

LUIS DE JESUS LOS ANGELES

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

JOHN VALADEZ: *Chaos Anime*
April 27 – June 8, 2024

Opening Reception:
Saturday, April 27, 5–8 pm.



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Luis De Jesus Los Angeles is very pleased to announce **JOHN VALADEZ: *Chaos Anime***, the artist's first solo exhibition with the gallery, featuring new paintings alongside recent works. The exhibition will be on view in Gallery 2, April 27 through June 8, 2024, with an opening reception on Saturday, April 27, from 5 to 8PM.

A trailblazer of the early Chicano Arts Movement in the 1970s and 80s, John Valadez's work has come to define an iconography of Chicano experience in the city by catalyzing its changing dynamics and reconstructing a mythical allegory that speaks to an alternate vision. Through a multidisciplinary practice spanning 45 years, encompassing documentary photography and portraiture, public murals, paintings, and pastel works, Valadez has cultivated a style that transcends genre designations. His work evokes a fluidity between multiple cultures and visual lexicons, effectively mirroring the unsettled experience of the Chicano identity. Valadez continues to pursue politically engaged work—a persistent voice championing generations of Chicano and Latinx communities.

JOHN VALADEZ: *Chaos Anime* presents new paintings that address the shifting global dynamics and social climates facing new generations of Chicanos today, alongside recent works that revisit earlier themes. Together, the works exhibit the breadth of the artist's social commentaries and further contextualize his lauded approach to painting. Drawing from current events, cultural histories, city life, and such experiences filtered through lucid dreaming, Valadez implements realism, mannerism, abstraction, and montage as a vehicle for allegory and satire to ignite a myriad of socio-political conversations.

Themes of invisible borders, sublime skies, and tempestuous seas, and juxtapositions between reality and dreams and the natural world versus the consequences of human interferences, are but some of the constants throughout the trove of Valadez's urban proverbs. A pivotal moment in Valadez's new body of work is his extension of Chicano Movement principles, speaking to global matters of displacement, gentrification, economic disparities, famine, the environment, and geopolitics.

The exhibition's title work, *Chaos* (2024)—among his most impressive and important work to date—is a new mural-scaled painting that dismantles the binaries and clichés of “haves and have-nots” narratives. Compositionally split in two, the work is Valadez's read on today's state of the union, a horror vacui of crises weighing social violence, environmental, and economic issues. The allegory presents new perspectives on borders and speaks to new generations of Chicanos making reverse migrations from the US to Mexico in hopes of improved cultural connections and quality of life.

Shipwreck Cruise (2024) presents a critique of tourism's effect on locals and their environments. Against a tranquil open sea, suspended in the aftermath of an event we are left to imagine, an acidic skyline of yellows disrupts the sea and sky in a haze indistinguishable from sunrise, sunset, or pollution. The mysterious scene presents a conceptual background for us to locate our complicities, empathies, and apathies, and follow the lead of the basket-donning woman at the helm of the ship, looking to the horizon for new solutions.

Other recent works, *Bambi Negra* (2018) and *Piernas Anime* (2017), exemplify different approaches to Valadez's wry satire, where it is not always extended outward but also takes criticality inward, including self-reflection in the case of *Bambi Negra*, depicting one of his dreams, and the cultural ruminations of *Piernas Anime*, influenced by the many layers of gender dynamics of Southern California car show culture. *Piernas Anime*, translated as “anime legs,” exemplifies an alloy of Valadez's influences from the futurism aesthetics present in Japanese Anime, to mannerism and surrealism. The painting presents a tableau that subverts the

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male gaze and machismo hierarchies of classic car shows. With symbols, figures, and activities occurring in the foreground and background, the paintings resist hierarchies and contain multiple entry points.

The works in *Chaos Anime* mark an exciting moment in Valadez's career. Radical and indefatigable, Valadez's allegories, cutting satire, masterful color, and playful yet dead-panned pastiche bring a refreshed sensibility of endurance despite the capriciousness of time.

John Valadez (b.1951, Los Angeles, CA) is a painter, photographer, and muralist living and working in Los Angeles. Valadez studied at East Los Angeles Junior College from 1970-72 and earned his BFA at California State University, Long Beach in 1976. Valadez was active in early impactful collectives such as Los Four and Centro de Arte Publico. Valadez's critically acclaimed 35-year retrospective, *Santa Ana Condition* at the Museum of Contemporary Art, San Diego, CA, traveled to the National Mexican Museum of Art, Chicago, IL, and the Vincent Price Museum, East Los Angeles College, CA. Valadez has exhibited in major canonical exhibitions contextualizing Chicano and Mexican-American art internationally and has numerous federal and state mural commissions throughout California, Texas, and France.

Notable collections include the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, CA; Los Angeles County Museum of Art, CA; The Hammer Museum, Los Angeles, CA; The Museum of Modern Art, New York, NY; Brooklyn Museum, NY; National Museum of American Art, Smithsonian, Washington, DC; Museum of Contemporary Art San Diego, La Jolla, CA; The Cheech Marin Collection, Riverside, CA; The Mexican Museum, San Francisco, CA; The Bass Museum of Art, Miami Beach, FL; National Mexican Museum, Chicago, IL; Centre d'Art, Santa Monica, Barcelona, ES; El Centro Cultural Tijuana, BC, MX; Musée d'Aquitaine, Bordeaux, FR, amongst others.

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