

After purchasing a plot at a green burial site, Kathy High has designed a garden that will be planted above her body. Her body will literally become these plants' bodies and become a plant. The plants are chosen based on their common names – and the poetry (or irony) of those names. These plants will make up her 'headstone' and grave marker – a plant poem representing different aspects of her life – from the coy to the innocent, the intuitive to the jaded. She will continue to include other indigenous plants to flesh out other aspects of her personality, researching the plants' various properties.

To date, she has been experimenting with plantings to test this garden, as seen in her photographs. To promote growth and honor the dead with burial, she placed animal carcasses that her cats have hunted under the flora.

This is death, and decomposition at work: organisms devouring each other in a constant process of symbiosis - things eating things, exchanging, becoming.

This is a process of naturally buried human bodies becoming a plant – with no regrets.  
*(Mixed media & design augmentations)*

In 'Becoming a Plant: Resurrection Project' Kathy High has been designing a garden that will be planted above her body. Her body will literally become a plant.

Oliver Kellhammer, the artist behind 'Hyperorganisms', has had a long fascination with how ruined cityscapes gradually get absorbed by certain (ruderal) plants. From the wreckage of factories, brown fields and destroyed buildings, beautiful and diverse biotopes emerge.

In this work, the artists collectively and in conversation imagine and celebrate these potentials for the transformation of their expired bodies and abject architecture – into the subjectivity of chlorophyll.

In the age of the Anthropocene\* our thoughts often turn to mortality. But life goes on – our bodies and even our buildings dissolve into the indefatigable processes of plant-ness. Nos habebit humus. The earth will have us. The earth does have us.

*\*Anthropocene is a proposed epoch that begins when human activities started to have a significant impact on Earth's ecosystems.*

# SEEING THE FOREST THROUGH THE TREES

**18 September - 06 December 2015**

**The lifestyles of plants are a source of inspiration for Seeing the Forest through the Trees, an unorthodox living exhibition at Grizedale Forest Visitor Centre as part of the AND Festival 2015.**

Throughout history humans have struggled to devise fair and ethical ways to live together with animals and plants. This exhibition asks you to rethink your relationship with plants as we celebrate their entanglements across species.

Plants are active and autonomous beings who perceive the world in ways both alien and familiar. Our future with them is tightly connected. We can learn from the networks and systems plants employ as survival strategies. Their bodies are organised in a modular way to harvest solar energy and minerals to produce oxygen and food for animals.

The artworks featured in the exhibition reveal ways in which artists are contributing to our efforts to understand plants themselves and their relations with animals. The artists invite you to look closely at plant behaviours – how they monitor their environment, 'sing', 'fantasise', 'dream', avoid and attract other species, find nutrients and adapt – through experiments, performances, design and actions.

**Featuring international artists: Brandon Ballengee, Karl Heinz Jeron, Chiara Esposito, Špela Petrič, Dimitris Stamatis and Jasmina Weiss, Pei- Ying Lin, Allison Kudla, Kathy High and Oliver Kellhammer.**

**Curated by Monika Bakke**

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**1****PSX Consultancy***Dimitris Stamatidis and Jasmina Weiss,  
Pei- Ying Lin, Špela Petrič*

The PSX Consultancy is a research project that investigates the art and science of the reproductive behaviour of plants. The project includes the creation of plant-centred designs, which are a collection of concepts that linger between medical devices and erotic hardware. The intended functionality of these support the interaction between the plants and the agents on which they depend to improve their mobility and growth. *(Mixed media & design augmentations)*

**2****State of Becoming***Allison Kudla (US)*

State of Becoming (Study No. 2) takes its form from the mathematical patterns expressed by 'phyllotaxy', the natural arrangement of leaves on a plant stem.

Many plants arrange their leaf growth in a spiral pattern equivalent to the Golden Angle or Fibonacci series. It has been posited that such patterns are not due to genetic or developmental forces but to physical laws that underpin all matter in our universe. In this installation, this mathematical pattern is laid flat in space but not in time, allowing the viewer to look at states of seed development, each existing in its own microscopic universe within a swirling nebula of life.

The growth of each seedling is coupled to the macroscopic progression of the mathematics expressed in the underlying phyllotaxic pattern.

**3****Ephemerella Ignita Variation  
(part of Love Motel for Insects)***Brandon Ballengee (US)*

Love Motel for Insects is a large-scale living sculpture, which invites insects from across the forest to stay.

This sculpture using ultra-violet lights on enormous sculpted canvases has attracted an array of bugs and insects. The motel will create an opportunity for people to interact with the rarely seen nocturnal arthropods and their environment and it was on site at Grizedale Forest over the AND Festival 2015.

For the exhibition Brandon Ballengee has created an Arthropod Observation Station. Here you will be able to peer through the field scopes and view the habitats from the forest, read about the insect and plant data collected, and etch your own arthropod on the wall.

**Dream of Flying***Chiara Esposito (IT)***4**

Sometimes, a plant dreams of flying! Movements in plants are usually associated with growth or following the sun. Some plants get their nutrients from the air, others use the wind to let their seeds move quicker and need the action of insects or birds to reproduce. This plant has chosen to fly a drone!

In the accompanying video you can watch how artist Chiara Esposito has created a computer interface, which measures the electrical activity of the plant and as a result enables the plant control of the flight and navigation of the drone. *(Mixed media, video drone)*

**When Plants Sing***Karl Heinz Jeron (GER)***5**

Ever wondered if plants could sing? Plants, as all living organisms, utilise electric current and they emit weak electromagnetic fields, which can be amplified. Karl Heinz Jeron has created a site-specific installation for Grizedale, which draws on the sound of the trees in the surrounding visitor centre and the plants in the greenhouse. The plants have been connected to electronic oscillators, which sonify the electromagnetic fields of the plants.

**Hyperorganisms***Oliver Kelhammer (CAN)***6**

Artist Oliver Kellhammer performs various 'botanical re-mixing' using simple strategies of 'grafting' and 'scaffolding'.

The outcomes of these experiments are documented in large-scale photographs. Some investigate the capacity of native and naturalised plants to act as 'scaffolding' for similar species that offer higher food yields. These assemblages of two or more species form a new living system, a 'hyperorganism' with characteristics of all the component parts.

He has grafted a Bartlett Pear to wild hawthorn trees and numerous cultivars of domestic apple (*Malus domestica*) to the Pacific crabapple (*Malus fusca*), a wild species native to North America.

Grafting can also be used to repair damaged trees. Some of the images on display show an apple tree that had been split, which Kelhammer then repaired using a 'bridge graft' made of watersprouts from the tree's base. He grafted these around the split to convey sap to the crown of the tree and in a few years these watersprouts encircled the wound, giving the tree a new lease on life.