

Paolo Salvador
Los últimos días del gato de fuego
September 14 – October 7, 2022
Opening Wednesday, September 14, 2–9PM

Peres Projects is pleased to present *Los últimos días del gato de fuego*, Paolo Salvador's (b. 1990 in Lima, PE) third solo exhibition with the gallery.

There is a sense of intimacy and companionship between the figures depicted on Salvador's canvases, an expression of the Andean cosmivision that observes a balance between all living beings. In allusion to the topography of Peru, similarly fluid background colors meet on one picture plane to describe indistinct and surreal surroundings which also intertwine with the figures represented. In *El talisman rojo* (2022), for instance, painted marks in peach and violet twist together to produce a hazy backdrop, through which a faint sun-like orb glows. Three figures stand in front, gazing out toward the viewer, seeming also to survey their obscure surroundings.

Salvador knowingly omits anything in his work that fixes the scenes in time or place – clothing and landmarks, for instance – although these vast environments perhaps most closely relate to the ocean horizons of Salvador's home city of Lima. Horizons appear in multiples in Salvador's works, suggestive of several dimensions, and here they represent overlapping or coexisting cosmologies and systems of knowledge.

A tree with sinewy, twisting limbs is also a recurring motif in this series, often rendered in several shades of green, as we see in *Cielo coral* (2022). While the depiction of a tree certainly situates the compositions in space, lending a fixity to otherwise indistinct settings, the tree is also symbolic – an allusion to the colonial history of Catholicism in Peru. Here, Salvador references the syncretic tangling of diverse religions and cultures in the country: his canvases express a confluence of Andean and settler-colonial worldviews that recognizes the ongoing impact of colonialism in Peru, and the evident cultural mixing over many centuries, a reality that also mirrors his personal experiences as a Peruvian artist living in Europe.

Salvador's approach to painting – sensitive, thoughtful and reciprocal – mirrors his beliefs with respect to an approach to life, and these same philosophies also relate to Andean traditions that form his cultural background. In his work Salvador makes frequent reference to the natural world and the harmonies found therein, a result of closely observing his environment in order to detect the intricate textures and patterns that inspire his paintings. To the artist, everything is deeply intertwined – science, art and spirituality; humans, plants and animals – which he believes are wrongly divided in many modern cultures.

From early on in his practice, Salvador has maintained a keen interest in painterly materials, placing particular emphasis on natural pigments. He is concerned with the composition of the materials he uses, as well as the geographic places they represent, paying heed to the political and social significance of his resources. Throughout his career he has conducted extensive material research, working with geologists and related specialists in both the UK and Germany to enhance his knowledge of mineral-based pigments, which he grinds himself as part of his artistic process. Using the metaphor of cooking in relation to his practice, and referencing the culinary heritage of Peru, he relates the experience of preparing food to the chemistry of working with artistic materials, both of which change texture and constitution as they are handled.

Salvador takes a holistic approach to his artistic practice. With tender attention, he measures the pressure of each brush stroke, the steady breaths he takes as he prepares canvas, the posture he assumes as he paints. To Salvador, the act of painting is an intricate dance with the work he makes: he allows his intuition to guide how and where to apply a tone or a gesture, and as his paintings undergo changes over time, these gradual transformations give him visual cues to progress his work.

This is Paolo Salvador's third solo exhibition with Peres Projects and his first in our Milan space. Salvador has exhibited in a number of international exhibitions including *Ensueños en el amanecer*, Ilwoo Space, Seoul, *Nuevas Mitologías*, Patricia Low Contemporary, Gstaad, *Heroic Bodies*, Rudolph Tegnens Museum, Dronningmølle, *Futurismo*, Mendes Wood DM, Sao Paulo, *Les Yeux Clos*, Perrotin, Paris, *Lingua Franca*, PQH, London, *Figurative NOW*, Daniel Benjamin Gallery, London, *Miradas a un acervo*, Centro Cultural Ccori Wasi, Lima, *Nuevos Pintores del Perú*, Galería Aguafuerte, Mexico City, *Miradas a un acervo*, Centro Cultural Ccori Wasi, Lima and *Muestra Colectiva*, Galería CEDE, Lima. He graduated from the Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú, Lima in 2014 and earned his MFA from The Slade School of Fine Art, London in 2019.

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