

# JJ MARTIN

ROLE MODELS



## ROLE MODELS / Curated by Marisa Caichiolo

J. J. Martin is a Mexican artist whose own life and strong desire to serve others are at the heart of his artwork. This desire led him and his partner to adopt four children several years ago — a decision that marked a turning point in the lives of the kids and also turned the new parents into role models of today's society.

Most people in our current fast-paced world are focused on the search for success and material gain. However, failure to meet society's expectations can have devastating effects on an individual's life at the physical, social and economic level.

This awareness led Martin to start researching the stories of Noble Prize winners whose exemplary behavior and lives have turned them into role models for regular citizens, specially the younger generations. Out of this research the series "Role Models" was created.

Martin's new body of work is comprised of large-scale portraits painted against varying intensity backgrounds that feature renowned politicians such as Barack Obama or Al Gore, activists like Rigoberta Menchú, Liu Xiaobo, Malala Yousafzai, and other influential figures.

Using a combination of photographs, drawings and collages of each 'role model,' the artist created powerful paintings that remove the character from the action and place him or her in mundane activities.

The series acts as a snapshot of today's society where modern technology has standardized citizens, erasing undesirable differences across mankind and creating human clones, who attempt to achieve social stability and collective happiness through material gain.

"Role Models" is an invitation for the viewer to contemplate and examine each featured character under a new light. But more importantly, the paintings create a space where the viewer can connect to its inner self and become —here and now— a role model in his or her daily life or community. Ultimately, Martin wants the viewer to embark on a journey of self-exploration only to realize that within us resides the power to create a better world through our actions.

From a conceptual standpoint, Martin's work stands out for his uniqueness. But the same can be stated of his technique and the often-delicate yet complex way in which he interacts with the canvas.



J.J Martin is a Mexican artist currently living and working in Los Angeles, CA. His work, which depicts contemporary looking characters, is an approach to the portrait. For his protagonists in each portrait, he uses models that he finds in daily life or who are extracted from his imagination. Each protagonist acts as a visual representation of an absence or presence. Observing his work, we can confirm that each of Martin's pieces are a true reflection of how he develops conversations and relationships with others.

His use of large format canvases, allows him to make use of his excellent technique, deploy his concepts, and demonstrate his formal and aesthetic expression. He draws and paints his characters on a neutral background, in order to not distract the viewer, and allowing them to concentrate on the main elements. We can appreciate the use of various techniques such as: drawing, and the application of ink, oil, acrylic, and diluted coffee (which gives the work a watercolor effect).

His newest series *ROLE MODELS*, represents those who have won the Nobel Peace Prize, from the Dalai Lama, to Ghandi (who was nominated five times), to Barack Obama, and reflects the fragility of force and how reliable these characters can be as life examples.



(Some samples of the oil paintings on canvas)

Exhibition layout (according to the space) Floor plan necessary .

Artworks : oil on canvas 72x48” (40 pieces originals)

Prints on aluminum and Museum Photographic paper (Limited editions)

Book special limited edition.

