

# Miguel Martinez

## *Tell Me How It Ends*

6 September - 19 October 2024

GRIMM, 54 White Street, New York, NY (US)

GRIMM is pleased to present *Tell Me How It Ends*, a solo exhibition by artist Miguel Martinez (b. 1991, Celaya, MX) taking place at the New York gallery from 6 September to 19 October 2024.

Raised in the outskirts of Celaya, Mexico, Martinez's work is deeply informed by the mystical imagery that proliferated throughout his Catholic upbringing. Martinez notes that the church provided an unparalleled source of cultural richness; however, in coming to terms with his own queer identity, he experienced an inner "schism" which he has sought to bridge through an expansive linking of spirituality and art. Influenced by the magpie maximalism of queer artists like Nicolas Moufarrege (b. 1947) and Thomas Lanigan Schmidt (b. 1948), Martinez works through an additive process evoking the ethos of *rasquachismo*, a Chicano practice of overcoming material limitations by "making the most from the least".

Drawing on traditions of folk art, magic and symbolism while paying homage to metaphysical painters, in particular the Mexican artist Francisco Toledo (b. 1940) and Venezuelan-born American painter Luchita Hurtado (b. 1920), Martinez notes that his practice is rooted in the desire to decorate surfaces with accessible materials like tin foil, glitter, sequins and ribbons. In doing so, he aims to root his practice in widely inclusive sources of inspiration that encourage a transcendent engagement on the part of the viewer.

For this exhibition, Martinez has produced a site-specific mural accompanying new paintings that typify his multi-media practice. In his mural, Martinez adopts and reproduces the forms of *milagros*, which are small metal amulets used in Mexican folk healing rituals. The artist reproduces and incorporates amulets from his own collection, enlarging their scale and oftentimes abstracting the original forms to incorporate various iconographies and Tantric imagery from traditions beyond Judeo-Christian origin.



Miguel Martinez | *Heaven Let Me In*, 2022-2024

In doing so, Martinez aims to reimagine amulets as autonomous power objects, untethered from a role of service. In his new series of paintings, the artist produces an origin story for the amulets depicted in his mural, further removing them from their original Catholic context and weaving them deeper into his own self-mythology.

The title *Tell Me How It Ends* is adapted from Valeria Luiselli's 2017 *Tell Me How It Ends: An Essay in 40 Questions*. The chronicle, structured around the forty questions Luiselli asks undocumented Latin American children facing deportation, humanizes these young migrants, highlighting the contradiction between the idea of America as a fiction for immigrants and the reality of racism and fear that they face upon arrival. In the painting *Chalupa's Journey*, 2023, a wall of rose thorns shaped like barbed wire indicates the crossing of a divide between a here and there. Printed reproductions of hand-sculpted amulets hang like theatrical stage props at the top of the painting.

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## About the artist

Miguel Martinez (b. 1991, Celaya, MX) received a BFA from The University of Houston, Houston, TX (US) in 2013 and completed an MFA at Hunter College, New York, NY (US) in 2021. He lives and works in Brooklyn, NY (US).

Recent group exhibitions include *Love's Other Name*, The Spite Haus, Philadelphia, PA (US) in 2023 and *Tinieblas*, 205 Hudson, New York, NY (US) in 2021. Recent residencies include Mad54 Artist Residency, New York, NY (US) and Mostajo Projects Artist Residency, CT (US), both in 2023. Awards include the 2018 Ruth Stanton Memorial Scholarship at Hunter College, New York, NY (US) and the 2013 Clare Hart DeGolyer Memorial Fund from the Dallas Museum of Art, Dallas, TX (US).

Miguel Martinez in his studio, 2023 | Photographed by Deb Leal

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