

A detailed botanical illustration of a plant against a dark background. The top portion of the plant features a dense, rounded cluster of fine, needle-like or spiky structures, resembling a pine cone or a similar coniferous growth. Below this, two large, elongated leaves with prominent, intricate vein patterns and serrated margins are shown. The leaves are rendered in a light, textured style, possibly using fine lines or stippling to create depth and detail. The overall composition is centered and balanced, with the plant's structure filling most of the frame.

# PLANT CURE

CENTRAL BOOKING in collaboration with The New York Academy of Medicine



# CENTRAL BOOKING

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*front cover:* Margot Glass, *Dandelion 1, (detail)*, 2017  
*back cover:* James Walsh, *Artemisia Vulgaris, (detail)*, 2016  
*opposite page:* Nancy Campbell, *Artemisia*, 2017  
*frontispiece:* Geraldine Ondrizek, *Dandelion I, (detail)*, 1997

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CYNTHIA BACK

C BANGS

MARISA BENJAMIM

GABY BERGLUND CARDENAS

NANCY CAMPBELL

DONNA TROY CLEARY

MARGOT GLASS

TESSA GRUNDON

JAMES MARTIN

AGNES MURRAY

GERALDINE ONDRIZEK

MADDY ROSENBERG

SUSAN ROSTOW

LEE SALOMONE

SARAH STENGLE

KATE TEMPLE

MARY TING

JAMES WALSH

ELIZABETH WHITELEY



# PLANT CURE

Curator: **Maddy Rosenberg**

September 6 – October 29, 2017

**CENTRAL BOOKING**

in collaboration with **The New York Academy of Medicine**

## PREFACE

**PLANT CURE** began as a project organized by CENTRAL BOOKING with the New York Academy of Medicine. An important component of CENTRAL BOOKING's programming has always revolved around art and science as well as artist's books, therefore a collaboration with the New York Academy of Medicine, containing a research library with extensive medical and science collections, seemed only natural. Five selected artists researched at the Academy Library over six months and produced work with their own unique take on medicinal plants.

The project culminated with the **PLANT CURE** exhibition at CENTRAL BOOKING, spreading over three of its spaces in the Lower East Side gallery. It featured this work produced by the five Artists in Residence as a result of their research at the Academy Library, in dialog with other artists who have also been intrigued by the theme. While uptown, at the New York Academy of Medicine, display cases documented the research, source material, and working methods employed by each of the Artists in Residence in the process of creating their work for **PLANT CURE**.





THERE'S AN OBVIOUS ANALOGY—OR THREE—to be made about the connection between cultivating a garden and nurturing a creative project. The five artists selected to be Artists in Residence at the Academy Library—C Bangs, Nancy Campbell, James Martin, Susan Rostow, and Mary Ting—were introduced to our collections in February of 2017. They were accompanied by Maddy Rosenberg, Director and Curator of CENTRAL BOOKING (hereby announced as our honorary sixth artist in residence). Under the attention of these six constant gardeners, our collections beget an astonishing harvest, abundant with surprising and varied outgrowth.

The New York Academy of Medicine has been home to one of the nation's most significant historical libraries in medicine and public health, with an extensive collection of rare books. Open to the public in 1878, the library holds over 550,000 volumes, including a rich collection of illustrated botanicals that demonstrate the tradition of using and classifying medicinal plants over time. Our library is committed to serving a core audience of patrons who engage with the collections in radically different ways, including students at all educational levels, artists, filmmakers, fiction writers, health professionals and policy makers. It was a joy to work with these artists here at the library.

For the artists' orientation to our collections, I pulled a range of illustrated botanical materials dating from the 15th through the 20th century. Among the books I showed were the sixteenth-century botanical by Leonardt Fuchs, as well as Curtis' *Botanical Magazine*, first published in 1787 and still in print. I also pulled the popular 18th-century *A Curious Herbal* (1730), illustrated, printed and engraved by the resourceful and talented artist Elizabeth Blackwell. A number of books shown for the artists' orientation expanded beyond the botanical category. Out came Albinus' large format *Tabulae Scelectae* (1759), an arresting anatomical atlas, populated with an ethereal cohort of skeletons who wander a lushly landscaped cemetery in varying degrees of dissection. It was accompanied by Athanasius Kircher's *China Monumentis* (1667), an account the Jesuit polymath compiled based on voyages of friends to the East, and populated with strange, fantastical flora and fauna they alleged to have encountered there.

All along, I anticipated that the **PLANT CURE** artists would be galvanized by their encounters with our books. The depth of our collections is truly breathtaking. After nearly three years

of working with our collections daily, these kinds of unanticipated sightings of books that surprise are still a daily occurrence. I also expected that visual artists would “see” our books very differently than I do, and am delighted with the way their contributions to **PLANT CURE** bear this out.

On the days that painter James Martin visited the rare book room, I could usually expect to see large format anatomical atlases open on our biggest table. Martin drew inspiration from the nineteenth-century anatomical illustrations of arteries by John Lazars, Friederich Tiedemann as well as Richard Quain and Joseph Maclise for his work. C. Bangs arrived at the Academy Library with a clear sense of the kinds of books she hoped would guide her project, and focused primarily on books related to astronomy and astrology. Arlene and I were delighted to discover Konrad *Lykosthenes'* 1557 book on monsters and celestial phenomena, unknown to us before her arrival. Long captivated by the fragility and lightness of Japanese scrolls, Nancy Campbell's encounter with Okamoto Ippo's *Jushi Kei Raki Wago* (1693), a three-volume work on moxa, afforded new access and hands-on engagement with the semi-transparent paper produced by Japanese mills in the 17th-century. Mary Ting approached the **PLANT CURE** project with an established fascination with ginseng, valerian and mandrake. Source material she consulted included hand-colored images from William Woodville's *Medical Botany*, the holistic volumes of *Medicinal Plants* published by Robert Bentley, and images of the anthropomorphized mandrake from the *Hortus Sanitatis*, or “*Garden of Health*.” Susan Rostow embraced the materiality of our collections; an examination of the spine structure of William Cheselden's *Osteographia* (1733) inspired her to investigate the similarities between book and human spines in her sculptural works.

The inimitable Arlene Shaner, who as always contributed her resourcefulness and extensive knowledge of the collections, nurtured all of these projects along the way. Thanks also to Maddy Rosenberg, whose leadership and guidance is evident in all aspects of this collaboration.

—Anne Garner

CURATOR, RARE BOOKS AND MANUSCRIPTS, THE NEW YORK ACADEMY OF MEDICINE

2017



## CURATOR STATEMENT

A PLANT MAY JUST RELIEVE AN ITCH, heal a sore or more than occasionally hold life and death within their aesthetically pleasing shapes. They may be palliatives to the ills of daily lives or ease us through our passing. To seek out nature's healing properties within the plant world and transform it into the matter of art was the quest of the five selected Artists in Residence at New York Academy of Medicine—C Bangs, Nancy Campbell, James Martin, Susan Rostow and Mary Ting. They joined the curator to delve deep within the shelves of this research library of extensive medical and science collections, in a quest for hidden knowledge and past interpretations. The medicinal properties of certain plant life is long known and documented, it was for these artists to breathe new life into how we view them.

C Bangs delves through recipes of branded potions made illicit, as they gave women control over their own bodies. Nancy Campbell enters the realm of the restorative plants from the Far East, as test and texture echo through transparent planes; with James Martin, the anatomy of the plant weaves around and over human counterparts in amalgam printed layers. The sculptural books of Susan Rostow encrusted with mushrooms, embedded within and along the surface, find themselves mirrored and thrust into the world. Mary Ting takes a bit of the garden, a dash of civic activism, adds various elements and comes out the other side. Maddy Rosenberg assembles pieces of historical texts into a file of medical products not to be found in everyday references.

But the mysteries can be uncovered and transformed by artists through other source materials as well. The delicate watercolors of [Agnes Murray](#) belie the utilitarian properties of the decorative summer geranium she references. Nature is the backbone of the work of [Cynthia Back](#) as she focuses her attention on the wild, while reducing it color by color. [Margot Glass](#) draws ghost-like images of dandelions, the emanating light feeling more like the x-ray of a plant emblazoned into the earth, while [Elizabeth Whiteley](#) draws the flowers in silver, with line and edges doing the contour defining.

[Marisa Benjamim](#) goes beyond the description of plants, she lives off of a diet of her own making, medicine for the body and not just of the soul. [Lee Salomone](#) walks us down a garden path paved with specimens from another continent, that of his native Australia. [James Walsh](#) gives us a botanist's viewpoint of cataloging and documenting as he excavates through implanted information. [Geraldine Ondrizek](#), too, uses the plant as a medium with embedded dandelions echoed by drawn ones.

Utilizing her own plant-derived inks, [Kate Temple](#) explores the realm of nature's healing secrets through the subtleties of abstraction. The healer of [Sarah Stengle](#) takes a more human form as she gathers the herbs to nurse us by. For [Donna Cleary](#), symbolic use is manifested in sculptural objects that bear more than cosmetic relief. [Gaby Berglund Cardenas](#) uncovers the medicinal mysteries of a particular Chinese tea, contained in a box; it takes [Tessa Grundon](#) to build her own medicine cabinet, of curatives that beckon us to pick and prune.

Through various media and materiality, these artists come to portray more than the earthly delights we find in the plant world. They reveal secrets and restorative solutions within the leaves and petals, vines and roots, that have survived accusations through the ages of being both magical and miraculous—and proven to be scientific at the very least.

—*Maddy Rosenberg*

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR/CURATOR, CENTRAL BOOKING

2017





CYNTHIA BACK I

*Garden #2, 2015*  
reduction woodcut  
10 x 8 inches



2

## C BANGS

*Flowering Pavonis B* (detail), 2017  
oil and acrylic on panel, painted frame  
15 x 12 inches





**MARISA BENJAMIM** 3

*Floristaurant, 2016*

photography installation  
dimensions variable



4 GABY BERGLUND CARDENAS

*Chinese Pu-erh Tea, 2016*

mixed media

10.25 x 10.25 x 1 inches



NANCY CAMPBELL 5

*Artemisia*, 2017  
mixed media collage  
24 x 12 inches





- 6 **DONNA TROY CLEARY**  
*Woman of the Year and More is More, 2017*  
yarn, bottle, herbal infused oil  
6 x 7 x 5 inches each



MARGOT GLASS 7

*Dandelion 2, 2017*

graphite on paper

12 x 16 inches



8 TESSA GRUNDON

*Sampling II*, 2017

Test-tubes and medicinal plants mounted on wood panel  
18 x 18 inches





**JAMES MARTIN**  
*Geranium and Arteries*, 2017  
inkjet print with monotype  
12.5 x 16.5 inches



10 **AGNES MURRAY**  
*Pelargonium: Summer Geraniums, (diptych), 2014*  
watercolor on chine collé paper  
20 x 60 inches



**GERALDINE ONDRIZEK** II

*Dandelion I*, From *Flos Cinis-The Flower Turns To Dust*, 1997  
pressed dandelion, rice paper, graphite, steel frame  
12 x 18 inches





12 **MADDY ROSENBERG**  
*A Dose Will Do It*, 2017  
digital artist's book with pockets  
8 x 6.25 inches





SUSAN ROSTOW 13

*Shelf Fungus*, 2017

mixed media sculptural book with carborundum and solar plate prints on paper,  
dried mushroom, wood, plastic refractive magnify lens, sand, glass beads and pigments

15 x 26 x 17 inches



14 LEE SALOMONE

*Bohemia*, 2013

eight metal saucepan lids, eight bronze leaves, patina

98 x 59 inches



SARAH STENGLER 15

*Florence I, 2016*

rhodonite pigment on digital image

7 x 10.5 inches



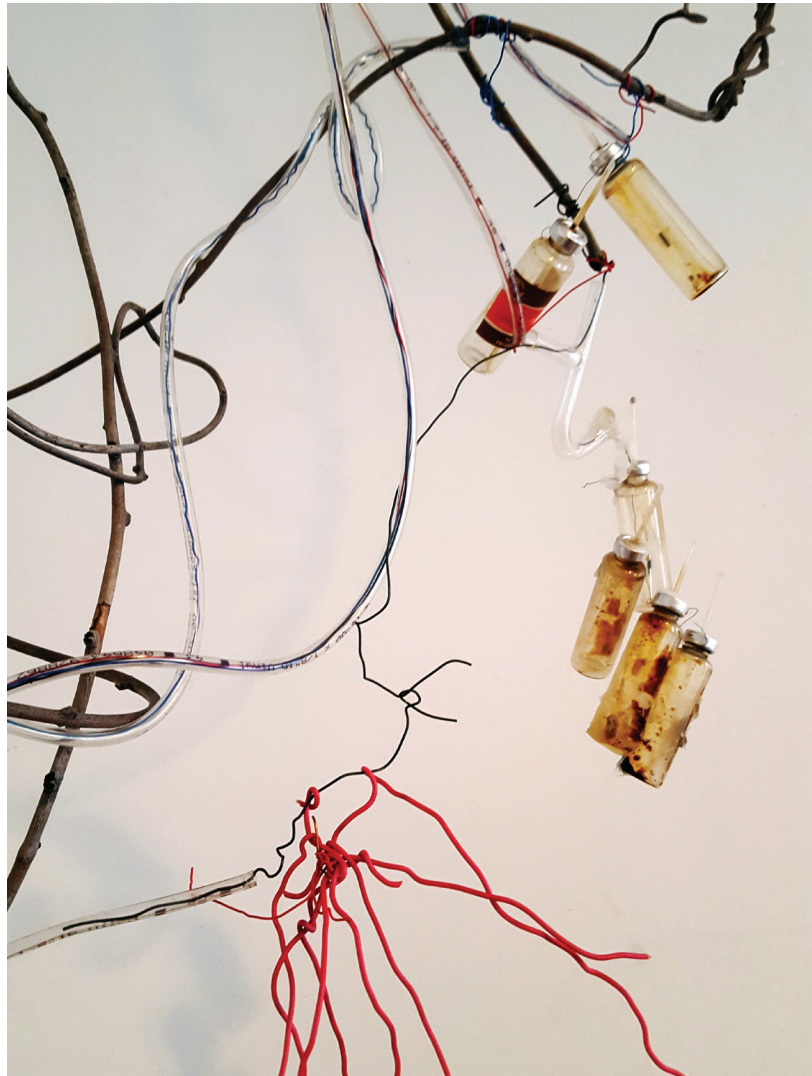


16 KATE TEMPLE

*Compass*, 2005

plant-derived inks on stretched paper

installation: 36 x 51 inches, each piece 17 x 12 inches



**MARY TING** 17  
*Holding On* (detail), 2017  
vine, wire, plastic tubing, glass  
72 x 20 x 10 inches



18 JAMES WALSH  
*Artemisia Vulgaris*, 2016  
letterpress, pressed plant on paper  
20 x 16 inches





**ELIZABETH WHITELEY**

**19**

*Ginkgo Biloba 2, 2015*

Silverpoint drawing illuminated with  
24 karat gold on prepared paper  
20 x 16 inches

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