

**Maia Cruz Palileo**

SATOR ROTAS

March 13 – April 26, 2025

Los Angeles

Press Release

David Kordansky Gallery is pleased to present *SATOR ROTAS*, its first exhibition of new work by Maia Cruz Palileo. The exhibition will occupy two spaces at the gallery's Los Angeles location, and will include paintings, ceramic sculptures, and works on paper, shedding light on the multi-faceted nature of the artist's project and their poetic engagement with the Filipino diaspora. *SATOR ROTAS* is on view at 5130 W. Edgewood Pl. from March 13 through April 26, 2025. An opening reception will be held on Thursday, March 13 from 6 to 8 PM.

Palileo looks at their own Filipino heritage to better understand the routes by which their family arrived in the United States, but also as a way of entering into deeper communication with their own psychological and imaginative responses to the contemporary world. In each phase of Palileo's work, they give shape to otherwise invisible forces that animate landscapes, drive historical change, and enrich—and complicate—human lives.

*SATOR ROTAS* features work Palileo has made since their visit to the Philippines at the beginning of 2024, when they were able to have firsthand experiences of environments that, as someone born in the US, they had predominantly encountered through archival documentation and secondhand family accounts. A whole new set of sense impressions has therefore transformed the raw material available to them on both conscious and unconscious levels, lending increased physicality to a practice already notable for its attunement to the sculptural qualities of paint.

Such impressions are not limited, however, to the visual or even the tactile. They also include more intuitive perceptions that arose when Palileo was able to connect myths, legends, and folklore shared by their family with the natural landscapes of the Philippines, resulting in an expanded, multi-dimensional sense of place. Several paintings are informed by time spent around Mount Banahaw, a slumbering volcano long considered a holy pilgrimage site in the Philippines. Palileo renders images of dense forest scenes, root systems, and branching forms of trees, providing opportunities for intricate layering and the creation of suggestive, mystery-laden openings where the unruliness of life bursts forth, seemingly of its own accord.

The exhibition's palindromic title draws attention to ideas of reflection and mirroring that appear throughout the works on view. In the horizontally oriented work, *Like a Shadow That Cannot Walk* (2025), Palileo bisects the painting so that when viewed in one direction, orange and pink swaths appear as water atop which a boat is floating. When viewed in the other direction, however, the orange and pink become a sunset sky, with its boat and figures reflected in the dark waters beneath. Similarly, the painting *Revir* (2024), whose title is the word "river" spelled backwards, draws connections to sinister ideas of the "upside down world" as it relates to colonialism, prompting the viewer to interrogate what it is they're seeing and to not be easily fooled by a first impression.

In *Springtime Again* (2024), a monumental diptych, Palileo establishes an optical rhythm in which vertical

striations create an effect akin to double vision. Like vintage stereo cards, Palileo creates two nearly identical spliced landscapes that, when presented side-by-side, allude to a third, imagined landscape. This work also exemplifies the ways in which collage, as a process and typology, influences Palileo's approach to image-making. Here, a repeated pattern of dark, tree-like vertical impressions approximates the negative space that results when cutting out strips of paper. *Springtime Again*, like several other works on view, pulls imagery directly from postcards—objects that have historically represented, or misrepresented, faraway places from a colonially skewed perspective. Postcards and stereo cards have an inherent relationship to both image and experience, which makes them an ideal reference for Palileo, whose work considers the motivations behind historic documentation and image-making, just as much as they consider the physical embodiments of one's senses.

Understanding the invisible, like travel or other sensorial events, plays a large part in Palileo's project, prompting questions around what experiences are invisible and what can be rendered visible. As a whole, the works in this exhibition offer a parallel understanding from both lived accounts—touching trees, walking down a street you've mostly seen in photos—and flattened images in an archive. It's through this parallel approach that Palileo creates paintings that appear mirrored, spliced, or otherwise bifurcated to approximate the experience of understanding a place and people through indirect methods, thereby gaining a closer understanding of their own family history and of themselves.

Maia Cruz Palileo (b. 1979, Chicago) has been the subject of solo exhibitions at Cummer Museum, Jacksonville, Florida (2023); Kimball Art Center, Park City, Utah (2022); Wattis Institute for Contemporary Arts, San Francisco (2021); and American University Museum at the Katzen Arts Center, Washington, D.C. (2019), among others. Recent group exhibitions include *Spirit House*, Cantor Arts Center at Stanford University (2024); *Seven Rooms and a Garden*, Moderna Museet, Skeppsholmen, Stockholm (2023); *Spirit in the Land*, Nasher Museum of Art at Duke University, Durham, North Carolina (2023); *The Outwin: American Portrait Today*, Smithsonian National Portrait Gallery, Washington, D.C. (2022); *A Point Stretched: Views on Time*, San José Museum of Art, California (2022); and *Our Blue Planet: Global Visions of Water*, Seattle Art Museum (2022), among many others. Their work is in the permanent collections of institutions including the Cummer Museum, Jacksonville, Florida; San José Museum of Art, California; TANG Art Foundation, Hong Kong; Fredriksen Collection, National Museum, Oslo, Norway; Nasher Museum of Art at Duke University, Durham, North Carolina; Speed Art Museum, Louisville, Kentucky; and Chapman University, Orange, California. Palileo lives and works in Brooklyn, New York.