

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

ENRIQUE MARTINEZ CELAYA

THE OPEN

1 APRIL – 12 MAY 2010

OPENING: WEDNESDAY, 31 MARCH 2010, 6 – 8 PM



Simon Lee Gallery is delighted to present a new body of work by the Cuban-American artist Enrique Martínez Celaya, for his first solo gallery show in the UK.

The show will continue Martínez Celaya's exploration of the theme of memory through the medium of the painted landscape, drawing upon human emotion to create atmospheres saturated with a sense of longing and unidentified familiarity. Whilst his earlier series entitled *The Palace* dealt with the examination of the world through the eyes of the child, *The Open* will investigate the world of the adult. Martínez Celaya surmises that the "life of the adult" is irrevocably connected to the search for "home", by which he means not only a place in which to live but also the deeper emotional sense of the term. Through the use of ethereal landscape and complex imagery, his work reflects the unconscious drive, experienced by many adults, to find a replacement for the safety and stability of the home of their youth.

Martínez Celaya's paintings directly engage with personal life experience and delve into his background in literature, philosophy, and religion, particularly in relation to his love of poetry. The writings of Anna Akhmatova, Martin Heidegger, and Robert Frost were important influences during the creation of the paintings for *The Open*, particularly the work of Akhmatova, whose poetry combines themes of love and human struggle with evocative descriptions of natural landscape.

Martínez Celaya uses landscape as a medium in which to create dream-like almost-narratives, using ethereal imagery and figures to pose questions concerning the relation between time and location and the human life experience. His painting technique heightens the dream-like atmosphere in its superficially realist style, blurring the line between realism and abstraction. When speaking about the works in *The Open*, he said: "These paintings are as much about painting, about what can be and should be represented, as about the failures inherent in painting. These paintings rely on the emotive quality of that futility." The meaning of the works is, unusually, not to be found through analysis of the imagery, but rather through absorption of the emotional and philosophical resonances created by the paintings as a whole. Martínez Celaya is not interested in the interpretation of subject matter, and in fact his art works possess "a presence that resists the meddling of interpretation".

Enrique Martínez Celaya was born in Cuba in 1964. He began his art training as an apprentice to an academic painter after studying Applied Physics at Cornell University and pursuing a Ph.D. in Quantum Electronics at the University of California, Berkeley. He continued studying to receive a Master of Fine Arts from the University of California, Santa Barbara in 1994. Martínez Celaya's studio and imprint, Whale & Star, functions as a contemplative and educational environment concerned with the role art has in life, spirit and community. He has exhibited at major institutions such as the Miami Art Museum, Florida, and his artwork is in the permanent collections of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Whitney Museum of American Art, the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, and others. He has also exhibited widely in America and Europe.

For further press materials please contact the gallery via press@simonleegallery.com or call +44 207 491 0100.

12 BERKELEY STREET
LONDON W1J 8DT
T +44 (0) 20 7491 0100
F +44 (0) 20 7491 0200
INFO@SIMONLEEGALLERY.COM