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## Q&A America Martin on exploring 'Themes of Humanity'

Posted by [Muriel Vega](#) @murielvega on Wed, Oct 29, 2014 at 3:40 PM

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AMERICA MARTIN

HUMAN NATURE: American Martin's "Women and Trumpet Flowers"

L.A.-based artist [America Martin](#) used to be a child actor, but art was always her first

passion. “Growing up in Hollywood, acting was a life choice that offered itself to me,” Martin says. “But I fell in love with art when I was nine years old, and by the time I was sixteen, I knew that fine art was all I wanted to do.”

Her work features broad lines and bright colors on canvas and has been shown around the country in California, Texas, Maine, among others.

“Heritage is like a thumbprint,” says the Colombian–American artist whose vibrant paintings often reflect the aesthetic and indigenous motifs of the South American country. “You never really think of it, but it is there, making you the individual that you are. It’s inherent in all the subtleties of taste and choices in life.”

*Themes of Humanity*, Martin’s new exhibition at [Tew Galleries](#), examines human form and experiences in that aesthetic. A favorite among collectors, Martin talks to *Creative Loafing* about growing as an artist, her creative process, and surrendering to her consciousness.

### **You describe yourself as a "painting anthropologist"?**

In life, there's people and stuff, and it's not about stuff. It's about the people who you meet and discover and come to know. Anthropology is the focused study, the admiration, of people and their cultures. It's about understanding that although we are so uniquely different, we are also so eternally the same. It's just fascinating. To capture with admiration and paint, both the unique and eternal elements of the human form, is just part of the joy of my art.

### **How did you prepare for this exhibition?**

I had been working on several series of works, always from a place of my own inclination. In that wide open place the muse is consistently present. From these separate series I pulled together works to share with [Gallery owner and director] Timothy Tew. ... He came out to Los Angeles to visit me in my studio. It was at this meeting that, together, we chose the works for this show. I got to share things with him and see what he was drawn to. I brought him work that I thought worked well with or gave space to a piece. It was really a lovely experience.

### **So you explore human experiences in your paintings. Do you do so in this exhibition?**

This series of work focused on the revelry and joy of line and color: creating a scene or a moment with layers of solid washes of color and then finding a figure within that flat plane and allowing that form to emerge with a hard or soft line. To discover a painting, while creating it—it's the cat's pajamas, the cream in my tea. It's just great fun. The process comes from such a sense of play, of peace and curious interest in the entire human experience. The works regard the viewer with a sense of peace and play.

### **What do you use to create those vibrant colors?**

I adore materials for different reasons the way you adore seasons for how you must react to them. I love oil and acrylic and canvas, because they can withstand me being violent and rough, building layers upon layers. I love fine handmade Japanese papers for their unique singularity, and the way they need gentle handling and caressing inks. Show me a material and I will find something in it to admire and become wild about it.

### **What's your creative process when you are going to start a painting?**

When I am going to begin a day in the studio my process seems to always be changing and yet is inevitably the same. To begin, there is always a separating—a real pulling and detaching from the realities of this life. There is a complete surrendering to the consciousness of no other thought than intuitive thought, a surrendering to no other kind of emotion than here and now. It might sound quite dramatic, but it is something I have thought about lately. Essentially, it's like any love affair. It only really works when you are 100-percent present, and not wanting to be anywhere else but where you are.

### **There's a certain joy or “time to party” vibe in most of your paintings. How do you hope the viewer will interpret your paintings/subjects?**

That's funny and is very nice to hear. I guess the “time to party” element is the feeling I personally have. It's how I feel about the idea that I get to do what I love, and what makes me literally dance around the studio, even when doing 15 [to] 20-hour days. I think, “Really? I get to paint, sculpt, and learn and listen and look? This is what I get to do?” But I am by nature a cup half-full person. It's nice to know that that comes through in my work.

*Themes of Humanity. Through Nov. 21. Mon.–Fri., 10 a.m.–5 p.m.; Sat., 11 a.m.–5 p.m. Tew Galleries, 425 Peachtree Hills Ave. 404-869-0511. [www.tewgalleries.com](http://www.tewgalleries.com).*

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