

For Immediate Release

Jil Weinstock

Unwanted Collaborator: Fractured Landscapes and Rubber Herbaria

2 November 2024 – 11 January 2025

Opening Reception: Saturday, November 2, 5:00 – 8:00pm

Walter Maciel Gallery is pleased to present *Unwanted Collaborator: Fractured Landscapes and Rubber Herbaria*, an exhibition of mixed-media work by New York-based artist, Jil Weinstock. The show includes unique digital collages and illuminated works that incorporate photography, rubber, plant life, embroidery thread and fabric to explore the fragility and resilience found in the natural world. Weinstock has a fifteen-year history with our gallery and this show marks her fifth solo exhibition.

Weinstock's focus on landscape lies within the disruptions caused by both natural elements such as erosion, tectonic activity or climate changes, and human activities like urbanization, deforestation or industrial development. Unwanted collaborators are exactly that-unplanned occurrences that disrupt the environment and become part of the process often creating a disordered and adaptive terrain. By imposing her hand into these landscapes, Weinstock creates a delicate balance between human intervention and nature's resilience. She begins with nature photographs from her personal archive and selecting elements such as waterfalls or rainbows to multiply digitally to make them seem more manufactured. Other images depict architectural rock formations and footprints in the earth, a contemplation of the impact travelers have on the places they visit. The digital images are interspersed with bits of real flowers and weeds that she gathered in nature and brought back to her Brooklyn studio where she pressed and submerged them in thin layers of liquid rubber. The surfaces cure preserving the plants into amorphous shapes that contrast the rigid rectangular frames of the photos with overlaid patterning. Rubber is a signature medium in Weinstock's practice which is a natural material produced by plants and makes the perfect binding agent. The amber color evokes age, antiquity and fossilized specimens. By treating ordinary weeds as new discoveries, Weinstock preserves them in time like a photograph captures a specific moment in life.

In this series of work, the rubber solidifies the vulnerable plants and the memories they elicit, transforming the collection of individual works into an *herbarium* that emerges as a profound metaphor for the intersection of temporal and ecological narratives. Weinstock creates a poignant dialogue between historical herbaria and the fractured landscapes of contemporary environmental crises. The rubber is often emblematic of industrial impact and contrasts with the delicate organic material, suggesting a tension between progress and preservation. This fusion not only reflects the ecological scars left by human activity but also reimagines the herbaria as dynamic witnesses to the shifting realities of pollution, habitat disruption and climate change. The photographs, encased plant life and embroidery appear as seemingly disjointed elements that together, transform and adapt to create a cohesive piece. Delicate yet strong, thread connects and mends, sewing together the dissonance and harmonizing the conflicting forces at play. Embroidered elements appear in many of the works with their artificially bright colors standing in contrast to the earthy tones of the poured rubber. A series of embedded plants in rubber panels are shown as light boxes revealing both the true visual presence of the shrubs when the light is off and a shadowed Xray version when it is on. This body of work provides an opportunity to consider the inherent beauty within the dissonance of our environment by challenging our perceptions of harmony and discord, contemplating the fragility of our surroundings and the potential for renewal in the face of something new.

Weinstock was born in Los Angeles and received a joint MFA from the University of California Berkeley and San Francisco Art Institute in 1995. Her work has been exhibited at the Aldrich Museum of Contemporary Art; Tang Teaching Museum and Art Gallery at Skidmore College; PS MoMA 1; Artist Space NYC; The University of Alabama Sarah Moody Gallery; Headlands Center for the Arts; San Jose Institute of Contemporary Art; Salina Art Center, KS; Olin Museum at Kenyon College, OH; Perimeter Editions, London; Fashion Institute of Technology, NY; Hunterdon Museum of Art, NJ; Avram Gallery at Southampton College, Long Island; Orari Galleria, Milan, Italy; Berlin Cultural Arts Center, Germany; The Cultural Arts Center, Vienna, Austria. Weinstock has participated in a residency at the American Academy in Rome and was an Artist-in-Residence at the Museum of Art and Design in New York. Previous press includes writings in the New York Times; The New Yorker; ARTnews; Art in America; The Huffington Post; New York Magazine among others. Weinstock is the recipient of a McGarth Grant and the Walter Gropius Award. She is currently the Executive Director of Baxter St. Camera Club of New York.