

LUIS DE JESUS LOS ANGELES

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

LUIS EMILIO ROMERO

Fortress of Light / Fortaleza de Luz

June 22 – August 3, 2024

Opening Reception: Saturday, June 22, 6–8 p.m.

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Luis De Jesus Los Angeles is pleased to announce **Luis Emilio Romero: *Fortress of Light / Fortaleza de Luz***, the artist's first solo exhibition with the gallery. The exhibition will run from June 22 – August 3, 2024, with an opening reception on Saturday, June 22, from 6–8pm.

Luis Emilio Romero's geometric abstract paintings are linked to ancestrally passed traditions of woven textiles as a process connected to the ritual of creation. Romero's work speaks to the lifeblood of cultural methodologies, employing spirituality and indigenous craft as the structural logic in his intricate compositions. His paintings are vessels of process imbued with intention, energy, and devotion.

Romero's process starts by drawing linear compositions on delicate paper. Using colored pencils, the drawing is replicated on canvas and this foundational blueprint serves as both the guideline and structure of the painting, a step he reveals on the edges of each finished work. He shares, "These lines have their own skeletal system; when merged, they become pillars, and once I combine them, they become like a fortress. The energy flows through me and into the root of these lines. The meditation aspect of this process is similar to the ritual of making textiles in Guatemala. There, I was taught that understanding the tools used in their creation is as important as the final piece itself."

The next step in his ritual is activated by meditating on the color spirit of the painting. With a carefully considered palette, he combines bands of color with rows of repeating individual brushstrokes to build tactile woven patterns that evoke rhythm and harmony. Each surface ignites the physicality and movement of the composition, highlighting vivid structures of color, texture, and line. These internal spaces, intricate patterns, and passageways lead to chambers of reflection that trigger a sensory experience.

Romero's approach to color is intuitive and rooted in nature, using color to communicate growth, unity, and movement within patterns. Just as light is a force of energy captured in vibrant colors or subtle and muted moments in the day, his pallet varies with light and dark hues affecting a range of experience—from the tranquility and calm of a night sky to the active and energized blaze of a morning dawn. Romero explains, "My approach to color is more of an organic vital force rather than color theory. Through the combination of color, there comes rhythm and repetition. Still, color has its own nature—meaning that if I lean into new patterns during the process, it will enhance that relationship of color with me and with the work."

The exhibition's title, "Fortaleza de Luz," does not easily translate to English as "Fortress of Light," as *fortaleza* holds a multitude of meanings. *Fortaleza* can be a personal verb or a physical noun; it can relate to the act of strengthening oneself, it can express the vitality of an object or being, or it can be a physical place designated for protection. Likewise, *luz* or "light" holds a wealth of metaphorical meanings—a poetic reading of protecting the light from within.

Luis Emilio Romero (b.1996, Bárcena, Guatemala) holds an MFA from Hunter College (2022) and a BFA from Rutgers State University (2019). He has participated in exhibitions including *Material Knowledge* (2022) at Arsenal Contemporary in New York; *It Begins with What's Already There* at 205 Hudson Gallery, Hunter College, New York; and *Rituales y el Subconsciente/ Rituals and the Subconscious* (2023) at Mostajo Projects, New York, among others. Romero has been awarded the Dedalus Foundation Master of Fine Arts Fellowship in 2023, and was an artist-in-residence at Mostajo Projects in Warren, CT (2023). He lives in New Jersey and works in Brooklyn, New York.

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)