

ASMA

PEANA

ASMA is an artist duo formed by Matias Armendaris (b. 1990, Ecuador) and Hanya Belia (b. 1994, Mexico). They live and work in Mexico City. Their work uses allegorical figures and evocative architectural spaces exploring formal interrelations between painterly and sculptural expressions. They employ fictional narratives which include forms of nature interwoven with psychoaffective contemporary landscapes. As a result of a collaborative process the work focuses on hybrid and polluted forms both in a material and conceptual nature. They explore a nostalgic revisitation of the past through a metamodern lens which oscillates between critical discourses of identity and belonging with ornate formal explorations of beauty.

ASMA's recent projects include *Inverse Sático Envy I & II* at PEANA, Mexico City, MX; *Blind Sun Rests in Desire*, Everyday Gallery, Antwerp, BEL; *The Last of Animal Builders* at the Edith Farnsworth House curated by Alberto Ortega in Plane, Illinois US; *Wander & Pursuit* a solo exhibition at House of Gaga in Los Angeles, US; *Who Tells a Tale Adds A Tail*, a group exhibition at Denver Art Museum; Denver, US; *Vain Kisses to the Source*, a solo exhibition at Deli Gallery in New York, US; *Vermin Gloom* at Project Pangeé, Montreal, CA; a participation in "OTRXS MUNDXS" a group exhibition at Museo Tamayo, Mexico City, MX; "Anima Mundi" a group exhibition presented as part of Manifiesta 13, Marseille, FR; "Janus" a solo exhibition at Embajada, San Juan, PR; "Half Blood Princess" a solo exhibition at PEANA, Monterrey, MX; "Blossoming Carcass" at Make Room, Los Angeles, US.





LIVES AND WORKS

CDMX, MX.

EDUCATION

2018 School of the Art Institute of Chicago (SAIC) MFA, Chicago, US.

2016 Facultad de Artes y Diseño (FAD - UNAM), Licenciatura, CDMX, MX.

2015 Emily Carr University of Art and Design, BFA, Vancouver, CA.

SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITIONS

2023 Blind Sun Rests in Desire, Everyday Gallery, Antwerp, BE.

Inverse Sátiro Envy I & II, PEANA; CDMX, MX.

2022 Wander & Pursuit, House of Gaga; Los Angeles, US.

Vain Kisses to the Source, Deli Gallery; New York, US.

2021 Vermin Gloom, Project Pangée; Montréal, CA.

Las cosas suceden de forma silenciosa, PEANA & Labor, CDMX, MX.

Gutz: ASMA + Sophronia Cook, Et.Al. Gallery; San Francisco, US.

2020 Janus, Embajada galería; San Juan, PR.

2019 Half Blood Princess, PEANA; Monterrey, MX.

Blossoming Carcass, Make Room; Los Angeles, US.

2018 Visitante, Arte Passagem; São Paulo, BR.

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

2023 Mud Keeper's Promise, Kunsthalle Bratislava; Bratislava, CZ.

The Last of Animal Builders, Edith Farnsworth House; Chicago, US.

Darling, you're head's not right!, François Ghebaly; New York, US.

Hit Sunt Dracones, Deli Gallery; CDMX, MX.

2022 Portrait of an Artist, PEANA; CDMX, MX.

Who Tells a Tale Adds a Tail: Latin America and Contemporary Art, Denver Museum; Denver, US.

Por debajo del árbol, Studio of Architect Agustín Hernández, PEANA Off-site; CDMX, MX.

2021 End of a Dream, No Place Gallery; Ohio, US.

2020 OTRXS MUNDXS, Museo Tamayo, CDMX, MX.

We introduce ourselves to planets and flowers, Kylin Gallery; Los Angeles, US.

You sit in a Garden, Centre Clark; Montreal, CA.

Anima Mundi, St Victor Abbey, Manifesta Biennial; Marseille, FR.

La memoria que no recordamos, PEANA & Labor; Monterrey, MX.

Blasted Heath, A.M. 180 Gallery; Prague, CZ.

Baitball 01, Like a little disaster / Pane Projects; Polignano a Mare, IT.

2019 Futuro Modular, Rachel Uffner Gallery; New York, US.

Sanctuary, Jessica Silverman Gallery- Fused Space; San Francisco, US.

Second Life, Casa Mobius hosted by PEANA, Condo MX; CDMX, MX.

Cold Prey, Lubov Gallery; New York, US.

XYXX0101000, Galería Curro; Guadalajara, MX.

Selected Projects

Blind Sun Rests in Desire

Everyday Gallery; Antwerp, BEL. 2023

Inverse Sático Envy I & II

PEANA; CDMX, MX. 2023

Liste Art Fair

Basel, CH. 2023

The Last of Animal Builders

Edith Farnsworth House; Chicago, US. 2023

Vain Kisses to the Source

Deli Gallery; New York, US. 2022

Who Tells a Tale adds a Tail

Denver Museum; Denver, US. 2022

Wander & Pursuit

House of Gaga; Los Angeles, US. 2022

Vermin Gloom

Project Pangée; Montreal, CA. 2021

Things Happen In A Silent Way

PEANA x Labor; CDMX, MX. 2021

JANUS

Embajada Galería; San Juan, PR. 2020

Anima Mundi

St Victor Abbey, Manifesta Biennial; Marseille, FR. 2020

Otrxs Mundxs

Museo Tamayo; CDMX, MX. 2020

Half Blood Princess

PEANA; Monterrey, MX. 2019



Blind Sun Rests in Desire

Everyday Gallery; Antwerp, BEL, 2023

Blind Sun Rest In Desire marks the first European solo exhibition of the Mexican duo ASMA. Invited by Everyday Gallery, Matias Armendaris (b. 1990, Ecuador) and Hanya Belia (b. 1994, México) create a scenographic exhibition where they let their artistic mind wonder about art, history, and cultural phenomenons.

Their first solo exhibition at the gallery exists out of three elements: large-scale litho-crayon drawings on raw linen stretched on the wall, silicone star-shaped relief paintings and the exhibition text written as a diary entry. This operates as a narrative that guides as a rhetorical thinking of the artist duo, reflecting on the romantic idea of creativity and the contemporary construction of identity and selfhood.

We collectively long in our late capitalistic environment towards individualism. While we experience this as a comfortable desire, we haven't overcome the associated alienation or despair. It is the question of the idea of authorship and originality that is at stake in the exhibition. To translate this cultural desire into a conversation, ASMA materialized the 'star' object. It is a symbol with multiple meanings, from a "movie star" to a symbol of unification as used in flags. A cultural symbol that is full of meaning and at the same time vacant due to its familiarity.

The materialized stars work as a poetic rhetoric that questions uniqueness, difference, and cartoonish self-mockery. The artists comment on our longing for a goal while being completely absorbed by individuality during the search. Symbolizing the need for attention which is a heavy burden in contemporary life. Like a 'blind sun', a star that can no longer contemplate its own light. Not being able to see your own light, you rest in a state of desire.







Installation view
Blind Sun Rests in Desire
Everyday Gallery; Antwerp, BEL.

Inverse Sático Envy I & II

ASMA & Julio Ruelas
Curator: Rodrigo Ortiz Monasterio
PEANA Mexico City, MX. 2023

Inverse Sático Envy, an exhibition curated by Rodrigo Ortiz Monasterio explores the concept of contemporary decadence, drawing parallels to the decadent movement of the late 1900s and contemporary culture. It uses meta-irony and satire to discuss post-cancel culture as a symptom of a metamodern spirit in a post-pandemic world. The show contextualizes the work of the Mexican symbolist artist Julio Ruelas and Mexico City based artistic duo ASMA.

Julio Ruelas' canonical works are framed with five lamp sculpture works by ASMA that illuminate them. The lamps blend designs from different eras, evoking early modern times with a French influence. The lampshade reliefs, made of silicone, contrast classical design with elongated compositions inspired by symbolist tropes of decadent imagination. Additionally, the reliefs incorporate animated stylized language reminiscent of late 90s and early 2000s cartoons, reflecting the contemporary decadent spirit of Gen Z and their nostalgia for music subcultures like punk, emo, or hardcore aesthetics. The composition of the lamp reliefs made by ASMA is inspired by the literary interplay of Ruelas, with poetic prose mimicking the cryptic style of female decadent writers. Certain parts of these texts become titles for the lamp sculptures, hinting at the process of translation between art forms.

The central work that also gives the title to the show, is a large bronze sculpture embedded with contemporary found objects and attempts to anachronically unify the formal language of the romantic classical expression of human figure sculpture with the accumulation of idiosyncratic contemporary objects from our present. This amalgamation imbues the work with a humorous quality that's suggestive of a hoarder's junk garage. The sculpture challenges traditional gender roles by depicting a male nude adopting a relaxed feminine pose and incorporating objects that contradict gender norms. This "masc-fatale" figure explores androgynous themes present in classical decadent works while addressing conflicting misogynistic portrayals of women in Ruelas's works on paper.







Installation view
Inverse Sátiro Envy, 2023
Bronze cast, found objects
PEANA CDMX, MX. 2023





Installation view
Inverse Sático Envy I & II,
PEANA CDMX, MX. 2023

Liste Art Fair

Basel, CH. 2023

For this solo presentation at Liste, ASMA proposes a series of bronze wall sculptures in the shape of flowers, sprouting from a bass relief composition at the center of their petals that creates a loop, a moebius effect bridging the sculptural form of the flower and the composition contained within. These are accompanied by a series of UV LED print on polished aluminum plate caged in a lost-wax casted metal fence, the ornamented object juxtaposing with the paintings to create a twisty window facade. This simulated inside-outside space, adds to the translucencies in the images to enact visual tricks of reflection, light and shadow.

The works together, allude precisely to those tricks of refraction: a scene in which the domestic setting of the window or the flower in a vase is fractalized through a narrative of transfiguration that invokes motifs of nonhuman encounters and altered natural elements. The flower loop and the doubling window become formal vehicles to explore ideas of liminality, the porosity between inside and outside worlds, they present specters of human presence through architectural gestures and objects entangled in relations to nonhuman entities, including insects, animals and plants. The compositions wink at ideas of inner/outer body interrelation in their inclusion of macro-biological systems.

This body of work thus expounds on ideas relating to the ontological and metaphysical processes of recognition: what we discern as real as opposed to imaginary through empirical experiences, as explored by Merleau-Ponty in his revisitation of correlationism and alterity.

A reference to Clarice Lispector's psychological realism and the eerie aspects of her narrative are evoked in the works by them inhabiting that edge between the fantastical and the psychological in the quotidian.







Installation view
Liste Art Fair
Basel, CH. 2023

The Last of Animal Builders

Edith Farnsworth House; Chicago, US. 2023

In 1970, one year before her death, the acclaimed architecture critic Sibyl Moholy-Nagy, in "Chapter Three: Defenseless Breeders," of her unpublished manuscript titled *Pragma*, wrote:

What distinguishes animal structure from human structure is this: in animal structure, structure and space are one. Structure is not means to span a functional void, but structure is the functional void: beehive, nest, spiderweb, etc. A secondary factor: there are no alternatives, which makes Mies (van der Rohe) and SOM, the last of animal builders.

With this declaration, Sibyl Moholy-Nagy allows us to think about the complex relations established between the human, the animal, nature, society, and economy having architecture as its mediating and determining mechanism. By framing the work of Mies van der Rohe through the lens of animality, Sibyl Moholy-Nagy complicates classical understandings of the legacy of one of the most iconic architects of architectural modernity and forces us to engage with a multispecies ethics and politics as a fundamental aspect of the ways in which we produce our spaces and societies. By announcing the end of animal logic within architectural modernity and by declaring Mies van der Rohe as one of *The Last of Animal Builders*, Sibyl seems to expect the modern human to become something beyond its animal condition. Architecture, according to Sibyl's writings, is the artificial matrix by which human societies refine their biological development. However, in such an argument she seems to unwillingly justify modernity as a logical stage in evolution, and in doing so, isolates it from its political condition.

But the critical question emerging from such declarations resides in the possibility to think of the human as a chimeric being, an organism able to achieve all possible forms and formations by means of architecture, art and technology. We can say then, following this line of thinking, that we are human, only to the extent that we are able to create devices of chimerization, devices to allow our frail bodies not only to survive but to transform, to allow the possibilities of our thinking to expand, to create devices to endure hostile environments, to see and think through darkness, to attempt to think like other living organisms do, and to create a world where all potential intelligences are able to thrive.

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Described by Sibyl Moholy-Nagy as defenseless breeders, humans connect with their fellow living organisms through mimicry and interdependence at best, or in exploitation and extraction at worst. By borrowing ideas and metaphors from the animal, vegetal, mineral and insect worlds, we have moulded our societies based on the kinds of interactions and behaviours we believe as efficient based on our perspective on the workings of non-human worlds. Throughout modernity and still determining our contemporary politics, the belief on the separation of the human and the "natural" has only worked to enhance relations of exploitation rather than of collaboration, co-existence and of mutual beneficial transformations. As a contemporary reinterpretation of the sculpture walk that occupied the property during Lord Peter Palumbo's ownership of the house, this temporary exhibition brings artworks selected from Thoma Foundation's Art Collection and works by contemporary artists to the Edith Farnsworth House and its landscape, but also spaces normally out of sight for visitors of this icon of architectural modernity.

The artworks selected from Thoma Foundation reflect on how architectural modernity, minimalism and capitalism have shaped our understandings of nature, the human, the non-human and economy. Bringing attention to the legacies of western modernity in architecture, and enabling a poetics of destruction and regeneration, these artworks engage with the existing architectures of the site through video installations. The artists selected to contribute with new and existing artworks, use plant, animal and mineral metaphors as a way to address social issues, questions of human desire and transformation, ways of engaging with the fragility of our bodies, and processes of thinking beyond and through anthropocentric power relations by means of sculpture and drawing.





Installation view
The Last of Animal Builders
Edith Farnsworth House; Chicago, US, 2023

Vain Kisses to the Source

Deli Gallery; New York, US. 2022

“And now they were preparing the funeral pile, the brandished torches and the bier; but his body was nowhere to be found. In place of his body they find a flower, its yellow centre girt with white petals.”

- Ovid, The Metamorphoses

An end is perhaps a way of beginning, or rather connecting a space between what once was and what could be. What if the process of transformation was not a finite act, but a state of becoming? A space where one could hold within themselves the multiplicity of both the before and the after, not simply a state of transition, but rather a saturation of the self in all its variable forms?

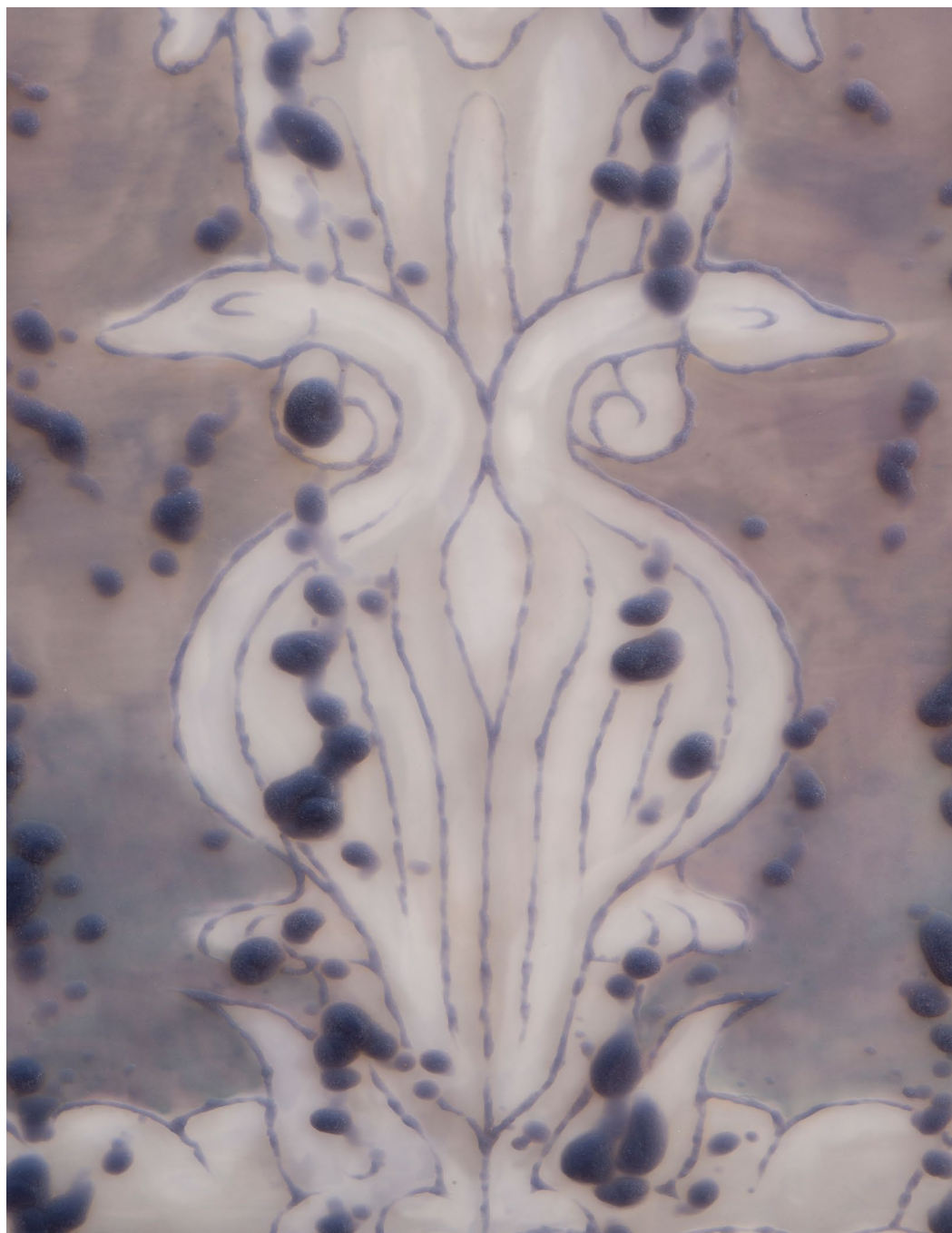
The title of this exhibition, Vain Kisses to the Source, is drawn from the classical myth of Narcissus, which tells the story of a youth who, having grown enamored with his own image, dies for being unable to possess the object of his affection. The reflective pool, within which Narcissus perceives himself, appears in the text's Spanish translation as fuente –meaning at once: fountain, font, or source. As translation too, may be taken as a form of metamorphosis, this more capacious definition allows this encounter to be both an act of self-reflection and a connection to some larger entity. Through this reading, knowing oneself becomes an essential act of belonging, of place-making between worlds.

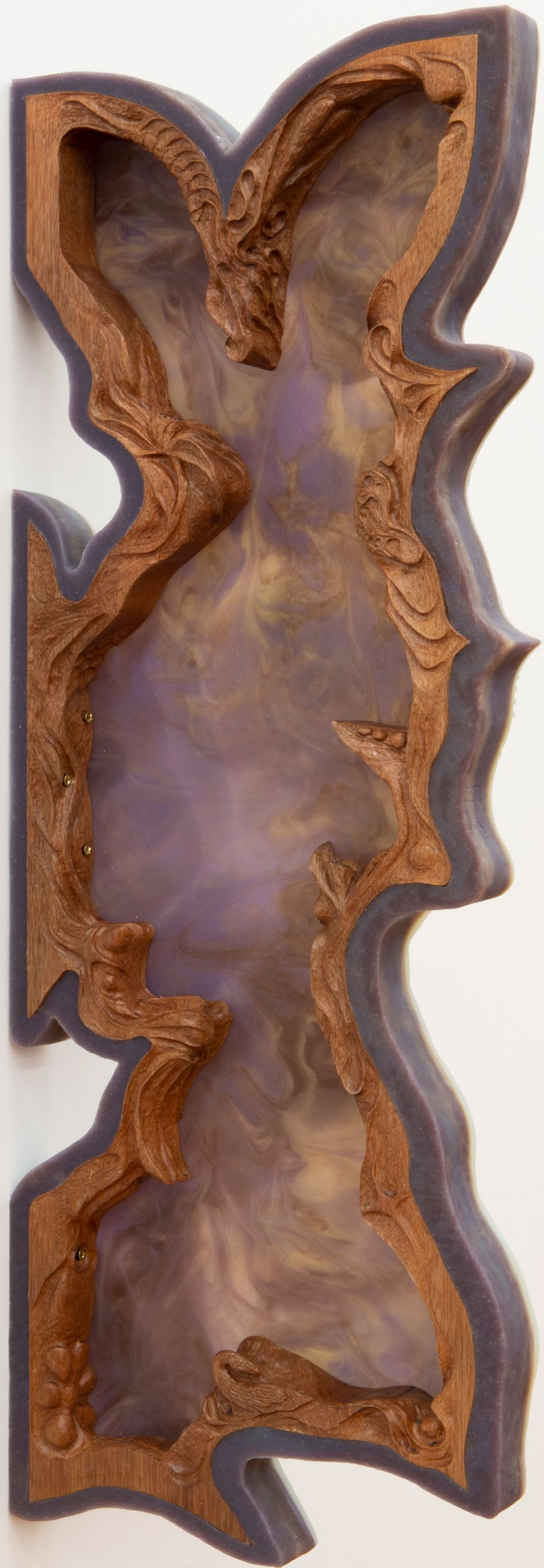
Attending to this space of in-betweenness, the works in this exhibition open the possibility of existing between dualities or states of difference, through both conceptual and material means. Paintings emerge through careful layers of soft silicone, hinting at the suppleness of flesh through the veil of a synthetic skin, bruised or blushing with an internal glow. Sculptures of cast bronze filigree trace torsos and ripening fruit, at once fragile and rigid, hybrids between nature and device. The fragmented body decays, reforms, takes old and new articulations—breathes life into itself.

In this space, one can take in the complexity of contradiction and imagine an expanded futurity beyond hegemonic worldviews and boundaries. A world in which the nymph and the cyborg conjoin, entangle their locks and their wires in grief or rapture, fluid between the ancient and the modern.

Perhaps an end is a way of beginning, or rather connecting what once was and what could be. Where past and present selves brush lips and embrace, and new forms grow forth.

- RK







Installation view
Vain Kisses to the Source
Deli Gallery; New York, USA. 2022

Who Tells a Tale Adds a Tail:

Latin America and Contemporary Art
Denver Museum; Denver, US. 2022

ASMA is the artist duo formed by Hanya Belia and Matias Armendaris, whose practice consistently gives form to objects that conjure fantastical parallel worlds. Their chosen media, one could say, is precisely that worlding. They bring forth these alternative, more luscious, phantasmagorical, otherworldly universes through their exalted material curiosity. In their wood-floored, light-flooded, Lagunilla-loud studio in Mexico City, they stir their own cauldrons of platinum silicon – a material usually reserved for the food and medical industries – manipulating for better impregnation of pigments, for translucidity and precise sensual light-play and for a more pliable inclination to detail. They love a challenge too and have taught themselves to carve different types of wood, to weave their own felt, to weld brass and silver, as well as to delicately sculpt with paraffin wax. These materials usually combine in layers of complexity, adding up to an aura of enigmatic preciousness to their pieces: silicone and metal wink at kinky inclinations, silver metal hugging a flower turns her into a Joan of Arc cosplayer. The result is a collection of objects that in both their material and narrative properties appear as talismans transported into our reality from other possible trajectories of existence. They're wispy, ethereal, pulled out of the depth of re-examined myths and the twistiest of fairy tales – dug up from an alternate future, a weird past laying ahead of us.

In ASMA's otherworlds they ponder if Narcissus, the gorgeous hunter's story classically portrayed by Ovid, wasn't so much in love with himself or selfinvolved to the point of self-annihilation, but instead perhaps obsessed with his connection to the material world around him enough to witness himself dissolving into the beauty of nature's features.

In another body of work the turbulent inner-life of adolescence is embodied by an anthropomorphic rose. In a series of silicone sculptures the flower performs the yearning, the clichéd pseudo-romance and the diluted borders between the real and the purely psychological that throw experience into chaos during those early years of existence. A recent show in Montreal had ASMA re-visiting Kafka's Metamorphosis, pulling inspiration specifically from the passages in the story in which he describes music and sounds. The resulting works were a meditation on the forceful transformative power of isolation, of spending all our time inside, of sitting with one's thoughts for too long, and how that transforms one's conscience but also one's perception of that which sits outside of us and of our domesticated spaces. Like the art that was possible before our current systems were in place—before we tamed it into a global market—the one that waged the duty of amalgamating function, beauty and metaphysics, ASMA's objects too want to embody this kind of vortex, where a devotion for myth, narrative and allegory meet with the ritualistic, meditative, mind-altering aspects of conversing with material. Their objects are another twist in the branch of that tradition, that lacing of ornament, function and cosmogony. Their practice is cosmoplastic: the work of ASMA is to hint at the worlds that could be, that could have been.

-Gaby Cepeda



Wander & Pursuit

House of GAGA; Los Angeles, US. 2022

“The deer that leads a knight through the forest into the enchanted castle is in reality the princess who lives within” - PH

Wander & Pursuit presents an anachronistic office environment rendered in bleak color palettes and composed as a symmetric, medieval walled garden adorned with figurative renderings of chivalric symbolism depicting idyllic moments of the hunt and romantic courtship. The show delves on the contemporary construction of a sense of purpose articulated through labor and the way identity is intertwined with ideas of yearning, fantasy, and desire which translate into metaphorical quests for a more meaningful existence.

These chivalric tales of fulfillment and destiny prevail as aspirational narratives of desire and realization reaffirm ideas of success achievable exclusively through the accumulation of multiple forms of capital. How do these narratives dictating contemporary life embody a clash between contradicting desires and fantasies? Does only the alienated nature seek adventure? These allegorical figures of grandness infiltrate our workplaces, which today have expanded beyond their place and into a quotidian setting, leaving the office to become a mere symbol itself, a ruin from a time in our past when life was divided into work and leisure.







Installation view
Wander & Pursuit
House of GAGA, Los Angeles, USA, 2022

Vermin Gloom

Project Pangée; Montreal, CA. 2021

Something becomes a vermin only in relation to any human activity or environment. When nature proliferates unexpectedly, it reveals an autonomy that overcomes our human desire for control. How can something feel out of their habitat even within their own home? A vermin can be multiple kinds of species, depending on the context of its inconvenience to human habitation.

Mold growing on the ceiling, critters making pathways within the walls, ants nest by the window, many roommates at the haunt. Can these uninvited visitors become closer to our desired image of nature? Like the memory of a walk into the trails of a landscape? Why is this natural idealized spectre often distant to our mundane experience of unpleasant otherness?

The exhibition presents a series of sculptural wall works along with small floor sculptures that set an imaginary stage within a young human's room in the midst of its abandonment. An array of insect figurations occupies the space, as encounters with an omen. A streaming sound comes out of a sweat-stained pillow on the floor: a speechless voice attempting some sort of communication, composed from fragments of our world ingested into a new gentle groan.

"Gregor had a shock as he heard his own voice answering hers, unmistakably his own voice, it was true, but with a persistent horrible twittering mixed squeak behind it like an undertone, which left the words in their clear shape only for the first moment and then rose up reverberating around them to destroy their sense, so that one could not be sure one had heard them rightly."

- Text: Courtesy of the artists
Franz Kafka





Installation view
Vermin Gloom
Projet Pangée; Montreal, CA. 2021

Things Happen In A Silent Way

PEANA x Labor; CDMX, MX. 2021

Labor and PEANA are pleased to present their second collaboration, this time as part of the activities for Zona Maco 2021, Art Week in Mexico City.

Things Happen In A Silent Way is an exhibition that brings together the work of Jorge Satorre (1979, Mexico) and the duo ASMA, formed by Matías Armendaris (1990, Ecuador) and Hanya Belιά (1994, Mexico), with the purpose of exploring not only their points of contact, but also of contrast.

Muscular flowers, mice who are dealers, disembodied hands, and laughing eagles inhabit the exhibition space, evoking a multiplicity of open narratives. Working with drawing, installation and sculpture, each of these artists generates tension between the portrayal of reality and fiction, truth and myth; the projection of desire and the adoption of foreign bodies, meanwhile appealing to a recognition of otherness in the process.

Jorge Satorre presents multiple bodies of work which reaffirm his interest in an oeuvre that develops as a series of responses to excluded traces of historical moments within the diverse contexts he engages with. In Formal encounters in the garden the artist reviewed Miguel Covarrubias' illustrations -found in Casa Barragán's archives- extracting details from them, turning them into a series of clay objects designed to decorate the Barragán house. As opposed to how it was originally installed, the complete series is now presented as a group, in correspondance to the exhibition format adopted for his installation of Los negros, currently at Museo Jumex. Another example of the use of collective memory in Satorre's work can be seen in Águila ríe where the Hokioi, an extinct species of giant eagle that once existed in New Zealand -and with which the artist has been working intermittently since 2013- reappears. Furthermore -while still using his immediate context as a starting point- Satorre also includes the subject of stories which are close to his personal background within his work; as in the case of A veces uso imágenes en mi trabajo que pueden ser vergonzosas

para mí, mi familia y mis galeristas (Sometimes I use images in my work that may be embarrassing for me, my family and my gallery owners). This body of work, consisting of two graphite drawings and a sculpture of intervened magazines -which were obtained from a personal archive from his teenage years, and from which he imagines a series of peculiar scenes inhabited by mice- responds to the context in which it was originally presented: the former garage of artist David Ireland in San Francisco.

In contrast, ASMA's work resorts to mythology, psychological literature, popular culture and alternative futures from which, employing their contrasting formal language, they conceive a series of hybrid characters in scenarios and situations endowed with strong symbolism. On this occasion, the duo presents a new body of work that extends their material exploration. Composed by a series of silicon paintings in bas relief that revolve around the image of an anthropomorphic rose, the works portray this character inhabiting renditions of the romantic cliché of which this particular flower is typically a partaker. Through the construction of this fantasy-induced realm, a psychological space is materialized, where bodies of vegetal-insectoid forms represent human intimacies from the sexual-affective imagination of adolescence, all while the animist language of the relief proposes an internal world framed by objects that evoke a real, domestic, industrial and utilitarian space.

Although the conceptual strategies involved in the construction of the projects presented by each of these artists have characteristics that distinguish them from one another; on one hand, the historical review of the local context with which Jorge Satorre works, and on the other, ASMA's reproduction of a quasi-mythological and fantastic imagery, this exhibition seeks to reveal the private place in which their practices find a converging point. The openness of the narratives to which the artists in the exhibition resort to gives place to the contact and cross-fertilization of the works, while their unique formal and conceptual strategies allow us to clearly identify each of their distinctive voices.



Installation view
Things Happen In A Silent Way
Labor; Mexico City, MX. 2021





Installation view
Things Happen In A Silent Way
Labor; Mexico City, MX. 2021

JANUS

Embajada Galería; San Juan, PR. 2020

The exhibition presents a sculptural installation along with a series of paintings and high-reliefs that construct a psycho-fantastic world where architectural elements are transformed into something living and organic. The construction of this internal space seeks to expand the traditional binary notion of the mythological symbol of Janus by extending its possibilities of containing diametrically opposed states. The exhibition makes use of contrasting materials that integrate an organic and corporeal viscosity juxtaposed against metallic and reflective rigidity with clinical and futuristic qualities; a semi-apocalyptic environment that is simultaneously alive and fertile.

In classical mythology, there are several figures that either fuse or contrast two opposing elements. One such figure is from the Roman tradition –the image of the deity Janus, commonly represented by a bust with two faces positioned in opposite directions. This image metaphorically contains many meanings, such as those echoing a process of transition and renewal, thus providing the etymological origin for the month of January, to mark the beginning of the year, and the exit from the previous one. The image has also been employed on doors, functioning as a transitional point between one place and another, an entrance and an exit simultaneously.

'Janus' traditional function –in addition to personifying union– is actually to demarcate a transition, the transition from one state to another, which also reaffirms the separation of states of difference. The image works primarily to define a division between two opposites. In the exhibition, this transitory portal symbolized by Janus expands and becomes a third habitable space, a space/state which, in itself, does not require the viewer to move toward a pure definition, but is internally contaminated by everything that integrates it. Janus, then, as a living

space is also an absent place of purity that mixes the natural with the mechanical, the past with the future, the imaginary with the real, good and evil, the living with the inert, the human with the animal, the soft and the rigid.

Janus, like a mirror, connects two adjacent worlds. The mirror as a metaphor in space activates this connection between two parallel places, expanding architecture and altering the way objects are perceived. This thin and transparent membrane becomes the central locus, which weaves everything around it. The mirror also mimics that quality, becoming a space in itself.

“Its form doesn't matter: no form manages to circumscribe and alter it. Mirror is light. A tiny piece of mirror is always the whole mirror. Remove its frame or the lines of its edges, and it grows like spilling water.”





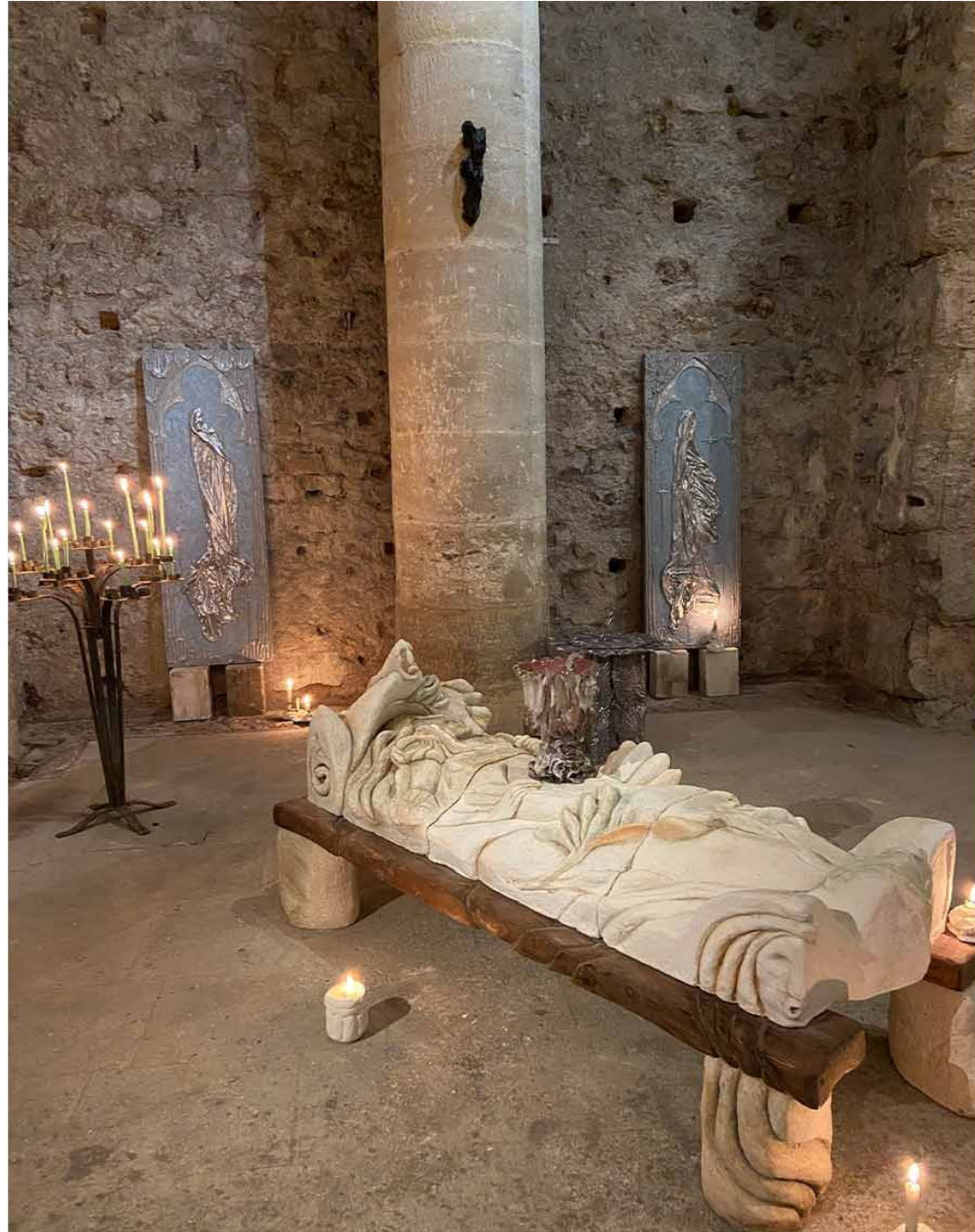
Installation view
JANUS
Galería, San Juan, PR. 2020

Anima Mundi

St Victor Abbey, Manifesta 13 Biennial; Marseille, FR. 2020

The exhibition Anima Mundi gathers several international artists in the ancient crypts of the Abbey of Saint-Victor, one of the oldest monuments in the Provence region. The works on display, mainly sculptures, communicate with the paleochristian sarcophagi in the crypts and propose a reflection on death, spirituality and the relation to History. The works, mixing art and craft, resonate and connect to the place through their vernacular and spiritual anchoring. The artists invited by Emmanuelle Luciani and Southway Studio combine past and present to offer artistic and aesthetic alternatives to contemporary matters with inspiration from the heritage impulse that arose from the Revolution, or like the Nabis and Pre-Raphaelites who reclaim the past to propose new artistic forms where spirituality is brought together with arts and modernity.





Otrxs Mundxs

Museo Tamayo; CDMX, MX. 2020

OTRXS MUNDXS [Spanish gender neutral for “Other Worlds”] is a group exhibition that surveys and articulates the work of an heterogeneous, multicultural group of more than forty artists who work individually and collectively in Mexico City. Throughout four thematic sections (I.Capitalism and Domination, II. Seriality, Identity and Obliteration, III. Entropy, Speculation and Visualization, and IV. Body and Materiality), the exhibition presents recent works and special commissions, which reveal urgent discourses, representative of an artistic community who internalizes the paradigms and failures of late capitalism. OTRXS MUNDXS focuses on highlighting otherness: artist’s presentations constitute artistic microcosms which question the preconceived, hegemonic notions—or else, they solidify alternative visions—of what it means to make art in or from Mexico City.

OTRXS MUNDXS presents a majority of younger, or emerging artists—for some of whom this exhibition is their first major museum presentation—as it articulates the narratives in which they are invested with a selected group of more established artists who have been instrumental for defining the Mexican artistic landscape, both nationally and internationally.

Even though the exhibition is an exhaustive revision of the current artistic landscape, it is not intended to be an all-encompassing or universal exercise. In that sense, the exhibition has been constructed with an awareness of its own limitations and with the hope of posing one argument, amongst the many that can be made about art in the present.

The exhibition is, first and foremost, a platform for art and artists to trace conversations that have been at the forefront of global artistic discourse, presenting the important dialogue between local communities and Mexican artists with artists from Ecuador, República Dominicana, France, Brazil, Peru, and many cities of the United States. It also addresses the lack of institutional representation and attention to local communities, particularly for a younger generation of artists in the city. OTRXS MUNDXS consists of an unprecedented institutional response to the global pandemic; a gesture which, in the best of cases, anticipates a post-pandemic alterity, a world in which equality, social and interspecies justice and the well-being of the inhabitants of this complex city, is not posed as radical idea, but as an attainable reality.

ARTISTS:

Francis Alÿs, ASMA, Zazil Barba, Fernanda Barreto, Javier Barrios, Miguel Calderón, Pia Camil, Marcos Castro, Paloma Contreras Lomas, Chelsea Culprit, Pablo Dávila, ektor garcia, Mario García Torres y Sol Oosel, Yann Gerstberger, Julieta Gil, Daniel Godínez Nivón, Romeo Gómez López, Cristóbal Gracia, Clotilde Jiménez Madeline Jiménez, Ángela Leyva, Yeni Mao, Noe Martínez, Melanie McLain, Josué Mejía, Berenice Olmedo, Fernando Palma Rodríguez, Tania Pérez Córdova, Rita Ponce de León, Jerónimo Reyes-Retana, Armando Rosales, Marco Rountree, SANGREE, Bárbara Sánchez-Kane, Guillermo Santamarina, Ana Segovia, Tercerunquinto and Tezontle.







Installation view
Otrxs Mundxs
Poción Multijugos, 2020
Museo Tamayo, Mexico City, MX. 2020

Half Blood Princess

PEANA; Monterrey, MX. 2019

The exhibition echoes a mythological open narrative of an encounter at the shore of a lagoon. Some fragments of this narrative suggest a hybrid being, a recognition of otherness and an embrace of different bodies: two facing characters that become everything and change over and over into the landscape. This speculative fiction takes place in a possible ancient past or a far away future where technologies have become organic.

Half Blood Princess features a series of sculptures, paintings, and installation elements that sets the stage at a place in between exterior and interior. Through the use of two large lattice that dictate the flow of entry to the show and the pace of the story, the context of the experience becomes about looking and being seen. The exhibition is comprised mainly of works that live between painting and sculpture, putting in evidence its formal propensity for fading limits and merging opposites. This new body of work constitutes a closer approach to figuration in direct contrast with mechanical line abstractions.

As part of their collaborative practice which enables the coexistence of differences and the process of interrelation, the works go through a series of material processes of alteration and modification that resist the casting processes and puts into play interrelations of materials. As a metaphorical figurative element, the liquid in the lagoon repeats through the exhibition suggesting a moment of submersion, and a possible process of becoming.







Installation view
Half Blood Princess
PEANA, Monterrey, MX. 2019

PEANA

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