

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
January 17, 2024

**THE WELLIN MUSEUM OF ART AT HAMILTON COLLEGE
TO PRESENT THE FIRST MUSEUM SURVEY OF WORK BY ARTIST RENÉ TREVIÑO
FROM FEBRUARY 17 THROUGH JUNE 9, 2024**



Artist René Treviño in his Baltimore studio, with works from the *Celestial Body-ody-ody* series (2022-23).
Photography by Joseph Hyde, November 2023.

Clinton, NY—The Wellin Museum of Art at Hamilton College will present the exhibition *René Treviño: Stab of Guilt* from February 17 through June 9, 2024. The artist’s first museum survey will feature almost 200 works from 2008 to the present, including new work created on the occasion of this exhibition. Much of the work in the show signifies new areas of exploration for the artist.

Explains Alexander Jarman, Assistant Curator of Exhibitions and Academic Outreach, “Treviño’s work highlights the complexity of the queer Mexican-American experience in this country. For the past 15 years, he has created multiple painting series and work in other media that celebrate difference while simultaneously erasing boundaries. The exhibition title, *René Treviño: Stab of Guilt*, connotes a unique blend of historical references, both personal to the artist and publicly known, including the violence often associated with the Aztec Empire, the private guilt engendered through religious doctrine, and the postcolonial reckonings faced by many cultural institutions, including art museums. Moreover, the works

assembled for this exhibition illustrate myriad examples of how an artist like Treviño can explore the connections among and across eras, societies, and cultures, in his case through the lenses of history, queer theory, and astronomy.”

Adds Treviño, “I am an optimist who thinks humanity is garbage. I am incredibly hopeful for the future, and I believe that even in a time of increased polarity, I can create images that help us find our commonality.”

René Treviño: Stab of Guilt brings together an exuberant selection of works with wide-ranging themes that illuminate the artist’s colorful and complex aesthetic. Treviño’s multidisciplinary practice encompasses a range of mediums and reflects personal inspirations as well as the artist’s research into Maya and Aztec history, Catholic symbolism, astronomy, pop culture, and queer theory to recast his heritage and identity in a new light.

Recent explorations into sculpture have resulted in a suite of three courtly robes embellished with faux jaguar fur and sequined patches, displayed with Aztec-inspired feather headdresses and presented on a custom-built stage. Titled *Regalia, Intuition; Regalia, Premonition; Regalia, Foresight*, the work intentionally blurs the line between high and low, craft and fine art, history and popular culture. Two sets of custom-designed *papel picado*, the traditional Mexican craft of cut or punched paper, are strung throughout the galleries.

Also debuting in *Stab of Guilt* are 20 mixed-media collages collectively titled *Sunspots by Day, Asteroids by Night* (2023), which incorporate imagery from 19th century star charts made by C. H. F. Peters, who was Hamilton College’s first professor of astronomy from 1858 until his death in 1890. The series builds upon paintings in which Treviño merges historical Western views of the heavens with scientific perspectives of the Maya and Aztecs and his own idiosyncratic naming conventions in the *Celestial Body-ody-ody* series (2020–23).

Other works on view include the *Circumference* series (2019–23), a grid of 119 paintings comprised of circular imagery that, taken together, point to our commonalities across geography and cultures—ancient Aztec glyphs sit comfortably next to depictions of Greek pottery and Indigenous American folk art—as well as embellished paintings on leather, based on ancient codices and featuring a mashup of queer and Mesoamerican imagery.

Adds Tracy L. Adler, Johnson-Pote Director of the Wellin Museum, “The exhibition’s accompanying WellinWorks education space features its own planetarium inspired by the observatories that have existed on campus—both past and present—and reflecting Treviño’s interest in the celestial. We hope that visitors to the exhibition will be encouraged to engage with the themes introduced by Treviño’s exuberant and theatrical work—from looking inward at who we are as individuals to looking outward into the furthest reaches of space.”

Organization

René Treviño: Stab of Guilt is curated by Alexander Jarman, Assistant Curator for Exhibitions and Academic Outreach, Ruth and Elmer Wellin Museum of Art. Research assistance provided by Taylor Scatliffe ’25.

Programming

Friday, February 16, 1:00 p.m.

Virtual Tour of *René Treviño: Stab of Guilt*

Artist René Treviño and exhibition curator Alexander Jarman will lead a virtual preview of the exhibition on Facebook Live. More information: <https://www.facebook.com/events/335920035747313>

Saturday, February 17, 4:00–6:00 p.m.

Opening Reception for *René Treviño: Stab of Guilt*

Join us for an in-person celebration at the Wellin Museum with the artist.

Wednesday, March 6, 4:30 p.m.

Artists in Conversation: René Treviño, Mackenzie Cooley, and Alexander Jarman

For this in-person conversation, artist René Treviño, assistant professor of history Mackenzie Cooley, and exhibition curator Alexander Jarman will explore topics related to *Stab of Guilt*.

Remote audiences can stream the conversation by registering at

https://hamilton.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_5bF6laeHQ6O8n1PJcgJq7A#/registration

About René Treviño

René Treviño (b. 1972, Kingsville, Texas) lives and works in Baltimore, Maryland. His work has been exhibited at the Arlington Arts Center (Virginia), Baltimore Museum of Art, Delaware Center for Contemporary Art (Wilmington), Reginald F. Lewis Museum of Maryland African American History and Culture (Baltimore), Pentimenti Gallery (Philadelphia), Wadsworth Atheneum (Hartford, CT), and White Box (New York City). Treviño is a recipient of the Baltimore Creative Fund Individual Artist Grant and the Trawick Prize. He has been an artist in residence at AIR Serenbe (Serenbe, GA), the Creative Alliance (Baltimore), and the Fine Arts Work Center (Provincetown, MA). Treviño holds a BFA from the School of Visual Arts in New York City and an MFA from the Maryland Institute College of Art in Baltimore.

About the Ruth and Elmer Wellin Museum of Art

A teaching museum on the campus of Hamilton College in Clinton, NY, the Wellin invites visitors to discover the arts and form unexpected connections through groundbreaking exhibitions, a globally representative collection, and engaging programming. The Wellin Museum opened in 2012 with Tracy L. Adler as its founding director. Its 30,537-square-foot building was designed by Machado Silvetti and features a 27-foot-high visible archive, over 5,000 square feet of exhibition space, and other amenities that foster common exchange and learning. The Museum collection includes over 8,000 objects representing a broad range of cultures, historical periods, artistic practices, and movements. Through its exhibitions, public programs, and educational outreach, the Museum promotes interdisciplinary approaches that are vital to a liberal arts education. <https://www.hamilton.edu/wellin>

Support

The Ruth and Elmer Wellin Museum of Art's programs are made possible, in part, with support from the Daniel W. Dietrich '64 Arts Museum Programming Fund; the Johnson-Pote Museum Director Fund; the John B. Root '44 Exhibition Fund; the Edward W. and Grace C. Root Endowment Fund; and the William G. Roehrick '34 Lecture Fund. Additional support for *René Treviño: Stab of Guilt* has been provided by the Daniel W. Dietrich '64 Fund for Innovation in the Arts.

Social Media

Join the conversation on social media by tagging @wellinmuseum and using the hashtags #WellinMuseum, #TreviñoWellin, and #StabofGuiltWellin

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