

Who Are the Most Underrated Artists, Alive or Dead? 12 Leading Art-World Figures Share Their Picks

We asked leading curators, museum directors, collectors, advisors and fellow artists to name an artist, alive or dead, that people should know more about, and tell us why.

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Work by Daniel Joseph Martinez at the Mona Bismarck American Center, Paris. Photo: Courtesy LAND.

The art world moves fast, with new trends, movements, and names popping up every day. The pace of change—not to mention structural biases—can leave many artists who are worthy of the spotlight in the shadows instead.

We asked 11 leading curators, museum directors, collectors, advisors and fellow artists to name a figure, alive or dead, that people should know more about, and tell us why. Here are their answers.

Daniel Joseph Martinez

The L.A.-based Daniel Joseph Martinez is the most radically innovative and forward thinking Latino artist in the U.S. and he has been producing ground breaking work in photography, sculpture, video and print for more than four decades. He has not been given his due because he eschews all appealing stereotypes associated with Mexican and Chicano culture, which makes his work difficult to categorize and consume, and also because US-born Latino artists lack a collector base, making it very hard for curators to obtain support for exhibitions or museums to acquire his work. People interested in Latino cultures should know about his work and should also be aware of the reasons why artists like Daniel are systematically excluded from mainstream museums collections.

—Coco Fusco, New York-based artist, writer and curator