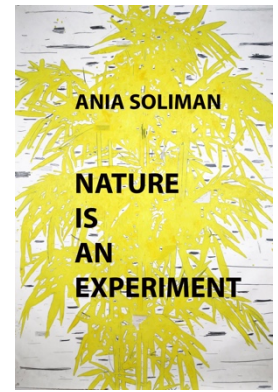


ANIA SOLIMAN**Nature is an experiment**

28.05.19 – 02.08.19

Opening: Tuesday 28 May at 7 PM

7:30PM Performance by Ania Soliman



àngels barcelona is pleased to present *Nature is an experiment* the second solo show in Spain of the interdisciplinary artist Ania Soliman whose research-based body of work constantly questions the basis for different kinds of representation. She looks at notions of artificiality and nature as well as our perceptions of the digital and the material.

Nature is an experiment initiates an investigation into nature and its various technologies. The exhibition presents drawings of artificial bamboo plants, as well as a rainforest landscape rendered in yellow.

Designed by humans, assigned a serial number, and mass-produced in plastic or cloth, the artificial-bamboo plants represent the kind of irrational and manic overproduction that threatens our continued existence on this planet. Yet the plants also represent a kind of hope: they illustrate how we love and desire nature even in its most alienated manifestations.

Nowadays, with the omnipresence of computers, the machine metaphor of nature has become a common denominator in contemporary society. When we see nature as a machine, we impose no ethical limitations on human action and, therefore, we destroy the very systems we depend upon for survival. Interestingly enough if we look closely and analyze the marketing discourse that a world-known design and furniture multinational group uses to sell artificial plants: “*Our lifelike artificial flowers and plants don't smell like the real thing, but they'll give your home a real boost. They never wilt and look fresh year after year. And (...) you can change them up with the seasons (...) anytime you want,*” we can easily imagine a society which, rather than changing its habits based on evidence of climate change, would rather “design” a new planet to fit its needs.

Soliman's *Nature is an experiment* reminds us of this desire to transform nature, whilst admiring it, of wanting to adapt it to our needs without having to worry about the consequences of our current ego-driven consumer culture that feeds itself on nature's exploitation in order to maintain the *status-quo* of over-production. By representing these “artificially natural” bamboos Soliman reminds us how nature is being “re-produced” by technology in order to adapt to our needs, which for the time being, cannot be adapted to fit nature's own. She suggests this is a false dichotomy and our production begins and ends with nature, whose agency we have to adapt to or become one of its failed experiments.

As research in Japan and elsewhere has demonstrated, bamboo plants can absorb as much as 12 tons of carbon dioxide per hectare per year, giving them a potentially crucial role in stabilizing our planet's atmosphere. Perhaps their mass-production could be an interesting experiment to imagine for our near future.

BIO | Ania Soliman (b. 1970, Warsaw) is an (US/Egypt/Poland) artist who grew up in Baghdad and currently lives and works in Paris.

She depicts objects that have been frozen in circulation- either externally (in markets, museums, symbolic systems) or internally (in language, traumatic structures, even drawings themselves). Often the result of multiple repetitions, her works function as icons-symbols of something unconscious being worked out in an almost mechanical fashion through physical engagement with the image. This process of nature becoming machine and machine becoming nature is one of her primary subjects, and the fundamentally machine-like aspect of language is particularly fascinating to her. In order to engage directly with the live circulation of language, she has recently begun to develop a series of lecture performance that connect to her drawing practice.

Ania Soliman's work has been exhibited at the Castello di Rivoli, Turin (2018), at the CCCB, Barcelona (2016), the Helga de Alvear Foundation, Cáceres (2016-17), the Museum der Moderne in Salzburg (2016), the Museum of Contemporary Art in Antwerp (2015), the Whitney Biennial (2010), the 14th Istanbul Biennial (2015), the Museum der Kulturen in Basel (2014) and the Drawing Center in New York (2000). She has recently given lecture- performances at the Global Art Forum in Dubai and Singapore and at Blockbase in Davos, Switzerland. She attended Harvard College and Columbia University before participating in the Whitney Independent Study program.

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