

ASMA and Jorge Satorre

AF artforum.com/print/reviews/202107/asma-and-jorge-satorre-86374



View of “ASMA and Jorge Satorre,” 2021. Photo: Ramiro Chaves.

LABOR

Mexico City’s Art Week, organized by the ZonaMaco fair in the last week of April, brought out many spur-of-the-moment, impulsive-feeling offerings as it spread throughout the capital’s gallery districts. These included some odd pairings, but none as surprising as the mash-up of ASMA and Jorge Satorre at Labor, the gallery’s second collaboration with Paena, an art space based in Monterrey in northeast Mexico. Satorre is a respected midcareer-ish local artist with a résumé that includes solo shows, museum exhibitions, international residencies, and prizes, while ASMA, comprising Mexican Hanya Belía and Ecuadorean Matías Armendaris, are a younger duo who have already become well known for their compelling use of materials such as wax, resin, brass, and silver. Satorre leans on historical research, tackling niche, overlooked subjects in different geographical contexts for inspiration. He is a former illustrator, and drawing remains a constant in his work. His sculptures are usually low-key interventions involving basic materials (wood, clay, metal) arranged studiously in space. ASMA, on the other hand, have a practice of seemingly cosmic scope; the duo’s works have in common the fact that they behave as if foreign to our everyday reality, having recently arrived

from a weirder, more poetic dimension. The artists amalgamate materials, techniques, and aesthetics to birth something that is eerie, ethereal, and very much their own. These objects can denature a room just by virtue of being there.

ASMA and Satorre's joint exhibition, "*Las cosas suceden de forma silenciosa*" (Things Happen in a Silent Way), was beautiful from the start. The entire right-hand wall of the gallery had been removed, unveiling a lush view of the garden and providing ideal sunlight for the pieces inside. The works weren't really mixed together, though they shared the space harmoniously. Opposite the open-air side of the gallery, on a long white base, rested Satorre's *Encuentro formal en el jardín* (Formal Encounter in the Garden), 2016, a group of clay sculptures with unglazed, earthy colors. These works were created for a show at the Casa Luis Barragán—the house museum devoted to the architect, across the street from Labor—and are comprised mostly of hands and feet adapted from sketches by famed Mexican caricaturist Miguel Covarrubias. Their odd, exaggerated proportions gestured toward ASMA's work: a group of rectangular bas-reliefs all made out of platinum silicone—a material primarily used in the food and pharmaceutical industries. These pieces tell the story of an anthropomorphized rose living out an otherworldly version of the passion-filled situations in which humans often employ them. In *Romance, Bath, Rose, Champagne*, 2021, the stylized blossom grows wispy wings as it submerges itself in a glass of champagne, recalling the many burlesque performers, from Helen Fairweather to Dita Von Teese, who have used oversize drinking glasses in their acts. In *Beautiful, Close the Door*, 2021, the rose appears to be posing, flexing itself like a muscle as it sits seductively, expectantly, on a bed with an open door behind it. Both these pieces are a light-blue lavender tone. The material looks slightly fleshy, and the works are adorned with small silver bits of hardware screwed onto their sides—door chains, metal hooks, and hinges—ornaments that add a little bit of kink, like an unexpected nipple piercing on an already attractive someone.

The foretold meeting point did arrive on a side wall where two pencil drawings from Satorre's *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 Might Be Embarrassing to Me, My Family, and My Dealers), 2019, hung near another rosebud and hardware piece by ASMA, *Raining in my Room*, 2021. For a moment, it seemed as if Satorre's depiction of mischievous partying mice might exist in the same extended universe as ASMA's sexy rose: a warped, delightfully alive cosmos in which nonhumans are history's protagonists and where Satorre's eye for the peripheral and ASMA's knack for fantasy coexist.

— Gaby Cepeda