



Enrique Martinez Celaya, work in progress (Courtesy of the artist and Kohn Gallery)

BEST OF L.A. ARTS: FALL PREVIEW PICK: ENRIQUE MARTINEZ CELAYA AT KOHN GALLERY

SHANA NYS DAMBROT x AUGUST 19, 2019

Painter, sculptor, physicist, philosopher, provost and poet **Enrique Martinez Celaya** lives and works in Los Angeles, where he has a devoted audience, but where also he has not had a solo gallery show in over four years. London, Havana, Stockholm, Berlin, yes — but not L.A. That is about to change in an important way, as Kohn Gallery devotes the entirety of its three gallery spaces — and even part of its outdoor landing — to a presentation centering on a suite of new paintings and sculptural works called *The Tears of Things*.



Enrique Martinez Celaya, The Well (Courtesy of the artist and Kohn Gallery)

The show's title is an old fashioned translation of a line from ancient Roman poet Virgil (there are newer versions, but Martinez Celaya likes this translation better, and yes, he's the sort of man who has preferences between different translations of Virgil). It has to do with the idea that objects are imbued with something like a soul, animated by the investments of personal memories and collective histories. There are figures in the paintings — a young skater on a winter pond, a fancy-dressed matador being gored in the arena, an aging poet on a nighttime walk with his sons — but in a very real sense, these new paintings are as much about the world beyond people as they are about the contours of the human psyche.

Working in a deliberate, naive style that draws attention to the art's status as physical, made objects and not merely vessels for pictorial information, Martinez Celaya creates a

series of paintings rich in mystery and melancholy. Largely foregoing his familiar use of rich colors in favor of a chillier, cold-night palette, in this series it is also significant that Martinez Celaya introduces both the stories and written words of others rather than his own. While continuing his investigation of the variations in the shape of reality, in *The Tears of Things*, the artist turns his gaze outward, toward the wider world of possible meanings, and the risks we are willing to take to find them.

Kohn Gallery, 1227 N. Highland Ave., Hollywood; opening reception: Fri., Sept. 13, 6-8 p.m.; (323) 461-3311; [kohngallery.com](http://www.kohngallery.com/) (<http://www.kohngallery.com/>).



Enrique Martinez Celaya, with a work in progress (Courtesy of the artist and Kohn Gallery)