



Kiara Aileen Machado
Refugio en las Flores

Opening Reception: Sunday, March 26, 2023 | 1 - 6 PM

at LAUNCH LA

170 S La Brea Ave, Los Angeles, CA 90036

March 26 - May 13, 2023



Asucena. Oil on canvas. 30 x 40 in.

*Crucé la frontera amor
no sé cuando volveré.
Tal vez cuando sea verano,
cuando abuelita Luna y padre Sol
se saluden otra vez
en una madrugada esclareciente,
festejados por todas las estrellas.*

*I crossed the border, love
I don't know when I'll return.
perhaps in the summer,
when grandmother moon and father sun
greet each other again
one luminous dawn,
celebrated by all the stars.*

Rigoberta Menchú Tum, excerpt from *Crucé La Frontera Amor*

Luna Anais Gallery, in partnership with **LAUNCH LA**, is pleased to present ***Refugio en las Flores***, an exhibition of recent works by **Kiara Aileen Machado**. In compositions dense with greenery, camouflaged figures, and references to traditional artesanía from El Salvador, Honduras, and Guatemala, Machado explores the vastness and complexity of Latinx identity. Underneath the sense of calm, beauty, and refuge, the artist confronts a history of colonization, classism, cultural hegemony, and the erasure of Central American identities in the post-colonial Americas. She considers the femme body, agency and personal autonomy, and the restorative strength that is found in the sanctuary of community and ancestral wisdom. The exhibition is on view through May 13th at LAUNCH LA (170 S La Brea Ave, Los Angeles, CA 90036), and there will be an opening reception on **Sunday, March 26 from 1 - 6 PM**.

Machado's latest body of work establishes a dialogue between autobiography and a shared struggle for justice. She uses abstraction and camouflage, embedding figures within thickets of vibrantly-colored flora, with references to traditional Central American handcrafts throughout the compositions. These are woven textiles, nets, and hand-carved woodworks. These are muñecas quitapenas, the handmade figurines originating from the Mayan people of Guatemala. The presence of these objects illuminates a tradition of artmaking that represents Machado's own early beginnings as an artist, honoring her connection to this lineage of artistry, making, and visual culture.

Though hidden or abstracted within these botanical veils, Machado's figures are not in hiding - they are images not of escape but of shelter and sanctuary. The compositions are immersive and multilayered, refocusing the idea of refuge to the powerful act of manifesting new space in an unjust world. Machado's depictions of lush greenery and the colors of Guatemala and El Salvador all speak to her connection to these lands, the memories and customs shared through generations, and the constant struggle to upend the xenophobia, racism, and violence that have been wrought upon those born within systems of oppression.

Machado navigates the complexity of cultural understanding and community healing; she acknowledges the true depth of heritage and the importance of preserving a sense of solidarity with one's forebears, dissolving the arbitrary boundaries between so-called "fine art" and indigenous craft traditions. Enmeshing her figures in symbols from her upbringing, Machado at once celebrates her heritage while confronting the seemingly insurmountable reality of systems hardened against liberation, which are armed to uphold the violent worldview underlying the US empire. The artist weaves a personal story, a people's history, and expansive social critique altogether in a body of work that illuminates a shared language of peace, strength, and resistance.

Kiara Aileen Machado is a contemporary artist born in Lynwood who depicts and explores the structures and liberation of identity, femininity, and culture in her work. She obtained her bachelor's degree in painting and drawing from California State University Long Beach. Her artwork has been seen in museums across the United States, including the South Gate Museum (California), Buckham Gallery (Michigan), Dupont Underground (Washington DC), John & Geraldine Lilley Museum (Nevada), UCF Art

Gallery (Florida), Stamp Gallery (Maryland), Frederic Jameson Gallery (North Carolina), and recently at Band of Vices (California) as part of the 'In the Paint' art initiative commenced by the Los Angeles Lakers to identify and support contemporary LA-based artists. She has recently exhibited work internationally in Florence, Paris, Frankfurt, Berlin and San Salvador.

Luna Anaïs Gallery is a nomadic art gallery in Los Angeles that opened during the pandemic. The gallery's goal is to create dedicated exhibitions and to provide a platform for women, trans, and non-binary artists working today. The gallery also seeks to build a base of young collectors, who we encourage in turn to increase widespread support for underrepresented artists.

Refugio en las Flores will be on view until May 13, 2023.

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