

Who Wants to Be an Impatient Gardener (?)

Pep Vidal

Curated by Xavier Acarín, Abrons AIRspace Curatorial Resident, 2016-17

November 25 - December 26, 2017

Opening Reception Saturday, December 2nd, 6-9pm

Conversation between Pep Vidal, Dr. Diana Reese, and Xavier Acarín

Wednesday December 13, 6:30pm

Abrons Arts Center is pleased to present *Who Wants To Be An Impatient Gardener (?)*, a project by artist and scientist, Pep Vidal, curated by Xavier Acarín, Abrons' 2016-17 Curator in Residency. This exhibition occurs simultaneously at Abrons and at ADN Gallery in Barcelona.

The project started in September 2016, when Vidal bought the entire stock of a plant store in Barcelona. His aim was to measure the variations and interactions of more than 300 plants, evaluating among other factors, the surface, volume, color, humidity, and light. Soon, Vidal realized that he was in need of a watering schedule for each plant, and developed a research in collaboration with his colleagues at the optics group of the Physics Department at the Autonomous University of Barcelona. By using lasers to measure the cells composition and water accumulation of the leaves they are developing a methodology that could have different potential applications, from early detection of diseases to sustainable agricultural systems. This research is currently being developed in partnership with other institutions, among them the Botanic Institute of Barcelona, and the team will soon publish the results in various scientific journals.

Now, a new phase of Vidal's project will be presented at Abrons. This departs from the intention to import all plants to the US, and will showcase elements of the research that combines artistic and scientific inquiries. While some of the plants will be included at the homonymous exhibition at ADN Gallery in Barcelona, others will travel to the US. This has prompted a wide effort to process all paperwork needed, through the usual bureaucratic procedures with the US Department of Agriculture and their Spanish counterparts. The fate of this process is still uncertain as there are multiple factors that can potentially disrupt the travel of the plants. In fact, there are many agents and steps that could make it impossible for the plants to arrive to the US, from biological to legal restrictions. This branch of the project points at a system of intricate relations between entities that conform a globalized networked of mobility and transportation. Airplanes, phytosanitary certificates, emails, cardboard boxes, government officials, plant species, the streets of Barcelona, and those of New York, are connected in an entanglement that is activated by this project. The interest of Vidal for systems and their performance, recalls the artistic attention to networks and their fluctuation.

In addition, the exhibition presents a series of drawings made by Pep Vidal, while in residency in Croatia. These employ scientific graphic principals to artistic configurations, and serve as citations of the conceptual interests that resonate in the project, mainly occupied with systems representation and the borders of entities. The drawings are embedded in a grid, that transforms the gallery into a measuring chamber, where each different wall works as a calculation plane, x, y, z. Here, the overall concern of the project with systems and measurements is not only depicted but also enacted, as the gallery becomes a sort of scientific tool. Other elements, such as a home made perfume of the dead flowers from the plants, and legal documents that details all information relevant to the transportation of plants into the US, are also included in the exhibition.

One of the aims of the project is to provide a more accurate system of measurements, something that mobilizes the artistic and scientific fields towards a questioning of human perspectives. Historically, exploitation has been associated with a model of economic profit based on a visual organization of the world, such as lineal perspective. The quest for a different approach to elements and entities, suggest a proximity to the object of study, that could potentially direct towards other models of production, economic development, and knowledge. By artistically addressing these concerns, the artist mobilizes a set of preoccupations that consider the variability of matter and the systemic circumstances of any entity, either human or non-human.

On Wednesday December 13 at 6:30pm, Dr. Diana Reese, professor of comparative literature with an emphasis on German and French 18th century literature and philosophy, will join Pep Vidal and Xavier Acarín in a conversation about the project.

ABRONS ARTS HENRY STREET CENTER SETTLEMENT

Pep Vidal (Barcelona, 1980). Degree in Mathematics at Universitat Autònoma of Barcelona (UAB) (2008). Special interest in infinitesimal calculus, topology and infinite series. PhD in Physics in UAB and ALBA synchrotron (2014). Thesis research about mathematical algorithms for improving accuracy of instruments used in particle accelerators. I have two important conclusions from here: there are some extremely sensitive and complex systems; and I'm not interested in research that doesn't include my own experience and vital life in the process. Advanced course in Contemporary Art in A*Desk (2011-12), conducted by David Armengol. Resident artist at Hangar, Barcelona, 2013-15, FARE, Milano, 2013 and Casa de Velázquez, Madrid, 2014. Residencies: Hangar, Barcelona, 2013-2015; FARE, Milano, Oct-Dec 2013; Casa Velázquez, Oct-Dec 2014. Grants and prizes: International Visual Arts Grant Fundación Botín 2016-17, Propuestas 2014 VEGAP (Visual Arts), Generaciones 2015, Miguel Casablanca 2014, ICUB La Capella 2013. Solo shows at ADN Gallery (2015, Barcelona), Rolando Anselmi Gallery (2015, Berlin), Capella de Sant Roc (2015, Valls), Art-O-Rama (2014, Marsella), L21 Gallery (2014, Madrid), Sal 'on (2013, Madrid), Espai Cub La Capella (2013, Barcelona). Last group shows in L21 Gallery (Madrid, 2016), Antoni Tàpies Foundation (curated by Oriol Fontdevila, 2015), Caixaforum Barcelona (curated by Juan Canela, 2015), VII Bienal de Jafre (curated by Carolina Grau Rahola, 2015), Fabbrica del Vapore, EXPO 2015, Generaciones 2015, La Casa Encendida, Madrid and Lisboa, 2015, OTR (curated by Carolina Castro, 2015). Colletion: Anny De Decker private colletion, Antwerpen; Francisco Cantos private colletion, Madrid; Urbano private colletion, Madrid; Montemadrid Foundation, Madrid; Arxiu del Centre d'Estudis i Documentació del MACBA, Barcelona; Centro de Documentación y Biblioteca del MNCARS, Madrid; Museum of Modern Art Library, New York.

Including *Pep Vidal: Who Wants To Be An Impatient Gardener (?)*, 2016-17 AIRspace curatorial resident **Xavier Acarín**, has organized three group exhibitions and one solo artist project at Abrons Arts Center this past year (*Pep Vidal: Who Wants To Be An Impatient Gardener (?)*, *Conspiracies Are Things*, *Public Formats*). Additional projects include collaborating on Abrons' NADA Art Fair booth and annual visual arts residency exhibition. Acarín's research during his residency has focused on the material conditions that mobilize a set of artistic issues related to contemporary feelings, like togetherness, anxiety, and disruption. His exhibitions have presented the work of seventeen artists, received media attention (*The New Yorker* and *NY Art Maps*), collaborated with two external galleries, ESTE in Brooklyn and ADN in Barcelona, and received external funding by two European cultural agencies.

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