

Botany under Influence

the politics of plants

Organized by:

Clelia Coussonnet

Opening reception:

Wednesday, September 7, 6-8 pm

On view: **September 8 - October 22, 2016**

Featuring work by:

Alberto Baraya

Joscelyn Gardner

Sasha Huber & Petri Saarikko

Kapwani Kiwanga

Pia Rönicke

Beatriz Santiago Muñoz



Pia Rönicke, *The Page of Day and Night*, 2015 (detail)

Botany under Influence explores systems of meaning that have been impressed upon nature, flora, and seeds throughout eras of imperialism, colonialism, and globalization. The exhibition evidences the politics of plants and reveals how the exportation of natural resources has affected power structures and cultural behavior. Investigating history gaps, it hopes to engage the public to reassess their perceptions about what seems 'natural,' 'neutral,' or 'passive' and might not be.

The artworks in this show share counter-official histories around flora, drowning us in an abundance of 'strange flowers.' Several pieces adopt the aesthetics of natural history illustrations, while two videos recall the links between botany, traditional healing methods, and spirituality. Despite the plants' beauty, our unease reminds us that what is at stake with nature's circulation routes goes beyond relations of power: it is about our origins, collective memory, and survival. Two bouquet sculptures that wither during the show embody this ephemerality and the idea of commemoration.

Botany under Influence is a 2016-17 apexart Unsolicited Proposal Program winning exhibition along with *Animal Intent* (January 2017) and *Promises to Keep* (June 2017).

Clelia Coussonnet is a cultural project manager, art journalist, and curator of contemporary art that also curated an exhibition of previously unseen 19th century glass plate negatives from Uzbekistan at the UNESCO. Together with Missla Libsekal, she develops the editorial project *In/Visible Voices of Women* (online & print monograph project). Amongst others, she regularly contributes to publications such as *Another Africa*, *Diptyk*, and *Ibraaz*.

For more information please contact Elizabeth.Larison@apexart.org or visit apexart.org/exhibitions/coussonnet.php

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