

LUIS A. SAHAGÚN *La Magia del Pueblo*

May 10 – June 9, 2024

Opening Reception Friday, May 10, 6-8pm



Luis Sahagun, *Soul Energy no. 01*, 2024

Palo Santo, Charcoal, oil, fire, and smoke on panel, 20 x 16 in.

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE** (New York, NY) - [LatchKey Gallery](https://www.latchkeygallery.com) is honored to present *La Magia Del Pueblo*, the second solo exhibition by Luis Álvaro Sahagún with Latchkey Gallery. Luis Sahagún is a multi-disciplinary artist who creates drawings, sculptures, and paintings with a socially engaged art practice transforming art into an act of cultural and spiritual reclamation. *La Magia Del Pueblo* will be on view from May 10 - June 9, 2024 at LatchKey Gallery located at 173 Henry Street, New York, NY 10002. The artist reception will take place on Friday, May 10 from 6-8PM.

As a practitioner of Curanderismo, a healing practice found in the indigenous cultures of Mexico, Sahagun transforms the gallery to a spiritual experience. This inclusion functions as a healing of oppressed identity, through histories of generational trauma, and finding ways to decolonize the self.

Newly produced paintings explore the spirit nagual, a mystical guardian and guiding force deeply rooted in indigenous traditions and shamanic beliefs. The choice to portray a complex spiritual aspect of the self in a physical medium identifies and represents the complexity of the human condition, as well as embodying the layered presence of this aspect of ancient traditions.

A large part in many of Sahagún's paintings is Paulo Santo, burnt in ancient practices. This ritual, traditionally not preservational in nature, is reoriented by the ability to transfer it onto canvas. This transcends the physical ephemerality of burning it, into something completely permanent. Using this medium falls out of the typical art practice, and brings the viewer into the ritual, pushing the boundaries of possibility for the piece. Through these emotional works, Sahagún preserves a practice, literally, and amplifies its permanence, despite the historical erasure of ancient practices and ideas. The Chuyel, sacred soul energies, stay pressed onto the work, in ways impossible in the practice itself.

Portraits of members of his community celebrate their personhood, surrounding the subjects with contemporary artifacts of Mexico, as well as indigenous influences. This artistic practice is combined with the spiritual, as every subject is treated by Sahagún while being drawn. Woven throughout *La Magia Del Pueblo*, is a sense of resistance, not in portraying pain, but in the beauty of indigenous identity and spirituality. Melding together the practice of healing, with the practice of creating, the pieces are a product of culture, as well as the inner self.

## **ABOUT THE ARTISTS:**

Luis A. Sahagún (B. 1982) Born in Guadalajara, Jalisco, Mexico, he creates paintings, performances, and sculptures that confront the palpable inescapability of race, transforming them into acts of cultural reclamation. Like DNA strings of mestizaje, his practice sits at the intersections of contradictions – indian/conqueror, violence/unity, and ancient/contemporary. As the grandson of a Curandera and a practitioner of Curanderismo, Luis makes art that conjures indigenous spiritualities to embody personal histories, cultural

resistance, and colonial disruption. As a formerly undocumented immigrant and laborer, Luis reveals the aesthetics of relocation and transgenerational trauma by utilizing building materials such as silicone, lumber, drywall, concrete, and hardware - symbols representing working class immigrants.

Luis has exhibited widely at venues including the Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago, the Anderson Museum of Contemporary Art (Roswell, NM), Latchkey Gallery NYC, Charlie James Gallery (Los Angeles), Arvika Art Gallery (Sweden), The National Museum of Mexican Art (Chicago), and the Chicago Cultural Center, among others.

His work is included in the Fidelity Collection of Boston, Alta Med Collection of Los Angeles, and the Beth Rudin DeWoody Collection, among others. Sahagun received his undergraduate degree from Southern Illinois University-Carbondale and his MFA from Northern Illinois University.

His work has been examined in publications including Artforum, the Los Angeles Times, Newcity, New American Paintings, and Hyperallergic. His practice has been spotlighted as having a unique voice helping to shape, shift, and touch the world on radio, podcasts, and television networks such as MundoFOX, NBC, UNIVISION and WBEZ-NPR.

Sahagun has held residencies at Roswell, NM; Oaxaca, Mexico; the Chicago Artist Coalition; Mana Contemporary in Miami; The Sally and Don Lucas Artists Residency Program (Montalvo), Saratoga, CA; and was an Artist in Residence for Critical Race Studies at Michigan State University. He is a 3Arts awardee and a 2023 United States Artist Fellow and is currently the Center for Craft's WNC Artists in Residence.