

Ruby Neri

Chorus

09.01.2025

22.02.2025

MASSIMODECARLO is delighted to present *Chorus*, Ruby Neri's debut solo exhibition with the gallery and her first in the UK. *Chorus* unfolds a surreal garden scene - part ritual, part dance, part escape. Neri's sculptural works and accompanying drawings conjure a space that is both vividly alive and curiously introspective.

Neri's compact compositions feature tightly choreographed figures, sculpted as if they were bouquets - female bodies twisting, melding, and blooming into floral arrangements. These works are celebratory yet cathartic, inviting us into an emotionally complex scenario that reflects the artist's perspective as a woman in contemporary society.

Chorus carries a Shakespearean sensibility - an English garden reimagined through the lens of a playwright, where artifice and intimacy coexist. Neri's ceramic sculptures form a "fence of girls," a choreography of figures that simultaneously invite and guard. Defying traditional functionality, these vessels act as both barriers and gateways, their forms shielding fragile interior narratives. Each figure's stance, glaze, and gesture evoke vulnerability, masked by a façade - an emotional sleight of hand that teeters between deflection and revelation.

Recent explorations in tonality reveal a shift in Neri's palette. The sugary pop hues of past works are replaced by richer, deeper tones - organic, earthy, and psychologically complex. The layering of opaque and sprayed glazes creates a textured surface that both absorbs and reflects light, imbuing the works with a subtle, almost melancholic depth.

Alongside the sculptures, Neri's pastels on paper extend the dialogue. Compact and heavily figurative, the drawings mirror the sculptures' themes. While the soft, airy quality of the pastels contrasts with the solid ceramics, both share a dynamic, choreographed energy. Together, they map a psychological garden where figures and nature entwine, embodying the complexity of human moods, relationships, and everyday life.

Movement is a recurring motif throughout the show, embodied by symbols like horses and figures in motion - dancing, sitting, or pausing mid-gesture.

These elements evoke a sense of perpetual flux, capturing moments of transition and thought. This dynamic also mirrors Neri's creative process, where drawings and sculptures are developed simultaneously, each influencing the other.

In *Chorus*, Ruby Neri invites us into her cathartic garden dance, a space of escape and reflection. It is a world both vibrant and meditative, personal and universal. The figures, with their multifaceted personalities, reflect the inner dialogues we all experience - bold and assertive in one moment, introspective and retreating the next. Through this deeply introspective yet accessible body of work, Neri explores the challenges and beauty of everyday life, transforming the seemingly mundane into an emotional terrain.

Ruby Neri

Ruby Neri (b. 1970, San Francisco) explores the human body, bridging West Coast artistic traditions with a global array of art historical and anthropological influences. Her work situates the figure as a porous, expressive form, navigating pleasure, vulnerability, and existential complexity.

Neri's practice is rooted in craft, drawing connections to the Bay Area Figurative and Funk movements while also engaging with the visceral, performative approaches of Los Angeles-based artists such as Mike Kelley and Paul McCarthy. Over the past two decades, she has been a central figure in the resurgence of ceramics within contemporary art, creating tactile, anthropomorphic vessels that blur the boundaries between functional form and emotional architecture.

Her use of airbrushed glazes - a nod to her graffiti roots with the San Francisco Mission School - imbues her ceramics with emotional immediacy. Neri's work continues to evolve, crafting a uniquely intimate dialogue between materiality, emotion, and identity.

Neri's work has been featured in numerous exhibitions worldwide. Recent solo and two-person exhibitions include Staircase, David Kordansky Gallery, Los Angeles, USA (2024); Paintings, Salon 94, New York, USA (2024); Weights and Measures, Kosaku Kanechika, Tokyo, J (2023); Alicia McCarthy and Ruby Neri / MATRIX 270, organized by Apsara DiQuinzio, Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive, University of California, Berkeley, USA (2018).

Recent group exhibitions include Bowls, Boxes, Plates & Vessels, Parker Gallery, Los Angeles, USA (2024); Opening the Mountain, MarinMOCA Annex, Marin Museum of Contemporary Art, Novato, USA (2024); 15x15: Independent 2010–2024, Independent New York, USA (2024); Storage Wars, The Hole, Los Angeles, USA (2023); Group Shoe 3, curated by Mario Ayala, House of Seiko, San Francisco, USA (2023); The Glover Group: A Los Angeles Story, MASSIMODECARLO, Milan, I (2023); 20, David Kordansky Gallery, Los Angeles (2023); Funk You Too! Humor and Irreverence in Ceramic Sculpture,

Museum of Arts and Design, New York, USA (2023); 5 Artists, Kosaku Kanechika, Tokyo, J (2023); The Drawing Centre Show, Consortium Museum, Dijon, F (2022); Lonesome Crowded West: Works from MOCA's Collection, curated by Rebecca Lowery, The Geffen Contemporary at The Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles; USA (2022); The Flames: The Age of Ceramics, Musée d'Art Moderne, Paris, F (2021); Mass Ornament: Pleasure, Play, and What Lies Beneath, curated by Alison M. Gingeras, South Etna Montuak, Montauk, USA (2020).