

## SARAH MEADOWS: *Tanglefoot*

July 30th-August 27th, 2022

Sarah Meadows is an Oregon-based visual artist. She received her MFA in Photography from the Rhode Island School of Design in 2016 and her BFA from Pacific Northwest College of Art in 2008. She also holds a BA from the Evergreen State College and studied at the Glasgow School of Art. Her work has been shown nationally and internationally at Melanie Flood Projects (Portland), Filter Photo (Chicago), and ClampArt (New York). Her work is published by Publication Studio, the Institute for Interspecies Art & Relations, and One Day Projects. She has been an artist in residence at Hewnoaks Artist Colony, The Wassaic Project, and Signal Fire Arts. Meadows teaches photography and its history at The Pacific Northwest College of Art.

Sophie Wright is a British filmmaker and writer, based in Amsterdam. She has worked in many different roles in the photography world as a writer, editor, curator and creative producer. was previously editor of Unseen Magazine and her writing has regularly appeared in LensCulture, the British Journal of Photography and many other publications.

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A Tanglefoot Trap can take the shape of a red apple, perfectly round, juicy and crisp. It can take the guise of a sunflower too—its flat, yellow petals coated in lashes of a fatal goo designed to capture any insect unlucky enough to succumb to its bright and friendly appearance. Created to lure tiny bodies into the sticky mess of their own desire, there is a violence lurking beneath the surface of these seductive images.

In her practice, Sarah Meadows probes her own sticky entanglement with the images that shape, mediate and flatten our experience of the ‘natural’ world. Balancing opposites, her exhibition *TANGLEFOOT* explores the tension between what we would like to see when we look at the non-human world and what is actually there, through an assortment of archival images interweaved with Meadows’ own flash-lit photographs. In the uneven terrain mapped out in the space, a paradox at the heart of our relationship to the environment is unearthed: a deep reverence of nature and an unending desire to control and refine it.

In one collage, a plump melon—its given-name “YELLOW BUTTERCUP HYBRID” spelled out buoyantly below—is punctured by several other images. A spattering of Deer Scat, an ominous metal cage, a hand crisscrossed by mesh and a group of people constructing a greenhouse. In this particular ecosystem of pictures, a feeling of decay and threat unfolds out of and around the fruit’s bright and cheery flesh. A compulsive appetite for images underpins Meadows’ research who, over the past five years, has collected a huge pool of material from seed catalogs to old gardening books via screen grabs of YouTube gardening videos. An endless choice of plants, elaborate names, repetition and variation, step-by-step instructions and rows upon rows of tools and contraptions fill the drawers of her collection with images that encourage, resolve, promise and dream. This picturesque natural world they offer up is one for the making and taking, where every problem has a novel solution just one purchase away.

Brimming with confidence, the archival images that find themselves in this exhibition—mostly belonging to an optimistic post-war America—speak to a compartmentalization and commercialization of nature that reaches far back into the Victorian era of horticulture and saturates our present in the form of our current obsession with houseplants. Emptied off their function and placed into conversation with other pictures, they become markers of a fantasy, drawing attention to our expectations of nature and how they are cultivated. No longer clean solutions, they ask questions of us. Which aspects of nature do we find beautiful? How do we get what we want? Where do we draw the line? How else can we connect with the world around us?

Seduced and questioning in equal measure, the artist plays with these found images drawing out their beauty, humor and sinister undertones, wondering all the while how they might feed into her own photographic impulses. Meadows has been interested in nature since childhood, when the outdoors was an escape to a space of endless possibility. It's a feeling that prevails in her practice, though now tinged with the anxiety of our times. In her own photographs, she steps out from the dizzying image-world in search of everything its crisp, purposeful images might evade. Groping around, often at night, the camera becomes a means to explore and touch her surroundings, illuminating both the abject and the beautiful, both delicate flowers and the twisted wire cages that contain them. Using her flash “like a child pointing their finger,” she hones in on small details, at times finding solace in quiet, sensory moments, at others expressing a feeling of disquiet. As if peeling back the surface of one of the shiny catalogs stacked in the artist's house, the world revealed in these photographs is an unruly one, inhabited by strange creatures and peppered with the mysterious devices created to keep them in check.

-Sophie Wright

all works 2022

*Trap*  
archival pigment print, mounted to dibond and plexiglass  
30 x 38”

*Flag (Sir Michael Foster)*  
archival pigment print, mounted to dibond and plexiglass  
30 x 38”

*Mantis*  
archival pigment print, mounted to dibond and plexiglass  
30 x 38”

*Persistence I*  
archival pigment print, mounted to dibond and plexiglass  
20 x 28”

*Persistence II*  
archival pigment print, mounted to dibond and plexiglass  
16 x 20”

*Paperweight*  
glass, archival pigment print, felt  
3.38 x 1”

*Buttercup hybrid*  
archival pigment prints, found images, maple frame  
14 x 12.5”

*Cage*  
archival pigment print, cotton rag mat, maple frame  
8 x 10”

*Early Blight*  
archival pigment print, self adhesive rhinestone, maple frame  
8 x 9.5”

*My Sylvan Family*  
Archival pigment prints, cotton rag mat, maple faame  
8 x 10”

*I wish I were a snail*  
8 x 10”  
archival pigment prints, cotton rag mat, maple frame  
2022

*Cocinelle/High flyer*  
4 x 96”  
mylar, plastic, thread, bleeding heart flower essence

*Training Weight*  
3 x 4”  
Concrete, wood, metal, bird repellent tape

*Untitled*  
dimensions variable  
satin and grosgrain ribbon, steel wire, thread

*Untitled*  
dimensions variable  
Satin and grosgrain ribbon, steel wire, thread

*Untitled*  
polyvinyl window decal  
7 x 8”

*Untitled*  
polyvinyl window decal  
6x14

*Untitled*  
plastic insect trap/steel wire  
4.25 x 4.25 x 8.5

prices available upon request