



IT'S OFFICIAL - Texas State Artists 2015 & 2016

Dornith Doherty, Dario Robleto, Margo Sawyer, and Vincent Valdez

June 25 – August 13, 2016

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE (May 25, 2016) - Holly Johnson Gallery in Dallas is pleased to announce the opening of *IT'S OFFICIAL*, an exhibition honoring the recent appointments of four contemporary artists, as "Texas State Artists for 2015 & 2016". These internationally acclaimed artists include: Dornith Doherty (Southlake), Dario Robleto (Houston), Margo Sawyer (Austin), and Vincent Valdez (San Antonio). A reception for the artists will be held Sat., June 25, from 5 to 8 pm. The exhibit continues through August 13.

The announcement last Spring came from the Texas Commission on the Arts. Appointments were made to the positions of state artists 2-D, state artists 3-D, state musicians, and state poet laureates with a celebration at the Texas State Legislature. Selected for their dedicated commitment to the arts in Texas, the appointees represent the best of Texas' diverse artistic community. This designation is the state's highest recognition for excellence in the arts.

For information about Texas State Artists visit [Texas Commission on the Arts](#).

Dornith Doherty explores the relationship between humans, science, and nature. Her images investigate the contemporary landscape while also commenting on critical issues affecting it. Doherty's extensive body of work explores the subtle yet complex encounters between the natural environment and human interference by focusing her work on specific aspects of landscape and resource preservation. Most recently, her archival pigment prints include seed and plant x-rays that evoke tensions between storage and dispersal, and reproduction and extinction. Her work questions the complicated philosophical, anthropological, and ecological issues surrounding the role of science, technology, and human agency in the context of seed banks.

A 2012 Guggenheim Foundation Fellow, Dornith Doherty was born in Houston, Texas, and received a BA cum laude in Spanish and French language and literature at Rice University in 1980 and an MFA in Photography from Yale University in 1988. In addition to the Guggenheim Fellowship, she has received grants from the Fulbright Foundation, the Japan Foundation, the Society for Contemporary Photography, the Indiana Arts Commission, and the United States Department of the Interior. Her work has been exhibited and collected extensively, both nationally and internationally. She is currently a Distinguished Research Professor at the University of North Texas.

Dario Robleto's prints and installations combine esoteric materials and processes to explore forgotten corners of history, art and science. Robleto has had over 30 solo exhibitions since 1997 and has had works included in many prestigious group shows and collections. His work has been seen most recently in solo exhibitions at the Menil Collection, Houston and the Baltimore Museum of Art. He has received numerous awards, including the 2007 Joan Mitchell Foundation Grant, the 2009 USA Rasmuson Fellowship, and the 2011 Smithsonian Artist Research Fellowship.

Robleto was born in San Antonio in 1972 and currently lives and works in Houston. He received his B.F.A. from the University of Texas, San Antonio, in 1997 and in 1996 attended the Summer School of Music and Art at Yale University. He is currently an Artist Research Fellow at Rice University in Houston.

Margo Sawyer's sculpture investigates the relationship between color, space and transcendence. Art and architecture converge in her works to transform mundane structures into euphoric icons, marrying exquisite materials in unexpected ways to form large public spaces that become intimate refuges. Her recent body of work, *Synchronicity of Color*, includes the lauded work that is a focal point at Houston's Discovery Green.

Margo Sawyer holds a B.A. Honors Degree from the Chelsea School of Art in London and an M.F.A. in sculpture from Yale University. Sawyer has been the recipient of numerous awards including a National Endowment for the Arts Artist Fellowship, two Fulbright Research Awards, the Japan Foundation Fellowship for Artists, and the Louis Comfort Tiffany Award. She has been a fellow of the American Academy in Rome and an ArtPace resident artist in San Antonio. Her sculpture is in the public art collections of the Cities of New York City, Austin, Dallas, San Antonio, and Houston, and at Eskenazi Health in Indianapolis, Indiana. Sawyer is a Professor of Sculpture and Extended Media in the Department of Art & Art History at the University of Texas at Austin.

Vincent Valdez's process takes an expansive approach that goes further than re-staging a lost scene for the history books. His aim is to interpret and respond to the modern world, and to create visual memorials in painting, pastels and graphite as part of the process of bearing witness to loss. Tension holds his images together. The tensions between subject and space, between frenzied detail and meditative state, and between vulnerability and defiance become symbolic. Valdez's work questions what forces hold these subjects in such limbo. These images become an instrument for seeing and a lens for looking at the recurring histories of the modern world.

Valdez grew up in San Antonio and demonstrated talent for drawing at an early age. He received a full scholarship to the Rhode Island School of Design, where he earned his B.F.A. in 2000. In 2004 at age 26, Valdez was the youngest artist to have a solo exhibition at the McNay Museum in San Antonio when *Stations*, his suite of monumental charcoal drawings, was shown. Other exhibition venues include the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, the Snite Museum of Art, Parsons Paris, the Smithsonian Museum of American Art, OSDE Buenos Aires, and the David Winton Bell Gallery at Brown University. A recipient of residencies at the Skowhegan School of Painting and the Kunstlerhaus Bethania in Berlin, Valdez currently serves as Chair of the Drawing and Painting Department at the Southwest School of Art in San Antonio.



Holly Johnson Gallery is located in the Dallas Design District at 1845 Levee Street #100; Dallas, TX 75207. Gallery hours are Tuesday - Saturday, 11 to 5 pm, and by appointment. The gallery is a founding member of CADD – Contemporary Art Dealers of Dallas. For more information contact us at 214-369-0169, or email info@hollyjohnsongallery.com, or visit the website at www.hollyjohnsongallery.com.