

KETELEER GALLERY is very pleased to present the duo-exhibition *Common Ground*. With this exhibition, the gallery presents a dialogue between the work of Ricardo Brey (°1955, Havana, CU) and Lois Weinberger (°1947, Stams - +2020, Vienna, AT).

Art and nature have a longstanding interwoven history, a relationship which many artists continue to explore. Ricardo Brey and Lois Weinberger are among the pioneers that have made this interaction the core topic of their practice. They often incorporate diverse natural elements into their art, emphasizing the interconnectedness and interdependence of humans and the environment. The common ground in the art of Ricardo Brey and Lois Weinberger is a continuous, deep reflection and commentary on the relationship between man and nature, and the impact of human activity on the world surrounding us. Both artists defy dominant behavioural patterns by encouraging viewers to rethink their relationship with the environment.

Ricardo Brey, born in Cuba, is an artist whose hybrid, multimedia artistic work questions nature, the cosmos, human society and its history. In his drawings, sculptures and installations, Brey often combines found objects and natural materials to evoke unexpected associations and create a highly personal and imaginative visual world. His suggestive oeuvre is characterized by a feeling of openness and connection.

Lois Weinberger was an Austrian artist known for his evocative ecological installations, sculptures, drawings, photographs and videos often starring plants and natural elements. Through the use of weeds, twigs, leaves and stones, he showcases both the fragility and the resilience, the transitoriness and the permanence of the natural world. His clear and incisive work reflects on the relationship between nature and culture and shows the many ways human action can influence the natural world.

The most fundamental correspondence in the artistic works of Ricardo Brey and Lois Weinberger is that it is never hierarchical. It's inclusive and extensive. Precious assemblages like *A patient man keeps cooking a stone and drinks from its broth* (2018), *Rueda Dentada* (2020) and *Red Thread* (1975) or *Untitled* (1970s-2009) show Brey and Weinberger's mutual interest in what is left behind, is considered peripheral or – all too often – remains invisible. Key works like *Mobile Landscape* (2003) and *Seed on the Moon* (2019) highlight how every kind of monoculture is threatening. This is juxtaposed with the richness of variation, migration and diversity.

In his series of figurative drawings and water colours, Lois Weinberger portrays the Green Man as a *leitmotif* to emphasize the interwovenness of man and nature by melting them together into this single hybrid figure. Breys' drawings on the other hand, are explosions of colour playing with abstraction and figuration. It are delicate reflections on the cyclicity of nature and time. In the downstairs gallery space the *Tumbling box* from the *Every Life is a Fire* (2021, Brey) series and the video *The Life of Plants* (2011, Weinberger) display a shared sensitivity for creating a reflective and meditative experience for the viewer.

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The layered but visually accessible work of Brey and Weinberger demonstrate how art can serve as a powerful instrument to broaden the awareness about man, society and environment. In the end, Brey and Weinberger's works remind us that we are not separated from our environment, but that we are deeply connected to it. By acknowledging and respecting this connection, we can learn to live in harmony with the natural world instead of exploiting and destroying it. Their work is a call on man to treat the world differently. Not just today, but also for the next generations.

*Koen Leemans, 2023.*

The exhibition will be on view 4 March – 6 May, 2023.