

**FOR
IMMEDIATE RELEASE
August 28, 2017**

**THE DAVIS MUSEUM PRESENTS ARTIST'S FIRST U.S. SOLO MUSEUM
EXHIBITION WITH *EDDIE MARTINEZ: ANTS AT A PICKNIC***



WELLESLEY, Mass. – The Davis Museum at Wellesley College presents ***Eddie Martinez: Ants at a Picknic***, the contemporary abstract artist's first solo museum exhibition. The installation includes a suite of seven new large-scale mandala paintings, accompanied by a group of 17 tabletop painted bronze sculptures and large framed drawings on paper, all presented for the first time. The exhibition, on view in the Camilla Chandler and Dorothy Buffum Chandler Gallery and Marjorie and Gerald Bronfman Gallery, runs from September 19 through December 17, 2017.

The exhibition marks a triumphant return of sorts, as Martinez's exhibition history began in Boston in 2005. He has since shown around the world, with exhibitions across the United

States, Europe, and Asia. Although Davis Museum Director Lisa Fischman had previously purchased two of his monoprints for the Davis, it was not until an art fair in 2014 that she encountered Martinez's paintings in person. A collaboration with the artist soon followed, and culminates with the exhibition ***Eddie Martinez: Ants at a Picknic***.

"The works in ***Ants at a Picknic*** make plain that Martinez has hit his stride," said Dr. Lisa Fischman, Ruth Gordon Shapiro '37 Director of the Davis Museum and curator of the exhibition. "The cosmic hooks, the summoning of spirits, the virtuoso line, the command of color and composition—it all adds up to its own kind of brilliance."

Mandala Paintings

The seven mandala paintings in the exhibition are grand in size—around 9 by 10 feet—wild with color, and rendered in Martinez’s signature style. Martinez’s paintings build from a distinctive process: the artist starts with small drawings in Sharpie, blows them up and translates the “skeleton” in black silk-screen ink onto canvas; he adds color and often affixes drawings and other textural materials to his surfaces. The drawings are an essential “biographical, journalistic tool” in his process, and “make their way into the painting studio and feed the paintings, [where] sometimes they get glued directly to the paintings. Jabbing impasto vies with sleek movements; sweeping washes, scratched passages, and scuffed fills bump around in oil and marine enamel. Martinez also uses spray paint—perhaps the only remaining link to an old graffiti habit—in sure shot gestures.

Referencing the traditional Hindu and Buddhist representational model of the universe, Martinez’s mandala forms contain an artist’s cosmos: eyes are everywhere, along with other signature motifs and moves, and “EM” often appears. The paintings are possessed of an ambitious compositional dynamism, driven by a confidence of hand and by an improvisational skill in putting paint to canvas that far exceeds plotting.

Sculptures

Martinez’s sculptures speak to the paintings and to his obsessive drawing habit. They function as expansions, translating impulses of line, form, and color into three dimensions. The pieces assemble prosaic scrap elements, and read as totally fresh. Martinez has got an innate material and formal capacity to organize unlikely fragments into satisfying, fully resolved wholes.

Drawings

Several large framed drawings in the exhibition put ink, oil paint, acrylic paint, marker, crayon, debris, spray paint, and enamel to paper. More fully realized than the little drawings that provide the bones for his paintings, and yet more spontaneous and loosed from the formalities of grand-scale canvas, the new drawings speak to the pleasures and challenges of scale – of the hand, the gesture, and the approach shaped by the terms of paper itself.

The Artist

Born in 1977 in Groton, Connecticut, Eddie Martinez lives in Brooklyn, New York. His first solo exhibition was mounted in 2005, at Allston Skirt outside of Boston, and his work has since been featured frequently in exhibitions in the U.S. and abroad. Martinez has been critically lauded and

widely collected for his dynamic linear abstraction, exuberant color, and a vocabulary of idiosyncratic reiterating forms. Inspired by a mash-up of visual sources, from fine art to popular culture, his work in every medium—painting, drawing, sculpture, and print—is impossible to mistake.

Martinez has had solo exhibitions at Mitchell-Innes & Nash, New York; The Drawing Center, New York; Timothy Taylor Gallery, London; Kohn Gallery, Los Angeles; Half Gallery, New York; Peres Projects, Berlin. His work has also been exhibited in various group exhibitions worldwide, in Rome, Tokyo, Copenhagen, Brussels, Mexico City, Lisbon, and Berlin, including exhibitions at The Saatchi Gallery, London and Garage Center for Contemporary Culture, Moscow. Additionally, Martinez’s work has been featured in *ARTnews*, *Interview Magazine*, *The New York Times*, *Artforum*, *Modern Painters*, *ARTINFO*, *ArtReview*, *The Brooklyn Rail*, and *Art in America*.

Catalogue & Contributors

A full-color catalogue accompanies the exhibition with contributions from Lisa Fischman, Ruth Gordon Shapiro ’37 Director of the Davis and exhibition curator, and Jim Lewis, Austin-based novelist, critic, and arts writer. The catalogue is produced by local talent: designed by the award-winning Boston-based firm of Stoltze Design, edited by Lucy Flint, and printed at Puritan Capital in Hollis, New Hampshire.

Lisa Fischman is the Ruth Gordon Shapiro ’37 Director of the Davis Museum at Wellesley College. She held previous appointments at the University of Arizona Museum of Art, the Atlanta College of Art Gallery, and the UB Art Gallery / SUNY Buffalo. A specialist in contemporary art, she has curated numerous exhibitions and written and/or contributed to many publications; several of her recent projects have focused on art of the Middle East. She earned a Ph.D. degree from the University of Minnesota in Art History and American Studies.

Jim Lewis is the author of three novels, “Sister” (1993), “Why the Tree Loves the Ax” (1998), and “The King Is Dead” (2003); two collaborative works, “Real Gone,” with Jack Pierson (1993), and “The English Garden,” with Cecily Brown (2015); and numerous artists’ catalogues and monographs. His essays, criticism, and reportage have appeared in the *New York Times Magazine*, *Granta*, *Slate*, *GQ*, *Artforum*, *W*, *Harper’s Bazaar*, and many other publications. He lives in Austin, Texas.

Support For *Eddie Martinez: Ants at a Picnic*

The exhibition and catalogue are realized with generous funding from Wellesley College Friends of Art at the Davis, The Helyn MacLean Endowed Program Fund for Contemporary and South Asian Art, The Mildred Cooper Glimcher ’61 Endowed Fund, and the Davis Museum and Cultural Center Endowed

Fund; with additional support for the catalogue from Timothy Taylor Gallery, London, and Mitchell-Innes & Nash, New York.

RELATED PUBLIC PROGRAMS

FALL OPENING CELEBRATION

Tuesday, September 19, 6:30 - 9 p.m.

Remarks at 7 p.m.

Davis Lobby and Galleries

The Davis Museum invites the public to celebrate the opening of its fall 2017 exhibitions—including six special installations that bring spectacular energy and creative visual innovation to the Wellesley College campus. Guests may welcome visiting artist Eddie Martinez in debuting his major solo exhibition, *Ants at a Picnic*, and enjoy a first look at *Hrair Sarkissian: Horizon; Martin Luther: Protest in Print, Life on Paper: South African Prints from the Davis Collections; Soong May-ling: Paintings*; and *David Teng Olsen: Smoked My Head on Yes Waters*.

MEDICINE BUDDHA MANDALA – CREATION and DISSOLUTION

September 20 - October 11, 11 a.m. - 5 p.m. daily

Opening ceremony: September 20 at 11 a.m.

Closing ceremony: October 11 at 3 p.m.

Camilla Chandler and Dorothy Buffum Chandler Gallery

Over the course of three weeks, visiting monks from the Namgyal Monastery Institute of Buddhist Studies in Ithaca, New York will construct a Tibetan Buddhist sand mandala amidst the paintings of artist Eddie Martinez. Creation of the richly complex Medicine Buddha Mandala—a form imbued with powerful healing properties—will begin on September 20, and will be open to the public, Tuesdays through Sundays, between 11 a.m. - 1 p.m. and 2 p.m. - 5 p.m. daily. The public is also invited to the final ritual step in the mandala's completion, a dissolution ceremony on Wednesday, October 11 at 3 p.m. which will begin at the Davis and conclude at Lake Waban. Sponsored by the Davis, with support from The Helyn MacLean Endowed Program Fund for Contemporary and South Asian Art, with additional support from the Office of Religious and Spiritual Life.

CURATORIAL GALLERY TALK: IN THE WILDS OF CONTEMPORARY ABSTRACTION

Tuesday, October 3, 4 p.m.

Camilla Chandler and Dorothy Buffum Chandler Gallery

Join Lisa Fischman, Ruth Gordon Shapiro '37 Director of the Davis Museum, for a special curator's tour of *Eddie Martinez: Ants at a Picnic*.

ABOUT THE DAVIS MUSEUM

One of the oldest and most acclaimed academic fine arts museums in the United States, the Davis Museum is a vital force in the intellectual, pedagogical and social life of Wellesley College. It seeks to create an environment that encourages visual literacy, inspires new ideas, and fosters involvement with the arts both within the College and the larger community.

ABOUT WELLESLEY COLLEGE AND THE ARTS

The Wellesley College arts curriculum and the highly acclaimed Davis Museum are integral components

of the College's liberal arts education. Departments and programs from across the campus enliven the community with world-class programming— classical and popular music, visual arts, theatre, dance, author readings, symposia, and lectures by some of today's leading artists and creative thinkers—most of which are free and open to the public.

Since 1875, Wellesley College has been the preeminent liberal arts college for women. Known for its intellectual rigor and its remarkable track record for the cultivation of women leaders in every arena, Wellesley—only 12 miles from Boston—is home to some 2,400 undergraduates from 49 states and 58 countries.

Image credit: Eddie Martinez, *Ants at a Picnic*, 2016
Silkscreen ink and oil paint on canvas, 96 x 84 inches
Courtesy the artist, JSP Art Photography and Mitchell-Innes & Nash, New York

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High-resolution images and interviews available upon request.