

**MEDIA CONTACT:**

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**“THE LAND OF FLOWERS” RECLAIMS PREHISPANIC MOTIFS
THROUGH VIVID WORKS IN PRINT & CERAMIC**

On View June 3 – September 9, 2023, at Houston Center for Contemporary Craft

Gabo Martinez: The Land of Flowers

June 3 – September 9, 2023

Front Gallery

Houston Center for Contemporary Craft

4848 Main Street, Houston, TX 77002

Exhibition Reception

Friday, June 2, 5:30 – 8:00 PM

The public is invited to celebrate the opening of the summer exhibitions at HCCC. The evening will also feature refreshments and open studios by the newest resident artists.

Exhibition web page

<https://crafthouston.org/exhibition/gabo-martinez-the-land-of-flowers/>

Hours & Admission

Open Tuesday - Saturday, 10 AM – 5 PM. Closed major holidays. Admission is free.

(HOUSTON, TX) March 13, 2023 — This summer, Houston Center for Contemporary Craft is pleased to present *Gabo Martinez: The Land of Flowers*, an exhibition of ceramics and printmaking named for the mythical, flower-filled paradise, known in Nahuatl as *xochitlalpan*. Influenced by her upbringing in Guanajuato, Mexico, and Texas, Martinez's vibrant work centers a reclamation of indigenous identity through craft production, using materials and motifs with ties to prehispanic cultures. Her vividly glazed terracotta vessels and large-scale prints are inscribed with motifs like the flower, a deeply significant symbol in the poetic tradition of Nahuatl speakers, known as *In xochitl In cuicatl* (*Flower and Song*).

Sweepingly lyrical and filled with metaphor, many surviving examples of the prehispanic oral tradition of Aztec performance—so-called *Flower Songs*—open with a ritual evocation of the divine. By calling the physicality of a mystical realm like the land of flowers into being, performers of Flower Songs invite audiences into spaces of yearning, hope, and even bliss. With its body of highly graphic prints and *sgraffito* pottery, this exhibition connects Martinez's work to the tradition of Flower Songs—subversive in its ability to survive and transmit indigeneity, despite centuries of colonial domination and erasure. By transforming the Front Gallery at HCCC into a space vibrating with color and possibility, *The Land of Flowers* richly evokes the artist's vision of a present and future defined by community, joy, and self-determination.

About Gabo Martinez

Based in San Marcos, Texas, Gabo Martinez is an interdisciplinary artist who was born in Guanajuato, Mexico. Drawing on traditional and contemporary motifs, Martinez utilizes those visual languages to craft a narrative that reclaims and honors her own heritage. She combines the mediums of printmaking and ceramics to create

spaces that evoke the warmth of brown bodies with rich vibrant colors. These spaces become vehicles for the reclamation of an historical clay body, known as *barro rojo*, in the contemporary moment, elevating ancestral ceramic technologies. Barro rojo lends its softness and malleability to objects that can further immortalize cultures and narratives.

Martinez holds a BFA in studio arts with a concentration in ceramics from Texas State University at San Marcos. She is a founder of the Tepeyac Collective, a group that aims to organize and highlight BIPOC clay artists in Central Texas as a response to the lack of diversity and harmful gatekeeping within the present-day clay community. Martinez has completed residencies at the Sonoma Community Center, in California, and at Texas A&M University, in Laredo, Texas. She has been featured in *Ceramics Monthly*, as well as the *Glasstire* “4x4” series.

About Houston Center for Contemporary Craft

Houston Center for Contemporary Craft (HCCC) is a nonprofit visual arts center dedicated to advancing education about the process, product, and history of craft. HCCC has served as a treasured resource in the Houston arts community and the region for more than 20 years. The Center showcases emerging and acclaimed artists in exhibitions, introduces visitors of all ages to contemporary craft through hands-on and virtual programming, and supports the development of working artists through its artist residency program.

HCCC is open Tuesday through Saturday, 10 AM – 5 PM. Closed major holidays. Admission is free. HCCC is located in the Museum District at 4848 Main Street, three blocks south of the Wheeler Ave. MetroRail station. Free parking is available directly behind the facility, off Rosedale and Travis Street.

HCCC is supported by individual donors and members and funded in part by The Brown Foundation; Houston Endowment, Inc.; the City of Houston through the Houston Arts Alliance; Texas Commission on the Arts; the National Endowment for the Arts, the Kinder Foundation; the Morgan Foundation; Windgate Charitable Foundation; and the Wortham Foundation. HCCC is a member of the Houston Museum District and the Midtown Arts District.

For more information, call 713-529-4848 or visit www.crafthouston.org. Find HCCC on Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram @CraftHouston.

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