

OCTOBER 20, 2022

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

LUIS SAHAGUN

RIDING THE THREE-HEADED SERPENT

969 CHUNG KING ROAD

NOVEMBER 5 – DECEMBER 17, 2022

ARTIST'S RECEPTION:

NOVEMBER 5th, 6-9pm

DJ SET BY DJ BROWN STARSHIP

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Charlie James Gallery is pleased to present *Riding the Three-Headed Serpent*, an exhibition by Chicago-based artist Luis Alvaro Sahagun Nuño. *Riding the Three-Headed Serpent* presents new works that interrogate how contemporary portraiture allied with Mesoamerican indigenous healing practices can serve as limpias or soul retrievals. In creating this body of work Luis worked to heal his family's and community's acute spiritual distress rooted in three diseases inflicted by colonization, white supremacy, and systemic oppression: Susto (soul lost or weeping soul), Bilis (rage), and Envidia (envy of the power of the oppressor).

Luis' family pictures are rendered in charcoal and adhered to oriented strand board (OSB), a construction material made from leftover parts of knotty or crooked trees. The OSB is then layered with resin beads infused with chants, yerbas or plant medicine, sea shells, crystals, and miniature family photos. Each piece also contains small sculptures created through ritual connection with spirit guides, which allow Luis to journey into the spirit world to identify the specific animal medicine required for each sitter. The portraits or limpias become shamanic topographical maps guiding intuitive ceremonies for the release of harmful emotional energy.



Luis Sahagun, Soul Retrieval no. 3 (Luis Alvaro "Alvarito" Sahagún Nuño), charcoal, paper, tigers eye, obsidian crystals, resin, beads, gorilla glue, sea shells, rope, joint compound, gold leaf, family portraits, found objects, and caulk, 30 x 15 x 2 inches, 2022

Luis references and re-uses 17th century royal Spanish portraits to spotlight, celebrate, and put in positions of power stories of indigenous survival. As a means to embolden the sitter's beauty and produce grandeur, the works of art are finished with bonded together fragments of ornamental baroque-style frames.

Riding the Three-Headed Serpent explores how craft, spirituality, and labor interweave to celebrate the complexities of Latinidad/Latinx identity, immigration/migration, and decoloniality, connecting Luis' rich ancestral history, lived experience and creative practice to intervene in this racially charged moment.

Luis Sahagun was born in Guadalajara, Jalisco, Mexico in 1982. He has exhibited at venues including the Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, IL; Chicago Cultural Center, Chicago, IL; Anderson Museum of Contemporary Art, Roswell, NM; The National Museum of Mexican Art, Chicago, IL; the International Exposition of Contemporary Art (expo) Chicago, IL; DePaul Art Museum, Chicago, IL; amongst many others. Additionally, his work has been covered in publications such as: ArtForum, ChicagoMag, NewCity Magazine, New American Paintings, and the Chicago Tribune. His practice has also been spotlighted on the radio, podcasts, and television networks such as MundoFOX, UNIVISION and WBEZ-NPR. Sahagun has held residencies at Roswell, NM, Oaxaca, MX, Chicago Artist Coalition, Mana Contemporary in Miami, and was an Artist in Residence for Critical Race Studies at Michigan State University. A 3Arts Awardee, he received his undergraduate degree from Southern Illinois University- Carbondale, an MFA at Northern Illinois University.

Artist Instagram: @luis_alvaro_sahagun

Gallery website: www.cjamesgallery.com

Gallery Instagram: @charliejamesgallery