



Latchkey Gallery
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Border Watcher II, 2023, oil & acrylic on canvas, 24" x 24" in.

Land of Wolves: Alejandro Macias
February 23 - March 31, 2024
Gallery Hours: Thurs - Sat: 12pm - 6pm & Sun: 12pm - 4pm

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE (New York, NY) – LatchKey Gallery, in partnership with CALA Alliance (Phoenix, AZ), is pleased to present *Land of Wolves*. This exhibition showcases new work by Alejandro Macias (b. 1987, Brownsville, TX), produced during CALA Alliance's 2023 Regional Artist-in-Residence program. *Land of Wolves* is the artist's New York City debut and the first show with LatchKey Gallery and will run from February 23 - March 31, 2024 at 173 Henry Street, New York, NY 10002. The opening reception will be Friday, February 23 from 6:00pm - 8:00pm.

Macias roots his practice in the ambiguity of the in-between—of identity, nationhood, and place. His paintings and drawings address themes of migration and assimilation, rendering a unique impression of the US/Mexico borderlands and foregrounding the brutal and unjust policies that characterize this space. The artist positions himself as a documentarian, depicting the objects, people, and geographies that make up the dynamic yet complex region.

Many of the works in *Land of Wolves* feature bifurcated maps, signposts, and portraits of law enforcement. These works serve as vignettes of the borderlands, often revealing the oppositions and inherent contradictions that exist within the region. The exhibition's title, borrowed from the 2015 film *Sicario*, underscores Macias's interest in interrogating representations of the borderlands in media and public consciousness. Though a contested, bicultural space, Macias draws attention to the narratives that disseminate across cultures to form a dominant idea of the borderlands in the American imagination.

In a series of works referencing the US flag, Macias creates a liminal space within the work itself by splitting the work across multiple panels and drawing attention to the space between them. For the artist, negative space or shifts in medium and iconography are critical aspects of the work. In paneled works such as *LIFE, LIBERTY, HAPPINESS* (2023), the craggy edges of splintered wood echo the almost 2,000 miles of the continental border. In contrast, smooth, industrial highway signs jut out of the bottommost section of the work, exposing the wall behind it. In a series of smaller wooden panels, Macias replicates the fissure between boards, with unique roadway signs bearing quotes from films released on both sides of the border.

In his portraits, Macias is profoundly interested in coupling seemingly oppositional elements in his sitters. In *Border Watcher* (2023), the subject wears a pressed and rigid border patrol uniform. While their identity is shielded by a multicolored serape—this pattern suggests that the sitter is of Mexican descent. The ongoing *Nopal en la Frente* series also depict border patrol officers, through precise graphite drawings paired with frenetic and gestural approaches in pastel. The derogatory title, a slur for Mexican Americans that shy away from their cultural heritage, signals that these officers, too, hold roots from the other side.

The duality of Macias's compositions highlights the inherent friction that people of the borderlands hold within them. In many ways, the portraits, signs, and maps are physical manifestations of this rupture. Taken as a whole, Macias's work asks us to consider the multiplicities of identities we may hold and how they might be in conflict with each other.



ABOUT THE ARTIST & ORGANIZATIONS

Alejandro Macias (b. 1987, Brownsville, TX) received his BA from the University of Texas at Brownsville in 2008 and his MFA in 2-D Studio Art from the University of Texas – Pan American in 2012. Macias has enjoyed solo exhibitions at Louise Hopkins Underwood Center for the Arts, Lubbock, TX (2019); Presa House Gallery, San Antonio, TX (2020); and the Tucson Museum of Art, Tucson, AZ (2021). He has been part of group exhibitions at the Visual Arts Center, University of Texas, Austin, TX (2020); Mexic-Arte Museum, Austin, TX (2020); Amarillo Museum of Art, Amarillo, TX (2021); Carlsbad Museum of Art, Carlsbad, NM (2021); Las Cruces Museum of Art, Las Cruces, NM (2022); ASU Art Museum, Tempe Arizona (2022); and the Phoenix Art Museum, Arizona (2023). Macias has been the recipient of notable residencies at Vermont Studio Center, Johnson, VT (2018); Chateau d'Orquevaux, Orquevaux, France (2019); The Studios at MASS MoCA, North Adams, MA (2020); Wassaic Project, Wassaic, NY (2022); and CALA Alliance, Phoenix, AZ (2023). He was recently featured in the West Issue #156 of *New American Paintings*, juried by Lauren R. O'Connell, Curator of Contemporary Art at the Scottsdale Museum of Contemporary Art. Macias currently serves as an Assistant Professor of Painting and Drawing at the University of Arizona School of Art in Tucson, AZ.

CALA Alliance (Celebración Artística de las Américas) is a Latinx arts organization based in Phoenix. CALA Alliance collaborates with artists and arts organizations to nurture artistic talent, focusing on artists from the Latin American diaspora. The organization advances its mission through innovative artist residencies, artist commissions, community workshops, and public programming that position the Metro Phoenix region as a fruitful site that acknowledges and contributes to the promotion of Latinx art throughout the United States. For more information about CALA Alliance, visit calaalliance.org.

LatchKey Gallery supports emerging artists who challenge historical narratives; helping shape cultural conversations to create a more diverse and dynamic society that reflects the complexity of our world. Past exhibitions include *Sweet Castrator*, a solo exhibition by Wynnie Mynerva, *Both at Once* with John Rivas and Raelis Vasquez, and *MIRROR MIRROR* with artists February James and Shona McAndrew. *A Bronx Tale* was a unique studio exhibition experience for collectors, creatives and art enthusiasts including artists Dario Calmese, Alteronce Gumbly, Lucia Hierro and Tariku Shiferaw. *100 Works* was produced in collaboration with ElectroPositive and Art Noir featuring works by Derrick Adams, Mario Moore and Shervone Neckles. LatchKey Gallery opened in 2018, is situated at 173 Henry Street in the LES and led by founder Amanda Uribe. LatchKey Gallery is a proud member of the New Art Dealers Alliance.