

FADE IN:

INT. PHOENIX - MOSMAN'S LIQUID ART GALLERY - NIGHT

Paint brush and jar in hand, SOFIA MITA, late 30's, dressed in black sweats, unlocks a door and steps inside an art gallery.

Sofia is an absolute beauty, one of those enigmatic faces with so much depth but no real way in.

She glances around the gallery.

The street lamps throw just enough light to outline the uniqueness of the artwork -- miniature liquid 3D sculptures of people posed among classic movie settings.

Sofia opens up the jar and dips an oversize paint brush in it. With a flourishing gesture, she covers one of the sculptures with a lumpy and sticky black liquid.

At once, the liquid sculpture turns into stone-like material.

Sofia laughs with mischievous glee... a sudden roll of THUNDER makes her jump. She spins around to look outside... lightning bolts zigzag across the street.

Sofia resumes her Medusa-like destruction: turning the liquid sculptures into stone.

EXT. DOWNTOWN - BODY BUILDING GYM - SIMULTANEOUS

THUNDER cracks over the city followed by a lightning zap.

Through a well-lit large window, MEN of all ages train hard.

Standing in the shadows of a building across the street, CHADD PEARCE, 40's, watches them.

The men are in perfect shape. Bodies pumped up with testosterone. But there's one man in particular, who is Chadd's center of attention.

This man's body bursts with steroids through his tight gym clothing.

Chadd brings a clay model in front of his face: it's a perfect replica of the man down to the crew-cut hair and thin goatee.

STEROID MAN goes through fast bent-over barbell rows then moves to a flat bench and starts a series of bench presses.

The STORM unleashes its pent-up violence over the city.

Chadd crosses the street and walks into the gym, straight toward Steroid Man (POV is still from the street).

The man sits up and speaks to Chadd (MOS). Chadd responds (MOS). Steroid Man takes stock of Chadd, then shakes his head with doubt.

The CAMERA pushes forward through the large window.

INT. DOWNTOWN - BODY-BUILDING GYM - CONTINUOUS

Steroid Man turns away.

CHADD

I can do it.

Steroid Man turns back to face Chadd.

STEROID MAN

Man. You ain't got the build.

CHADD

I will do whatever it takes.

STEROID MAN

It's fucking hard work.

CHADD

I will pay you.

Once more, Steroid Man sizes up Chadd.

STEROID MAN

You're gonna need some arnolds before you start training.

Steroid Man points to his bulging right arm muscles.

STEROID MAN (CONT'D)

Pumpers. Stackers. For padding. Got it? Wait. I'll be out in ten.

Steroid Man walks toward the lockers.

INT. DOWNTOWN - MOSMAN'S LIQUID ART GALLERY - SIMULTANEOUS

Sofia stands in the middle of the gallery, admiring her finished masterpiece of destruction: all the liquid sculptures have been transformed into stone.

Outside, the STORM still rages on. A lightning bolt STRIKES nearby, plunges the street into darkness.

Sofia leans into the window to look outside. A white van splashes around the corner and drives past her.

Despite the hard rain, she can make out the logo of the van: a bird with a blood-red beak, black wings and white plumage sitting inside an open red rose.

She grins as the van disappears around the corner.

INT. LOFT BUILDING - SOFIA'S LOFT - LATER

Sofia, dripping wet, enters her loft and undresses as she walks to her bedroom.

Her loft has been set up as a painter's workshop and as an alchemist's lab: paint supplies coexist side by side with alchemical tools.

There's something off-putting about the entire space: it's too organized, too clean. Sofia's world is all surface, without depth.

Yet, the walls are covered with paintings of people's faces in highly emotional stages. The paintings are more real than photographs... ready to burst into life.

On her metal desk lies an invoice labeled "STAN BRYANT INVESTIGATIONS, LLC." The invoice lists two trips to New York and various administrative expenses totaling \$1,500.

Sofia comes out of her bedroom in dry clothes. She kneels on the floor by a glass coffee table and lifts the corner of the rug. Underneath, there's a wooden lid carved in the parquet.

She flips the lid open and grabs a scrapbook. Inside the scrapbook are brochures, sketches and photos of artists and their artwork interspersed with notes.

All the pages are crossed off with a red "X."

She flips to two pages titled "HARRY MOSMAN." The pages are covered with photos of HARRY, mid-30's, and his liquid 3D artwork.

With a red marker, she crosses the pages with a large "X."

She then opens two new pages that contain loose brochures and photos of Chadd seen at the gym. The name "CHADD PEARCE" is written at the top of the pages.

It's clear she's been researching this man for a while. With excitement, she glues the materials onto the pages.

Sofia looks at a brochure that displays the logo of the white van. She smiles with anticipation.

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. DOWNTOWN THEATER - STAGE - NEW DAY

Sofia's eyes are fixated on the stage where a rehearsal for a play is in progress.

In the play, the characters wear masks representing their personalities. Veils are placed throughout the stage framed in by four pillars. Behind the back veils, MUSICIANS play MUSIC and SING impressions of the characters' emotions.

The silhouette of Saint Mark's Basilica in Venice is projected onto the veils at the back of the stage.

The actors move in-between the veils, from flesh-and-blood people to ghostly shadows.

There are four ACTORS on the stage (the actors reenact the past of the characters that we will see in the script):

-- A MOTHER and FATHER in their mid-40's. The father, Japanese, wears the mask of a mad artist and the mother, Italian, wears the mask of a stern prima donna.

-- Their older daughter, SOFIA (12), wears the mask of a dark exotic goddess.

-- Their younger daughter, ALANIS (10), wears the mask of a Japanese porcelain doll.

The parents clap and yell at their daughters until their dance steps are executed to perfection.

DANI, six years old, appears from backstage.

Music and chanting stop.

Dani is dressed in a canvas sack and wears the mask of a goblin.

The parents bewail Dani's appearance and point to a dark closet in the back.

Dani ignores her parents and carries out a most divine song. Music and chanting resume.

The parents order their daughters to take Dani away.

The girls ignore them and continue their dancing.

More yelling force the girls to obey their parents. They take Dani by the arms and push her inside the dark closet.

The music and chanting stop... outside, THUNDER growls.

JOELLYN (O.S.)
Great job everyone.

INT. DOWNTOWN THEATER - AUDITORIUM - LATER

The actors remove their masks and approach JOELLYN MALBERN, early 40's, the director of the play.

JOELLYN
Take ten, then it's notes.

Joellyn walks over to Sofia who, paint brush in hand, stands in front of an easel. Sofia's lost in her thoughts, her eyes still fixated on the stage.

JOELLYN (CONT'D)
Listen.

Sofia startles and turns to Joellyn.

JOELLYN (CONT'D)
I still think the two girls are too harsh with their little sister. I want you to smooth this over a little bit more. Think you could give me a quick rewrite?

SOFIA
Sure. I'd love to do a rewrite. All I'd need is to rewind the past.

JOELLYN
I need to see more compassion for Dani. What you and Alanis were forced to do was wrong. It needs to come out.

Sofia averts Joellyn's stare.

JOELLYN (CONT'D)
Hey, I'll work with you on the rewrite, okay?

Joellyn leans over the canvas that Sofia has been painting.

JOELLYN (CONT'D)

That's really good, Sofia. Let's
make it our poster.

Sofia's painting is more real than a photograph... ready to
burst into life.

The painting depicts Sofia and her siblings represented by
three masks floating over a desert mesa. From each mask,
blood drips down the mesa into dark waters.

EXT. DOWNTOWN THEATER - BACK DOOR - LATER

THUNDER welcomes Sofia as she steps outside the theater. A
lightning bolt flashes. Rain pours down like CANNON BALLS.

JOELLYN (O.S.)

Sofia. What about that rewrite?

Sofia doesn't hear her, too mesmerized by the power of the
storm, the end-of-days' darkness of the sky.

Joellyn touches Sofia's shoulder.

JOELLYN (CONT'D)

Hey. Where are you going?

Sofia glances back at Joellyn.

SOFIA

Out. I'll be back later.

JOELLYN

Now? In this monsoon?

Sofia ignores her and jumps outside into the monsoon.

EXT. DOWNTOWN STREETS - CONTINUOUS

Sofia becomes one with the rain, embracing it heart and soul.

She turns a sharp corner into a dilapidated street lined with
old warehouses and art galleries.

This is a very odd storm, splitting the city into two blocks:
a block of rain and a block of blue skies.

Sofia now stands at the edge of the rain. Behind her, it is
pouring down. In front of her, the street is dry.

She glances down the street toward Mosman's Liquid Art
Gallery and smiles in remembrance of the night before.

Then, she turns her attention toward another art gallery called The Age of Art Gallery.

Sun rays strike the gallery, beckoning Sofia to step forward.

EXT. THE AGE OF ART GALLERY - STREET - CONTINUOUS

With excitement, Sofia steps into the sun rays, leading to The Age of Art gallery.

At once, the dark clouds swallow up all light and the street falls into darkness... undeterred, she keeps moving forward.

She peeks into the large bay window of the gallery and sees several backlit silhouettes in various poses.

INT. THE AGE OF ART GALLERY - SIMULTANEOUS

The silhouettes are sculptures except one -- the silhouette of a man who watches Sofia. He moves forward.

Outside, lightning zips faster. THUNDER cracks. The rain EXPLODES from the dark clouds. The WIND, like a tidal wave, almost throws Sofia off balance.

This time, she shies away from the rain, huddling against the window of the gallery.

EXT. THE AGE OF ART GALLERY - STREET - CONTINUOUS

The door bursts open and the man, Chadd Pearce, smiles and motions for Sofia to come in.

CHADD

You'd better come inside.

Fighting the WIND, he SLAMS the door shut behind her.

INT. THE AGE OF ART GALLERY - CONTINUOUS

Chadd hands her a towel. She takes it and wipes her face.

SOFIA

Thank you.

Outside, the STORM rages on more powerful than ever.

SOFIA (CONT'D)

Wow, what an incredible monsoon.

Sofia hands him the towel back and takes a look around.
The sculptures, set on a polished black floor, are stunning.

SOFIA (CONT'D)
Your work's amazing.

She walks over to an unusual replica of Rodin's The Age of Bronze sculpture against the back wall.

SOFIA (CONT'D)
The Age of Bronze. One of my favorites.

CHADD
And one of Rodin's most controversial pieces.

SOFIA
Yes. Quite the scandal back then. Accused of casting a real man to achieve his masterpiece.

The sculpture of the male nude is rough and twisted like an android out of a sci-fi movie; his eyes are black and lifeless; his face is glossy like a doll face.

SOFIA (CONT'D)
So awesome how he used the morbid publicity to get people to see it.

CHADD
He would be in heaven in today's media world.

She chuckles and nods in agreement.

CHADD (CONT'D)
Very few people know the story behind the masterpiece. Wish all my female fans had your knowledge.

SOFIA
Assuming I'm one of your female fans.

CHADD
Touché. Regardless, I am glad the storm blew you in.

SOFIA
Perhaps, I brought the storm to you.

Sofia checks out the other sculptures in the gallery.

Each one has peculiar features: jagged eyes, tortured poses, warped texture of the material. All are made out of metal, rock, wood, or synthetic material; all have glossy faces with black and lifeless eyes.

CHADD

My luck then -- I am Chadd Pearce.
And you are?

SOFIA

A fan of Rodin.

CHADD

Shall I call you a fan?

SOFIA/CAMILLE

Or you can call me -- Camille.

She catches his reaction of surprise... just for a second.

CHADD

Camille... a beautiful name.

Sofia circles back to The Age of Bronze sculpture and steps onto the pedestal to observe the mask-like face more closely.

SOFIA/CAMILLE

Very cool the way you make the
faces of your sculptures.

CHADD

What do you see?

Sofia startles as Chadd stands right behind her.

SOFIA/CAMILLE

It's just so realistic.

She lifts a finger near the man's face... he grabs her wrist.

CHADD

I'd rather you did not.

SOFIA/CAMILLE

What kind of material is it?

CHADD

Artists need secrets.

SOFIA/CAMILLE

That's true, we do.

CHADD

We... are you an artist yourself?

SOFIA/CAMILLE

I'm a painter -- you know. I'm surprised you only have one Rodin.

She pulls her wrist away from his fingers.

CHADD

On display, yes.

She walks toward the window. Outside, the storm has gone.

SOFIA/CAMILLE

Are the others reserved for private viewing?

Chadd's about to reply when a large bird with a blood-red beak, black wings and white plumage lands by the window -- exactly like the bird in the logo.

SOFIA/CAMILLE (CONT'D)

What a beautiful bird. So unusual.

As Chadd steps closer to the bird, she stares at Chadd's body reflected in the window.

SOFIA/CAMILLE (CONT'D)

Nature always knows better how to create perfection.

Chadd is very much like his sculptures: handsomely shaped yet eerie in the way he stands and holds his head; his intense eyes seem to be endowed with powers to see through anything.

CHADD

I saved her from a nasty stray cat.

The bird hops over to Chadd and stares straight at him.

SOFIA/CAMILLE

She likes you -- well, Chadd. Thank you for the shelter.

She opens the door. Outside, the bird stares at her.

CHADD

Leaving already?

She nods.

CHADD (CONT'D)

A pity. When can I see you again?

SOFIA/CAMILLE

I'd love to see your other Rodin sculptures.

CHADD

I can arrange that. Someday.

Sofia smiles and walks away. She turns around and sees the bird eating from Chadd's hand.

When she's gone, Chadd casts the seeds on the ground.

Agitated, he locks the door behind him and crosses his gallery. At the back door, he punches a code on a keypad.