

***Orangery of Care* addresses the relationship between humans and plants**



Shirin Sabahi: Muted Fanfare for the Shy, 2013 (video still). Courtesy the artist & VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn

Orangery of Care

Exhibition and events

September 12–November 17, 2024

Opening: September 11, 2024

The group show *Orangery of Care* takes potted plants as its point of departure to interconnect ecological, feminist, and postcolonial issues. Grouped around a site-specific installation on the care and propagation of discarded houseplants, thirteen works by contemporary artists address the relationship between humans and plants in urban space.

House plants are entangled in the colonial history of botanical gardens and the industrial destruction of habitats, but also in privatized practices of life preservation. Today, as in the bourgeois culture of the nineteenth century, the domesticated forms of displaced plant species are still treated as status symbols. Looking after ficuses elasticas, monstera, and yuccas is viewed as unpolitical housework. Rethinking the coexistence of humans and plants means questioning the fetishization and exoticization of plants, as well as their role in the

naturalization of (post-)colonial conditions—while also reflecting on the importance of regenerative and caring activities in the preservation of ecosystems.

How does the health of plants reflect human behavior? How are encounters with plants influenced by (post-)colonial conditions? Can rethinking human-plant relationships also lead to a relearning of relations among humans?

With these questions in mind, the **PARA** artists' collective has conceived a greenhouse that gives an account of households and offices as spaces animated by plants, speculates on their virtual survival, and makes use of the principle of friendship for plant propagation. Members of PARA form the nGbK work group developing the exhibition. The curatorial concept for the "Orangery of Care" is based on their installation: In the group show, video- and spatial installations, sculptures, paintings, and textile works explore different modes of relationships between humans and plants, revealing the tensions between protection and control inherent in the practice of keeping and caring for plants, as well as exploring its transformative potential.

Works by **Anne Marie Maes & Margarita Maximova**, **Bethan Hughes**, **Marlene Heidinger**, **Hoda Tawakol** and **Sophie Utikal** examine the basic conditions of life, limits on resources of care, and constructions of nature and femininity. Films by **Jesse McLean** and **Rob Crosse** explore the various types of care required by plants that cohabit with humans, and systems of mutual support, while **Jana Kerima Stolzer & Lex Rütten** question the technical manufacturability of artificial nature via idealized notions of biohacking. **Samir Laghouati-Rashwan** and **Julia Löffler** highlight the ongoing impact of colonialism when humans exploit and capitalize plants, while the video work by **Laure Prouvost** caressingly puts itself at the service of the creatures that surround it. Works by **Shirin Sabahi** and **Dunja Krcek** deal with the ambivalence of gardens between utopia and dystopia, and with the relational space between humans and plants that results when the sight of flowers generates an experience of beauty.

The accompanying program of events and outreach consists of performances, talks, and activations of the space, and also takes the biodiversity of the surrounding cityscape into consideration. Further information on the program will be available shortly on ngbk.de.

Exhibition with works by Rob Crosse, Marlene Heidinger, Bethan Hughes, Dunja Krcek, Samir Laghouati-Rashwan, Julia Löffler, Anne Marie Maes & Margarita Maximova, Jesse McLean, PARA, Laure Prouvost, Lex Rütten & Jana Kerima Stolzer, Shirin Sabahi, Hoda Tawakol, Sophie Utikal

Program of events and outreach with Anguezomo Mba Bikoro, Josephine Hans, Dunja Krcek, Anne Marie Maes & Margarita Maximova, Marylou, Juliana Oliveira, Méliá Roger, Miki Yui, and many more

nGbK work group: Lina Brion, Vanessa Opoku, Jonas Fischer, Amelie Neumann, Kolja Vennewald

nGbK am Alex

Karl-Liebknecht-Straße 11/13, 10178 Berlin, 1st floor (access via escalator)

Opening hours: Tue–Sun 12–6 pm, Fri 12–8 pm

Free admission to the exhibition and all events, including free-of-charge meals

Accessible with wheelchairs and strollers

Information for visitors is available on ngbk.de

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Press images are available [here](#).

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