

DECEMBER 2, 2021

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

NARSISO MARTINEZ – *TENDER LEAVES*

961 CHUNG KING ROAD *NEW SECOND LOCATION*****

DECEMBER 11, 2021 – JANUARY 22, 2022

ARTIST'S RECEPTION: DECEMBER 11th, 6-9pm

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Charlie James Gallery is pleased to present our second solo show of Los Angeles-based artist Narsiso Martinez titled *Tender Leaves*, opening December 11th at the gallery's new second space at 961 Chung King Road from 6-9pm.

Narsiso Martinez's work originates from his lived experience as an immigrant and a farmworker. His work is in dialogue with European Realist painters like Jean-Francois Millet and 1930s-era Social Realism, in particular the Mexican muralist movement. Martinez uses drawing, painting and sculpture to depict portraits and scenes of American farmworkers at work in the fields. His works are frequently executed on the surfaces of discarded produce boxes that Martinez retrieves from various markets around Long Beach and Los Angeles.

In *Tender Leaves*, Martinez will exhibit a new series of farmworker portraits amplified by his most ambitious sculptural piece to date and an installation in the rear gallery of the space that recalls in style and material the works of Kara Walker. A tone of increasing concern runs through the works in the show for the state of constant precarity farmworkers live under in America. Martinez brings the dialogue closer to the viewer / consumer in this show, with his series of citrus worker portraits executed on deconstructed Trader Joe's orange juice boxes. Larger scale portraits in the show exude detectable elements of fear and alarm in the eyes of the subjects. Other



Narsiso Martinez, *Too Cool*, Gouache, acrylic, and charcoal on produce plasticboard boxes, 41.25 x 32.5 inches, 2021

figures beckon warmly, openly, suggestive of the immeasurable contributions made by American farmworkers. The works in *Tender Leaves* seek to valorize the farmworkers that fill grocery store produce sections around the country, and also to decry their systemic and comprehensive vulnerability.

Narsiso Martinez (b. 1977, Oaxaca, Mexico) came to the United States when he was 20 years old. He attended Evans Community Adult School and completed high school in 2006 at the age of 29. He earned an Associate of Arts degree in 2009 from Los Angeles City College. In the fall of 2012 Narsiso earned his Bachelor of Fine Arts from California State University Long Beach. Martinez funded his BFA and MFA education by working nine seasons in the fields of Eastern Washington. In the spring of 2018 he received a Master of Fine Arts degree in drawing and painting from California State University Long Beach, and was awarded the prestigious Dedalus Foundation MFA Fellowship in Painting and Sculpture. His work has been exhibited both locally and internationally. Martinez's work resides in the permanent collections of the Hammer Museum in Los Angeles, the Amon Carter Museum of American Art in Fort Worth, TX, the Santa Barbara Museum of Art, the Crocker Art Museum in Sacramento, CA, the Long Beach Museum of Art, the Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Art at the University of Oregon, and Compound in Long Beach, CA. Martinez lives and works in Long Beach, CA and is represented by Charlie James Gallery, Los Angeles.

Artist Instagram: @narsisomartinez

Gallery website: www.cjamesgallery.com

Gallery Instagram: @charliejamesgallery