

Bot Dialectics

These works called 'Bot Dialectics' are about making Gardens in consultation with Nanobots who are Futuristic Life Forms.

When making a garden, I think you must ask a lot of questions. I watch over the garden and tend the garden, yet so much happens that I do not see. Maybe I stand for a long time or squint or dig just to smell and observe the growth. As a microcosm and metaphor, the container of garden, the garden body, the architecture of it, are all intellectual constructs that source back to and rely on nature itself, then assert values and formal ideals.

Within this logos and sense of the garden place, I foreground my pantheism to include nature's sprites and transform them. These cyborgian nanobots assist me in my gardens and bring a dimension to the process that are about the changing parameters of all life forms. My own absorption and support of technology invites referencing new science so that I can explore the mysteries of nature in the context of shared experience with capable 'others'.

In part, there is a dystopian emphasis throughout these pieces - an overhanging black ether infuses portions of the gardens and landscapes. It is our future to decisively interact with the earth and even hold discussions with advancing technologies - such as my bot-like beings - to work through solutions to real garden problems as a model of greater issues. Death, competition, disease, bugs, lack of water or sun and storms in the garden alludes to inescapable climate change, over population, spreading disease, water and industrial pollutions. I am like a Beatrice confined to lush gardens where many plants are poisonous, where I need to sort out apparent dangers.

Asking and trying to answer questions brought up by gardens ascertains the needs of the garden and by extension, into politics and values at large. I remember in the later film version of 'The Fly', Jeff Goldblum is turning rapidly into a hybrid fly-human, so he asks, "What are fly politics?" This was a phenomenal observation for me. In turn, I wonder how do I communicate values to bots? Are the bots selfish or programmed? Does my relative center reflect on and compromise between my desires and others and the bots? How am I treading on the limited resources of the earth? These wonderings with myself are philosophically connected to formal thought as represented by the nanobots who I construct as intelligent beings. I do not know much about them, except what I learn as I move forward with them in my work. If we are to be 'punished for our luxuries' in life, I wish to explore this through the interaction of growing plants and fantastical bots who do, for instance, clothe themselves as roses and speed about like morris minors.

All artists reduce complexities to simpler forms and methods. Nature is too full to encompass, decisions must be made to pare down and reveal. Thought traces the image with associations, then issues, then experience and depth. Beauty needs a counterpoint, a little thorn, a sting - Each of these main points, beauty, thought, and reduction, keep me at work.

To desire connections between the image and society to bring forward discussion of issues and ills, is an ethical response. In particular, I feel responsible to create meaningfulness and for me it starts in earth, water and air, with birds about and a variety of growing things needing ordering. I am not la finta giardiniera, a 'pretend gardener' - the toil and sun bring me close in to the pleasures of observation, to see the design of flowers and insects as they fulfill each other's biological survival. The Chinese philosophy advising us 'to live in harmony with nature' is timeless, yet so prescient considering the conditions of climate change and dwindling world resources.

As I print my work, the paper becomes the excess, the big and gaudy thing for the ink to spread out on. The fabric-like weight and textural white surface, breathes in the image. Like the negative in the darkroom, the paper in a solution after exposure, the electronic file tells the ink where to flow, the paper telling it how. The result is that of a combination of formats: painting, photography and print making, informing the digital pen or brush with historical capabilities.

The work is made digitally, in all respects electronically, but in cooperation with the human hand, the mind and mind's eye. The use of digital is radical - many artists use it in some way, but few want to own it. They use more acceptable and disguised terminology to define their work for galleries and museums. It is curious that electronic forms are so dynamic and capable as tools, yet they frighten humans as too distinctly other, as an unfulfilling part of the human experience. The new is intimidating even within this context of contemporary.

If I look at films such as Metropolis, Blade Runner and Brasil, I find lucid visuality within the context of fundamental societal change. These influences are brought into my garden to pore over and re-invent in the hazy heat with crickets and weeds. I meet the bots there arguing their contradictory ideas as they populate my thoughts and as we seek expression and illuminations via gardens and landscape sites.

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