

Press Release

Flora Fantastic: Eco-Critical Contemporary Botanical Art

Curated by **Corina L. Apostol and Tashima Thomas**

On view:

November 4 - December 23

Tues. - Sat., 11am - 6pm

Opening Reception: **Fri., Nov 4, 6 - 8pm**

Location:

291 Church Street, NYC, and 3D Online

Featuring work by:

Kristaps Ancāns - Tamika Galanis - Scherezade García - Joiri Minaya - Virginia Wagner and artistic collaborators Anna Malicka and Agate Tūna

The nature of plants can be two-sided, as the line between poison and panacea is often thin. The knowledge of what heals and what is a hazard can be traced back to pre colonial times. These insights have been erased on a large scale by coloniality.

This exhibition brings together artists from post-colonial contexts who are looking critically at the colonial past and deconstructing history through the lens of the botanical. Kristaps Ancāns looks at the artificiality of domestic interiors decorated with indigenous plants removed from their native contexts, creating a sense of control over nature. Joiri Minaya addresses colonial encounters in the Americas, gesturing towards nature's reclamation of her lands. Scherezade Garcia reveals interconnectedness between the natural environment and commercial enterprises. Virginia Wagner unearths how botanical knowledge is historically translated. Tamika Galanis investigates how botanicals became agents of health and resistance. A collaborative botanical timeline positions plants as protagonists in colonial history, capable of draining life out of the body or restoring well-being.

During a time when we have found ways to classify and clone plants we have discovered in the world, we have also systematically erased them from native contexts. *Flora Fantastic* begins a conversation about embodiment, inhabitation, belonging and dwelling.

***Flora Fantastic: Eco-Critical Contemporary Botanical Art* is an apexart NYC Open Call exhibition. For the latest information on the exhibition and related events, visit apexart.org/clark.php or contact ash.hagerstrand@apexart.org.**

Corina L. Apostol is a curator at the Tallinn Art Hall and the co-curator of Beyond Matter – Cultural Heritage on the Verge of Virtual Reality. She serves as a guest lecturer at POST MA program, Art Academy of Latvia. She has been appointed as the curator of the Estonian Pavilion at the 59th Venice Biennale (2022). She is the editor of *Making Another World Possible* (Routledge, 2019).

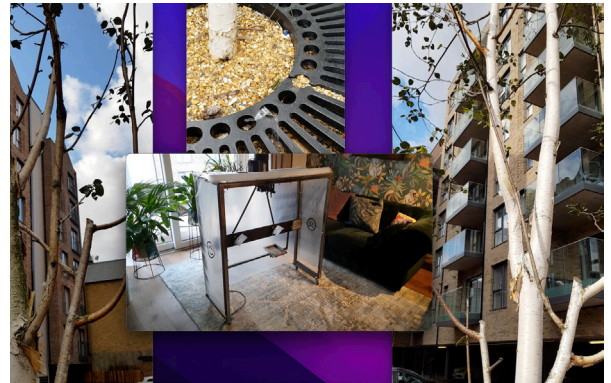
Tashima Thomas is an art historian, gastronome, and cultural critic specializing in the art of the African Diaspora in the Americas. Her research examines food pathways, visual and material culture, racial formation, and the environmental humanities. Her work has been published in peer-reviewed journals, exhibition catalogues, and edited volumes.

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#FloraFantastic

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Kristaps Ancāns, *Instructions on How to Learn New Synonyms Every Day*, Multimedia installation, 2020-2022