

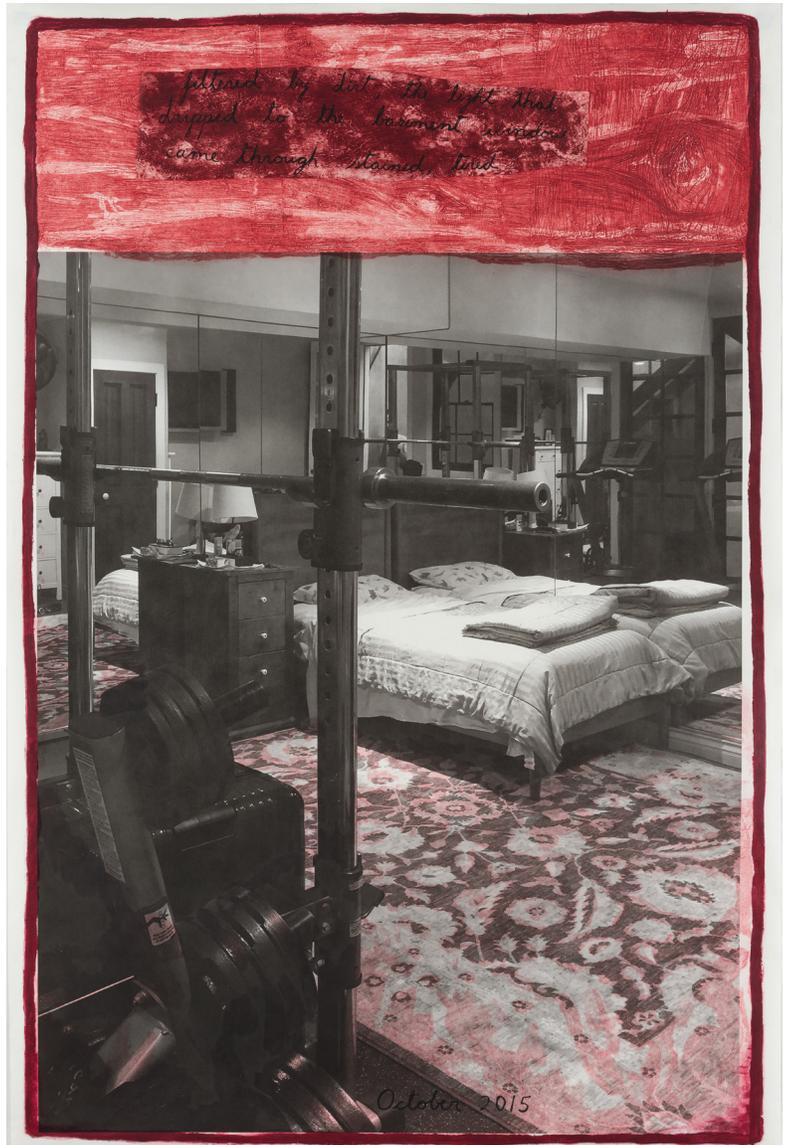
PROOF

ENRIQUE MARTÍNEZ CELAYA | NEW EDITIONS SUMMER 2020

“An artwork challenges you with a million questions back to yourself” - Enrique Martínez Celaya

Enrique Martínez Celaya's artistic practice revolves around uncovering layers of the self. His creative process is a deeply intertwined discourse between painting, writing and reading, uncovering meaning through reflections on philosophy, poetry, and personal memory. Working primarily in painting, Martínez Celaya also creates sculptural works, prints, prose, and poetry. Through his introspective works, he mines his own experience to physicalize emotional spaces, which suspend between time and place as they reconstitute his perceptions and recollections. These oneiric, mysterious scenes permeate into the realm of the collective psyche despite their deeply personal referents.

In *The Mirrored Dinosaur*, created during his one-week residency as the Arthur and Sheila Prensky visiting artist in 2018 at Island Press, Martínez Celaya draws from an episode in his own life to reflect on themes of masculinity, parenthood, devotion, isolation, identity, and self-examination. The print combines black-and-white photographic imagery with a visceral intrusion of color and a short phrase evoking the remembered scene memorialized in the work: “filtered by dirt, the light that dripped to the basement window came through stained, tired.” As in Martínez Celaya's paintings, the emotional resonance of each of the objects in the room emerges through sustained examination. The ad-hoc domestic interior feels temporary and unsettled, a space for disparate users and activities that do not usually share the same room. A weight rack and bench share space with a child's bed sporting pillows patterned with dinosaurs and a fine rug. A mirrored wall has the unsettling effect of multiplying the entire scene in fragmented panels. The setup is at the same time intimate and alienating. Feelings of discomfort and unfamiliarity arise out of the disjointedness of the domestic space, and viewed through the foggy frame of memory, the scene takes on an air of desolation and displacement.



The Mirrored Dinosaur, archival inkjet, collagraph, silkscreen and chine collé on Shiramine Paper, 67 x 44 inches. Edition 14.

Collage-like, the print incorporates disparate elements of photograph, written text, and painterly markmaking through a range of digital and analog print techniques (archival inkjet, silkscreen, collagraph, and chine collé). Among these methods, collagraphy has a particular allure for Martínez Celaya, achieving the palpable materiality that is a key characteristic of his painted surfaces. The central

photograph is bounded by and intruded upon by a frame of dark red collagraph that seeps hazily into the photograph, refusing to stay put, its sinewy, dark red marks recalling blood and muscle fibers - the stuff of family bonds and the idealized strength of manhood - that fade into pink as the frame spills into the rug in the photo. In its streaky physicality, the textured collagraph frame draws on the painterly language of the open, tangible strokes of Martínez Celaya's canvases, as the photograph provides a glimpse of personal memory that surfaces repeatedly in his other works.

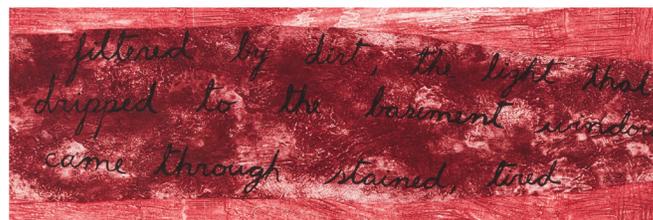
Despite the intimate specificity of the personal photograph, the possibility arises that we too, as viewers, inhabit these kinds of transitional spaces. Through the haze of Martínez Celaya's memory we arrive at a place where we can examine the basements of our own lives, where uncomfortable emotions of fatigue, unsettledness, and questioning echo just below the surface.

essay by

Laura Mart, Assistant Curator, Skirball Cultural Center, Los Angeles



Enrique working at Island Press in September 2018, writing out the text for the silkscreened elements while various proofs from the project hang behind him.



detail of text element, *The Mirrored Dinosaur*, silkscreen and collagraph

ABOUT THE ARTIST:

Enrique Martínez Celaya is an artist, author, and former scientist whose work has been exhibited and collected by major institutions around the world, and he is the author of books and papers in art, poetry, philosophy, and physics. He has created projects and exhibitions for the State Hermitage Museum in St. Petersburg, Russia, The Phillips Collection, Washington D.C., and the Museum der bildenden Künste Leipzig, among many others, as well as for institutions customarily outside of the art world, including the Berliner Philharmonie, the Cathedral Church of Saint John the Divine in New York, and the Dorotheenstadt Cemetery in Berlin. Work by the artist is held in over 50 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, The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, Museum der bildenden Künste Leipzig, and the Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art, Hartford. Celaya lives and works in Los Angeles, CA.

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ISLAND PRESS

Island Press is a research-based printmaking workshop and publisher committed to education and innovation in contemporary print editions and artist projects. Visiting artists work side by side with the master printer and students in the Sam Fox School of Design & Visual Arts at Washington University in St. Louis. The result is high-quality print editions of technical complexity created in a unique setting where artists and students share skill sets and ideas.

Island Press is project-driven and collaborative, tapping into the place where the artist's creative research intersects with the all of the

possibilities of the print studio. Recent artist projects include editions with Radcliffe Bailey, Chakaia Booker, Squeak Carnwath, Willie Cole, Henrik Drescher, Chris Duncan, Tom Friedman, Ann Hamilton, Trenton Doyle Hancock, Nina Katchadourian, Shaun O'Dell, Dario Robleto, Lisa Sanditz, Beverly Semmes, James Siena, and Paula Wilson.

Island Press was founded in 1978. Past visiting artists include Hung Liu, Jaune Quick-To-See-Smith, Joyce Scott, Juan Sanchez, Nick Cave, and many other great artists.

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