

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

## RODNEY ZELENKA

*SEMIOTICS OF A SPIDER* - A Solo Exhibition.

Concept and Curation:

Elga Wimmer and Priska Juschka

Exhibition Dates: October 2 – October 26, 2024

**OPENING RECEPTION: TUESDAY, OCTOBER 8 | 6 – 8 PM**

**PANEL moderated by Elga Wimmer: THURSDAY, OCTOBER 10 | 6 – 8 PM**

During LES Gallery Night | Lower East Side Galleries Open Till 8 PM

### Press Release:

**Lichtundfire** is pleased to present *Semiotics of A Spider*, the second solo exhibition by **Rodney Zelenka** at the gallery. At his previous exhibition, *Rivers of Babylon* (June - July 2023), Zelenka addressed the complexities and perils of migration, while in this series, *Semiotics of a Spider*, in various media, with painting, sculpture, video and works on paper, the Panamanian-born artist touches on the controversial issue of immigration in a holistic manner. Of German, Austrian, and Bohemian descent—family members were refugees—Zelenka explores the plight of millions of people today, migrating around the globe.

From its early depiction as a good omen during the Han Dynasty (206 BC – 220 AD), to mysterious appearances in Renaissance paintings and medieval still-life, and on into the 20th Century— works by Odilon Redon, Henri Michaux, and Louise Bourgeois—the spider would come to symbolize the cycle of life and death, comfort and trauma, interconnectedness and resilience, patience and persistence, danger and protection. Its intricate net is both a support system and a trap. Like Kafka's insect, the spider is a psychological term—a spider's web is a metaphor or analogy—finding expression even as the Internet or World Wide Web.

In Zelenka's, *The Thief - El Ladron* (acrylic, ink, gold leaf on handmade rag paper, 2024), we see a spider carrying a nest of birds on its shoulder high above a tree, behind suitcases, boots and furniture in dark blue, symbolizing a waiting line of people at a border crossing. The spider knows no border, spinning its golden web across any obstacle.

The show abounds with lyrical and poetic notes touching on the harsh reality and hardship of migration, be it forced or aspirational. In the painting, *Trapped* (acrylic, ink, gold leaf on handmade rug paper, 2024), the spider is entangled by wire near what seems a bloodline, its long legs holding on absurdly to suitcases, pets, and furniture on the other side of the fence.

In the past three years, Zelenka has focused largely on migration in a number of institutional and museum exhibitions, mainly in Mexico and Central America, and this show continues that journey while delicately navigating the ever changing political currents.

For additional information and events, please contact Elga Wimmer, curator at [elgawimmer@gmail.com](mailto:elgawimmer@gmail.com) - +1 646 5154898 and Priska Juschka, curator and director Lichtundfire at [info@lichtundfire.com](mailto:info@lichtundfire.com)

Instagram: [@lichtundfire](https://www.instagram.com/lichtundfire) and hashtag: [#lichtundfire](https://www.instagram.com/lichtundfire) Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/lichtundfire>

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Gallery Hours: Wednesday – Saturday, 12 – 6 pm, and by appointment  
[www.lichtundfire.com](http://www.lichtundfire.com)



Rodney Zelenka, *Behind the Lines*, Acrylic, ink and gold leaf on handmade rag paper, 48 x 32 cm