

PATRICK MARTINEZ
REMEMBERING TO FORGET



CJG CHARLIE JAMES GALLERY
CHINATOWN, LOS ANGELES

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PATRICK MARTINEZ

REMEMBERING TO FORGET

In his second solo show with the gallery opening September 8th titled “Remembering to Forget,” Patrick Martinez contemplates American life nearly two decades into the twenty-first century. Through landscape and portrait painting supported by a new series of neon sign sculptures, Patrick unearths sites of personal, civic and cultural loss. The paintings collectively bear the imprint of excavation, as if from amidst ruins - they suggest an effort by Patrick to resurface the memories of injustice and the memories of lives lived to keep them from fading from view. Victims of police violence Stephon Clark and Claudia Patricia Gomez Gonzalez are memorialized in portraits wherein their visages emerge from torn away layers of paint and stucco. Their portraits share space on the gallery’s main floor with large-scale landscape paintings depicting the advancement of gentrification and its concomitant displacement and loss. If the main floor of the gallery is an elegy for fading American promise, Patrick uses the basement gallery to present a series of inter-related neon sign sculptures that draw from revolutionary slogans and other sources to send messages of resilience and commitment to remain hopeful and alive.

Patrick Martinez earned his BFA with honors from the Art Center College of Design in 2005, and in 2017/2018 was the subject of two solo museum exhibitions and numerous gallery exhibitions. His work has been exhibited domestically and internationally in Los Angeles, San Francisco, Minneapolis, Miami, New York and the Netherlands, and he has shown at venues including Cornell Fine Arts Museum, Occidental College, Galerie Lelong (NYC), the Studio Museum in Harlem, the Vincent Price Art Museum, Biola University, LA Louver, Showroom MAMA, Providence College Galleries, MACLA, the SUR biennial, the Chinese American Museum and the Euphrat Museum of Art. He has been covered by the Los Angeles Times, KPCC, KCRW, Fusion, Art News, Opening Ceremony Art Blog and Wired, among others. Patrick’s work resides in the collections of the Cornell Fine Arts Museum, the Pizzuti Collection, the Escalette Permanent Collection of Art at Chapman University, the Manetti-Shrem Museum of Art, and the Museum of Latin American Art, among others. Patrick will have his NY solo gallery debut in March, 2019 at Ft. Gansevoort in Manhattan. Patrick lives and works in Los Angeles, CA.

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Fallen Empire
Stucco, ceramic, ceramic tile, mixed media and found
banner tarp on panel
96 x 156 inches
2018

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Closed, Out of Business
Stucco, neon, mean streak, spray paint,
latex house paint and store sign with
vinyl decal on panel
60 x 60 inches
2018

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Remembering to Forget
Ceramic, mixed media
and stucco on panel
60 x 60 inches
2018

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Available Landscape
Mixed Media on Panel
48 x 60 inches
2018

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Morning and Night (James
Baldwin & Angela Davis)
Neon on plexiglass
30 x 36 inches
Edition of 3
2018

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Remembering to Forget
Neon Window Installation
Neon
63 x 93.5 inches each
2018

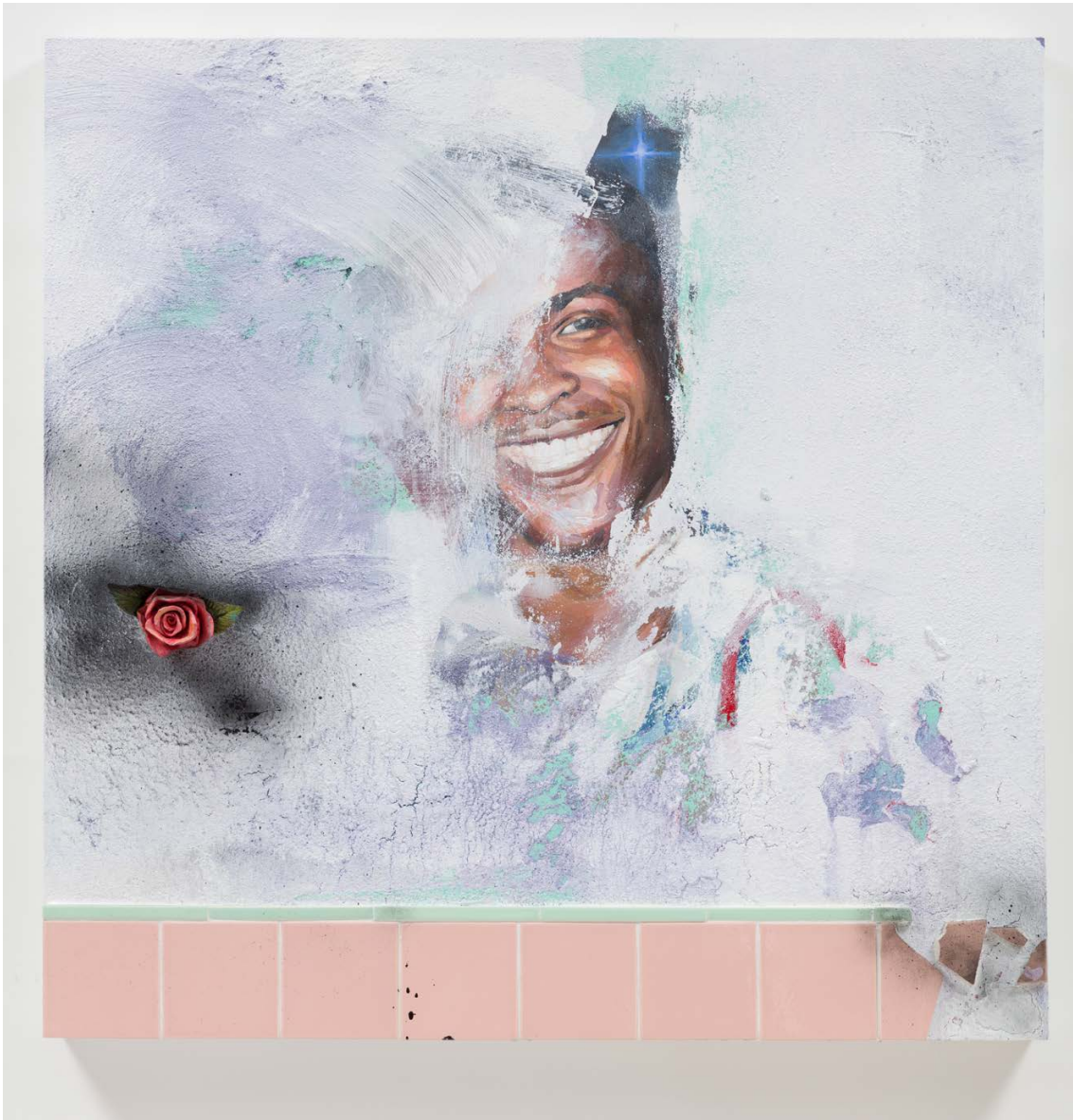
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Stephon Clark
(Reminder to Remember 2)
Ceramic, ceramic tile and
stucco on panel
36 x 36 inches
2018

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Claudia Patricia Gomez
Gonzalez (Reminder to
Remember)
Ceramic, ceramic tile and
stucco on panel
36 x 36 inches
2018

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Humanity
Neon on plexiglass
20 x 25 inches
Edition of 3
2018

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We're Moving
Neon, found banner tarp,
and stucco on panel
60 x 60 inches
2018

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Writing the future
Neon on plexiglass
20 x 30 inches
Edition of 3
2018

Soul Stock
Neon on plexiglass
20 x 25 inches
Edition of 3
2018

I Am A Child
Neon on plexiglass
20 x 25 inches
Edition of 3
2018

Fight the Power
(Chuck D)
Neon on plexiglass
30 x 36 inches
Edition of 3
2018

Not Power the
Flower (Rebecca
Solnit)
Neon on plexiglass
30 x 36 inches
Edition of 3
2018

Everything for
Everyone Nothing
for Us
Neon on plexiglass
24 x 20.5 inches
Edition of 3
2018

Abolish ICE
Neon on plexiglass
20 x 25 inches
Edition of 3
2018

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Sunset Creeping Through My
Window
Neon, colored clear acrylic
plex and mixed media on panel
with wall stucco
60 x 60 inches
2018

PATRICK MARTINEZ
REMEMBERING TO FORGET



Cover up 2
Ceramic, ceramic tile, mixed media
and stucco on panel
24 x 24 x 5 inches
2018



Cover up 1
Ceramic, ceramic tile, mixed media
and stucco on panel
24 x 24 x 5 inches
2018

Patrick Martinez Excavates American Trauma in “Remembering to Forget” at Charlie James Gallery

TRINA CALDERÓN | SEPTEMBER 6, 2018

At an early age, native Angeleno Patrick Martinez knew he wanted to make art. Encouraged in subtle ways by his father, who helped him learn to draw, and inspired by his older brother, who introduced him to graffiti, Martinez developed a meaningful and devoted art practice. His paintings and mixed-media artwork invoke empathy, humanity and communication in a time that demands accountability, transparency and connection.

“Remembering to Forget,” Martinez’s second solo show, opens Saturday, Sept. 8, at Charlie James Gallery in Chinatown. Among the authentic Los Angeles artists (born and raised in L.A.) who continue to evolve here, Martinez is making art not only for art’s sake but with society in mind; and his work may leave you thinking, why is there any American art right now without a message? L.A. Weekly spoke to Martinez on the eve of his new show, about all of this plus music, politics, police violence and, in the end, how to have hope.

L.A. WEEKLY: How did sociopolitical ideas find their way into your art practice?

PATRICK MARTINEZ: It has a lot to do with the music I was listening to. It was about listening to rap and understanding that subculture. A lot of that rap I was listening to in the ‘90s would speak the truth. It was N.W.A and Public Enemy, and that was a piece of what sparked it. I was around people, even my dad’s side of the family, that were interested in being truthful and peeling back what we learned. Early on as a teenager, I knew that I didn’t want to make stuff to be pretty, to be decorative. I wanted it to be impactful or useful, and I think I get that from my mom because she’s more practical that way.

I enjoyed listening to rap a lot, and even now I’m listening to all kinds of music but I’m more listening to super R&B, Blood Orange and Benjamin Clementine. The ‘90s rap was more like you had to be hard, and there’s a lot of issues with me, now that I’m starting to break down rap and I understand it more. Or, a lot of things I had to unlearn from then because it was... it feels so masculine. There was a lot of rap that was honest and real. But I feel like a shift happened. The music, the art, it’s there but



the message is getting distorted. I don’t even know what the message is supposed to be; it became about monetary gain. Money. I feel like everything is like that.

L.A. streets used to be more violent in the ‘80s and ‘90s, and that, unfortunately, may have kept the scenes more authentic, in both graffiti and music. Then there was that shift...

It all goes back to the internet and the preferred way of communicating: Instagram, Facebook. It’s for the internet, right? The internet and social media neutralized a lot of the messages. “I don’t want to hear that shit, it’s too complicated. What are you trying to do, save the world?” Nah, but there’s some shit that we should be talking about! But a lot of times in this country, unfortunately, it’s about financial gain, over everything, even love and caring. It becomes about who sold what for how much. Not, “Will it stand the test of time? Is it adding to the conversation of art?” These aren’t things that people talk about. Instead, it’s “Oh, that dude is dope! Why? Oh, because his show sold out.” Like what does that even mean? Does the work speak? Do people come and say, this is pretty thought-provoking? I don’t think those conversations are happening as much; hopefully they start to come up.

Your Pee-Chee folder paintings are genius. Tell me how you started making those.

The Pee-Chee folder was something I remembered from high school and middle school. My brother would have them in his back pocket, he would tag on them, draw on them. I remember them being at Thrifty, and you could buy them for 25 cents.

Patrick Martinez Excavates American Trauma in “Remembering to Forget” at Charlie James Gallery (continued)

Fast forward to when I was at Art Center, probably my final year there. I started doing a project where I was trying to speak on youth and authority. These were issues that I knew were happening, kids getting fucked up. I would see or hear about it, cops fucking with my brother’s friend or my friend, and you just knew the details of the story were fucked up. Summertime, they put my brother’s friend in the back of the police car and turn the heaters on and just leave him in there.

In 2005, I drew up this generic Pee-Chee folder, a remix of the original ones we had in high school. It was a kid getting chased by the cop, a kid getting arrested by the cop, super generic. That was 2005 through 2007, in different capacities. Seven years later, and everyone has a camera on their phone, and video. The content is not stopping; it just keeps on coming. One every week — Eric Garner, Tamir Rice. You know, a kid that was actually at his grandma’s house that was in the backyard and they thought he was someone else and they shot him.

I thought, “Holy shit, this was what I was speaking about.” I revisited them. I felt like art was the way to say it now, so I started making new paintings. With Eric Garner, the detective that was choking him had a football jersey on, and the cop was choking the dude. I was like, holy shit, this looks like a football scene and that he’s being tackled, but he’s really losing his life. I think a dude running in South Carolina, Walter Scott, getting shot in the back, well, it’s like track. So I’m going to paint them because when someone gets painted there’s an importance there, it’s like cementing things.

Do you feel you’re impacting the viewer with your artwork?

I would like to think so. I feel like I have a lot of work to put out there. You’re always trying to become better. But in terms of a response, initially you get the love, and people that know your work and follow it come out to check out the show, and you’re thankful for that. But then also, with the response from people that don’t go to your show that actually hate you because they’re like, “Fuck you and fuck this bullshit that you’re making up with the police.” At least they’re thinking about me, or I moved them so much they had to send me an email. When you get those emails,



you know you’re doing your job right!

The neon artwork gets a lot of love because the format is easy, it reads on the internet and social media, and then it just multiplies. I always look at those as messages. Obviously, those are messages that are remixed but more as protest signs. They come from advertising, too, so they’re doing that, they’re doing what they’re supposed to do. They hit their function, instead of living in windows, they’re living in the internet or Instagram world. Street signs and windows, embedded in the glass of your iPhone.

How are you evolving?

I have this limited palette and I’m still experimenting with it. Like how I can speak with this material, because I like the materials. I’m using stucco, ceramic, neon, paint and tile. It’s getting all mixed up in there; sometimes they cross paths. The Pee-Chee stuff stays and exists as a print or a painting, and then sometimes I’ll make a print and then make a folder of that and give it to the youth. Then the stucco paintings, sometimes neon will creep in or like painting and neon will creep in, sometimes it all goes back and forth. It might seem like it’s all over the place, but I feel like there’s a common thread in terms of the content.

Some of it is subtler, like the new big piece is taking pieces that I’ve already started messing with, and kind of breaking them down and seeing what places the tile is falling off, and what’s underneath. There’s a mural of the Aztec god of sun underneath but it’s all

Patrick Martinez Excavates American Trauma in “Remembering to Forget” at Charlie James Gallery (continued)

tagged on. The piece is called Fallen Empire. What does that mean to speak to gentrification and people losing their space and occupying space? Who’s replacing whom? I started thinking about churches built on top of temples; it’s all interconnected in a sense. It’s a smaller version of that. It’s about L.A. and the space and things being rented out and bought out and changed and colors painted over. That’s what the new work is about. It’s about traumas and different versions of that.

These are landscape pieces to me, but also figures, places and people. Painting Claudia Gomez Gonzalez — the woman that was shot in Texas crossing the border and she was Guatemalan — painting a portrait of her and then painting over her and then excavating with a pressure-washer her portrait, and showing her face. That piece, to me, deals with authority and youth also because she was like 20 years old. Now it’s in the stucco, now that’s a portrait I could’ve painted in the Pee-Chee folder and now it’s in the stucco and it’s like a crossover. It’s all over the place, but it’s analogous.

Do you feel a big shift in your work since you last showed at Charlie James Gallery?

Visually, I feel like it changed. Maybe it’s subtle, but for me, it’s totally not what I was showing. I’ve been playing with the materials for about a year plus, so the materials are different. Some of the same things are there in terms of medium, but I think it did switch. The show last year at CJG was called “American Memorial” and this is a response. That was despair. This is a little bit about issues that we’re still dealing with and not the resolution, but the topic of conversation, hope.

I was reading a lot of Rebecca Solnit, *Hope in the Dark*. That book was written during the Bush era and was about how to deal with despair and what the language of hope looks like. I wanted to make art that spoke on, not like Barack Obama hope or Shepard Fairey hope, but like conversation starters. Like, cool, that’s fucked up what’s happening, but let’s get this shit started in terms of how we can start moving past that, past conflicted conversations we have that are almost cynical and go into something more productive and actually a call to action. It’s more poetry speaking on things. I’ll have neons that are direct quotes from her book. She speaks about not power but the flower of hope, and I do a neon that looks like a flower shop. I think

it’s an answer to the first show.

There’s constant change. I don’t see why your art wouldn’t change, too, and how there wouldn’t be a response every time you exhibit.

It’s crazy, right; the world is changing, the work should be, too. To each his own, everyone’s going to have their opinions, but there are so many things to talk about. It’s exhausting but I love making art. It’s the way I talk, and I choose to speak.

It’s a direct response to “American Memorial.” This second show is still a little despair, and grief, and then resolution, or how can we continue the new day and how can we start the conversation about being constructive. And what does the visual message of the new day or hope look like? And get optimistic outlooks, hopefully.

What’s the name of the new show?

“Remembering to Forget.” I’ve been reading a book about post-memory in visual culture, specifically in the Holocaust but you could apply this to anything. If your parents went through crazy trauma and now you’re inheriting it because they’re telling you the stories and they don’t know, they’re not going to therapy, so they’re telling you. You’re like, oh wow, now you’re living with it, and so what does your work look like? What’s your responsibility as an artist? A lot of these little traumas that are happening to us, how does that work? What does that look like?

This piece I have, with the same title as the show, “Remembering to Forget,” is literally a wreath made out of ceramic that’s painted, and then painted white over and then pressure-washed to expose the hurt or the trauma so we could speak about it. So we could move forward versus not acknowledging these things, because that causes even more things because you’re not acknowledging people’s hurt or traumas, you’re really trying to brush them aside.



LA WEEKLY

Patrick Martinez Excavates American Trauma in “Remembering to Forget” at Charlie James Gallery (continued)

Stephon Clark, the kid that was shot in Sacramento earlier this year, I was telling Charlie James, these are all events that happen. They're events that happen this year, and the show is this year and we're already not remembering what happened in January, February, March or April. These are events that get covered up and just left to ... they're like disposable.

Expendable.

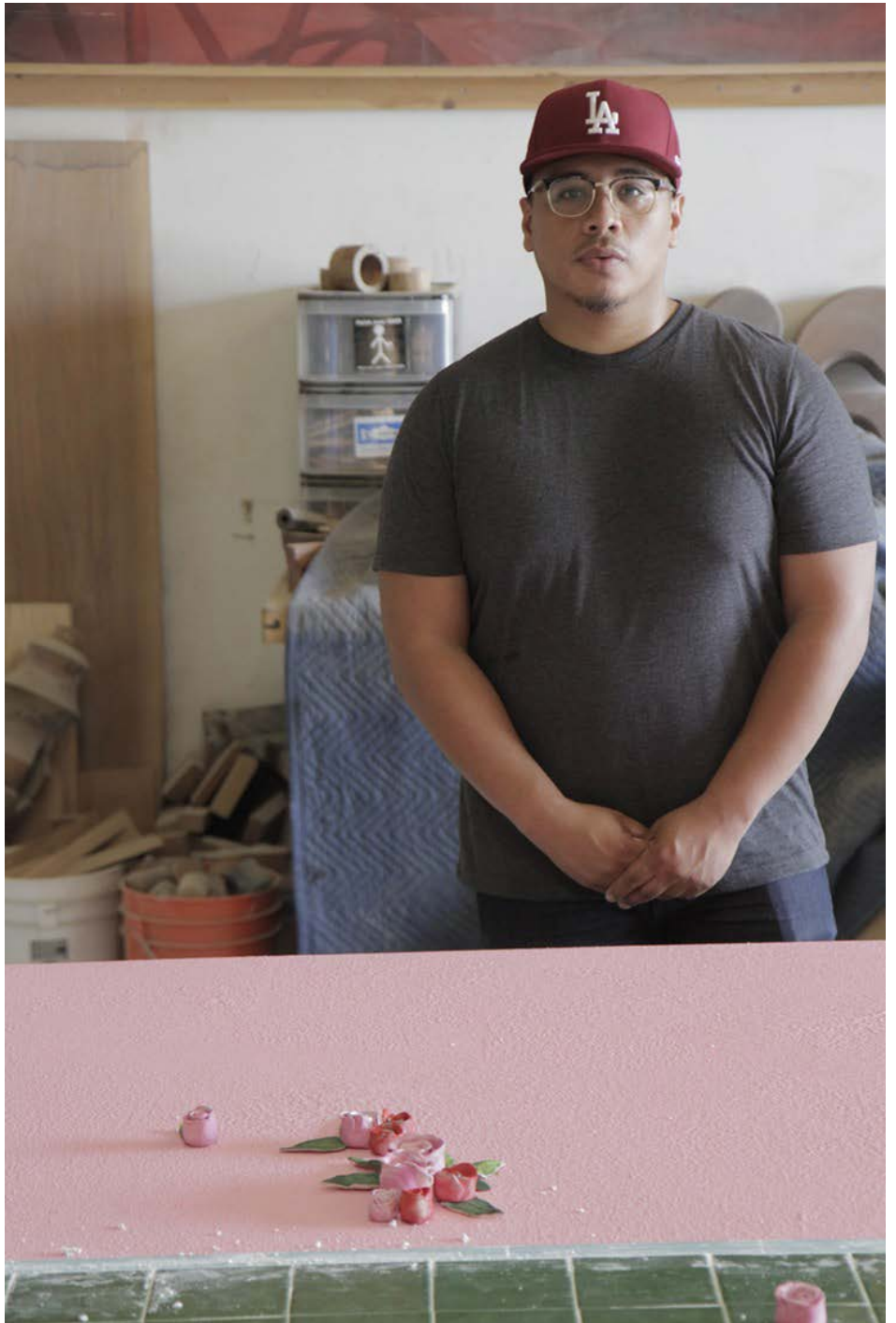
Yes, expendable. They're just news stories that get covered up and how do you give that importance? How do you slow down, and I feel like it's a painting and it's trying to show that. Let's remember this happened this year, these are things that just happened, and we're almost desensitizing ourselves because there's so much of it and we're trying to get past all of it so we can make it through the year.

People don't want to rehash; they don't want to bring it back up.

Yeah, that's the real essence of this country. We don't want to even acknowledge to people that we stole this land, that we killed a bunch of Native American folk and that we enslaved a bunch of people. These current traumas are happening. I'm just trying to place them, give them importance with the painting or the piece, with the layering of the city that I see. In using the landscapes of the cover-up, when I use those types of layers and I pressure-wash them, I'm speaking on time and how long things were there. You're exposing layers, even in something you might read like a tree that's cut and you're reading the rings. It's things that people are trying to cover up and move on, and I'm trying to re-expose them or dig them up. Excavate them and show them that these are still things that are weighing heavy on people.

Excavating current events, while they're still happening.

Yes, because these are big fucking issues.



PATRICK MARTINEZ

REMEMBERING TO FORGET

Patrick Martinez (b. 1980, U.S.)
Lives and works in Los Angeles, CA.

Solo Exhibitions

- 2018 Remembering to Forget, Charlie James Gallery, CA
2017 America is for Dreamers, Vincent Price Art Museum, Los Angeles CA
American Memorial, Cornell Fine Arts Museum, Winter Park, FL
Po-lice, Occidental College, Los Angeles, CA
All Season Portfolio, Charlie James Gallery, Los Angeles, CA
2015 Forbidden Fruit, New Image Gallery, Los Angeles, CA
2013 Buy Now, Cry Later, Public Functionary, Minneapolis, MN
2012 Lovely Day, Known Gallery, Los Angeles, CA
2011 Hustlemania, , Known Gallery, Los Angeles, CA
Reel Tawlk, , Loft in Space Gallery, Honolulu, HI
2009 You Don't Have To Lie To Kick It, Upper Playground / Fifty241a Gallery Los Angeles, CA
2004 The Palm Tree Paradox, Crewest Gallery, Los Angeles, CA

Group Exhibitions/Projects

- 2018 Beyond the Streets, curated by Roger Gastman, Los Angeles, CA
Bold Visual Language: Emory Douglas, LACE, Los Angeles, CA
black is a color, Antenna Gallery, New Orleans, LA
Sidelined, Galerie Lelong, New York, NY
2017 My Barrio: Emigdio Vasquez and Chicana/o Identity in Orange County, Guggenheim Gallery, Chapman

University, Orange, CA
Fictions, Studio Museum in Harlem, New York, NY

- Face to Face: Los Angeles Collects
Portraiture, California African American Museum, Los Angeles, CA
Black is a color, curated by Essence Harden, Charlie James Gallery, Los Angeles, CA
2016 Roll Call, curated by Gajin Fujita, LA Louver, Los Angeles, CA
Southland, curated by Patrick Martinez, Charlie James gallery, Los Angeles, CA
2015 The Thrill of Victory the Agony of Defeat: Sports in Contemporary Art, New Image Art, Los Angeles, CA
A Sign Only Has to Serve as a Sign, Providence College Galleries, Rhode Island
Found in Translation, MACLA Movimiento de Arte y Cultura Latino Americana, San Jose, CA
Los Angeles SUR Biennial, Cerritos College Art Gallery, Cerritos, CA
This Is My Trip, Joshua Liner Gallery, New York, NY
Mooncakes, Churros, and Cherry Pie, Euphrat Museum of Art, Cupertino, CA
2014 Seau Banco Carbon, Bed Stuy Love Affair, New York, NY
My Crazy Life, New Image Art, Los Angeles, CA
RE:DEFINE, Dallas Contemporary, Dallas, TX
L.A. Heat, Chinese American Museum, Los Angeles, CA
2013 Most Oddinism, Art Basel, Miami, FL
Break Bread, Site Specific Installation, El Tapatio Market, Bell Gardens, CA

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- July Group Show, Guerrero Gallery, San Francisco, CA
Bespoke Auction, Dallas Contemporary, Dallas, TX
Bullets Billboard Project, Various Locations around L.A., Los Angeles, CA
- 2012 Scope Miami Art Fair, VHI Lounge Garden Installation, Miami, FL
Scope Miami Art Fair, Circuit 12 Contemporary, Miami, FL
Lance Armstrong - 15 Years of Live Strong, Featuring work from: Ed Ruscha, Mister Cartoon, Dustin Yellin and Patrick Martinez, Austin Convention Center, Austin, TX
Season Opener, Guerrero Gallery, San Francisco, CA
Getty Research Institute "Black Book Project", Permanent Collection, The Getty, Los Angeles, CA
Even Flow, 3 Person Show, Circuit 12 Contemporary, Dallas, TX
City of Fire, Curated by Arrested Motion, Steven Webster Gallery, Beverly Hills, CA
All in for the 99%, Curated by New Image Art, Ace Museum, Los Angeles, CA
Palm Springs Fine Art Fair / Post - War And Contemporary Art
Group Show, Cheech Marin / Known Gallery / Thomas Paul Fine Art, Palm Springs, CA
Dream Continuum, Group Show, Circuit 12 Contemporary, Dallas, TX
- 2011 Assorted Flavor, Known Gallery, Los Angeles, CA
Ward of the State, Rivera Gallery, Los Angeles, CA
Nothing To Say, Guerrero Gallery, San Francisco, CA
- CA
- 2010 Dreams Deferred, Chinese American Museum Los Angeles, CA
Come In We're Closed, Store Front Installation, Los Angeles, CA
Re:Form School, New York, NY
(I Can) Feel The Pulse, Mama Showroom Rotterdam, The Netherlands
Freedom, Known Gallery, Los Angeles, CA
Manifest Equality, Los Angeles, CA
Keep It Real, Semi Permanent installation, Show and Tell Gallery Toronto, Canada
- 2009 Manifest Hope, Irvine Contemporary Washington D.C.
Scion Installation Tour, Various Galleries across the United States, Detroit, MI, Miami, FL Phoenix, AZ, Minneapolis, MN, New York, NY, San Jose, CA, Philadelphia, PA, Portland, OR, Los Angeles, CA
- 2008 New Works, Two Man Show Upper Playground / Fifty241a Gallery Los Angeles, CA
Scion Installation Tour, Various Galleries across the United States, Detroit, MI, Miami, FL Phoenix, AZ, Minneapolis, MN, New York, NY, San Jose, CA, Philadelphia, PA, Portland, OR, Los Angeles, CA
- 2007 Rendition, Scion Art Gallery Culver City, CA
- 2006 Soul Significance, Crewest Gallery Los Angeles, CA
- 2005 The First Annual LA Weekly Biennial, Track 16 Gallery Santa Monica, CA
- 2003 No Struggle, No Progress, Rock Rose Gallery Los Angeles, CA

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Selected Publications

- Trina Calderon, "Patrick Martinez Excavates American Trauma in "Remembering to Forget" at Charlie James Gallery", LA Weekly, 2018
- Mira Dayal, "Fictions - The Studio Museum in Harlem", Artforum, 2018
- Seph Rodney, "The Political Truths That Ground Our Athletic Heroes", Hyperallergic, 2018
- Holland Cotter, "From Personal to Political, 19 Artists to Watch Next Year", New York Times, 2017
- Leah Sandler, "Artist Patrick Martinez remixes everyday stuff like school supplies, store neons and sheet cakes into artifacts of brutality", Orlando Weekly, 2017
- Ezrha Jean Black, "Patrick Martinez: All Season Portfolio", Artillery Magazine, 2017
- Carolina Miranda, "How graffiti, neon signs and Pee-Chee folders taught artist Patrick Martinez to see Los Angeles", Los Angeles Times, 2017
- Essence Harden, "A Grief, Which Does Not Cease, Insists on a Presence, Which Must Protest", SFAQ, 2017
- "Patrick Martinez at Charlie James Gallery, Los Angeles", ArtNews, 2017
- Rose G. Salseda, "Black and Blue and Brown: Artists Depict Police Brutality", KCET Artbound, 2017
- David Pagel, "L.A.'s potent 'Call'", Los Angeles Times, 2016
- Adam Popescu, "Kobe Bryant's Next Step, New Shoes, and Moves with Los Angeles artists", New York Times, 2016
- Essence Harden, "What Resonates: Southland at Charlie James Gallery", SFAQ, 2016
- Austin Cross and A Martinez, "SoCal Artist uses Pee-Chee style to document police use of force", KPCC Take Two, 2016
- Liz Ohanesian, "Retro 'Pee-Chee' Folders are Re-envisioned to Memorialize Victims of Police Brutality", KCET, 2016
- Kristen Cochrane, "Meet Patrick Martinez: Drake's Favourite Neon Artist", Amuse, VICE, 2016
- Jorge Rivas, "Iconic 'Pee-Chee' folders Reimagined with Familiar Scenes of Police Brutality", FUSION, 2016
- Chloe Dewberry, "Artist Patrick Martinez Gives the Still Life a Neon Makeover", Opening Ceremony Blog, 2015