

Ecologies of Elsewhere

February 10 – August 6, 2023

Ecologies of Elsewhere is a multi-disciplinary group exhibition that takes interdependence as a point of departure. The idea of elsewhere serves as a communal, historical, material, and speculative site from which to engage questions about ecology. Considering the confluence of histories of empire, capitalist extractivism, and climate change, as well as the healing and medicinal qualities of plants, the artists compel us to rethink our societal ecological relationships. Attuning to ecology as an everyday practice allows us to consider how kitchen rituals, our grandmother's gardens, fermentation, and oral traditions shift what we have come to understand as knowledge. Specifically, *Ecologies of Elsewhere* centers Black, Indigenous, and diasporic perspectives. It explores how these knowledge systems have always existed and highlights how they continue to inspire our relationships in a multispecies world.

Plants are considered our oldest teachers.¹ The long-term and ongoing effects of slavery, colonialism, and environmental harm are deeply intertwined. With the forced movement of people came the movement of seeds, plants, and crops. The Trans-Atlantic Slave trade and the histories of botany and medicine are closely connected as enslaved Africans brought botanical and medicinal substances and epistemologies to the Americas. Exploring the healing qualities of plants is an important mode of orientation and way of remembering. As the struggle for land ownership and movements against the exploitation of natural

resources continues, we recognize that many of the undercurrents within environmental justice are held up by feminist, queer, and two-spirited Black, Indigenous, and other communities of color.

The artists shed light on other kinds of knowledge formations, whether informed by ancestral connections to plants, queer erotic desire, or magic realism. Plants and flowers are deeply performative, sensual, and ceremonial. Imaginations of elsewhere are also about disrupting the boundaries between human and non-human worlds and the intimate and environmental world. What happens when we understand plants as witnesses, historical agents, multispecies narrators, and storytellers? As we grapple with the possibilities of another world, *Ecologies of Elsewhere* offers a space for contemplation and sensuous ecological awareness.

Curated by Dr. Chandra Frank, independent curator and Assistant Professor at the University of Cincinnati, and Dr. Portia Malatjie, Senior Lecturer in Visual Cultures, University of Cape Town and Adjunct Curator, Tate Modern, London.

Sammy Baloji
Firelei Báez
Zheng Bo
Torkwase Dyson
Eric Gyamfi
Emily Hanako Momohara
Rashid Johnson
Kapwani Kiwanga
Las Nietas de Nonó
MADEYOULOOK
Lorena Molina
Abel Rodríguez
Lisandro Surriel
Ilze Wolff
Michaela Yearwood-Dan
Rachel Youn

¹ *Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge, and the Teachings of Plants* by Robin Wall Kimmerer.