

FLOWERS OF EVIL: NATURE AND THE COLONIAL WOUND brings together works by Carla Bobadilla, Imayna Cáceres, Edinson Quiñones, Sandra Monterroso, Sofi Utikal and Mariel Rodríguez to rethink relationships between body, nature, politics and technology.

The title of the exhibition borrows the name of the famous book by French poet Charles Baudelaire (1821-1867). In his work, Baudelaire sought to articulate the characteristics of a new way of life as experienced through the industrialization, secularization and urbanization of Europe. In another text entitled “The painter of modern life” (1864) he coined the term “*modernité*” to refer to this new world configuration.

In a gesture resembling an act of piracy, **FLOWERS OF EVIL: NATURE AND THE COLONIAL WOUND** retakes this name and the reference in order to point out at the impact that the foundational concepts of the European project of Modernity had and continues to have in relation to nature. Modernity, understood as the process of Western rationalization in order to achieve progress had devastating ecological consequences. The concept of progress whether social, scientific or technological entailed the domination of nature as a crucial step towards the realization of a supposed true potential of mankind. Industrialization, individualism and a blind faith in economy are the milestones that sustain the contemporary ecocide. These principles sustain in the division between nature and culture, in which nature plays the role of the inexhaustible servant.

The exhibition relates Colonialism to this division between culture and nature, since - following Vandana Shiva (1999)- it is in the roots of patriarchal understanding of gender roles regarding reproduction. The opposition nature/culture is followed by other set of binaries that rule our perceptions and relation to the world. Nature has been paired with the feminine and the irrational, in the patriarchal nature such as women are understood as passive sources to be discovered and employed by masculine forces that respond to activity, creativity and agency.

The artists who are part of the exhibition reflect on the binaries: men/woman, activity/passivity, materiality/spirituality or mind/body as the artificial concepts that fuelled the development of Western sciences, and which continue to serve as façade that enables the exploitation of natural resources and the marginalization of indigenous peoples this entails. If the slogan of Spanish colonialism was “to discover and conquer”, now a secular version of this maxim has settled in through the patent system on GMO's* and intellectual property rights over life. New forms of colonialism masked as scientific endeavors that cut off the social fabric and lay open the wound. The colonial wound that hasn't healed. The crack between so called Third and First World.

In the works presented, the fractures in human relationships based on domination of resources are countered by gestures of resistance. Thus and so the exhibition seeks to build bridges over those fissures, to suture with art and counter-thought the wounds of the colonial past in order to rethink our future as and with nature.

The exhibition highlights the uses, histories and symbolisms of plants such as maize, rubber, achioté, bayhops and coca, as reinterpreted by various artistic positions.

References:

Shiva, Vandana. 1999. *BIOPIRACY: The plunder of nature and knowledge*. California:North Atlantic Books.

*Genetic Modified Organisms