

Enrique Martínez Celaya Daybreak

20 November 2008 - 3 January 2009

Reception for the artist:
 Thursday 20 November, 6 - 8 p.m.

L.A. Louver is proud to present a solo exhibition of paintings, sculpture and works on paper by Enrique Martínez Celaya. This is the first exhibition of Martínez Celaya's work at L.A. Louver since the gallery commenced its representation of the artist in 2007. L.A. Louver will devote all of its galleries to this extensive body of new work.

Each of Martínez Celaya's paintings appears to convey a passage from a grand myth or epic narrative: poppies in vast fields that stretch to the light; a young man encased in ice; barren trees against a landscape; a child engulfed in a thick, oversized coat; a horse alone in the forest. Yet, despite the presence of such iconography, Martínez Celaya considers his work neither figurative nor narrative. He has stated, "The iconography is less important to me than the armature on which that iconography hangs, as are the philosophical and ethical insights the works might suggest, which are often a reflection of the armature." In *Daybreak*, Martínez Celaya sets out to explore a simultaneous trust in the resonance of representation, and mistrust in the painting to be anything but futile markings or records of passage, undermined by a history of suspicion towards the authenticity of most artistic gestures.



The Unwilled, 2008, oil and wax on canvas
 100 x 78 in. (254 x 198.1 cm)



The Savior, 2008, bronze
 66 x 26 x 135 in. (167.6 x 66 x 342.9 cm), Edition 1 of 5

Martínez Celaya creates his paintings using oil and wax, which he applies to the canvas in direct, mostly flat, thin layers. This process gives an archeology to each work, and instills light into the compositions. They are more colorful and "painterly" compared to previous paintings. The paintings embody time and possess a melancholic, stilled aura.

The exhibition also includes two large sculptures, each of which is rooted in questions of identity: a bronze deer pulls a landscape from leads that tie around its antlers, and a roughly-hewn young female figure, which the artist has carved from a wide-girthed *Paulownia tomentosa* (or Empress) tree and then charred, is depicted seated with head bowed.

Continued



The Wind Over the Poppy Field, 2008, oil and wax on canvas
92 x 118 in. (233.7 x 299.7 cm)

Born in Cuba, Martínez Celaya spent much of his childhood in Spain and Puerto Rico. As a young boy, he developed an interest in art, science, philosophy and literature, which led him to the study of applied physics and electrical engineering at Cornell University, and to a master's degree and doctoral studies in Quantum Electronics at University of California, Berkeley. He attended the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture in Maine, and received his M.F.A. from the University of California, Santa Barbara. Martínez Celaya was Associate Professor of Art at Pomona College and the Claremont Graduate University (1994-2003), and is currently Visiting Presidential Professor at the University of Nebraska, Omaha. Also, for many years, he has taught at the Anderson Ranch Arts Center workshop. Honors include the California Community

Foundation Fellowship, J. Paul Getty Trust Fund for the Visual Arts, the Los Angeles County Museum of Art's Here and Now Award, the Hirsch Grant, and Anderson Ranch National Artist Award. In 1998, Martínez Celaya founded Whale and Star, a publishing house whose books are distributed internationally.

Martínez Celaya has exhibited throughout the United States, Europe, the Far East and Australia. His work is represented in the Museum of Fine Arts Houston, Texas; the Contemporary Museum, Honolulu, Hawaii; the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, the Museum of Contemporary Art in Los Angeles, Oakland Museum, and Museum of Contemporary Art San Diego, California; Miami Art Museum, Miami, Florida; the Metropolitan Museum and the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; the Museum der Bildenden Kunst Leipzig, and Sammlung Rosenkranz, Berlin, Germany.

L.A. Louver's exhibition will be the first show of the artist's work in Los Angeles since 2005, and presages both a survey show at the State Russian Museum, Saint Petersburg, Russia, at the end of 2009, and a major mid-career traveling museum exhibition originated by the Museum of Latin American Art in Long Beach, California. The latter exhibition begins its two-and-a-half year tour in 2010, and will travel to at least six venues throughout Latin America, including Brazil, Chile, Argentina and Mexico, as well as Puerto Rico.

A 50-page, fully illustrated color catalogue, also entitled *Daybreak*, will accompany the exhibition, and include text by the artist.

L.A. Louver is open Tuesday through Saturday, 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Validated parking available.

For further information and visuals please contact:
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