

ENRIQUE MARTINEZ CELAYA

A NEW RELEASE FROM PAULSON PRESS

Paulson Press is pleased to announce the release of nine new intaglio editions by artist Enrique Martinez Celaya. These print editions will be available for release in October 2002.

In his first project at Paulson Press, Martinez Celaya completed a body of work that, like his painting, sculpture and photography, reveals his interest in the relationship between wholeness and fragmentation and delves into the gray area between experience and its representation. The emotional and conceptual force behind this series, according to Martinez Celaya, is a meditation on Beethoven in whose work he recognizes as "relevant to the mystery of what is revealed but unnamable." Working concurrently on a long poem entitled "Poisonwood," these new etchings, combined with the words of his poetry, created a dialog that persisted throughout the project.

Martinez Celaya submits his work to explicit procedures of erasure and disfiguration in his desire to create and uncover his unique concept of wholeness. To facilitate this during the etching process, he combined a variety of intaglio techniques such as spitbite, soapground, drypoint and scrape and burnish. Working steadfastly on the two plates of the diptych Invisible Chambers, he scraped, erased and finally rubbed the actual plates on concrete to arrive at his desired marks. On a neutral background, just a trace outline of two standing figures remains slightly obscured by a flurry of falling snow.

Martinez Celaya frequently integrates human figures with elements from the natural world and juxtaposes images in his ongoing study of paired ideas and seeming opposites – that of beauty and imperfection, of tenderness and alienation, of presence and invisibility. In Figure with Flowers (Morning) a discernable yet subtle outline of a man and a spear like array of flowers is set on an amber background. Drawn in light tones of tan and white, the images appear like vanishing dreams, not bound by reality, space or time yet immediately identifiable as creatures of the earth. In Daybreak (Rosemilk) a small child lays amidst three finely drawn birch trees. Saturated in crimson and shades of deep burgundy aquatint, the surface of this print has a lush painterly quality. The outline of the child is delicately illuminated and enveloped in a soft, pinkish cloud, creating an image both tender and ethereal. Figure and Birch (Larks) again fuses the human figure, this time a silhouette in pastel pink, with a starkly rendered drawing of a single branch of a birch tree.

Finely drafted in thin black lines, a human figure holds a small child in North. The two are encapsulated in white and pastel blue, yellow and pink prismatic light like a veil of protection. Behind them lies a non-static amber background punctuated by flecks of light.

A series of four larger prints, The Music (Age), The Music (Tangible), The Music (White Forest) and Constellation (Woodrooms) are strong etchings that portray figures alone or paired. Two blackened silhouettes in The Music (Age) stand one behind the other, each leaning slightly, linked together yet projecting a sense of being alone. On a white streaked background in The Music (Tangible) an adult figure cradles an infant in its arms conveying an impression of intimacy, affection and nurturing. Drips of soapground give the figures a rough-hewn painterly texture. With much of Martinez Celaya's paintings, depicting entire figures tends to be more the exception than the rule; body parts are often obscured suggesting that the human body can no longer be imagined as whole, intact and perfect. In these prints, too, figures are drawn minimally -- we see an extended arm without a hand and torsos drawn with arms hidden.

Martinez Celaya's reference to Beethoven is most notable in The Music (White Forest), an etching of a large white ghostlike trace of a figure on a soft, gray field. Blue, red, yellow and light orange songbirds flank the throat and neck area creating a colorful contrast to the purity of this predominantly white image. The throat is the center of attention in both this print and in Constellation (Woodrooms). In The Music (White Forest, a subtly drawn section of the inner ear is positioned on the throat area, as if a locus of energy emanates from this



Invisible Chambers, 2002
Color softground aquatint etching with Gampi, scrape and burnish
Somerset white paper
Image size 18" x 28"
Paper size 26" x 35"
Edition of 15



Figure with Flowers (Morning), 2002
Color softground aquatint etching
Somerset white paper
Image size 18" x 14"
Paper size 26" x 21"
Edition of 15



Daybreak (Rosemilk), 2002
Color soapground, aquatint etching with drypoint, Gampi, scrape and burnish
Somerset white paper
Image size 18" x 14"
Paper size 26" x 21"
Edition of 30



Figure and Birch (Larks), 2002
Color aquatint etching with drypoint
Somerset white paper
Image size 14" x 18 1/2"
Paper size 22" x 25"
Edition of 15



North, 2002
Color spitbite, aquatint etching with drypoint
Somerset white paper
Image size 14" x 18"
Paper size 22" x 25"
Edition of 15



The Music (Age), 2002
Color soapground, aquatint etching
Somerset white paper
Image size 35" x 26 1/2"
Paper size 46" x 36 1/2"
Edition of 25



The Music (Tangible), 2002
Color soapground, aquatint etching
Somerset white paper
Image size 35" x 26 1/2"
Paper size 46" x 36 1/2"
Edition of 25

part of the body. In the large profile central to the print Constellation (Woodrooms) a glowing orb radiates from the throat. Here, a darkened female figure is encircled by a luminous shadow of light. The background is highly atmospheric composed of charcoal gray clouds with dark green undertones.

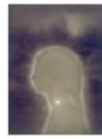
In this body of work, his first in the intaglio process, Martinez Celaya has successfully completed a coherent and elegant group of prints drawing from a wide array of sources both familiar and private. Physically sparse yet emotionally dense, no one thing is facile about the making, the meaning or the cumulative effect of his work. Instead, it is in the interrelated fragments, the concealments, the revelations and the clustered images that the whole is achieved. It has been said that for Martinez Celaya, as for the Romantics, "imagination is a faculty of perception, one that unlocks the mysterious world loosely referred to as spiritual. Apprehended in rare moments, the forms of this world are at once allusive and singular." It is a result of his unusually agile sensibility that Martinez Celaya is able to capture and articulate this very essence.

Enrique Martinez Celaya was born in Cuba in 1964 and moved to Spain, Puerto Rico and Los Angeles where he currently lives. He is represented by Griffin Contemporary in Venice, California and exhibits at the John Berggruen Gallery in San Francisco and Danese in New York. His work has been shown in numerous galleries nationwide and is held in a number of public and private collections in Europe and the United States including the Whitney Museum of American Art and LACMA. Martinez Celaya's work has garnered international attention through museum exhibitions such as The Contemporary Museum, Honolulu, Hawaii, the Von der Heydt-Museum, Wuppertal, Germany and the Orange County Museum of Art, Newport Beach, CA.

For more information about these prints, please contact Nicole Avril, Gallery Director at Paulson Press (510) 559-2088. Prices and availability are subject to change without notice.



The Music (White Forest), 2002
Color soapground, aquatint etching
Somerset white paper
Image size 35" x 26 1/2"
Paper size 46" x 36 1/2"
Edition of 25



Constellation (Woodrooms), 2002
Color spitbite, aquatint etching
with drypoint
Somerset soft white paper
Image size 35" x 26 1/2"
Paper size 46" x 36 1/2"
Edition of 20