

**Yasmina Karli Malmsten and Elia diane Fushi Bekene**

***the song in my veins***

Skånes konstförening

Nov 11–Dec 11

ENGLISH

Artist Talk: Nov 11, 15:00–16:00

## Curatorial Statement

This duo exhibition explores the body as a site for psychological healing, community healing, and our own internal polyphony: the voices of our many selves. A world of softness and solace, this exhibition focuses on the oases we create internally and communally through the power of imagination and community. Historically, the body has been a site of oppression, especially for marginalized folks, who were and continue to be defined by our bodies and our (un)fit-ness. From colonial conquest to public policy to the intergenerational trauma that follows, the body can become fraught, and with imagination offering the only safety. Under these conditions, imagination can also be a powerful springboard for new worlds, policies, and ways of being.

Through the interplay of Yasmina's visuals and Elia's soundscapes, the artists have turned the gallery into a collection of small worlds. Elia's audio work draws inspiration from healing and the four elements—earth, water, fire, air—and interlocks with Yasmina's sectioned soft depictions of the body, selfhood, and community. Earthy umber, pale lilac, white, and warm blue form the backdrops for larger than life figures in moments of togetherness, both within themselves and with each other.

Though each artist worked independently, the result is an intriguing interplay between color, scale, texture, and sound. Through her large murals and prints, Yasmina reflects on the fragments within the self and how they fit into communities, while Elia explores healing through sound and body-based therapeutic methods. At times joyous, at times restful, Yasmina examines how us individually and our internal fragments can resonate together in moments of care.

In the main gallery space, the painted figures' are impossibly sized and positioned. Queer and nonsensical in their proportions, soft and grand in their stature. And yet this is precisely the world they inhabit—the realm of delight, of softness—presided over by Elia's dreamy soundscapes.

The smaller, far room contains a grove of Yasmina's electric and plaster sculptures, to the tune of Elia's *Earth Trance*. Lit by these flower-trees, the room is suspended outside of time, where sunset and moonrise collide.

Throughout the exhibition, the shapes of these sculptures echo the voluptuousness and free lines of the bodies in the two-dimensional works. With the addition of Elia's audio works, these scenes transform into gateways and spaces to explore the body with both its weight and its joys.

Drawing from tarot, as well as body-focused and ancestral healing practices, Elia's soundscapes are located in QR codes throughout the space. Each sonic trance engages with a single element—air, fire, earth, water—each one corresponding to a different visual section of Yasmina's work. Elia also draws from somatic therapy principles, wherein the body and mind are connected. Trauma lingers in the body and wreaks havoc on the mind, but it can be reverse engineered: calming the body to calm the mind.

In the *Ancestral Healing Tarot Deck*, each card suit is also defined by an element. The deck displays Elia's reimaginings of digital creations and archival photographs. Some of these photographs are reclaimed colonial documentary materials that Elia lovingly rehuses in lush environments, such as outer space, rainbows, beautiful sand dunes, palaces.

By contrast, the cards also contain documentary photographs taken by Black and Brown folks themselves in moments of love and togetherness: parties, dinners, family gatherings. Featured people of color, specifically formerly colonized Black and Brown people, find new homes within the universe of each card and in the deck among each other.

Throughout this exhibition, the artists examine togetherness and selfhood, healing and community—the community of the self, of the groups within groups, and close relationships, all within each figure and among all figures. From those depicted on the wall to those in the card decks, these communities create a larger space of many fellowships. Safety and softness are not always possible in the lived world. In those moments, the inner world of the self and groundedness in the body become especially important. In this imaginary, impossible world, the artists allow sound, shape, and color to resonate together in softness and care.

C. Grace Chang, Curator

