

In Practice: Isabel Mallet

Nov 2–Dec 11, 2023

SculptureCenter

44-19 Purves Street
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sculpture-center.org

Isabel Mallet studies the biological and technological life cycles of materials. She builds forms and systems that reconfigure given architectures, proposing sculpture as a revelatory experience of space.

On the steel I-beams of the gallery's ceiling, Mallet suspends three stone slabs: a gray granite, a pink granite, and a serpentine. These stones, chosen for their historical specificity in the construction of New York, can be found in buildings, monuments and public spaces throughout the city—as architecture, their durability is symbolic as much as it is physical. However, once extracted from the earth, the stone degrades at a much faster rate due to weather, water, and wear. On a geological time scale, they are quickly turning to dust.

Using the same technology as the city's streetlamps, Mallet modifies the gallery's existing lights to turn on when they sense darkness. In this room, the lights respond to each other and themselves. As each 'dusk to dawn' photocell sensor is triggered, it in turn causes another to turn off, entering a random feedback loop.

This summer, along the empty tree pits that line Purves Street outside of SculptureCenter, Mallet planted *datura wrightii*. All parts of the plant contain narcotic alkaloids which are poisonous in high doses. For some, the plant is sacred, and is used medicinally and ceremonially; for others, the plant is considered dangerous and invasive. The *datura's* blooms last just one night; those that are pollinated turn into spiky bulbous seed pods that burst open when ripe. It spreads without regard to the defined spaces of the city, filling in cracks and craters, carrying out its own lifecycle, on repeat, year after year.

In ways perceptible and not, the exhibition grafts together these different registers of time, staging extractive interruptions as flashes in daily life amid cycles of blooming, propagating, and dying beyond the human.

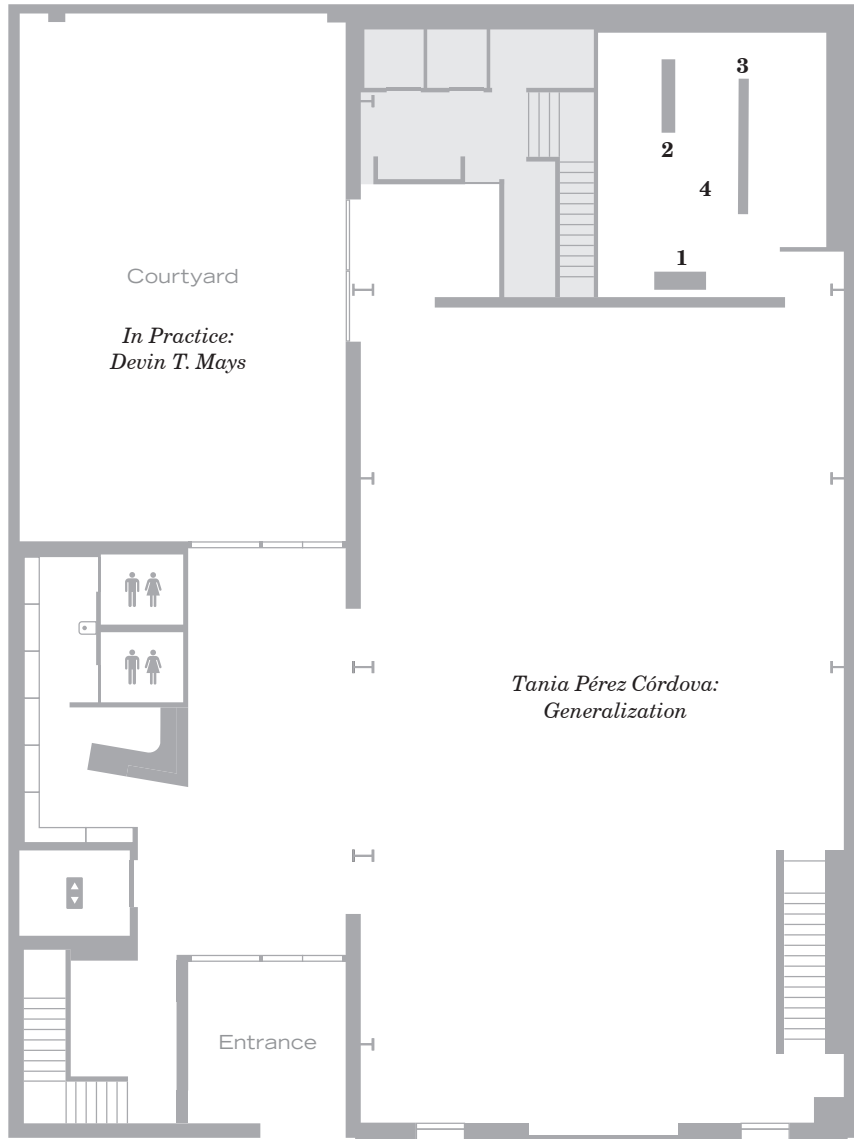
With thanks to:

Rob Boulanger, Marco Parent and Jonathan Houghton at Rock of Ages Quarry

Darrell Petit at Stony Creek Quarry

Tom Fabbioni, Peter Fabbioni and Mary-Margaret Fabbioni at Vermont Verde Serpentine Quarry

Works in the Exhibition



Ground Floor Plan

Ground Floor

- 1 *Slab from the edge of a rift zone*, 2023
Stony Creek granite, steel brackets, I-beam
26 x 53 x 10 inches
(66 x 135 x 25 cm)
 - 2 *Slab from an ancient fault line*, 2023
Vermont Verde serpentine, steel brackets, I-beam
40 x 52 ¾ x 8 inches
(102 x 134 x 20 cm)
 - 3 *Slab from a vast pluton*, 2023
Barre Gray granite, steel brackets, I-beam
16 ¼ x 127 ½ x 5 ¾ inches
(41 x 324 x 15 cm)
 - 4 *Misstep the track (cacophony in 0-1)*, 2023
LED panels, photocell sensors, gutted track light cans, hardware
Dimensions variable
- Datura*, 2023
Datura wrightii grown in empty tree pits along Purves Street
(Seasonal)

All works courtesy the artist

On View Concurrently

Tania Pérez Córdoba: Generalization
Sep 23–Dec 11, 2023

*Julian Abraham “Togar”:
Too good to be OK*
Sep 23–Dec 11, 2023

In Practice: Devin T. Mays
Sep 23–Dec 11, 2023

About In Practice

In Practice 2023 marks the twentieth anniversary of SculptureCenter’s signature open call program for artists, and the first year of a new format for the program. Our new format generates a yearlong series of solo presentations and provides more substantial financial and production support to artists who have not yet had an institutional exhibition in New York City.

SculptureCenter is a not-for-profit arts institution that takes the history and legacy of sculpture as a framework from which to consider the diverse activity taking place in the field of contemporary art. SculptureCenter’s program encourages artists and audiences to explore the possibilities of sculpture and the multifarious ways in which sculpture is developing and connecting to other forms of expression, including installation, video, performance, architecture, and other media.

Since 2003, SculptureCenter’s In Practice open call program has supported the production of new work by 250 artists.

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Art Installers

In Practice 2023 is organized by the SculptureCenter curatorial team.

In Practice: Isabel Mallet is curated by Christopher Aque, Exhibition and Program Manager, and Kyle Dancewicz, Deputy Director.

Sponsors

In Practice 2023 is made possible by the generosity of the Elaine Graham Weitzen Foundation for Fine Arts. The Foundation's support for SculptureCenter's annual open call exhibition reflects Elaine Graham Weitzen's (1920-2017) lifelong commitment to emerging artists and her exuberant support of new ideas in art. Weitzen served as a devoted Trustee of SculptureCenter from 1987 to 2017.

Major support for the In Practice program is provided by the Pollock-Krasner Foundation. In Practice is supported in part by an award from the National Endowment for the Arts.

Leadership support for SculptureCenter's exhibitions and programs is provided by Carol Bove, Barbara and Andrew Gundlach, the Anna-Maria and Stephen Kellen Foundation, Jill and Peter Kraus, and Teiger Foundation. Major support is provided by the Marguerite Steed Hoffman Donor Advised Fund at The Dallas Foundation, Karyn Kohl, Miyoung Lee and Neil Simpkins, Eleanor Heyman Propp, and Jacques Louis Vidal. Support is also generously provided by the May and Samuel Rudin Foundation, Inc., with additional funding from Candy and Michael Barasch, Sanford Biggers, Libby and Adrian Ellis, Jane Hait and Justin Beal, and Amy and Sean Lyons.