

ASMA: Ideal Space for Music

Oct 31, 2024–Feb 3, 2025

SculptureCenter

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ASMA's sculptural practice expands the possibilities of materials like silicone, resin, bronze, steel, and glass, creating hybrid works that merge artisan techniques with synthetic processes. Their research integrates concepts from literature, mythology, and fantasy with an exploration of the human condition and psychoaffective states, all framed through a metamodern lens.

In *Ideal Space for Music*, ASMA draws on the metaphorical capacity of SculptureCenter's lower level as a place embodying the subconscious, opening a conversation around desire, fragmentation, and longing—concepts reflected in the exhibition's title that point to an inherent impossibility. They explore this through the development of language and literature, using the concept of joint articulation and the symbol of ball-jointed dolls. In BJDs, the sphere becomes a place of contact, a point of conjunction and separation, simultaneously symbolizing the object of desire triangulating between a lover and the loved. For SculptureCenter, ASMA has sculpted low-relief cast aluminum spheres, depicting contorted figures dissected by curved lines. Other shapes reveal their musculature or are stretched and elongated—bodies, hands, legs, and feet become indistinguishable yet glow and reflect the viewer.

Adding to the newly commissioned metal spheres, ASMA creates a total environment with new stagings, paintings, a video, and soundscape. Dolls first appear through a drawing and photograph made by street vendors and found by chance by the artists in Mexico City. From here, the exhibition unfolds into a sequence of dramatic scenes featuring constructed figures that are all meticulously handcrafted and further the exploration of text, language, and symbolism. Combining found and reassembled pieces—many from prosthetic devices—with newly created elements like rounded joints and wired silicone hands, the dolls are given life-like movement and flexibility. They incorporate elements such as a clarinet for a leg, a sink faucet for a leg ligament, a dental impression tray as a foot, a bracket bonding device for the torso, cut hand orthoses for the thighs, and clothing made from used shirts, socks, and jeans.

The real, the imaginary and the symbolic, (B doll) engages with the tradition of still lifes and opens the emotional ambience of the exhibition through its interplay with shadow and perception. This next scene is lightened by the small glass mouse at the foot of *Sub, (D doll)* whose prefix as title evokes words like *subway, subconscious, subject, or submission*, emphasizing sound associations and play with the lower-level space. *Composer and composition, (C doll)* reflects on the interaction between creator and creation while also being configured. *Nude and the Staircase, (A Doll)* invokes the romantic desire of the maker with references to Duchamp's fragmented painting of the body. Building on earlier representations of dolls as sites of projection for ideas around sexuality, eroticism, and monstrosity linked to avant-

garde artists like Hans Bellmer—who also drew on Lacan’s ideas around symbolism and language—ASMA’s works serve as avatars that revisit the Frankensteinian notion of disintegration. They evoke themes of contamination and hybridity in the process of self-becoming.

The dolls are illuminated by a series of lamps similarly patchworked with found components, including glass cups and plates, a baking mold, magnifying glass, headlamps, flashlights, and other details that refract light and shadow. These fixtures also light a group of hand-finished calligraphic ink paintings that dissolve letters and text fragments drawn from sources that include psychological terminology, a 1913 text on Lotte Pritzel’s dolls by Rainer Maria Rilke, and prepositions in multiple languages. Breaking the point of composition, they also serve as vacant stage backdrops.

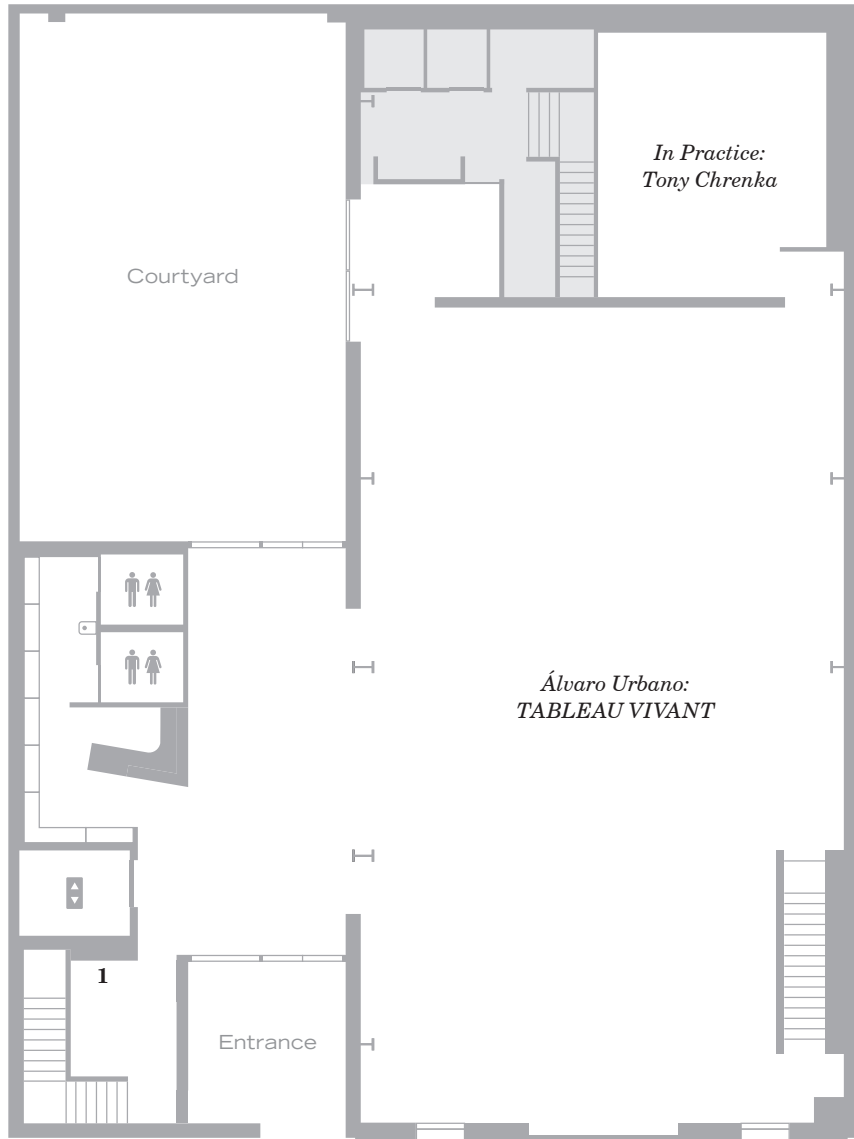
Integrating all of the artworks is a soundscape, a new dimension in their work, collaged by ASMA from sounds collected over many years. This auditory experience creates an atemporal atmosphere and ranges from melodic to dissonant. It includes classical music excerpts, distorted conversations, birdsongs, footsteps, water drops, and heartbeats. This dislodging of time is further developed through a new video work featuring the constructed dolls posing. It was filmed with a 16mm camera, hand-developed in black and white solarized stock, and then scanned and digitized.

Representations of the fragmented body manifest as a response to the horror and perversion of human conflict during times of violence. ASMA’s exploration coincides with the current resurgence of dolls in popular culture, serving as a psychological space for coping with the contemporary nightmares of collective sorrow.

ASMA is a Mexico City-based artist duo formed by Matias Armendaris and Hanya Beliá. Their work uses allegorical figures and evocative architectural spaces, exploring formal interrelations between painterly and sculptural expressions. They employ fictional narratives that 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 that oscillates between critical discourses of identity and belonging and ornate formal explorations of beauty.

ASMA’s recent solo exhibitions include *Inverse Sátiro Envy I & II*, PEANA, Mexico City; *Blind Sun Rests in Desire*, Everyday Gallery, Antwerp, BEL; *The Last of Animal Builders*, Edith Farnsworth House, Illinois, US; *Wander & Pursuit*, House of Gaga, Los Angeles; *Vermin Gloom*, Project Pangeé, Montreal; *Vain Kisses to the Source*, Deli Gallery, New York; *Janus*, Embajada, San Juan, PR; *Half Blood Princess*, PEANA, Monterrey, MX; *Blossoming Carcass*, Make Room, Los Angeles. Recent group show exhibitions include *Who Tells a Tale Adds a Tail*, Denver Art Museum, Denver; *OTRXS MUNDXS*, Museo Tamayo, Mexico City; and *Anima Mundi*, Manifiesta 13, Marseille, FR.

Works in the Exhibition



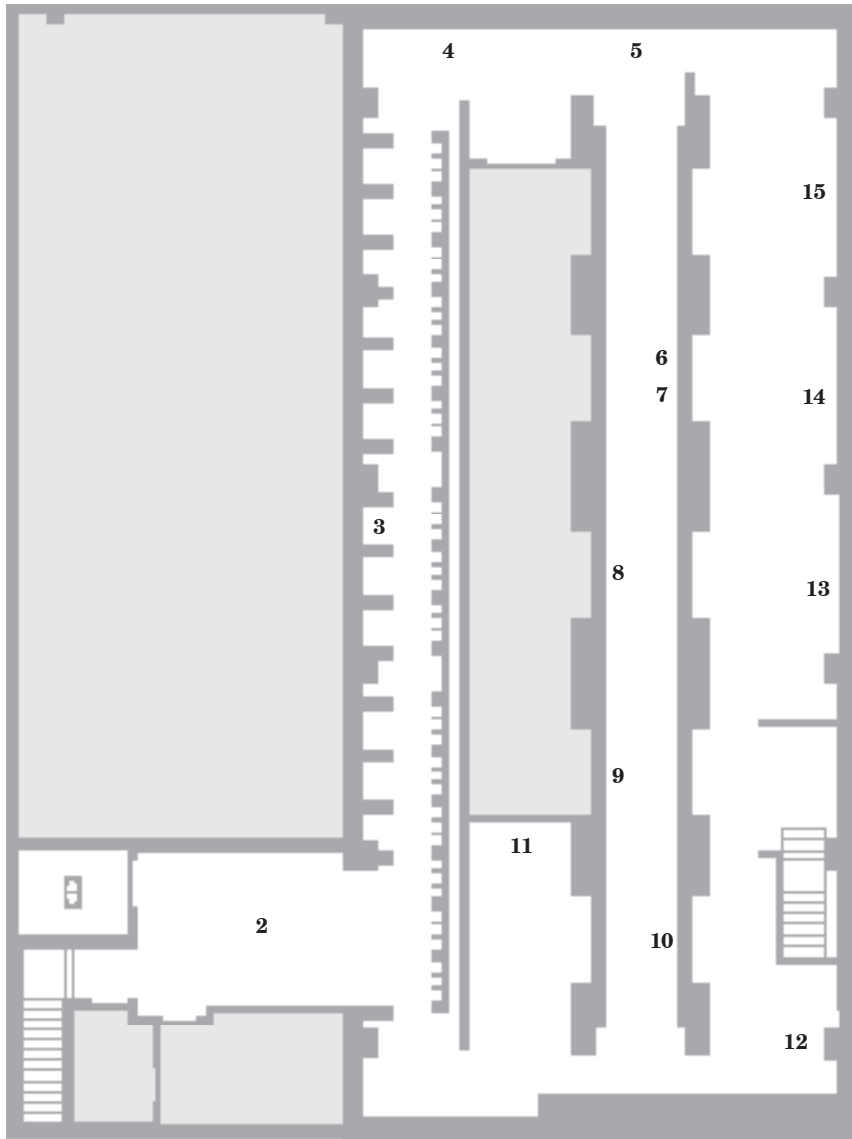
Ground Floor Plan

Checklist – Ground Floor

- 1 *Prelude*, 2024
Found ball-point pen drawing on board, found polaroid photograph
14 ½ x 19 ¼ inches (37 x 49 cm) framed

Exhibition continues in the Lower Level

Works in the Exhibition



Checklist – Lower Level

- 2** *The real, the imaginary and the symbolic, (B doll), 2024*
Doll (found objects, wood, metal, epoxy resin, fiberglass, newspaper, silicone, fabric, synthetic hair, plastic, seed), taxidermy skunk, artist-made lamps, glass figurine
Doll: 40 ½ x 11 ¾ x 4 inches (103 x 30 x 10 cm); installation dimensions variable
- 3** *Sub, (D doll), 2024*
Doll (found objects, wood, metal, epoxy resin, fiberglass, silicone, fabric, synthetic hair, plastic, leather, paper) glass figurine, artist-made lamp
Doll: 40 ½ x 11 ¾ x 4 inches (103 x 30 x 10 cm); installation dimensions variable
- 4** *Composer and composition, (C doll), 2024*
Doll (found objects, wood, metal, epoxy resin, silicone, fabric, synthetic hair, bone, paper, plastic) vintage Baby Grand metal piano, artists-made lamps
Doll: 40 ½ x 11 ¾ x 4 inches (103 x 30 x 10 cm); installation dimensions variable
- 5** *Puntuación (Joint F), 2024*
Aluminum
13 ¾ inches (35 cm) diameter
- 6** *Cruz (Joint E), 2024*
Aluminum
13 ¾ inches (35 cm) diameter
- 7** *Yum, Yuck (Joint B), 2024*
Aluminum
13 ¾ inches (35 cm) diameter
- 8** *Grid (Joint A), 2024*
Aluminum
13 ¾ inches (35 cm) diameter
- 9** *Yearn, Yap, Yawn (Joint C), 2024*
Aluminum
13 ¾ inches (35 cm) diameter
- 10** *Pentagrama (Joint D), 2024*
Aluminum
13 ¾ inches (35 cm) diameter
- 11** ASMA in collaboration with Josue Eber
I ought to be thy Adam; but I am rather the fallen angel...., 2024
16mm transferred to 4K video
9:02 mins
- 12** *Nude and the Staircase, (A Doll), 2024*
Doll (found objects, wood, metal, epoxy resin, silicone, fabric, synthetic hair, cardboard, acrylic, elastic, plastic, polyurethane, adhesive tape), vintage miniature playing cards, artist-made lamps
Doll: 40 ½ x 11 ¾ x 4 inches (103 x 30 x 10 cm); installation dimensions variable
- 13** *Outside, amongst, A, entre, a merced de, 2024*
Calligraphy ink on canvas
169 ¼ x 90 ½ x 2 inches (408 x 214 x 5 cm)
- 14** *Per, plus, post, pre, pro, 2024*
Calligraphy ink on canvas
169 ¼ x 90 ½ x 2 inches (408 x 214 x 5 cm)
- 15** *Versus, hasta, beneath, beside, between, beyond, but, by, 2024*
Calligraphy ink on canvas
169 ¼ x 90 ½ x 2 inches (408 x 214 x 5 cm)
- Throughout**
Chord, 2024
Audio
2 hrs 11:35 mins
- All works courtesy the artists and Gaga, Los Angeles and Guadalajara, and Peana, Mexico City.

Public Programs

Opening Reception
Weds, Oct 30, 2024, 6–8pm

Book Launch
Thurs, Jan 30, 2025, 6–8pm

On View Concurrently

Álvaro Urbano: TABLEAU VIVANT
Sep 19, 2024–Mar 24, 2025

In Practice: Tony Chrenka
Oct 31–Dec 22, 2024

In Practice: Anita Esfandiari
Jan–Mar 2025

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ASMA: Ideal Space for Music is curated by Jovanna Venegas, Curator.

Sponsors

Generous support for *ASMA: Ideal Space for Music* is provided by Colección Carolina García y Alfonso Castro, Simon Chung, Marcos Ruiz, and PAC.

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