

ASMA
Vain Kisses to the Source
 January 7 - February 19, 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 *fuentes*—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.

– ЯК

DELI

ASMA is an artist duo based in Mexico City, formed by Matias Armendaris (Ecuador, b. 1990) and Hanya Belia (México, b. 1994). The duo focuses on developing work produced exclusively through active collaboration. Their work uses open narratives and architectural spaces exploring formal interrelations between painterly and sculptural expressions. In their collaborative process, they explore the act of interaction and how things in contact start affecting each other. In this interrelation, things start erasing their boundaries and begin to fuse, they play with the potential of this process of transformation, both formally and conceptually.

Recent solo exhibitions include *Vermin Gloom* at Projet Pangee, Montreal, CA; *Janus* presented at Embajada (San Juan, Puerto Rico), 2020; *Half Blood Princess*, Peana, (Monterrey, Mexico), 2019; and *Blossoming Carcass*, Make Room Gallery (Los Angeles, USA), 2019. The duo also participated in multiple group exhibitions such as *Trama*, 80m2LiviaBenavides (Lima, Perú), 2021; *Theorem X*, Rachel Uffner Gallery (New York, USA), 2021; *Theorem Y*, Mrs. Gallery (New York, USA), 2021; *You sit in a Garden*, Centre Clark (Montreal, Canada), 2021; and *44 Signs of The Time*, Mana Contemporary (New Jersey, USA), 2021.