

## Press Release

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### Enrique Martínez Celaya Self and Sea

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19 May – 09 July 2016

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Private view:  
Wednesday 18 May, 6–8pm



Enrique Martínez Celaya, *The Dragon*, 2016  
Oil and wax on canvas, 183 × 152 cm (72 × 60 ins)

For further details and images  
please contact:

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Parafin is delighted to announce an exhibition of new work by the acclaimed Cuban-American artist Enrique Martínez Celaya. It is Martínez Celaya's second show with the gallery and follows exhibitions in Los Angeles and New York in 2015 as well as the publication of a major new monograph by Radius Books.

*Self and Sea* is the first in a proposed trilogy of exhibitions which will form an extended interrogation of the genre of portraiture. While portraits have always been a key element within Martínez Celaya's practice, this is the first time he has used them as the central thematic of a body of work. Martínez Celaya's portraits, based on real people, are here presented without identification or reference to the subject's biography. Typically, for Martínez Celaya these new works function on a number of different levels. While his paintings depict individuals – family members, poets, writers and musicians including TS Eliot, Freddie Mercury and Nina Simone – who have significance for his personal and intellectual life, Martínez Celaya uses the process of making them to explore the possibilities and failures of the genre of portraiture as well as of painting itself. Moreover, the portraits are contrasted with small paintings of sea and sky. These seemingly 'empty' images serve to expose the notion of 'content' in the portraits and together begin to address the impossibility of representation, the tension between reality and illusion, notions of memory, doubt, presence and absence. For Martínez Celaya this new body of work explores 'the capacity of art to affect us, often precisely as a consequence of its failures'.

Since the early 1990s, working in a variety of media including painting, sculpture and installation, Enrique Martínez Celaya has created an extensive body of work characterised by allusive complexity. Using simple compositions and quasi-archetypal images – including the sea, animals and birds, children, landscapes and symbols of domesticity such as chairs and tables – Martínez Celaya blends fantasy, reality, and memory to create a poetic world that is both semi-autobiographical and resonantly universal. His work is an open-ended search for meaning and significance, proceeding from the personal to the public, evolving as distinct but interconnected bodies of work in profound thematic constructions. Eschewing narrative and conventional interpretation Martínez Celaya's work thereby creates a matrix of rich conceptual possibilities and a striking openness to personal readings.

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Enrique Martínez Celaya (born 1964) trained both as an artist and physicist. Recent major solo exhibitions include *Burning as It Were a Lamp* at the Hood Art Museum, Dartmouth College in 2014; *The Pearl* at SITE Santa Fe in 2013; *The Tower of Snow* at The State Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg, Russia in 2012; and *Schneebett* at the Pérez Art Museum Miami in 2011; as well as gallery exhibitions at LA Louver in Los Angeles and Jack Shainman Gallery in New York. His works are included in many important private and public collections including those of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, and the Moderna Museet, Stockholm. In 2016 he is the prestigious Roth Family Distinguished Visiting Scholar at Dartmouth College, Hanover, New Hampshire.

## Editor's Notes

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## Parafin

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Parafin was launched in September 2014 by former Haunch of Venison London directors Ben Tufnell and Matt Watkins, and the founder of London gallery Master Piper, Nicholas Rhodes.

Located at 18 Woodstock Street, just off New Bond Street, Parafin represents a broad selection of contemporary artists from emerging names to established international figures.

## Gallery artists

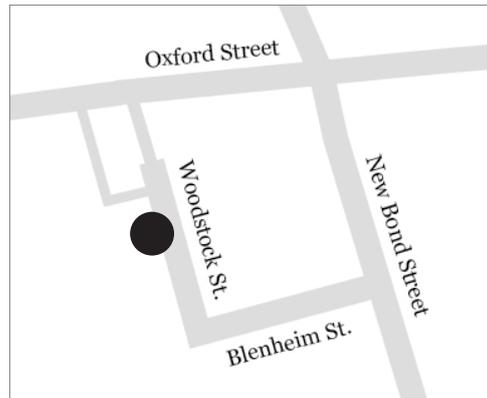
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Fernando Casasepere	Nathan Coley
Tim Head	Nancy Holt
Hynek Martinec	Enrique Martínez Celaya
Justin Mortimer	Katie Paterson
Hiraki Sawa	Michelle Stuart
Alison Watt	Hugo Wilson
Uwe Wittwer	

## Woodstock Street, Mayfair

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Woodstock Street is located on the northern edge of Mayfair, London, between New Bond Street (via Blenheim Street) and Oxford Street. Parafin is situated near to the historic tiled Art Deco façade of auction house Bonhams.



## Opening Hours

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Tuesday–Friday, 10–6  
Saturday, 12–5  
Or by appointment