

Organized Matter + Guadalupe Quesada Elemental Phenomena

Art Review
by Shana Nys Dambrot
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A quite contrary garden grew inside a downtown Los Angeles gallery in late Autumn of 2022 – as beds of outlandishly hued, splayed and chunky succulents nestled on mirrored angular hillocks under a sweeping canopy of cascading wires, sparkling lights, ghostly blossoming trellises, and ethereal sounds. This fantastical environment was cultivated by Xaus Kahal with El Salón Arte from objects and gestures by sculptor Guadalupe Quesada and Organized Matter (the design studio of James Benn and Krislyn Komarov) to expand what nature and the esoteric landscape can be – and can be made of. Subtly overwhelming, charming and queasy, full of surprise and delight, but impossible to get your bearings – Eternal Phenomena expresses in material form the sensation of paradox at the cusp of ecology and industry.



OM's overall list of installation materials recites a litany of the mineral qualities of post-organic bodies – botanical flowers, wax, gypsum, linen, lime, aluminum, steel, electric light, poly foam, gesso, epoxy resin, plaster, pyrite, marble, found objects. Their sculptural work is known for inventive objects and evocative elements set amid immersive, experiential design environments, in which they express the distilled essence of the poetic grotto, the sublime picturesque of beauty and chaos, pleasure and terror. In their collating of natural and industrial resources, replication of fractal networks in their design directives, and their elusive materiality of casts of what were flowers, flickers of what were vines, memories of what were fireflies, OM gets you to think about nature while being eminently aware that they are nowhere near it.

Quesada's ceramics are more apparently botanical, hand-molded flora with the personalities of little living beings, full of rounded bulbs and folded edges, valves and polyps and little secret treats. Their surfaces are mottled and pigmented with cheeky, theatrical patterns of dots and drips, flecks and flares; they flaunt their palette of sky blue, creamy orange, creamy yellow, dreamy lavender, nervy pink, stony blood orange, and dusty teal with panache. As a flower bed, it's both unmistakable and uncanny, exotic and extraterrestrial; as an avatar of the idea of beauty in a world gone mad, it flourishes.

