

# LUIS DE JESUS LOS ANGELES

1110 Mateo Street, Los Angeles, CA 90021  
213 395 0762 | gallery@luisdejesus.com |  
luisdejesus.com

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

**Hugo Crosthwaite: *Caravan***  
**Gallery 2 & Gallery 3**  
**January 14 – March 4, 2023**  
**Opening Reception: Saturday, January 21, 4 to 7 PM**

**Media Contact:** Stacie Martinez  
[stacie@luisdejesus.com](mailto:stacie@luisdejesus.com)  
213-395-0762

Luis De Jesus Los Angeles is very pleased to announce **Hugo Crosthwaite: *Caravan***, an exhibition of new paintings, sculptures, and videos, on view in Gallery 2 and Gallery 3 from January 14 through March 4, 2023. An opening reception will be held on Saturday, January 21 from 4 to 7 pm.

Drawing from his own experiences as a citizen living on the U.S./Mexico-border, Hugo Crosthwaite has spent the past twenty years documenting the endless ebb and flow of humanity between Tijuana and San Diego. Each day, thousands of migrants and refugees trek across this great divide. With his sketchbook and camera in hand, Crosthwaite captures their portraits and personal stories while they stand in line or sit on a bus or park bench waiting to cross.

The works in *Caravan* speak to the harsh reality faced by migrants as they make the treacherous journey to the border in search of the American Dream. This is a reality that few of us have experienced personally, yet stories of the vulnerability, disenfranchisement, and violence faced at the southern border continue to make bold headlines every week while year after year political stump speeches stoke fear and prejudice.

As an installation, ***Caravan*** is comprised of a series of wooden pedestals, or towers, each holding five individually hand-crafted and hand-painted ceramic figurines resembling ancient Mayan idols onto which Crosthwaite has drawn migrants' faces. It is installed in a meandering line that follows the contours of the border wall between San Diego and Tijuana, and is accompanied by a five-minute stop-motion drawing animation video. The video references the politicization of the term "caravan" as a way of dehumanizing these aliens. Crosthwaite's haunting ceramic figurines re-center the migratory routes and the flesh of asylum-seekers in physicality and empathy.

In a new series of large-scale paintings on canvas titled ***Manifest Destiny*** the artist re-introduces the use of color in his work, last employed some twenty years ago. In these works, Crosthwaite takes inspiration from *American Progress*, the 1872 painting by John Gast that serves as an allegory for Manifest Destiny and American westward expansion. In three of the paintings a central female figure—Columbia, Lady Liberty, and the Virgen of Guadalupe—personifying the hopes and dreams of a future, lead migrants facing great adversity across the desert wilderness to an uncertain destiny.

A second series of smaller paintings, titled ***Borderlands***, and rendered more typically in black and white with acrylic, ink and graphite on panel capture the eclectic architectural aesthetic of Tijuana in detail, contrasting its intimacy and chaos with idealized aspects of the migrants' desired life beyond the border. These paintings, aspects of which are featured in the video, explore notions of the border and migration through a combination of figurative representation, abstraction, surrealism, and pop elements.

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Also included in this exhibition, and marking its Los Angeles debut, is Crosthwaite's stop-motion drawing animation, *A Portrait of Berenice Sarmiento Chávez*, which was awarded First Prize in the Smithsonian National Portrait Gallery's Outwin Boochever Portrait Competition in 2019. The video recounts the story of a young Mexican woman who ventured north across the border multiple times in search of the American Dream.

When Crosthwaite met Chávez during one of her many attempts, she embellished her story with elements of exaggeration, fantasy, and violence. "We are defined by the stories that we tell ourselves," he says, "either real or imagined, to deal with difficult situations in our lives. I have left the video open to interpretation just as Berenice left me with her vague and unsettling story." The repeated drawing and erasure in Sarmiento Chávez' stop motion portrait can be seen to represent not only her story, but the U.S./México border itself—a constant reopening of a scar that wants to heal but can't.

Hugo Crosthwaite was born 1971 in Tijuana and spent his formative years in Rosarito, Baja California, Mexico. An American citizen with family on both sides of the border, he graduated from San Diego State University in 1997 with a BA in Applied Arts. He was awarded First Prize in the 2019 Smithsonian National Portrait Gallery's Outwin Boochever Portrait Competition for his stop-motion animated video "A Portrait of Berenice Sarmiento Chavez, and subsequently the portrait commission for Dr. Anthony S. Fauci, another stop-motion animation portrait that debuted recently at the NPG. In addition, he is also winner of the 2021 San Diego Art Prize, and the Grand Prize at the 2014 XI FEMSA Monterrey Biennial, MX.

Crosthwaite's works are included in the permanent collections of the Smithsonian National Portrait Gallery, Washington, D.C.; Morgan Library and Museum, New York; Los Angeles County Museum of Art; Orange County Museum of Art, Newport Beach, CA; Museum of Contemporary Art, San Diego, CA; San Diego Museum of Art, CA; Museum of Latin American Art, Long Beach, CA; Boca Raton Museum of Art, FL; the National Museum of Mexican Art, Chicago, IL; University of Arkansas Art Gallery, Little Rock, AK; FEMSA Collection, Mexico; CECUT/Centro Cultural Tijuana, Mexico; and private collections in the U.S. and around the world.

For further information, including images and previews, please call 213-395-0762, or email: [gallery@luisdejesus.com](mailto:gallery@luisdejesus.com).

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