

# LUIS DE JESUS LOS ANGELES

2685 S La Cienega Blvd, Los Angeles, CA 90034  
T 310 838 6000 | F 310 838 6001  
gallery@luisdejesus.com | luisdejesus.com

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## Media Contact:

gallery@luisdejesus.com  
310-838-6000

## EVITA TEZENO: BETTER DAYS

March 6 – April 17, 2021

Opening Reception: Saturday, March 6th, 12 – 6 PM

*"This world is so dark and so dreary sometimes. We have so many misfortunes in our lives. I create a small oasis amidst a storm to combat all the negative things that go on in our lives."* — **Evita Tezeno**

Luis De Jesus Los Angeles is very pleased to announce **EVITA TEZENO: BETTER DAYS**, on view from March 6 through April 17, 2021. *Better Days* marks Tezeno's first solo exhibition in Los Angeles. An opening reception will be held on Saturday, March 6<sup>th</sup>, from 12:00 pm to 6:00 pm. Visitors are encouraged to make an appointment at [www.luisdejesus.com/contact](http://www.luisdejesus.com/contact).

Employing richly patterned hand-painted papers and found objects in a contemporary folk-art style, Evita Tezeno's colorful collage paintings on canvas and rag board depict a cast of characters in harmonious everyday scenes. Inspired by her family and friends, childhood memories in South Texas, personal dreams and moments from her adult life—and influenced by the great 20<sup>th</sup> century modernists Romare Bearden, Elizabeth Catlett, and William H. Johnson—scenes of joy animate her vision of a Black America filled with humanity.

The theme of timelessness emerges—a carefree life, united and strengthened by love, tradition, and spirituality evoking the past in portraits that are both idealized and hopeful. Evita Tezeno's work is a powerful affirmation of African American life. Characterized by its simplicity and whimsy, it reflects a strength of character developed in centuries-old rituals and customs, such as storytelling, spirituals, gospel music, and the blues. Her vision can be understood as an act of self-definition that allows the black tradition to speak for itself.

Tezeno's creative process begins with sketches and lush textures and patterns painted onto paper using acrylic paint, watercolor, crayon, and various other mediums and techniques. She traces and cuts out shapes and arranges them to form the face and various parts of the figure, the clothing, and the landscape elements in the background. The works in *Better Days* portray intimate moments: couples holding hands in silence or singing a song, or snapshots of everyday scenes, such as friends waiting at a bus stop or enjoying a walk under a bright midday sun. Devoid of pain, her characters are filled with a sense of nobility and tenderness.

Evita Tezeno (b. 1960) is a Port Arthur, Texas native, and graduate of Lamar University. She lives and works in Dallas. As the recipient of the prestigious Elizabeth Catlett Award for *The New Power Generation*, Tezeno has built a career as an acclaimed multi-disciplinary female artist. Her work is included in the permanent collection of the African American Museum of Dallas and the Embassy of the Republic of Madagascar. In addition, her work has been acquired by prominent collectors, entertainers, media personalities and athletes, including Samuel L. Jackson, David Hoberman, Denzel Washington, Star Jones, and Susan Taylor, among others. She has been awarded commissions by the Essence Music Festival in New Orleans, The Deep Ellum Film Festival in Dallas, and the legendary New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival ("Jazz Fest"), where in 1999 she became the first female artist to design its celebrated poster.