

ÁLVARO URBANO

Prelude

11 July - 22 August 2025
385 Broadway, New York, NY 10013
Opening Reception: 11 July 2025, 6 – 8 pm



Álvaro Urbano, *TABLEAU VIVANT (Dogwood)*, 2024 (Detail). Metal, paint.
Marjorie Brunet Plaza, 2024

*Unexpectedly at night you may come upon scenes of crushed intimacy along the dark twisting lanes.
in the eery mottled light--[...] And when, finally, the rain came pouring, I walked in it, soaked, as if the water
would wash away whatever had caused the desperate night experience.*

– John Rechy, *City of Night*

Marian Goodman Gallery is delighted to announce our first solo exhibition with Álvaro Urbano titled *Prelude*, which will be on view 11 July - 22 August 2025. Working in the intersection of theater, architecture and film, Álvaro Urbano transforms spaces into immersive environments emulating an oneiric dimension. Through atmospheric installations Urbano researches the ruin as a space where reality and fiction commingle. Staged gestures and reconstituted narratives are used to conjure these lost and heterotopic spaces; disrupting archetypes and objects from their original function render them open to interpretation.

For *Prelude*, Urbano revisits The Ramble, a woodland area of Central Park and a known space of transit whose public distinction borrows from a legacy of 19th-century landscape design – celebrated in the parlance of its time for “obscurity, not absolutely impenetrable, but sufficient to affect imagination with a sense of mystery.” Frederick Law Olmsted’s design offered winding, labyrinthian paths in all directions for rustic ambling. In this landscape, luminaries designed by Kent Bloomer were placed in 1980; light fixtures were affixed to lamp posts that Henry Bacon had designed for the park in 1910, ostensibly to ‘reduce vandalism and improve security.’ The latter phrase, serving as veiled and normative code for regulating the use of the landscape —or reducing the historic use of the site for spontaneous and anonymous cruising by the gay community— provides a hidden layer of meaning to this *mise en scène*.

Bringing traces of this asphalt-hemmed Eden, Urbano offers us a chimeric simulation. The luminaries are extracted from their original context for *Prelude*, freed from their roles of watchful oversight. Flickering and blinking, their luminous engagement unfolds as they maintain a secret conversation between each other. The viewer becomes a witness to this intimate encounter, as if the two lamp posts have found time to be alone, unraveling inner worlds, comparing points of view, silent in each other’s company. The landscape, benches and passersby from the park have vanished; just an isolated branch remains-- an intruder, growing from the wall, as if the framing of the situation has engulfed it accidentally into a filmic frame. Raindrops cling to the windows of the room, a sign of a

passing storm. The blooming dogwood and window droplets signal a pause, a cessation from the regular flow of time, a still and permanent spring. Maybe this conversation lasts forever, and time stands still for it to endure. A discarded box, now an improvised pigeon's nest, remains unwatched, noticed only by the passing birdwatchers that devotedly scan the sky above The Ramble on a regular basis.

Urbano bestows a historic site with illusion, creating an uncanny apparition in which objects have agency, approaching animism. The streetlamps seem to mimic the behavior of cruising lovers, emitting signals and gestures in order to convey a secret set of codes that are deployed across the landscape, and are only pertinent to those who listen and watch appropriately.

This exhibition follows on Urbano's recent solo show, *TABLEAU VIVANT*, at SculptureCenter (2024), which focused on a public sculpture by the American artist sculptor Scott Burton (1939–1989). Originally installed in the Equitable Center building in New York in 1986 until it was dismantled in 2020, the marble furnishment was subjected to the risk of becoming a ruin.

Upcoming projects include *Pure Intention*, Singapore Biennale 2025; *Whispers on the Horizon*, Taipei Biennial 2025. Urbano's work has been the subject of numerous solo exhibitions such as *TABLEAU VIVANT* at SculptureCenter, New York (2024); TEA Tenerife Espacio de las Artes, Santa Cruz de Tenerife, Spain (2023); Storefront for Art and Architecture, New York (2021); La Casa Encendida, Madrid (2020); among others.

Álvaro Urbano, born in 1983 in Madrid, Spain, lives and works between Berlin and Paris. Urbano studied Interior Architecture at the Escuela Técnica Superior de Arquitectura de Madrid, (ETSAM) in Madrid, and Fine Arts at the Institut für Raumexperimente, Universität der Künste in Berlin.

Urbano has participated in exhibitions in institutions such as CCA Wattis Institute for Contemporary Arts (2025); Georg Kolbe Museum, Berlin (2025); MACBA, Barcelona (2024); Sydney Biennale (2024); Museo Nacional Thyssen-Bornemisza, Madrid (2023); Bergen Assembly, Bergen, Norway (2022); Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid (2020); Kunsthalle Düsseldorf (2018); Hamburger Bahnhof, Berlin (2017); CAB, Brussels (2017); Boghossian Foundation, Brussels (2016); Kölischer Kunstverein, Cologne (2016); Moscow International Biennale for Young Art (2016); Bundeskunsthalle, Bonn (2015); Neue Nationalgalerie, Berlin (2014); among others.

Urbano received the Villa Romana Fellowship in 2014. He attended The Artists and Architects-in-Residence at MAK, Los Angeles (2016/2017) and holds a professorship at the École Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts de Paris, FR.

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