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The Armory Show



Mario Martinez, *Inside, Outside*, 2004, acrylic and charcoal on canvas, 86 x 133 1/2 inches

For the 2023 edition of the Armory Show, Garth Greenan Gallery is pleased to present a selection of paintings by Ralph Humphrey, Mario Martinez, and Howardena Pindell. These hyper-tactile, dynamic works reverberate with light, energy, and psychic intensity, articulating subtle and fundamental spiritual and meditative ideas in the process.

Beginning in the mid '70s, Ralph Humphrey embarked on a series of “Constructed Paintings,” coating wooden surfaces with modeling paste and casein paint. These paintings often loosely resemble real-world objects, like packages or containers. In *Conveyance #4* (1976–1977) rich, saturated blue is intensified by fleeting glimpses of primary red, green, and yellow. The tactile, stucco-like finish appears to almost vibrate with nocturnal energy and eerie intensity. Ostensibly, each work in the series is a vessel for Humphrey’s emotions, life experiences, and ideas about painting. The work itself reveals a porous boundary between materiality and its many ethereal counterparts.

Mario Martinez, a life-long student of art history, is a great admirer of the New York School and Abstract Expressionists. His monumental works reverberate with the turbulent energy of the paintings of Gorky or de Kooning. “I know people expect figuration from Natives,” the artist says, while noting that abstraction itself has “been in Indian and Indigenous cultures forever.” His references to Yaqui culture are usually indirect—detectable in certain patterns or materials, or in

cryptic allusions that inform the universe of his paintings. “I’m part of a 40,000-year tradition,” Martinez says of his practice, which comfortably integrates pre- and post-colonial painting traditions.

In *Inside, Outside*, (2004) bold charcoal lines form an undulating grid that occasionally ruptures into divergent rays. The upper half of the canvas—a soft, clay-pink—is suggestive of the sky, or the atmosphere, while the turbulent grid below is less suggestive of the earth’s surface than of the profound and energetic unseen world beneath it.

Despite the influence of Spanish Jesuits in the 16th century, Yaqui religion maintained its deep, foundational reverence for nature that is detectable in many of the artist’s works. “Our most ancient spiritual and ceremonial traditions honor the earth and the heavens,” says Martinez. In many of the works, forms, energy, and space intermingle in unexpected ways. Some hint at the pre-Christian Yaqui concept of sea ania, or the flower world: a beautiful, ever-present parallel reality.

The presentation will also feature a selection of paintings by Howardena Pindell, all from 2022. In the early ’70s, Pindell began a now iconic series of spray-dot paintings. Perhaps prompted by the renewed attention to this body of work following her 2018 career retrospective at the MCA Chicago, Pindell revisited the spray technique for the first time in over three decades. Her new works are staggering interplays between background and foreground culminating in endless fluctuations in light and color.

Garth Greenan Gallery is pleased to represent Mario Martinez and Howardena Pindell and the estate of Ralph Humphrey.

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