

EXHIBITION CHECKLIST:

All works are courtesy of the artist and Sikkema Jenkins & Co., New York.

Boboras Autumnalias, 2005, Glossy C-print, 50 x 60 inches

Glandulitera Maris, 2005, Glossy C-print, 40 x 50 inches

Xicletoformis Geminis, 2005, Glossy C-print, 50 x 40 inches

Xicletoformis Pluralis, 2005, Glossy C-print, 60 x 50 inches

Pendulus Somnis, 2005, Digital Glossy C-print, 50 x 60 inches

Indigus Gentilis (Oculus), 2005, Glossy C-Print, 24 x 30 inches

Veratrum Bulbosus, 2006, Glossy C-Print, 40 x 50 inches

Octopussi Mollis, 2006, Glossy C-Print, 40 x 50 inches

Ovalaria Floris, 2006, Glossy C-Print, 50 x 60 inches

Bulbosus Neros, 2006, Glossy C-Print, 30 x 24 inches

Azulis Venosus, 2005, Digital C-Print, 13 x 8 5/8 inches

Cadmium Infecto, 2005, Digital C-Print, 9 1/8 x 13 inches

Cogumelus Venum, 2005, Digital C-Print, 8 5/8 x 13 inches

Crocodilus Lificus, 2005, Digital C-Print, 8 5/8 x 13 inches

Fungus Lunaticus, 2005, Digital C-Print, 9 x 13 inches

Musgus Sombris, 2005, Digital C-Print, 8 5/8 x 13 inches

Oculus Fundis, 2005, Digital C-Print, 9 1/8 x 13 inches

Rosalinda Humida, 2005, Digital C-Print, 8 5/8 x 13 inches

Turficus Nebulatu, 2004, C-Print, 8 3/4 x 13 inches

Floribunda Noturna, 2004, R-print, 10 1/2 x 13 inches

Inflatum Laranjatha, 2004, R-print, 10 1/2 x 13 inches

Melancholicus Strelatus, 2004, C-Print, 8 3/4 x 13 inches

Phallus Impudicus, 2004, R-print, 10 1/2 x 13 inches

Tomatus Phobicus, 2004, R-Print, 10 1/2 x 13 inches

Primavera, 2006, watercolor on paper, 60 x 119 inches

A Botanist's Dream 1, 2006, Polaroid, 9 1/2 x 7 1/2 inches

A Botanist's Dream 2, 2006, Polaroid, 9 1/2 x 7 1/2 inches

A Botanist's Dream 3, 2006, Polaroid, 9 1/2 x 7 1/2 inches

A Botanist's Dream 4, 2006, Polaroid, 9 1/2 x 7 1/2 inches

A Botanist's Dream 5, 2006, Polaroid, 9 1/2 x 7 1/2 inches

A Botanist's Dream 6, 2006, Polaroid, 9 1/2 x 7 1/2 inches

A Botanist's Dream 7, 2006, Polaroid, 9 1/2 x 7 1/2 inches

A Botanist's Dream 8, 2006, Polaroid, 9 1/2 x 7 1/2 inches

A Botanist's Dream 9, 2006, Polaroid, 9 1/2 x 7 1/2 inches

Insomnia 1, 2006, DVD, 11 minutes, 14 seconds, looped

Insomnia 2, 2006, DVD, 16 minutes, 32 seconds, looped

Insomnia 3, 2006, DVD, 11 seconds

JANAINA TSCHÄPE: MELANTROPICS

SEPTEMBER 15 - DECEMBER 31, 2006

Janaina Tschäpe will give an artist talk on September 16, 2006 at 1:00 pm at the Contemporary.

cover image: *Bulbosus Neros*, 2006, Glossy C-Print, 30 x 24 inches. Courtesy of the artist and Sikkema Jenkins & Co., New York.

Janaina Tschäpe: *Melantropics* is organized by the Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis and curated by Andrea Green, Curatorial Assistant.

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Janaina Tschäpe: *Melanotropics*

The exhibition *Melanotropics* features work by German and Brazilian artist Janaina Tschäpe that explores the amalgamation of the female body and landscape through the use of photography, video, and drawing. Created in public and private gardens, the work in the exhibition presents a curious botanical milieu embodied with notions of solitude and references to mythology and folklore. *Melanotropics* is a concept invented by Tschäpe that combines the words melancholy and tropics and refers to the epidemic of melancholy that occurred in Brazil at the end of the 19th century. Hybridity is a thread throughout Tschäpe's work and titles—she combines elements found in nature with fabricated costumes and props and blends words and languages to form new ones which results in her own fictitious botanical nomenclature. In the photographs and videos, Tschäpe constructs imaginary environments that exist between the natural and the artificial.

Tschäpe produced a new series of photographs and videos during a weeklong residency at the Missouri Botanical Garden located in St. Louis. Founded by Henry Shaw in 1859, it is one of the oldest botanical institutions in the country and a National Historic Landmark. The Garden serves as an oasis in the city of St. Louis—79 acres of beautiful horticultural display, including a 14-acre Japanese strolling garden and the Climatron conservatory simulating a tropical lowland rainforest. In addition to the work made in St. Louis, *Melanotropics* also includes photographs and video work Tschäpe produced on-site in the tropical Parque Lage, located in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Designed in the late 1840s by the English gardener John Tyndale, Parque Lage is comprised of gardens, dense forests, and small grottos.

Tschäpe's performance-oriented photographs and videos are created amongst lush botanical settings wherein she directs human models, in this case young, quiescent women wearing artist-made costumes that are biomorphic in form and include various appendages of latex, inflatables, and colorful fabrics. These curious, artificial extensions of the youthful female body evoke imaginary and fictitious creatures. The models interact with props, such as helium-filled balloons, fabric forms, and the natural and man-made surroundings. The vibrant costumes transform individuals into hybrid living things—part creature, part flower—where they linger quietly in a location that is neither here nor there (not quite in the natural world and not fully in the realm of fiction). In these images, the discovery of a new mythic creature in its habitat suggest secrets abound.

Nestled amongst the lush foliage of the garden, the young woman in the photograph *Ovalaria Floris* might be mistaken for a flower or a garden nymph. Pink and white fabric appendages drape from her body and lie beside her like fallen flower petals from the tree she sits beneath. In *Octopussi Mollis*, a squid-like creature with tentacles that protrude and spread out on the verdant green lawn lies motionless as if resting, sleeping, or perhaps even deceased. In other photographs, Tschäpe populates the surroundings with vegetation she creates from handmade fabric and plasticine in an effort to create a tension between what is natural and what is artificial. These surreal sculptural forms of bright oranges, blues, yellows, pinks, and greens appear to be new growths, suggesting that their origins are possibly magical or perhaps even invasive.

The large-scale photographs from the public settings are complimented with the inclusion of Polaroids Tschäpe produced in her private garden in Brooklyn where she cultivates a variety of plant life. These images contain paper-doll cutouts of costumed models arranged within the foliage and then re-photographed. The images of pixie-like figures and garden nymphs interact within their enchanted settings. As referenced in the title of the series, *A Botanist's Dream*, these tiny hybrid creatures might be found in a terrarium where they frolic in their surroundings and/or are kept captive for display, study, and enjoyment. Accompanying the Polaroids in the gallery are three new videos, entitled *Insomnia*, where the restless mythic creatures intermingle with one another as they roam their surroundings with curiosity.

The garden is a locus of marvel and delight, where things blossom, flourish, entice, wither, decay, and die. It is also a place of nature and artifice as it can effectively be shaped, controlled, and cultivated. It is a territory that fosters growth and manipulation; where human intervention entwines with the organic. The settings Janaina Tschäpe conceives in her work are vibrant, seductive, surreal, and at the same time contemplative, still, and melancholic. Her fabricated creatures and vegetation enhance the existing botanical environments by taking them into the realm of dream and fantasy.

Andrea Green
Curatorial Assistant



Ovalaria Floris, 2006, Glossy, C-Print, 50 x 60 inches. Courtesy of the artist and Sikkema Jenkins & Co., New York.

Janaina Tschäpe (b.1973, Munich, Germany) received a Master of Fine Arts degree from School of Visual Arts, New York and completed studies at Hochschule fur Bilende Kuenste, Hamburg, Germany, and was an artist in residence at Museu de Arte Moderna, Salvador, Brazil. Tschäpe's selected solo exhibitions include shows at: Museum of Contemporary Art, Shanghai, China (2006); Palácio das Artes, Sao Paulo, Brazil (2006); Nichido Contemporary Art, Tokyo (2005); Galerie Catherine Bastide, Brussels, Belgium (2005); UB Art Gallery, State University of New York at Buffalo, Buffalo, NY (2005); Espaço Maria Bonita, Sao Paulo, Brazil (2005); ACC Galerie, Weimar, Germany (2004); University of South Florida Contemporary Art Museum, Tampa, FL (2004); Sikkema Jenkins & Co., New York (2004); Centre Pompidou, Paris, France (2004); Images Au Centre, Le Chateau d'Azay-le-Rideau, France (2003); Galeria Fortes Vilaça, Sao Paulo, Brazil (2003); Art Concept, Paris (2002); and Paco das Artes, Sao Paulo, Brazil (2002), among others. Her group exhibitions include: *Landscape Confection*, Wexner Center, Columbus, Ohio (2005) (traveling); *Acting Out: The Invented Melodrama in Contemporary Art*, The University of Iowa Museum of Art, Iowa City, Iowa (2005) (traveling); *Water, Water Everywhere...*, Scottsdale Museum of Contemporary Art, Scottsdale, AZ (2005); *Unclosed Stories*, Unlimited, Athens, Greece (2004); *Identity II*, Nichido Contemporary Art, Tokyo (2004); *The 59th Minute: Video Art on the Time Square Astrovision*, produced by Creative Time, New York (2004); *Strange and Beautiful: Janaina Tschäpe and Mariele Neudecker*, Sketch Gallery, London (2003); *Nuites Blanches*, Palais de Tokyo, Paris (2002); *Stories*, Haus der Kunst, Munchen, Germany (2002); and *Virgin Territory, Women, Gender and History in Contemporary Brazilian Art*, National Museum of Women in the Arts, Washington DC (2001).