

# LUIS DE JESUS LOS ANGELES

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

**KARLA DIAZ: *Mujer Valiente y Los Diablitos (The Brave Woman and The Little Devils)***

**April 27 – June 8, 2024**

**Opening Reception and Performance:**

**Saturday, April 27, 5–8 p.m.**

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Luis De Jesus Los Angeles is pleased to announce **KARLA DIAZ: *Mujer Valiente y Los Diablitos (The Brave Woman and The Little Devils)***, the artist's second solo exhibition with the gallery, on view from April 27 through June 8, 2024. An opening reception featuring a live musical performance of the artist's own corrido (co-written with César Castro, Jarochelo, and Chuy Sandoval) will be held on April 27, 2024, from 5 to 8PM.

Karla Diaz is known for her storytelling kaleidoscopic paintings, which she began making to chart memories, dreams, and whims during her recovery from a stroke. Her healing journey has resulted in a prolific series of works that have evolved into a playful yet formidable anthology of Latinx and Mexican-American experiences in Southern California. Diaz's surreal paintings chronicle a collective unconscious of cultural iconography, pop references, current events, and familial dynamics and traditions that shape the worldview of the artist and her communities. In Diaz's latest series, she expands her visual storytelling to encompass music and performance through the Northern Mexican genre of narrative ballads, the *corrido*.

**KARLA DIAZ: *Mujer Valiente y Los Diablitos (The Brave Woman and The Little Devils)*** invites you to the artist's fantasy world of her alter ego, *Mujer Valiente*, the lead singer of the band, *Los Diablitos*, and their tour through various beloved locations in East LA, from Mariachi Plaza to Whittier Boulevard. The exhibition elaborates on the storytelling of the corrido, where the artist has flipped its traditional tropes to empower women. Historically, corridos have been used as a forum for oral histories and storytelling, facilitating social messages crooned by heroic men, where, in contrast, women are often nonexistent or mentioned in allegories warning against social deviance. Diaz's reinterpretation not only flips the gender roles but also brings new content to a genre that, in its contemporary moment, has had controversy and even legal ramifications for songs promoting illegal activities, narcotics, misogyny, violence against women, and femicide. Her artistic agency is a powerful testament to the strength and resilience of women, inspiring us all to challenge societal norms and reclaim our narratives.

Through the lyrics—sung, performed, and vibrantly painted on canvas—we learn the story of the brave woman who does not even fear the devil (“no le teme ni al diablo”), and her determination and resilience in overcoming a broken heart. The storytelling in corridos, like many ballads, is abstracted and blends fact and probability with fiction and drama for effect. Diaz adapts this in full force—painting lyrics saturated in her distinctive palette of rainbow hues, dreamy washes, and colors that conjure the magic of cultural vernacular, from cheerfully painted neighborhood shops to bougainvillea pinks, cactus greens, colorful textiles, and concert costumes. In these works, the artist often assumes fantasy characters, taking up roles of power and positions that have typically been dominated by men, such as a corrido singer, a bullfighter, or a boxer. Amidst the paintings, the exhibition's installation also features a music video and a large painted backdrop that immerses viewers inside her imaginary concert hall.

The narratives tell the story of the Latina artist who dreams of being a star and what it would be like to occupy positions of power that women often have little or no access to. Adapting the corrido genre to playfully carry mythical characters and woman-centered novellas of love, abandonment, and heartache with urgent and pressing social themes of protest, immigration, and political unrest. Diaz's works embrace, amplify, and provide an array of emotional releases through humor, earnestness, and nostalgia. *Mujer Valiente* reconstitutes the corrido as a space for radical discourse. The exhibition and corrido not only tell the story of

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an individual woman's strength but also celebrate her neighbors and friends who support and cheer for her—essentially, a love song for Diaz's community.

**Karla Diaz (b. 1976, Los Angeles)** lives and works in Los Angeles, she received her MFA from the California Institute of the Arts in 2003 and a BA from California State University Los Angeles in 1999. Diaz is a co-founder, alongside Mario Ybarra Jr., of the collective and community artist space Slanguage in Wilmington, CA. Diaz's works have been exhibited nationally and internationally at the 18th Street Art Center, Santa Monica, CA; the Hammer Museum, Los Angeles, CA; Los Angeles County Museum of Art, CA; Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, CA; Museum of Contemporary Art San Diego, LAXART, Hollywood, CA; Pitzer College, Claremont, CA; California State University Los Angeles, CA; San Jose Museum of Art, CA; Institute for Contemporary Art, Boston, MA; Hyde Park Art Center, Chicago, IL; Museum of Contemporary Art Detroit, MI; the Serpentine Gallery, London, U.K.; and Museo Casa de Cervantes, Madrid, Spain. Her work is in the collection of the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles, Museum of Contemporary Art, San Diego, CA, and Inhotim Museum, Brumadinho, Brazil. She has received numerous grants and awards from Art Matters, New York, NY; Tiffany Foundation, New York, NY; City of Los Angeles, CA; Riverside Art Museum, CA; and CalArts, Los Angeles, CA.

For further information, including images and previews, please contact Gallery Director, Brianna Bakke at 213-395-0762, or [gallery@luisdejesus.com](mailto:gallery@luisdejesus.com). Gallery Instagram: [@luisdejesuslosangeles](https://www.instagram.com/luisdejesuslosangeles)