

Galería Marta Cervera has the honour to present *Growing Histories: Ground Dispersions*, an exhibition by Maureen Connor and Kadambari Baxi. The show will be on view from the 19th of June, 2024 up until the 17th of July 2024.

An indoor garden in the shape of a map of Spain and Portugal, blooms in the gallery. Designed and assembled by architect Kadambari Baxi and artist Maureen Connor, this installation displays live plants historically used for fertility management, recent geolocated herb observations maps, reimagined plant-passports and data on current international abortion laws. Collectively, these materials highlight the natural and cultural histories of plant medicines and reproductive control.

Also on view in the gallery is *Negro púrpura*, a film by Sabela Iglesias and Adriana Villanueva. It focuses on ergot, a fungus that infects farmed and wild grasses, such as rye. Another natural source for reproductive care, ergot became, for a time, the center of the pharmaceutical industry in 20th century Spain. Before then, ergot had been known for centuries by herbalists for fertility control when used in small amounts, a hallucinogen at higher doses and a deadly poison with prolonged use.

Some of the plants shown have a history of first being used throughout the ancient world--a history that has been challenged, suppressed, hidden and even destroyed by forces of religion and patriarchy. As a result, specific instructions for such methods of reproductive control are now largely absent from the "official historical record". Although this knowledge has long been held within indigenous communities and non-Western plant-based traditions around the world, a new awareness of this history is growing as options for fertility control have declined in some nation states due to repressive legislation.

Since plants do not grow according to national boundaries (although sending them through borders is highly controlled), the wall-maps in the gallery expand beyond Spain and Portugal. Crowdsourced observations of each herb across borders near and far is juxtaposed with legends listing uneven country-based laws and public healthcare demands. According to the World Health Organization global data, the legality of fertility control across the world has little to no effect on abortion rates everywhere and their findings underscore: legal or not, fertility control in many forms can, will, and does take place.

People have always controlled fertility. They always will. These histories cannot be hidden and will remain as they continue to disperse.

Maureen Connor and Kadambari Baxi have been collaborating on public projects and museum installations for almost 20 years, most recently on *Trigger Planting*, Frieze NY, 2022 and *Found (abortion) Monument*, Unison Arts, New Paltz, NY 2021-2. Baxi's current projects focus on fair labor practices, climate justice and human rights in the built environment. Her architecture and design work with interdisciplinary teams has been exhibited at the Architekturmuseum, Berlin; the Seoul Biennial of Architecture and Urbanism; the Art Institute of Chicago; the Oslo Architectural Biennial; and ETSAM, Madrid, among others. Connor's recent work is comprised of collaborative investigations where women's rights, human relationships and social interactions constitute a central focus. Internationally recognized for her feminist sculpture and video installation from the eighties and nineties, her work is included in numerous publications and has been exhibited globally.

Sabela Iglesias and Adriana Villanueva are part of the Galician creative production company *Illa Bufarda*. Since 2012 they have been producing audiovisual, animation, design and photography. Their works include the feature-length documentaries *Negro púrpura* (2021) and *Threads out. Stories of workers between seams and patterns* (2015) and the web series *SEX* (2020).

*Organized with the art and pedagogy collective *how to perform an abortion*: <https://www.howtoperformanabortion.com/projects:%20https://www.kbaxi.net/projects>

**Plants, exhibition installation and plant maintenance provided by the *Planteka Community*; <https://planteka.co> and *Speak in Plants*; <https://www.speakinplants.com>

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