



Self Help Graphics & Art Names Betty Avila Executive Director

BY Maximiliano Durán POSTED 08/07/18 5:05 PM

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Betty Avila will be the next director of Self Help Graphics & Art, the arts nonprofit based in the Boyle Heights neighborhood of Los Angeles that is best known for its print-making studio.

Avila has been with Self Help since 2015, serving in various roles at the organization, most recently as its acting director. She had previously worked at other L.A. arts institutions, including the Getty Research Center, the Music Center, and the Levitt Pavilion in MacArthur Park.

"If you look at the trajectory of Self Help over the past few years, there's been a real momentum that people are rallying behind," Avila told *ARTnews* by phone. "There have been some major touch-point moments that have put us back on people's radar." Among those are the recent purchase of its current building and the exhibition they organized last fall as part of the Getty Foundation's Pacific Standard Time: LA/LA initiative that looked at Self Help's artistic and cultural community surrounding its annual Día de los Muertos Celebration which it started in 1973.



Betty Avila. NOE MONTES

Avila said the organization is gearing up for celebrations around its 45th year, including the upcoming exhibition "Entre Tinta y Lucha: 45 Years of Self Help Graphics & Art," which opens later this month. The exhibition, organized in partnership with Cal State LA's Fine Arts Gallery, where it will be on view, will chart the artistic output of the organization since it was founded in 1973 by Franciscan nun Sister Karen Bocalero and Mexican and Chicano artists (Carlos Bueno, Antonio Ibañez, and Frank Hernandez). The show will cull from the over 1,000 print editions that Self Help has produced in the years since, and include works by Bocalero, Judith F. Baca, Alma Lopez, Frank Romero, and Wayne Healy, among others.

"It's an interesting moment for Self Help, a bridge almost in our upcoming programming, in which we're looking back at where we've come from, honoring it, and moving the organization forward by building on that legacy," Avila said. "This job has been a dream for me. It's always the place I wanted to land."

She recounted an interaction she had with artist Judithe Hernández around when Avila started at Self Help. "She told me, 'You are standing on the shoulders of giants.' I took that seriously. There's a great responsibility that comes with running this organization. There is a diversity of voices and experiences of artists that come to Self Help and who seek it out and want to work here."

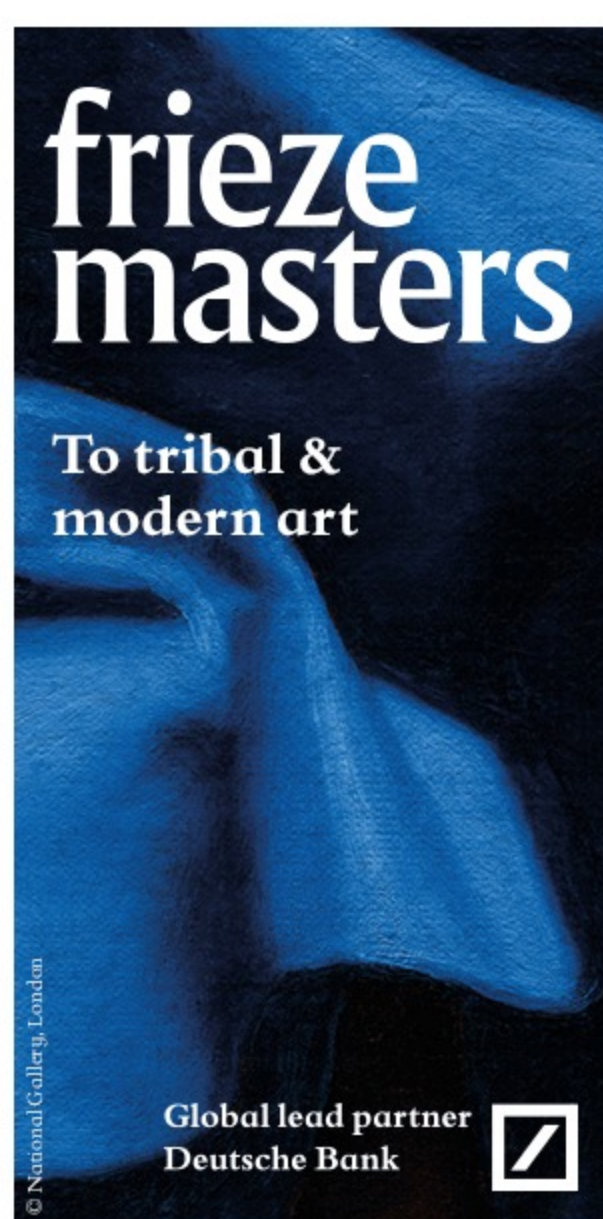
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