



Ken Gonzales-Day: Afterlife

From November 08, 2025 to December 20, 2025



Luis De Jesus Los Angeles

1110 Mateo St.

Los Angeles, CA 90021

Ken Gonzales-Day returns to Luis De Jesus Los Angeles with *Afterlife*, a striking new exhibition that expands his long-standing exploration of history, race, and representation. On view from November 8 through December 20, 2025, the show marks his sixth solo presentation with the gallery and reaffirms his deep commitment to reinterpreting the narratives held within museum collections.

In *Afterlife*, Gonzales-Day examines the ways cultural objects survive across time—how they carry stories, identities, and contradictions from one civilization to another. Drawing on imagery from the Mexica and other Mesoamerican traditions, and combining them with artifacts from Europe, Africa, and Asia, he creates visually layered compositions that challenge the conventional hierarchies of art history. The resulting works invite viewers to consider how the past continues to shape the present and how museums, often seen as guardians of culture, are also sites of omission and erasure.

For over two decades, the artist has photographed artifacts in institutions worldwide, digitally reconstructing them into new visual dialogues. In *Xipe Totec with Busts*, Gonzales-Day brings together figures of American icons—George Washington, Abraham Lincoln, Benjamin Franklin, and Susan B. Anthony—alongside Mesoamerican deities and skulls from a museum of criminal anthropology. This haunting combination reflects on cultural survival, loss, and the uneasy coexistence of power and mortality.

Other works continue his ongoing inquiry into what is preserved and what is forgotten. Pairing a Roman Dying Gaul with a Mesoamerican Chac Mool, Gonzales-Day creates a conversation between civilizations separated by time but united by themes of sacrifice, renewal, and human vulnerability.

Ultimately, *Afterlife* is both an artistic excavation and a meditation on continuity. Gonzales-Day reminds us that every object—and every image—has its own afterlife, carrying within it the traces of countless stories waiting to be seen anew.

Image: Ken Gonzales-Day *Afterlife* (Digital composition with Mexico, Effigy of Death, National Museum of Anthropology (MNA), Mexico City; Leonard Wells Volk, Abraham Lincoln, Smithsonian National Portrait Gallery (NGP); Mexico, Aztec, Figure of Xipe Totec, LACMA; Jean-Antoine Houdon, George Washington, NPG; Houdon, Benjamin Franklin, NPG; Adelaide Johnson, Susan B. Anthony, NPG; Mexico, Scull Mask, MNA; Jean-Antoine Houdon, Flayed Man; Skulls, Museum of Criminal Anthropology, Turin; Rosenberg Tapestries, Rosenberg Castle, Copenhagen), 2025 Archival ink on rag paper 40 x 80 in (101.6 x 203.2 cm) © Ken Gonzales-Day