

**Magenta Plains | Independent New York****Roberto Juarez****May 8–11, 2025 | Booth 624**

For the 2025 edition of Independent New York, Magenta Plains is pleased to present a series of mixed-media paintings from the 1980s by New York artist Roberto Juarez. Juarez emerged in the 1980s as a vital voice in the East Village and downtown New York art scene, exhibiting alongside Jean-Michel Basquiat, Keith Haring, and David Wojnarowicz, such as in the critical 1981 exhibition *New York/New Wave* at P.S.1. His brash, vigorous and colorful paintings capture the dynamic spirit of the city and during this time. His work from this era—featured on the cover of the 1987 Whitney Biennial catalog—engages with cultural and queer identities, the anxieties of the AIDS crisis and his ongoing inspiration from pre-Columbian artifacts. Although often referenced as Neo-expressionist, his work is more personal and reflective on the chaos and complexity of the time. Blending abstraction and representation, he explores themes of mythology, nature, and cultural hybridity.

Juarez's paintings appear passionately executed, often featuring a combination of oil stick and acrylic paint on paper, mounted on canvas. This methodology allows Juarez to work over his subject matter with his personal brand of abstraction; sensitive to the substance of the paint and the cultural significance of what is being painted. Much of Juarez's work draws on his personal identity as the locus in a whirlwind of references, pop cultural and otherwise, which engender his practice with a warmth and emotional transparency that make them accessible to the viewer. In this vein, images like *Black G.I.* (1983) and *Parrotman* (1982) demonstrate Juarez's political commitment to the issues and concerns of their contemporary moment, whereas *Con Ed* (1985) or *Green Nude with Chair* (1984) emphasize a much more whimsical sensibility. This balance is essential to Juarez's practice and is central to this presentation at the Independent.

Born in 1952 in Chicago to Puerto Rican and Mexican parents, he studied at the San Francisco Art Institute and then UCLA's Graduate Film Program before moving through Paris and eventually settling in New York. Juarez first gained attention with a solo show at Robert Miller Gallery in 1981. He later expanded into large-scale public murals, creating works for Grand Central Terminal in New York, Miami International Airport, the University of Michigan, among others. His recent international exhibitions include a 2024 two-part survey in Italy at Apalazzo Gallery in Brescia and Palazzo Tiepolo in Venice. Magenta Plains' solo presentation of Juarez's work at the Independent NY will mark his first in New York since 2014. He currently lives and works between New York City—where he and a group of artists purchased a building on 8th Street near Tompkins Square Park in the late 1980s—and Canaan, NY.

Roberto Juarez's notable solo exhibitions include a two-part survey at Apalazzo Gallery, Brescia, IT and Palazzo Tiepolo, Venice, IT (2024); *Processing: Paintings & Prints 2008-2018*, Boulder Museum of Contemporary Art, CO (2018); *Roberto Juarez: Mural Paintings*, Berkshire Museum, Pittsfield, MA (2011); *They Entered the Road*, Kemper Museum of Contemporary Art, Kansas City, MO (2004); and *A Sense of Place: Roberto Juarez*, Museum of Contemporary Art, Miami, FL (2003). Juarez's work is included in public collections such as the Brooklyn Museum, NY; the Denver Art Museum, CO; El Museo del Barrio, New York, NY; J. B. Speed Art Museum, Louisville, KY; Kemper Museum of Contemporary Art & Design, Kansas City, MO; Los Angeles County Museum of Art, CA; Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, NY; the Saint Louis Museum of Art, St. Louis, MO, and many others. Magenta Plains' solo presentation of Juarez's work at the Independent Art Fair will mark his first in New York since 2014.