

LUIS DE JESUS LOS ANGELES

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For Immediate Release:

MAGGIE MICHAEL: *Root Chords, Earth to Sky*
January 11 – February 22, 2025
Artist's Reception: Saturday, January 11, 4:00 – 7:00 p.m.

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Painting untethers a mesh of past, present and future. Intuitive and intentional, the emotion of making is moving towards the stillness of viewing, wavering in the density and airiness of our coming and going. Abstraction, a siren for expansive thinking, offers generous clarity and strangeness; also, brutal, base forms of beauty. — Maggie Michael

Luis De Jesus Los Angeles is very pleased to announce **Maggie Michael: *Root Chords, Earth to Sky***, the artist's debut exhibition with the gallery and on the West Coast. The exhibition will be presented in Gallery 1 from January 11 through February 22, 2025. An artist's reception will be held on Saturday, January 11 from 4:00 to 7:00 pm.

Maggie Michael's paintings can be ferocious and muscular. They can also be seductive and dreamlike. Considered one of Washington, D.C.'s leading painters, Michael's lyrical works are a powerful reminder of the transformative potential of abstraction. Her paintings unfold as a series of capricious moments, processes, and forms, evoking the history and energy of American abstract expressionism. Her paintings grapple with humanity and nature's profound duality—our capacity to both sustain and destroy—yet, she also prioritizes painterly strategy, using form as a vehicle to convey material content. Michael's works flow like sequences, a confluence of the visual vocabulary she has developed over her 25-year career.

Michael's paintings juxtapose expressive, gestural brushwork, with precise shapes and incorporate a diverse range of media including ink, latex, acrylic, oil, and spray paint in a jarring yet harmonious blend of colors. Found objects such as pine needles, feathers, soil, rocks, shells, insects, leaves, and branches also make frequent appearances on her canvases as she wields an arsenal of abstract techniques to craft richly textured works that stir visceral responses.

At the heart of Michael's experiential and experimental project lies an instinctive desire to perceive fresh perspectives, to generate novel, more expansive and illuminating impressions of the world. With each application of paint or rotation of the canvas, she reaches for ways to understand natural, elemental, and spiritual worlds—sky, trees, mountains, clouds, wind, water, sunlight, bodies (plant, animal, human), minerals, energy, motion—reveal insights and realizations about existence and the human condition. Yet her works also inhabit other realms, "sourced," as she says, "from wells of feeling, seas of teaching, thoughts turning over and under, poetic rememberings, and musings on earth folding and unfolding."

Maggie Michael (born, Milwaukee, WI) lives and works in Washington, DC and West Virginia. She earned her MFA from American University, Washington, DC (2002), an MA from San Francisco State University, San Francisco, CA (2000), and BFA from University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee, WI (1996).

Michael's work has been exhibited across the US and internationally. Selected exhibitions include: "Fields and Formations, A Survey of Mid-Atlantic Abstraction," The Delaware Contemporary, DE (2021) and American University Museum, Washington, DC (2022); "One on One: Maggie Michael/Arthur Dove, Depth of Field," The Phillips Collection, Washington, DC (2019); "Even the Clouds are not Finished" DCKEAF, Studio Residency at Camelot, Krakow, Poland (2018); "Cubes and Pyramids Share the Same Base", G Fine Art, Washington, DC (2017); "A Phrase Hung in Midair as if Frozen," American University Museum, Washington, DC (2016).

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Museum and public collections include the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden; National Museum of Women in the Arts; Smithsonian American Art Museum; The Phillips Collection; US Art in Embassies Collection in Romania and Barbados; Washingtonian Art Bank; The Wilson Building Collection; DC Commission on the Arts and Humanities; American University Museum; and University of Maryland, College Park. Artist residencies include the Joan Mitchell Center, New Orleans, LA; Banff Centre for Arts and Creativity, Banff, Canada; Cetate Arts Danube, Romania; Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden Artist at Work Program and the Smithsonian Artist Research Fellowship, Washington, DC; and DCKEAF, Studio Residency at Camelot, Krakow, Poland. Awards include the Joan Mitchell Foundation Painters and Sculptors Grant, the Trawick Contemporary Art Award, and numerous Artist Fellowship Grants from the DC Commission on the Arts and Humanities—funded in part by the NEA.