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Strange Attractor

Geum Beollae 금벌레
Isabel Carvalho
Joana Escoval
Nobuko Tsuchiya 土屋信子

4.12.2021 – 6.3.2022

Galerias Municipais – Pavilhão Branco
Jardim do Palácio Pimenta
Campo Grande, Lisbon
Tuesday to Sunday: 10am-1pm and 2pm-6pm
Free entrance

Guided tours by appointment
mediacao@galeriasmunicipais.pt

The access to our exhibition spaces is organized
in compliance with the norms issued by the
Directorate-General of Health.

curated by
Margarida Mendes

JAPAN FOUNDATION 
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Pavilhão Branco

Come to Dust

Spirit, rehearse the journeys of the body
that are to come, the motions
of the matter that held you.
Rise up in the smoke of palo santo.
Fall to the earth in the falling rain.
Sink in, sink down to the farthest roots.
Mount slowly in the rising sap
to the branches, the crown, the leaf-tips.
Come down to earth as leaves in autumn
to lie in the patient rot of winter.
Rise again in spring's green fountains.
Drift in sunlight with the sacred pollen
to fall in blessing.

All earth's dust
has been life, held soul, is holy.

Ursula K. Le Guin

Departing from the premise of the impermanence of matter, that always changes state and transubstantiates in a constant cycle of mutation, this exhibition brings together four artists who explore the transformative potential of the natural world. Geum Beollae 김별래, Isabel Carvalho, Joana Escoval and Nobuko Tsuchiya 土屋信子 present newly commissioned sculptures and installations that intersect in an elemental circuit drawn in the Pavilhão Branco, in resonance with the surrounding garden.

Developing a body of work with strong affinities to oral and cultivation traditions, sculptural narration and the materiality of chance, the invited artists explore the alternating morphogenetic states of natural elements and their multidimensional attributes, as well as the intimacy of their uncertainty, ephemerality and turbulence. As such, they germinate aesthetic grammars that merge with each other, in this exhibition that allows for a mutual confluence between practices, invoking a space of formal experimentation that cannot be governed by precise or static rules.

Nobuko Tsuchiya produces artworks that explore the playful potentiality of matter. This exhibition comprises the sculptures *Mayfly* (2019), *Urchin Compass* (2019) and *Lake Tail* (2020), part of a broader group of works imagined as machines for moon travel. Playing with the shapeshifting interval between what is crystallised or soft, and what is on the edge of being parascientific, Tsuchiya's oeuvre sets off from an oneiric world

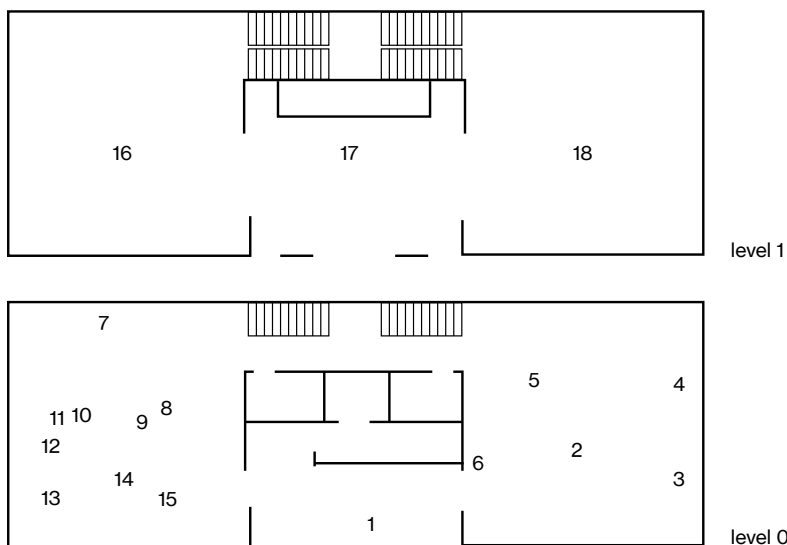
where the physical properties of objects seem to transmute and acquire new meanings. In her work, Tsuchiya evokes the magnetic pulse of materials, sparked by accidents in her studio that act as catalysts for new hypnotic forms. Sometimes resembling organic machines, her diagrammatic sculptures incorporate moulds made of resin, cotton and other materials that are manipulated to the point of being unidentifiable, generating phantasmagoric entities that inhabit an imaginary interstice.

Geum Beollae's installations include quotidian objects that reflect her family lineage, unfolded into multiple narratives. The artist developed a site-specific installation for Pavilhão Branco that incorporates traditional South Korean divination tools (*saju*), as well as other elements that evoke the rhythms of bodily nurturing rituals and physiological maintenance. Creating a textured space where the web of life is woven by the biological mesh of DNA and the tempos of fermentation and material decomposition, Beollae invites us to question the place we occupy in an elemental genealogy, and to ponder who our ancestors are. Her installations, self-described as 'unstable poems', contain traces of her personal memory, including organic components such as fingernails from a close friend, hair woven by her mother, or her grandmother's fluids inscribed on a quilt. With a practice firmly rooted in ceramics, Beollae also presents raw clay sculptures that contain rice in varying states of decay, leaving her work ever open to the cycles of mutation.

Joana Escoval has developed new sculptures for this exhibition that include metallic filaments that expand through the space like nevralgic vectors. These conduction circuits cross tree roots in harmony with the lines of the space and surrounding garden, calling on the latent pulse of nature that is ever transforming. Her works include branches from the vinyard that grows in her garden, merging its spiralling wisdom with the metal alloys. On other instances, interlaced peacock feathers emerge from them. On the ground floor, we find a bell with a rope that resounds the call of an invocation casted by the artists included in this exhibition. Creating internal rhythms that amplify the properties of elemental transmutation in a constant cycle of recomposition, Escoval's sculptures live beyond the echo of their physicality, as they become etherealized. They emerge from the metabolic hiatus between the perennial and the evanescent, in a seductive ode to the natural world.

The sculptures by Isabel Carvalho exhibited here form part of a recent body of work developed in plaster and shaped in experimental moulds. Creating forms inspired by organic structures and physiological components, these sculptures depart from the human body as a

component of the modelling process, that leaves the plaster with an imprint of the artist's gestuality. These oracular censers contain traces of burnt incense and other substances (such as sawdust from cherrywood, chestnut and pine, specks of incense, dried roses, essence of incense, ground charcoal, diluted gum arabic, and pigments), as well as powdered gold which is applied to the painted plaster. Some of these sculptures might emit smoke during the exhibition when their resins are ignited, turning them incandescent as they evoke the turbulent magnetism of fire.



1
Joana Escoval
Learning to mix metals in specific proportions to produce / see a sound pleasant to all creatures, 2018 - 2021
Wood, vegetable fibers, metals, paper
Dimensions variable
Courtesy of the artist

2
Nobuko Tsuchiya 土屋信子
Mayfly, 2019
Wool, resin, steel, wood, silicone tube
33 x 130 x 88 cm
Courtesy of the artist, Anthony Reynolds, London and Gregor Podnar, Berlin

3
Nobuko Tsuchiya 土屋信子
Lake Tail, 2020
Wool, brass, silicone, acrylic plastic tube, resin, stainless steel
65 x 59 x 17 cm
Courtesy of the artist and Gregor Podnar, Berlin

4
Nobuko Tsuchiya 土屋信子
Urchin Compass, 2019
Silicone, polyester, steel
32 x 98 x 16 cm
Courtesy of the artist, Anthony Reynolds, London and Gregor Podnar, Berlin

5
Isabel Carvalho
Sea tongue with splintered stars, 2021
Plaster with washing of saline solutions and talc
95 x 100 x 12 cm
Courtesy of the artist

6
Joana Escoval
It arises not from any cause, but from the cooperation of many, 2021
Bronze, brass
Dimensions variable
Courtesy of the artist

7
Joana Escoval
The world as a passing cloud, 2021
Cement, iron, algae, aquatic molluscs, metals
84 x 26 x 18 cm
Courtesy of the artist

8
Isabel Carvalho
Tickling nerves (5), 2021
Painted plaster, molded in clay matrices with traces of burnt incense (sawdust from cherry, chestnut and pine, incense beans, dried roses, incense essence, ground charcoal, diluted gum arabic, pigments and alcohol) and gold powder
16,5 x 19 x 16 cm
Courtesy of the artist

9
Isabel Carvalho
Counter-memory (3), 2021
Plaster molded in clay matrices
16,5 x 68 x 43 cm
Courtesy of the artist

10
Isabel Carvalho
Tickling nerves (3), 2021
Painted plaster, molded in clay matrices with traces of burnt incense (sawdust from cherry, chestnut and pine, incense beans, dried roses, incense essence, ground charcoal, diluted gum arabic, pigments and

alcohol) and gold powder
27,5 x 13,5 x 14,5 cm
Courtesy of the artist

11
Isabel Carvalho
Tickling nerves (2), 2021
Painted plaster, molded in clay matrices with traces of burnt incense (sawdust from cherry, chestnut and pine, incense beans, dried roses, incense essence, ground charcoal, diluted gum arabic, pigments and alcohol) and gold powder
38 x 16 x 13,5 cm
Courtesy of the artist

12
Isabel Carvalho
Counter-memory (2), 2021
Plaster molded in clay matrices
21 x 54,5 x 26 cm
Courtesy of the artist

13
Isabel Carvalho
Tickling nerves (1), 2021
Painted plaster, molded in clay matrices with traces of burnt incense (sawdust from cherry, chestnut and pine, incense beans, dried roses, incense essence, ground charcoal, diluted gum arabic, pigments and alcohol) and gold powder
26 x 21 x 17 cm
Courtesy of the artist

14
Isabel Carvalho
Counter-memory (1), 2021
Plaster molded in clay matrices
19 x 44 x 34 cm
Courtesy of the artist

15
Isabel Carvalho
Tickling nerves (4), 2021
Painted plaster, molded in clay matrices with traces of burnt incense (sawdust from cherry, chestnut and pine, incense beans, dried roses, incense essence, ground charcoal, diluted gum arabic, pigments and alcohol) and gold powder

9 x 21 x 23,5 cm
Courtesy of the artist

16
Joana Escoval
Rain falls, winds blow, plants bloom, leaves mature and are blown away, 2021
Metals, climbing plant, peacock feathers, tree roots
Dimensions variable
Courtesy of the artist

17
Geum Beollae *금벌레* and Joana Escoval
Root hair, momentary continuity, 2021
Root, sand, metals, horsehair
112 x 25 x 40 cm
Courtesy of the artists

18
Geum Beollae *금벌레*
Unrefined, flaw, superstition, indolence, indetermination, 2021
Hair of various people, mongolian horse hair, water, clay, mold, rice, spoon, shaman's table for rice fortunetelling, baked rice bowls, soil from various sites, stones from various sites, porcelain replica of demolished house debris, clay sculptures crafted by water, cotton-stuffed winter blanket, body fluids, human nails, cat nails, cat fur, nibbled leaves, mechanical devices, wooden structures, chopsticks, bronze bowls, gold pigment powder, ground mixture with the artist's father's dead tissue and hair, urinal container, plastic bags, mushrooms, water sprinkler, spray paint, acrylic pipe, crystals, beads, a ring that someone lost
Dimensions variable
Courtesy of the artist

Poem by Geum Beollae:

Unrefined, flaw, superstition, indolence, indetermination, 2021

*You are within the boundary stones put up by nature.
Here, the history of the elements is being written endlessly in a language that has not been born.
These elements are recorded in all the things that exist here: Water, stone, bone, nail, hair, dead skin cells, as well someone's lost ring.*

Water is talkative.

*All bodies grow while swallowing other bodies and souls.
We are built from layers upon layers of a countless number of beings.
The body is an archive of vast memory.*

There, you can browse how the clay felt the first time humanity held it in its hand, the emotions of a moment recorded on the elements, the amount of food an insect had in its lifetime, how wise an object is, the various sculptures crafted by water.

*The stones hold water.
Something grows by sucking out the water that seeped in from the body of stones.
Stones are destroyed by water and roots and quietly help another's pitiful existence.
Even a stone's parasitic life form is silent.
Their silence is written in natural history.*

Meanwhile, someone is using GPS to count the number of trees in the world.

Water is quiet.

*Black plastic bags swim gracefully in the ocean's depths.
Everyone holds their breath and watches a near-eternal dignified existence swimming.
Plastic bags can lightly embrace everything, or lightly suffocate it.
To a plastic bag, the growth or decay, that occurs inside it, is one and the same.
It will embrace anything and bless it, so it can moistly grow, rot, and expire.*

Water is free.

*The mushrooms, so tenderly held by plastic, release their spores into the air.
We endlessly infect the world with our thoughts and emotions.
And the world graciously protects those bacteria.*

*The speed at which mushrooms grow is astounding.
But the speed at which they decay is even more astounding.
A majestic drama plays out through mushrooms, showing us that appearance and disappearance are equivalent.*

Water is not free.

*Some people were designed to gain comfort from the savoury scent of rice.
Sacred grains of rice silently give themselves away, and new records are quietly added daily to the archives of their bodies.*

*God dwells on what we treat as sacred.
For example, rice is a sacred substance.
If you hold grains of rice to your ear, you will hear our future and anxieties.*

An instant sculpture that you can make with a single strand of hair: Brush your hair with your hands, Pick up a strand of hair which has already fallen on to your body, Put it on a grain of rice and make a wish.

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This exhibition is accompanied by a text and lecture by theorist Esther Leslie, an essential contributor to “Strange Attractor”.