

MATTHEW BROWN LOS ANGELES

LUIS FLORES

Prende la Luz Que Tengo Miedo

October 26—December 7, 2019

Opening Saturday, October 26th

Prende la Luz Que Tengo Miedo is a story of transformation, staged in three parts. It is Flores' story as it stands, a tale of coming into consciousness based around the metaphorical loss of a father and the artist's new role as parent.

As in earlier bodies of work, Flores' complicated depictions of gender are revealing and intimate. Notably absent is the overt violence and trauma of previous work. In its place are reflections of the internal trauma that persists long after an overt trauma has passed. Attempting to negotiate new terrain where traditional gender paradigms are eroding, Flores unpacks his own attachments to gender and identity through a lens of vulnerability.

Flores' auto-biographical impulse is illuminated in four mediums: drawing, photography, video and sculpture. The exhibition is designed chronologically—beginning in the past, moving through the present, and into the imagined future, an optimistic projection where the cycle of trauma is broken.

Flores' approach to art making involves a deliberate combination of the mechanics of self-portraiture and fabric material. Flores is best-known for his life-size 'doppelgängers'—soft sculptures, constructed with hand-crocheted yarn. A limited engagement with and access to emotions is a hallmark of American masculinity. Flores processes these notions of social norms and gender stereotypes through the form of his own body, which is in fact constructed by means of a craft often explicitly attached to the female gender. With these elements, he tackles the subject of what it was like to grow up identifying as a man, and the boundaries therein. His particular pairings provoke these social constructs and the language we use to describe them.

El Reloj Cucú ("The Cuckoo-Clock") plays at the entrance of the exhibition. *Prende la Luz Que Tengo Miedo* ("Turn on the Light I'm Afraid") are lyrics quoted from a song by Maná about the loss of a father. In this intimate video self-portrait, the artist's head and face are shaved while *El Reloj Cucú* plays on loop. A lone sculptural self-portrait sits pensively watching the video on repeat.

In the first gallery is a presentation of eight self-portrait drawings from Flores' *Dickhead* series. Each drawing personifies an inherently masculine gesture, referring back to Flores' figures engaged in World Wrestling Entertainment choreography (to underscore precarious notions of male power and gender central to the artist's own upbringing). In the doorway to the main gallery, a crocheted figure is engaged in a pull up, an absurdist representation of a masculine endurance test.

A sculptural portrait of the artist's wife, Alexa, shields their new baby Bear from the surrounding artist's self representations. Bear makes another appearance in the second gallery, where Flores' work points toward an aspirational future with his son. Encircling the father and son sculpture are four, life-scale photographs of the (sculpted) artist and his pregnant wife in traditionally composed images of domestic bliss.

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Luis Flores (b. 1985, West Covina, CA) received his MFA from California Institute of the Arts in 2014 and his BA in Art from the University of California, Los Angeles in 2009. The artist lives and works in Los Angeles, California.

Prende la Luz Que Tengo Miedo marks the artist's first solo exhibition at Matthew Brown Los Angeles.

Selected solo exhibitions Another Thing You Did to Me, Salon 94, New York, 2019; Does Your Dick Touch Your Asshole?, Galerie Hussenot, Paris, France, 2018; Whatever You Want It to Be, Grice Bench, Los Angeles, CA, 2015; and Boxer, D300 Gallery, California Institute of the Arts, Valencia, CA, 2014.

Selected group exhibitions include Thread., Long Beach Museum of Art, Long Beach, CA; That Land That I Live In, Matthew Brown Los Angeles, 2019; People, Jeffrey Deitch, Los Angeles, 2019; MIDTOWN organized by Maccarone, Salon 94, Salon 94 Design, NY, New York, 2017; EVERYBODY! COME STAND ON THE ALTAR!, PSSST, Los Angeles, CA, 2016; and Don't Call Me When You're Rich Or Famous. Call Me When You're In the Gutter, Grice Bench, Los Angeles, CA, 2016.