

Galerie

Artist to Watch: Maia Cruz Palileo Channels Family's Immigration Story into Paintings, Sculptures, and More

While legacy remains central to this emerging talent's work, a solo show this fall at David Kordansky Gallery moves toward compositions that feel dreamlike in their intricacy

BY ANNABEL KEENAN

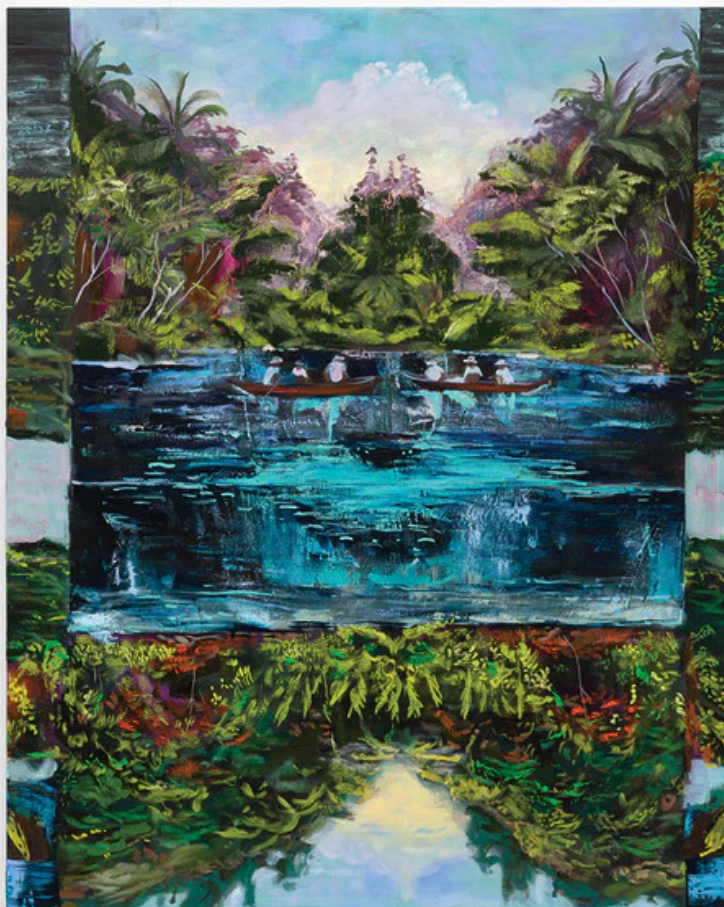
JULY 31, 2026



Maia Cruz Palileo in their former Brooklyn studio with *The Invitation* (2024). Photo: MARY INHEA KANG

For artist Maia Cruz Palileo, family archives and oral history are “starting points, small tributaries that lead to and are connected to a vast system of rivers full of larger inquiries,” they say. For more than a decade, Palileo has channeled their family’s immigration story into paintings, sculptures, and installations, tracing a journey from the Philippines to the U.S. and forming inquiries like: How did we get here? What stories are censored, silenced, and omitted? What lies between the lines or is hidden in plain sight?

Those missives help inform Palileo’s work. “While it doesn’t produce answers, painting can hold the complexities and possibilities that arise when asking big questions,” they say. “Painting is a generative process that unfolds in unpredictable and sometimes incomprehensible ways and acts as a space, a vehicle to face deeper emotions that language can’t contain.”



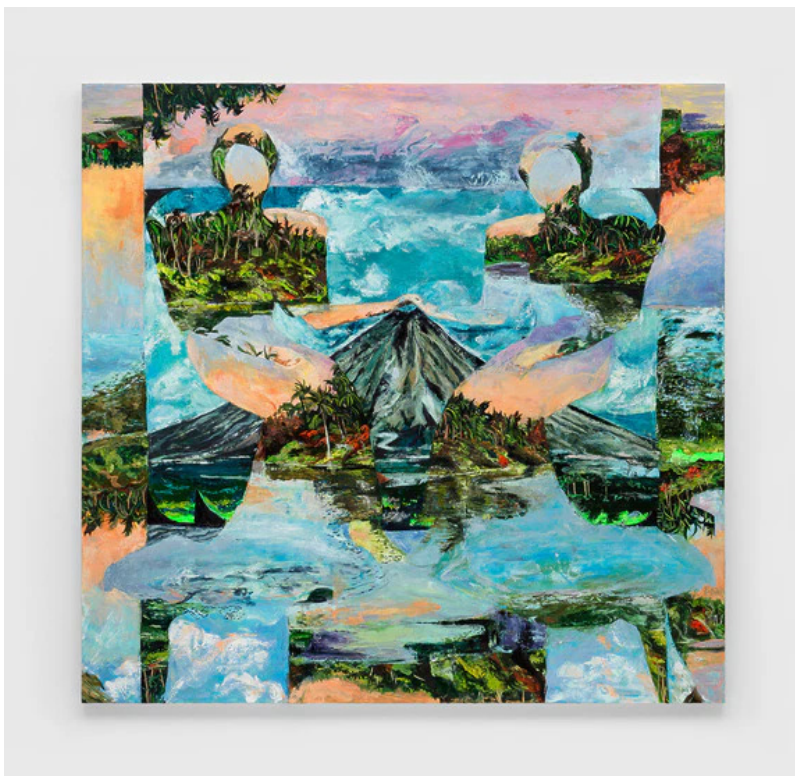
The artist's *A Curve in the Beautiful Rio* (2025).

Photo: CHRISTOPHER STACH, COURTESY OF DAVID KORDANSKY GALLERY

Through their exploration of immigration, Palileo also excavates histories embedded within Filipino culture as well as the enduring effects of colonial rule. Their paintings frequently function as acts of reclamation, challenging dominant understandings of identity and belonging.

In their solo show, running from September 10 to October 24 at David Kordansky Gallery in New York, a notable shift takes place. While legacy remains central, the works move away from straightforward portraits toward compositions that feel dreamlike in their intricacy. "I recently learned about this word in Filipino psychology, *pakikiramdam*, which refers to the emotional surround sound of all senses," the artist explains. "The paintings in the show embody this concept of visual surround sound observation."

Keenan, Annabel, "Artist to Watch: Maia Cruz Palileo Channels Family's Immigration Story into Paintings, Sculptures, and More," *GalerieMagazine.com*, July 31, 2026



Maia Cruz Palileo *Once Again There Was No Time*, (2026).
Photo: DARIO LASAGNI. COURTESY OF DAVID KORDANSKY GALLERY

In a kaleidoscopic manner, figures emerge from, dissolve into, and become entangled with dense landscapes. The effect is immersive and atmospheric, suggesting pasts that are constantly unfolding.



Maia Cruz Palileo *Springtime Again*, (2025).
Photo: DARIO LASAGNI. COURTESY OF DAVID KORDANSKY GALLERY

Keenan, Annabel, "Artist to Watch: Maia Cruz Palileo Channels Family's Immigration Story into Paintings, Sculptures, and More," *GalerieMagazine.com*, July 31, 2026

This shift follows Palileo's move to the mid-Hudson Valley, an area whose story is intertwined with the Hudson River School painters. The relocation led the artist to consider the early American colonial era, Manifest Destiny, and "concepts of possession, dispossession, and domination," they say. "I am obsessed with how these perspectives and orientations to landscape painting can be disrupted and disoriented. Living near the mountains, sky, and river has been a huge and welcome change after 25 years in the city. While my practice is multidisciplinary, this show is a love letter to painting."
