

The Horticultural Society of New York Exhibition for UBS Art Gallery, New York

IMPLANT

August 7 – October 31, 2008

Implant is rooted in a concept offered by horticultural author Michael Pollan (*The Botany of Desire*) who suggests that, in effect, THEY CONTROL US – that is the plants, controlling the humans. The natural tendency is to think the intimate human/plant bond exists to our advantage with plants providing food, experimental subjects, outdoor enjoyment, indoor décor and employment. The truth is, we have it backwards. The plants use us to further their lives and make their families live generations, even centuries longer than ours. After all, they were here first. Wisdom comes with time.

In his book, Pollan posits this idea in terms of four plants: the apple tree, the tulip bulb, the marijuana plant and the potato. He considers the greater social and cultural needs of humans, and how these specific plants figure into that equation. What is interesting and relevant to *Implant* is how Pollan's idea relates to art, and specifically, artistic production. Is it possible that when an artist uses plants, i.e. flower, tree, or natural landscape in a composition, the connection has been directly suggested by these presumably innocuous living things? The personal artist/subject bond is forged within a larger context of each individual's intrinsic understanding of his/her place in nature. The plant's authority is felt strongly over time as they compel artists to depict their history and evolution throughout artistic periods. When artists use botanical subjects in their work, it is because the plants have chosen them first. Cleverly, the plant has found a way to immortalize itself – to take eternal life in the form of an artwork.

This exhibition is about that very furtive, cosmic level where artwork is conceived, made and shown – emphasized by the equally mysterious way that plants have found an entry into that process. We can see this in a wide variety of artistic media with plants appearing as muse in conceptual art, pigment, celluloid, dimensional materials, pixels, sound and ink.

To articulate this greater idea into its constituent parts, the ten individual bays offered by the Gallery become physical spaces in which the idea is enacted. I think of each bay as an outcropping, and the plant-based works inside as germinations of the concept.

Jodie Vicenta Jacobson
Curator
The Horticultural Society of New York