celaya in *On Being*, 2017

“I am interested in transitions, both temporal and spatial, and in movement and journeys. ... I’m interested in the idea of the temporary and all that it implies, including a promise and a fear that you will need to move on again.”—Enrique Martínez Celaya interviewed in *Studio International*, 2017



Enrique Martínez Celaya, *The Well*, 2021

Enrique Martínez Celaya is an artist, author, and former physicist whose paintings, sculptures, installations, photographs, and writings are known for their poetic and philosophical qualities that invite viewers to reflect on the human condition, the natural world, and the role of art in society.

Martínez Celaya’s work has been exhibited and collected by major institutions worldwide, including the Berliner Philharmonie, Berlin, Germany; the State Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg, Russia; The Phillips Collection, Washington, D.C.; the Cathedral Church of St. John the Divine, New York; and Museum der bildenden Künste Leipzig, Germany. It is held in 56 public collections internationally, including the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, the Whitney Museum of American Art, the Moderna Museet in Stockholm, and the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston.

Martínez Celaya’s paintings are large, with birds, lone figures, flowers, mythical creatures, and expanses of space as recurring motifs.

Martínez Celaya is the author of several books, including two volumes of his *Collected Writings and Interviews*, and his work has been the subject of several monographs, most recently *Martínez Celaya, SEA SKY LAND: towards a map of everything* and *Enrique Martínez Celaya and Käthe Kollwitz: Von den ersten und den letzten*.

Martínez Celaya was born in Cuba and raised in Spain and Puerto Rico. He initiated his formal artistic training as an apprentice to a painter at the age of 12. He received a Bachelor of Science in applied physics with a minor in electrical engineering from Cornell University, and a Master of Science with a specialization in quantum electronics from the University of California, Berkeley. He conducted part of his graduate physics research at Brookhaven National Laboratory and holds several patents in laser devices. He attended the Skowhegan School of Painting & Sculpture and earned an MFA from the University of California, Santa Barbara, where he was also a Regents Fellow and Junior Fellow of the Interdisciplinary Humanities Center.



Enrique Martínez Celaya, *The Song of Freedom*, 2021–2023



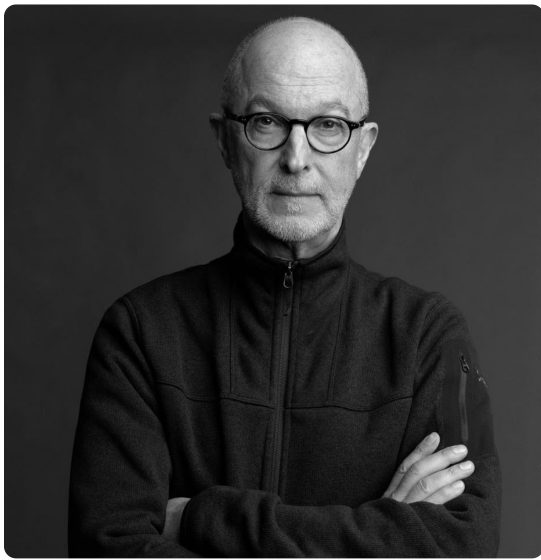
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Enrique Martínez Celaya, *The Prodigal Son*, 2015



Martin Brest



Enrique Martínez Celaya, *The Tower of Snow*, 2012

In 1998, Martínez Celaya created Whale & Star as an evolving idea of social interaction and responsibility. It has an internationally recognized imprint that publishes books in art, poetry, art practice, and critical theory. Whale & Star also offers public lectures, a residency and internship program, scholarships, and activities for poor and at-risk children.

Before his current academic posts, Martínez Celaya held the positions of Roth Family Distinguished Visiting Scholar at Dartmouth College, Presidential Professor at the University of Nebraska, and Associate Professor at Pomona College and the Claremont Graduate University. He received a Doctor Honoris Causa from Otis College of Art and Design in 2020. He is a Fellow of the Huntington Library, Art Museum, and Botanical Gardens; a Fellow of Los Angeles Institute for the Humanities; and a Fellow of the Robinson Jeffers Tor House Foundation. He is a Governor on the Board of Otis College of Art and Design, was the artist advisor to the Anderson Ranch Arts Center in Colorado from 2018 to 2021, and is a member of the International Advisory Council of the Hispanic Society of America. He is the first Provost Professor of Humanities and Arts at USC.

MARTIN BREST

Martin Brest is the director of films including *Beverly Hills Cop*, *Midnight Run*, *Scent of a Woman* (which earned Al Pacino his first Academy Award for Best Actor), *Meet Joe Black*, and *Gigli*. In addition to his work in film, Brest is a collector of contemporary art and, for many years, has been a friend and supporter of Enrique Martínez Celaya.

ON CREATIVITY AND MAKING ART

“I don’t use sources, just images from memory, from what I have in my head. The discovery of what is true in the painting emerges in the process of painting. I paint loosely, with liquid layers of paint, and engage constantly with the process, so no assistance, it’s all about discovery. And I can’t make another one like it; each is its own instance.”—Enrique Martínez Celaya interviewed in *Studio International*, 2017

“Growth does not have to be systematic. The way of the artist is a meandering path.”—Enrique Martínez Celaya, *On Art and Mindfulness*, 2015

“[M]y idea of creativity is different from much of what I hear around. Creativity involves taking the known, the not-so-known, and often some disparate information, to bring forth something new, and this process is structurally similar regardless of the pursuit or the field. It has associative qualities as well as aspects that seem mystical or unconscious, but it is not a wacky, disorganized effort about something one does not know well. Instead, most significant creative leaps result from sustained attention, in-depth knowledge, and intense engagement.”—Enrique Martínez Celaya interviewed in the *Los Angeles Review of Books*, 2020

“An artist’s practice should account for uncertainty and instability that is always part of an honest inquiry. Expect change. Embrace accidents and mistakes.”—Enrique Martínez Celaya, *On Art and Mindfulness*, 2015



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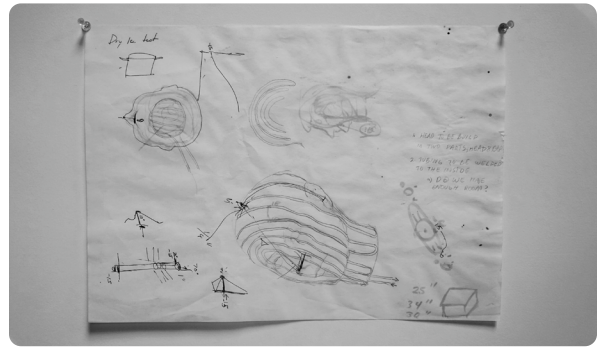
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FOR FURTHER REFLECTION

- What themes do you see in Martínez Celaya’s work?
- Martínez Celaya’s paintings are often described as poetic or philosophical—what does it mean for a painting to be poetic or philosophical?
- How does Martínez Celaya’s education in science inform his thought and art?
- How does his background as an immigrant child who grew up in different nations inform his art and thought?
- What is the role of friendship in an artistic life?

IF YOU LIKED THIS EVENT, YOU MIGHT WANT TO CHECK OUT:

- Enrique Martínez Celaya’s online journal martinezcelaya.com
- Whale & Star whaleandstarpress.com
- Classes and events at the USC Roski School of Art and Design roski.usc.edu
- USC Fisher Museum of Art fisher.usc.edu
- Museum of Contemporary Art moca.org
- Institute of Contemporary Art - LA theicala.org
- Upcoming Visions and Voices Events
 - 12/2/23** [The Upcycled Self: An Evening with Black Thought from The Roots](#)
 - 3/1/24** [Searching for Home: An Evening with Contemporary Artists Humaira Abid and Phung Huynh](#)
 - 4/6/24** [The Great Wall of Los Angeles at 40: A Conversation with Judy Baca and Screening of Murs Murs](#)



Enrique Martínez Celaya sketchbook page, 2022



Institute of Contemporary Art - LA



The Upcycled Self: An Evening with Black Thought from The Roots



The Great Wall of Los Angeles at 40: A Conversation with Judy Baca and Screening of Murs Murs



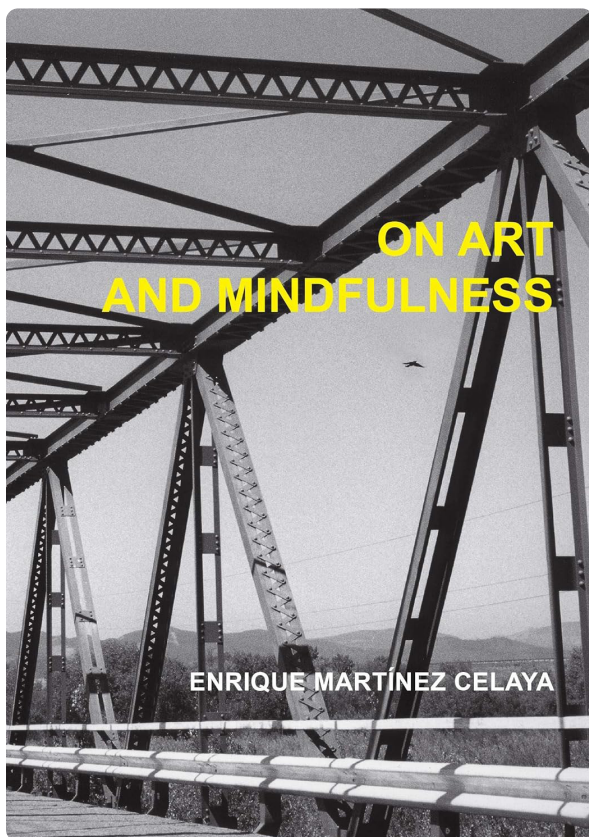
Searching for Home: An Evening with Contemporary Artists Humaira Abid and Phung Huynh



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DISCOVER MORE AT THE USC LIBRARIES

CHRISTINA SNIDER of the USC Libraries selected the following resources to help you learn more about Enrique Martínez Celaya. Electronic resources are accessible through the search bar on the USC Libraries homepage at libraries.usc.edu but may require the user to log in using their USC credentials.

ARTICLE

- 🕒 [“About the Artist: Enrique Martínez Celaya,”](#) *Psychological Perspectives* 59, no. 2 (2016): 155–56.

BOOKS

- 🕒 Enrique Martínez Celaya and Matthew Biro, [Enrique Martínez Celaya: Collected Writings and Interviews, 2010-2017](#) (Lincoln: Univ of Nebraska Press, 2020).
- 🕒 Enrique Martínez Celaya, [Enrique Martínez Celaya: The Pearl](#) (Santa Fe: Radius Books, 2013).
- 🕒 Enrique Martínez Celaya, [On Art and Mindfulness: Notes from the Anderson Ranch](#) (Culver City: Whale & Star Press, 2015).
- 🕒 Enrique Martínez Celaya and Peter W. Boswell, [Nomad: Enrique Martínez Celaya: Miami Art Museum, November 2, 2007-January 13, 2008](#) (Del Ray: Whale and Star, 2007).
- 🕒 Enrique Martínez Celaya et al., [The Fire of Heaven: Enrique Martínez Celaya and Robinson Jeffers](#) (Berlin: Hatje Cantz, 2022).
- 🕒 Enrique Martínez Celaya et al., [Martinez Celaya: Early Work](#) (Lincoln: Whale and Star, 2006).
- 🕒 Enrique Martínez Celaya, Susan Anderson, and Selma Holo, [Martinez Celaya: Sea Sky Land: Towards a Map of Everything](#) (Los Angeles: USC Fisher Museum of Art, 2021).

DATABASES

- 🕒 [Art & Architecture ePortal](#)
- 🕒 [Art, Design & Architecture Collection](#)
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- 🕒 [ArtBabblel](#)
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JOURNALS

- 🕒 [Art and the Public Sphere](#)
- 🕒 [E-flux Journal](#)
- 🕒 [Frieze \(Online\)](#)
- 🕒 [Journal of Contemporary Art](#)
- 🕒 [Journal of Contemporary Painting](#)