Botany under Influence
the politics of plants

Organized by:
Clélie 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

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).

Clélie 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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