

ADRIEN MISSIKA

LA PENSÉE SAUVAGE

Press release

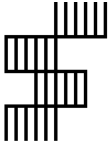
Adrien Missika
La Pensée Sauvage
Solo exhibition
Galeria Francisco Fino
02.05.2024 – 15.06.2024

Galeria Francisco Fino is pleased to share Adrien Missika's third solo show at the gallery, *La Pensée Sauvage*, on view until 15 June.

On the Wild Pansy

In a brief Appendix to his canonical work of structural anthropology, *La Pensée Sauvage* (1962), Claude Lévi-Strauss addresses the double entendre inherent in the book's title, originally translated into English as *The Savage Mind* and more recently as *Wild Thought* (Portuguese *O Pensamento Selvagem*). The translations do not preserve the double meaning of 'pensée,' a word that denotes both 'thought' and the small flower known as *viola tricolor* or field pansy, and more provocatively as the flower of the Trinity. A survey of German, Polish and Ukrainian folklore reveals various interpretations of the five-petalled flower as a family merged together through an unseemly marriage. The 'little stepmother' of German lore represents the displacement of the children of a first marriage by the entitled offspring of a second pairing, signified by the sumptuous hues of the lower petals. In the Polish version, the first two children are forced to share a single petal as a chair, while the stepmother and her children spread out in a more comfortable seating arrangement. Other versions figure the pansy as an orphan or an incestuous marriage between siblings, who will bow their heads as the flower wilts in shame. At the whim of the patriarch, who is conspicuously absent from the scene, each family constellation is beset by uncomfortable strains and compromises. In this structuralist game of musical chairs rendered in a botanical idiom, the relations among the petals qua family members are more significant than the positions themselves.

Far from a frictionless ideal of filiation, the wild pansy offers a parable of uncomfortable kinship. It is a story of making do with decisions made by others, and of accommodating interlopers and replacements. It speaks of the challenges of being a good host and a good guest. The little flower holds different ways of working within the constraints of structure—and potential for



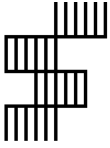
poststructural transgression. Indeed the *wildness* that the pansy shares with thought lies with its propensity for queer overflowing of the relations prescribed by a marriage that is not convenient to all who are united within its embrace.

Troubled kinship relations are the legacy of the era known variously as the Anthropocene, Plantationocene and Capitalocene. Like the paternal pistil of the pansy around which the stepfamily gathers, a copy of *Le Capitalocène* by Armel Campagne (2017) is enshrined at the core of Adrien Missika's video *TransPlants* (2024). Enclosed in a bird cage along with a mandarin orange, incense, shards of a broken mirror, a dead dragonfly and other symbolic items, the book becomes a talisman that accompanies the artist on a treacherous journey across the city of Guangzhou. On the flatbed of a motorized tricycle, he transports a collection of large tropical plants from the flower market to the garden of an art gallery, where he waters them lovingly. In turn, he hands over custody of the plants under a legal contract for their care and replanting in open soil. In this ambiguous gesture of landscaping or rewilding, the *transplants* become botanical step-family, and as such, figures for the broader urban ecosystems into which they intervene.

In a series of performative interventions stretching back over the last decade, Missika negotiates the awkward demands of ecological kinship set into motion by the dis/organizing principles of our age. What duties of care and forms of cohabitation do our troubled times demand? With what kinds of beings do we identify? Who deserves our affection and attention? Taking lessons from the wild pansy, Missika exhausts himself watering weeds on the sidewalk, enduring a heatwave together. In a loving refusal of futility, he washes the soot from the blackened leaves of plants growing under highways in Mexico City. Elsewhere, he stages the comedy of unwanted advances, affectionately rebuffed by a Saguaro cactus upon whose thorns he impales himself, through a protective suit of pillows. He reads his deepest fear/desire mirrored in conjoined twin carrots (*I don't want to die alone*). In the vibrant excesses of wild thought, botanical and social relations grow into one another, confounding divisions of species, genus and family. Plants do not merely symbolize kinship, they *are* kin. — Dehlia Hannah

Biography

Adrien Missika (Paris, 1981) lives and works in Berlin. Co-founder of the art space 1m3 in Lausanne in 2006, he graduated from ECAL (École cantonale d'art de Lausanne) in 2007. He has had numerous personal exhibitions including: 21er Haus in Vienna, Kunsthaus Glarus, Switzerland, Centre Culturel Suisse, Paris; Centre d'art contemporain Genève, Switzerland and Palais de Tokyo in Paris. His work has also been shown in many group exhibitions, among which at Centre Pompidou, Paris; Metro Pictures, New York; Aargauer Kunsthaus, Aarau; Nouveau Musée National de Monaco, Montecarlo; Le Magasin, Grenoble; Fotomuseum Winterthur and Centre Pompidou Metz. In 2009 he was awarded the Swiss Art Award, in 2011 the Prize of the Fondation Ricard and the Kiefer Hablitzel Prize.



The work of Adrien Missika humorously investigates the natural and the cultural. Using epistemology as a base for research, his conceptual approach drifts into poetic and hypothetical narratives. Through a variety of media, from video, photography, sculpture to installation and action, the work digs into the wide range of natural and environmental sciences, such as biology, landscape architecture and geography to name a few. Overcoming the logic of capitalism, Missika's artistic practice nurtures a space for possible worlds.

Images

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Courtesy of Adrien Missika and Galeria Francisco Fino

Additional information

Galeria Francisco Fino

Rua Capitão Leitão, 76

1950-052 Lisbon

E.: galeria@franciscofino.com

T.: +351 215 842 211