

ARTFORUM

EDDIE MARTINEZ TO REPRESENT SAN MARINO AT 60TH VENICE BIENNALE

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Eddie Martinez, 2024. Photo: Jason Schmidt.

American artist Eddie Martinez will represent San Marino, a tiny landlocked nation inside Italy, at the 2024 Venice Biennale. The country has historically invited artists of varying nationalities to represent it at the Biennale, in honor of its heritage as a place of refuge for foreign nationals. Martinez, who is known largely as a painter, will exhibit paintings, drawings, and sculpture. His exhibition, “Nomader,” will be curated by Alison M. Gingeras, organized by the FR Istituto d’Arte Contemporanea, and commissioned by former San Martino captain regent Paolo Rondelli.

“Nomader” takes its name from the idea of the nomad, or wanderer, and is in keeping with the main theme of the Biennale, which is “Stranieri Ovunque” (Foreigners Everywhere). Put forth by Biennale curator Adriano Pedrosa, artistic director of Museu de Arte de São Paulo and the first curator of the event to be based in Latin America, the theme invites participating artists to investigate the concept of the foreigner, focusing on marginalized people including exiles, refugees, immigrants, Indigenous people, and queer people.

Besides aligning with this theme, the title “Nomader” reflects Martinez’s own peripatetic past: His parents having divorced while he was still a child, he spent his youth shuttling among California, Florida, Texas, and Massachusetts. The experience influenced his practice, in which he bounces between abstraction and figuration to create graphic, vibrantly hued works that have drawn comparisons to artists as diverse as Jean-Michel Basquiat, Philip Guston, Paul Klee, and Cy Twombly. Drawing, a habit Martinez picked up as a boy owing to the portability of the materials required, also features heavily in his oeuvre.

“Drawing has always been the generative engine of his work, and how the paintings and even the sculptures come about,” Gingeras told Artnews. “He’s always drawing. If you have a coffee with him or sitting there in the studio with him, he’s drawing. Those fragments often are what he uses to build out the finished paintings.”

The Sixtieth Venice Biennale is slated to take place April 20–November 24.