

Soil

27 March - 27 June 2026

Private View 16 April 2026 6-10PM

Firepit is delighted to present *Soil*, featuring the work of Zully Mejía in her second London solo exhibition. Creating intimate glimpses into her interpersonal life, Mejía approaches nature beyond set dressing, using it as a visual language to articulate emotional architecture. Intimacy, rupture, grief and care are explored through the shifting state and symbolism of nature in each painting, varying from blooming flowers and grassy fields to a blazing inferno.

Mejía depicts two friends in her works *Beneath the cherry blossom tree* and *El Gallo* in states of serenity and joy. Within the exhibition, they emerge as figures of safety and support, while presenting an exploration of masculinity in relation to nature. Symbolic elements such as cherry blossoms and a rooster evoke a reconsidering of conventional associations within the context of gender and culture.

The two contrasting self-portraits *Dos montañas agarradas de la mano* and *Does anyone have a fire extinguisher?* delve into the progression and eventual fallout of a romantic relationship. *Dos montañas agarradas de la mano* portrays a couple, including the artist herself, staring out into a mountainous landscape standing beside each other. There is an impression of unity between the pair, who are presented in front of a natural structure as permanent and resolute as a mountain. The use of monochromatic blue tones creates an atmosphere of calmness and peace. In the accompanying portrait *Does anyone have a fire extinguisher?*, the figure of a partner in the first painting is replaced by a reflection of Mejía herself, looking out into a forested area that has been consumed by fire. The change in colour palette and smouldering landscape register rage and loss. The artist stands alongside her mirrored self as a steadying force. There is a sense of hopefulness in this self-companionship and reflection. The forest, after burning, may grow back stronger with enough time, patience and care. Displaying these works in conversation with each other, Mejía shows us the natural and repeating cycle of life and death; the placement of these paintings is interchangeable.

In her self-portrait *A Safe Place to Cry*, Mejía creates an outlet for herself within a period of grieving and positions nature as a place where feelings can exist without guilt. Painted over the course of nine months, the work carries the weight of mourning. It is a deeply intimate portrait in which the artist makes direct eye contact with the viewer while holding tears, conveying the vulnerability that is present in both the process of healing as well as the experience of creating art. Rendering her own skin a muted grey, Mejía employs colour theory to capture the impact of grief. In this work, the colour represents numbness, exhaustion and alienation, as well as malleability and groundedness through its similarity to clay. She depicts herself surrounded by Peruvian lilies, referencing her heritage as well as the sense of refuge she finds in nature. The title of the work echoes this sentiment and acts as an ode to the people in her life that make her feel held and safe.

Nature also appears as a site of restoration and self-address. In *No te des por vencida, Zully. Eres resiliente como aquel árbol. Aunque la vida te ponga pruebas difíciles y a veces te caigas, eres luchadora igual que tu mamá y seguirás adelante. Deja que la naturaleza cure tus heridas. Ahí encontrarás paz.*, Mejía presents herself alongside vibrant rolling fields of grass and a distant mountain range. While the setting appears to have been taken straight from an idyllic countryside, in actuality it has been imagined entirely by the artist and painted without reference images. Seeking a connection with the natural world, she has intuitively created an environment that is soothing to her and placed herself inside of it. The mountains are framed by a warm sunrise evocative of new life. Directed towards herself, the title of the work is in Mejía's native tongue, Spanish, and is made up of words encouraging resilience.