

LUIS A. SAHAGÚN

HACIENDO CARAS





Magia Madre, 2021, Graphite and charcoal
on Arches Rives BFK paper, 80 x 81 in



En luto por un divino Socorro, 2020, Gorilla glue, beads, and San Martin de Porres prayer cards, 24 x 25 x 12 in



Jose Morales, 2020, Beads, Virgin Mary statue, acrylic, chalk, rope, gorilla glue, and boat, 36 x 45 x 6 in



Petición Para San Ignacio de Loyola, 2020,
Rosaries, beads, gorilla glue & spray paint, 70 x 17 x 5 in

Latchkey Gallery is proud to present *Haciendo Caras* by Luis A. Sahagún, his first solo exhibition with the gallery. Composed of drawing, painting, sculpture, and performance, Sahagún's practice is a visual manifestation of personal history and mythical heritage.

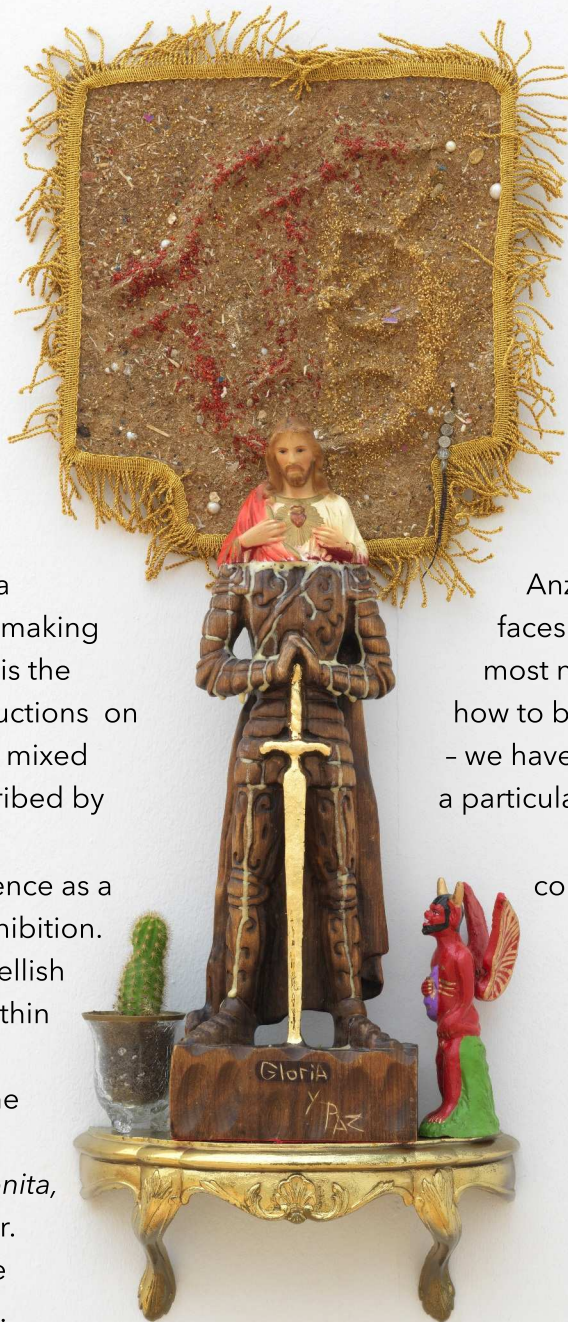
Born in Guadalajara, Mexico, Sahagún immigrated to the United States at the age of four.

Undocumented, Sahagún grew up in communities victimized by gang-related violence. As the grandson of a curandero apprentice, Sahagún transforms his art making into a mystical instrument that conjures indigenous spiritualities to embody the aesthetics of cultural resistance and colonial disruption.

Haciendo Caras examines the various symbolic manifestations of the face. Its topography, carved by the blade of experience, is composed of layers formed by the divine spirits of Anzaldúa's introduction to an anthology of the same title, "making faces means to put on a face, ... most notably inscribed by social structures, marked with instructions on how to be. ... As mestizas - biological and/or culturally mixed - we have different surfaces for each aspect of identity, each inscribed by

Sahagún's decade of experience as a construction worker and laborer is evident throughout the exhibition. Raw wood, metal, rope, foam, silicone and glue embellish the portraits of his ancestors. Within the terrain of each canvas exists meticulous charcoal drawings of conjured works in *Haciendo Caras* is artistic and ancestral journey, none more so than *Maria Bonita*, a colossal Standing at nearly six feet in height, the figure mimics the majesty of the byzantine illustration of Maria Antioch. Her imperial pose is shrouded in an ornate mantel

made up of construction materials and beads, honoring the material's ancient use in rituals of birth and death. Contributing to her regal stature, she holds a specter adorned by a pre-Columbian vessel at the finial. Crowning her head is the ubiquitous Chicago Bulls baseball cap joining the various surfaces of Sahagún's identity and the subcultures that exist within.



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Gloria y Paz, 2020, Sawdust, charcoal, personal objects, beads, tassel, found object, gold leaf, 26 x 17 x 6 in

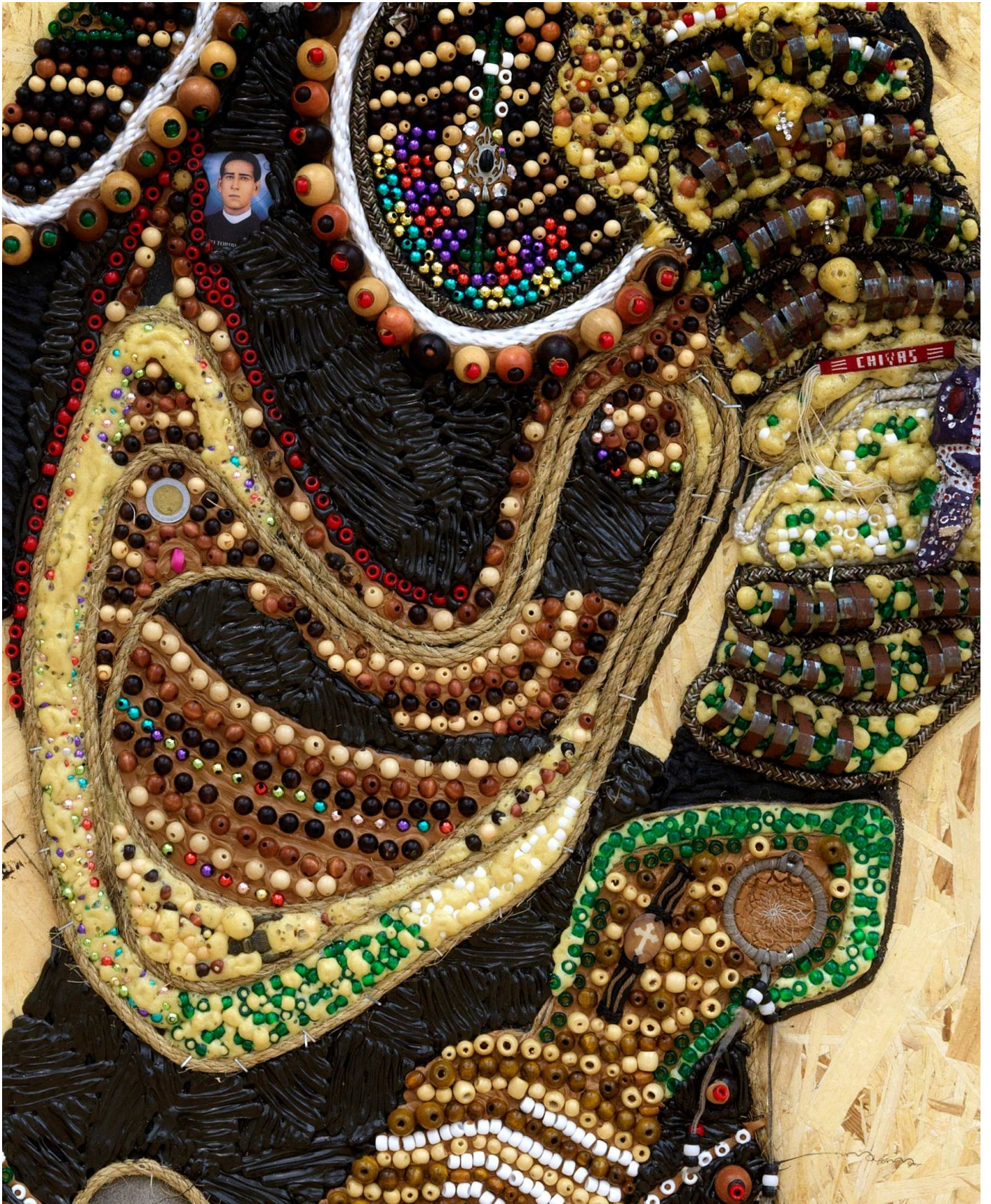
LUIS A. SAHAGÚN
Haciendo Caras
Mar 25 - Apr 30, 2022







Sangre Disfrazada (Blood Costume), 2022, Silicone, charcoal, beads, hemp, on wood, , 80 x 56 x 3 in





Cicatrices de Un Malcriado, 2019, Silicone, charcoal,
beads, hemp, on wood, 75 x 33 x 6 in



Madre Bonita, Madre del Arma 2022, Silicone, charcoal, beads, hemp, on wood, , 81 x 56 x 2.5 in

Against Domination: Material Distortion and Turbulent Faiths

By Alex Santana

Luis A. Sahgún's works mine personal mythologies to underscore how the historical violence of religion and colonial conquest appear in our own lives, as well as those of our family and extended communities. In multimedia works that drip accumulatively, protrude from the surface, and juxtapose unlikely elements, Sahgún evokes the colloquial items that inform the ideologies imposed on us. The continual reappearance of stretched, distorted faces in his work further suggests how these imposed social orders manifest as psychological distresses, creating a liminal space with possibilities for healing through ancestral connection.

Works like *En Luto Por Un Divino Socorro* and *Peticion Para San Ignacio de Loyola* employ a strategy of material accumulation, which provides the work with a formidable sense of physical and emotional density. Through embedded ornate beading and the gathering of plastic rosaries, both works address the brutality of colonial hegemony, specifically its enforcement through Catholicism. Illustrations of San Ignacio de Loyola and San Martin de Porres cement this criticism through allusions to two saints who represent vastly different principles: the former of a Spanish Jesuit order, and the latter (turned upside down), the Peruvian patron saint of mixed peoples and racial harmony. Another sculptural work titled *Gloria y Paz* makes a similar point through the use of Jesus Christ, whose figure is fused with that of a colonizer wielding a sword, alluding to the bloody conquest of the Americas justified in the name of the cross.

The inclusion of found objects in *Gloria y Paz* frames the main protagonist with poignant symbols, including a halo made of sawdust, a spiked cactus, and a horned devil figurine. In this work and others, the amalgamation and clashing of diverse sculptural materials and found objects evokes the idea of construction. Specifically, the construction of ideology, but also the profound potential of physical construction sites and work zones, which thematically reappears in Sahagun's practice. In *Maria Bonita*, *Maria Del Alma* this is apparent, most obviously through the use of oriented strand board as the background for the painted portrait of the artist's mother. In this monumental work, the main figure is stately and elegant, like a saint who has been recently beatified. The combination of colloquial construction materials with ornate bead work and other delicate ornamentation lends a personalized quality to the tender portrait, and the love is unmistakable.



Ojo Celestial (Celestial Sight), 2022, Charcoal, Silicone, Beads, & Gorilla Glue on paper, 33 x 44 x 4 in

Love--like chaos and faith and other turbulences--is an emotional vehicle for the exploration of personal histories as well as broader societal systems and symbols. Bringing to play a more restrained color palette, in works like *Magia Madre* and *Ojo Celestial* Sahgún explores the emotional intensity of conflicting ideologies through surrealist disembodiment. In both works, human faces are stretched and distorted, limbs are severed, and heads are left floating in space. In this realm, a spiritual connection informs an ancestral reconstruction, borrowing facial features from members of Sahagun's own family, past and present. Composite human faces hover above chaotic oceans and alien landscapes, attempting to make sense of the world(s) they inhabit. These works, among others in *Haciendo Caras*, illustrate the profound tension between love and conflict, ultimately underscoring their coexistence on the same plane: messy, beautiful, and human.





Requiem for a Mirrored Ancestor, 2019, Beads, rope, silicone, gorilla glue, screws, charcoal, wood, jute, acrylic, & oil, 48 x 48 x 12 in



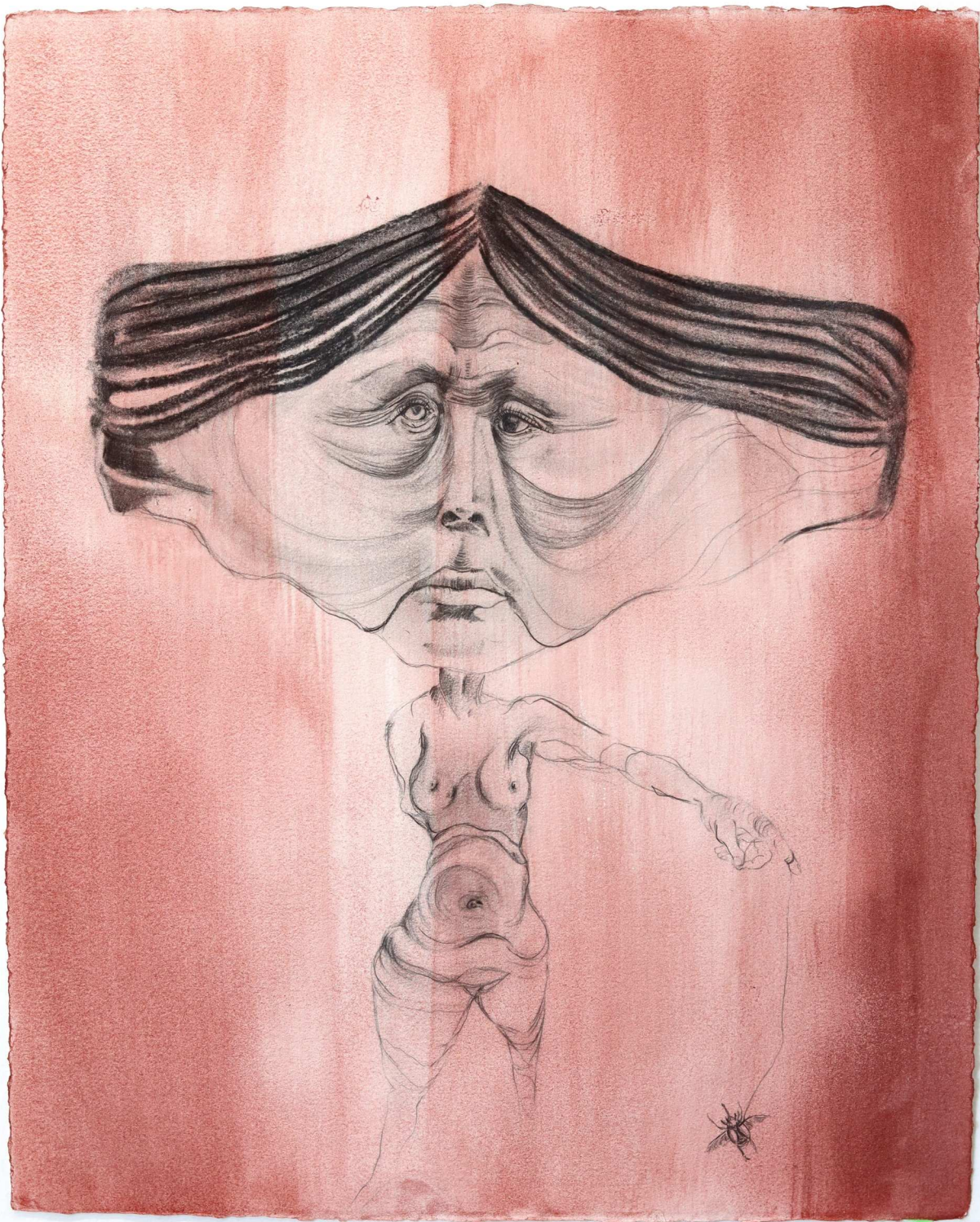
Ojo Celestial, 2022, Charcoal, silicone, beads, & gorilla glue on paper, 33 x 44 x 4 in



Revelación Ancestral I (Ancestral Revelation I), 2021,
Compressed charcoal and oil on BFK paper, 20 x 16 in



Revelación Ancestral II (Ancestral Revelation II), 2021,
Compressed charcoal and oil on BFK paper, 20 x 16 in



*Revelación Ancestral III (Ancestral Revelation III), 2021,
Compressed charcoal and oil on BFK paper, 20 x 16 in*

