



Art League Houston
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For Immediate Release

2023 Texas Artist of the Year: Vincent Valdez
Vincent Valdez

Exhibition Dates: September 22, 2023 – December 2, 2023

Opening Reception: September 22, 2023, 6-8 PM

Vincent Valdez in Conversation with Kathy Vargas: September 23, 2023 @ 2 PM

September 6, 2023. Houston, TX - Art League Houston is proud to present **2023 Texas Artist of the Year: Vincent Valdez**, featuring recent works and a curatorial installation by Vincent Valdez.



Vincent Valdez, From the Series *Siete Dias*, 2022, Silkscreen on synthetic fiber

In his exhibition as the Art League Houston (ALH), 2023 Texas Artist of the Year, Vincent Valdez examines memory and remembrance from both personal and cultural perspectives. His installation piece, *Siete Dias/Seven Days*, features an installation of



twenty-one banners suspended from the gallery's ceiling that showcase a handful of the over 150,000 individuals who have disappeared in Central and South America since the 1970s.

Central to *Siete Dias* are fourteen haunting portraits of disappeared individuals drawn from an archival calendar originally published in 1980s Central America. These ghostly depictions exude a palpable presence, organized in a chapel-like arrangement, with three rows of portraits inviting visitors to contemplate the enigma of their absence.

Seven single-word text panels are interwoven among the evocative images, each representing a day of the week in Spanish. These text panels poignantly symbolize the passage of time, amplifying the ongoing absence and uncertain fates of these missing individuals.

In addition to *Siete Dias*, Valdez recreates a personal memory of his first museum experience through a curation of work. In collaboration with Joe Diaz, a long-time collector and advocate for Latinx and Chicano art (and Valdez's first collector,) Valdez aims to elevate and acknowledge the artists who inspired his dedication to his craft.

Works by Jose Luis Rivera, Roger Brown, Luis Jimenez, Peter Saul, Alex Rubio, Benito Huerta, Enrique Chagoya, John Hernandez, George Grosz, Ben Shahn, Kathy Vargas, John Valadez, Cesar Martinez, Lucas Johnson, Adriana Corral, Raymond Pettibone, and Gloria Ozuna will be featured alongside Valdez's works.

The catalog *Undercurrents: Vincent Valdez*, published by ALH and designed by Cereal Box Studios, will be available in conjunction with this exhibition. The publication offers a perspective into the evolution of Vincent Valdez's artistic style and thematic continuity. Comprising eighteen meticulously crafted loose-leaf pages, three fold-out posters, and an illuminating essay penned by renowned curator and writer Lucy R. Lippard, this collection of work focuses on two pivotal phases of his artistic career: the formative first six years from 1999 to 2005 and the recent impactful period spanning 2015 to 2023.





2023 Texas Artist of the Year

Vincent Valdez



Vincent Valdez,
1988

Vincent Valdez (b.1977) blends large, representational paintings—the scale of which recall Western traditions of history painting as well as mural painting and cinema—with contemporary subject matter. He focuses on subjects that explore his observations and experience of life in the twenty-first century. The results are powerful images of American identity that confront injustice and inequity while imbuing his subjects with empathy and humanity. Valdez states, “My aim is to incite public remembrance and to counter the distorted realities that I witness, like the social amnesia that fogs our collective American memory.”





His dedication to craft and skill along with his investment in presenting critical subjects, has earned him several accolades such as the Ford and Mellon Foundations Latinx Artist Fellowship (2022), Joan Mitchell Foundation Grant for Painters and Sculptors (2016), as well as residencies at the Skowhegan School of Painting (2005), the Vermont Studio Center (2011), the Kunstlerhaus Bethania Berlin Residency (2014), and the Arion Press' King Residency (2023). Exhibitions and Collections include: The Ford Foundation, The Los Angeles County Museum of Art, MASS MoCA, The Museum of Fine Arts Houston, The Smithsonian Museum of American Art, and The National Portrait Gallery, among others. He lives and works in Houston and Los Angeles.

Valdez is now recognized for his monumental portrayal of the contemporary figure. His drawn and painted subjects remark on a universal struggle within various socio-political arenas and eras. He states, "My aim is to incite public remembrance and to counter the distorted realities that I witness, like the social amnesia that fogs our collective American memory.

Valdez notes:

"It is safe to say that much of my work resonates like an alarm ringing nonstop in my head. I must depict what I witness. I create images as instruments to probe the past in order to reveal an immediacy to what is occurring today."

"I am alarmed by the denial of history. Therefore, I create counter-images to defy our fateful desire to repeat history. I offer this work as a report—my visual testimony about a struggle for transformation, hope, love and survival in twenty-first century America."

Valdez's first monograph, *Vincent Valdez: In Memory*, published by Radius Books, was released in April 2023. He was recently the inaugural artist-in-residence at Arion Press, where he created a series of drawings to illustrate Kurt Vonnegut's *Slaughterhouse-Five*, set to release in September 2023. His upcoming exhibitions include: *2023 Texas Artist of the Year: Vincent Valdez*, Art League Houston (Sept 2023); *Hidden Histories*, Museum of Fine Arts Houston (Aug 2023); *The Slaughterhouse Five Drawings: Vincent Valdez*, The Drawing Center, NYC (Oct 2023); *Vincent Valdez & Ry Cooder: El Chavez Ravine*, Los Angeles County Museum of Art (Nov 2023) and *Vincent Valdez: Just A*





Dream (In America), Contemporary Arts Museum Houston (Fall 2024) and MASS MoCA (2025-26).

Valdez currently lives and works in Houston and Los Angeles.

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For more information, visit www.artleaguehouston.org, or contact Zhaira Costiniano, Exhibitions and Curatorial Projects Manager, at zhaira@artleaguehouston.org or 713-523-9530.

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