

Images Available Upon Request

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Spring Exhibitions Look at Queerness in Nature, Human Connection, and Intergenerational Healing

April 20 – August 11: *Perfect Trouble: Queering Natureculture*

April 20 – June 9: Tao Leigh Goffe: *Plot and Provision: Crate-Digging*

April 20 – August 4: Ruben Natal-San Miguel: *Nature Finds a Way*

Bronx, NY, April 9, 2024 — Wave Hill is pleased to announce the opening of its 2024 spring exhibition season. The Spring Arts Opening Day will be held on Saturday, April 20, 1:00 – 4:00PM. In Glyndor Gallery, the group exhibition *Perfect Trouble: Queering Natureculture* explores queerness as a concept that is at once inherently natural and a social construct, featuring works by artists that challenge the nature/culture dichotomy and reveal sexual and gender identity to be mutable and fluid. The exhibition is on view through Sunday, August 11. In the Sunroom Project Space, Tao Leigh Goffe presents the site-specific exhibition *Plot and Provision: Crate Digging*, on view through Sunday, June 9. And opening in Wave Hill House is Ruben Natal-San Miguel's photography exhibition, *Nature Finds a Way*, on view through August 4.



Erin Johnson, *There are things in this world that are yet to be named*, 2020 (still), film (color, sound), 7:20 min.
Courtesy of the artist.

April 20 – August 11: *Perfect Trouble: Queering Natureculture*, Glyndor Gallery

Botanists and horticulturists describe flowering plants, which have both male and female reproductive organs, as “perfect flowers.” In addition to these perfect plant specimens and those that can change their sex or self-pollinate, abundant examples exist in nature that can be described, in contemporary human terms, as bisexual, transgender, nonbinary, intersex, or queer. As evidenced by thousands of species of plants, non-human animals and fungi, sexual and gender identity is inherently mutable and fluid. As such, strictly essentialist understandings of identity flatten not only the rich complexity of the self into overbearing biological standards but also misrepresent nature itself. Greenhouses and gardens, for example, are carefully cultivated spaces

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where plants are propagated, pruned and grown in controlled environments; nature here is fashioned by human hands. Rather than attempt to untangle nature from culture, *Perfect Trouble: Queering Natureculture* revels in the messiness.

Perfect Trouble features artists **Pyaari Azaadi** (formerly known as Jaishri Abichandani) (she/her; born Bombay, India; lives in Brooklyn, NY), **Seba Calfuqueo** (she/they; born Santiago de Chile; lives in Ngulumapu, Wallmapu (Chile)), **Young Joon Kwak** (she/they; born Queens, NY; lives in Los Angeles, CA), **Erin Johnson** (she/her; born Tucson, AZ; lives in Brooklyn, NY), **Diana Sofia Lozano** (she/her; born Cali, Colombia; lives in Brooklyn, NY), **Sofia Moreno** (she/her; born Coahuila, Mexico; lives in Mexico City, Mexico), **Christopher Udemezue** (he/him; born Long Island, NY; lives in New York, NY) and **Rachel Youn** (they/them; born Abington, PA; lives in New Haven, CT).



Seba Calfuqueo, *Simbiosis*, 2021, from *Esporas* series, photograph. Photo: Diego Argote. Courtesy of the artist.

Recognizing that the natural world encompasses remarkable gender and sexual diversity, the works of artists in *Perfect Trouble* challenge the way that nature is used to uphold standards of normativity, and collectively, call attention to the arbitrariness of the nature-culture divide and other theoretical binaries. Exploring queerness as both inherently natural and socially constructed, the exhibition confronts conservative arguments that queerness is “deviant” while also rejecting reductive biological discussions of sexual and gender identity. Instead, *Perfect Trouble* looks at the in-between and intertwining space of nature and nurture and blurs the boundaries that divide the natural world from the fabricated environment.

Works by Erin Johnson and Diana Sofia Lozano scrutinize the structures at play within the botanical sciences. Johnson’s short film *There are things in this world that are yet to be named* (2020) explores *Solanum plastisexum*, an Australian tomato that has an unpredictable sexual expression, causing difficulty among scientists in naming and classifying it. Lozano’s sculpture *A fruiting body is responsible for which of the following* depicts a hybridized, aberrant plant form spilling spores onto the floor, the speculative species blooms or fruits in opposition to rigid boundaries, expectations and groupings.

Young Joon Kwak and Rachel Youn depict composite forms of human and plant bodies, further emphasizing this question of hybridity that comes up in Lozano’s work. Youn’s sculptures are assemblages of artificial plants and discarded electronic massagers, which convey failed attempts at reaching impossible standards of personal satisfaction. Similarly, Kwak’s *Aggregate Body (Wall Grid I)* is an abstract collage of limbs, tools, flesh and clay, reminding us that our bodies, identities and selves are forms that, much like the human-made environment, can be reshaped and reconceived.

Works by Seba Calfuqueo and Christopher Udemezue depict queer and trans people as part of the earth, exploring connections between queerness, colonialism and the soil. Calfuqueo’s photographs and videos depict her body melded with various elements of nature, meditating on Indigenous modes of collective thinking by deconstructing the boundaries between the human and non-human. Udemezue’s photo-based works play on ancestral Jamaican folklore to fill in a queer history erased by colonialism. Likewise, Sofia Moreno blends ecology and ancient Mesoamerican mythology with self-portraiture and queer eroticism, while Pyaari Azaadi depicts her queer loved ones as South Asian deities. In the work of each of these artists, queerness—so often degraded as profane—is made sacred, asserting that queerness has always and will always be here, as timeless as the soil and sky themselves.

Employing cultural, embodied and scientific knowledge, the artists in *Perfect Trouble* illuminate the ways in which nature holds a multiplicity of lived experiences. In the context of the garden, where plants are grown and cared for in controlled environments, the exhibition shows how notions of the natural and human-made, the wild and cultivated, and male/female depend on archaic classification systems that fail to acknowledge the expansive variety of life on Earth.

April 20 – June 9: Tao Leigh Goffe, *Plot and Provision: Crate-Digging*, Sunroom Project Space

Tao Leigh Goffe inaugurates the 2024 Sunroom Project Space season with *Plot and Provision: Crate-Digging*, a climate-art, multimedia installation that explores the notion of the commons, how land has been historically segmented and intergenerational healing through the sounds and the soil of the Bronx.



Tao Leigh Goffe, detail from *Plot and Provision: Crate-Digging*, 2024, mixed media sound installation. Courtesy of the artist.

April 20 – August 4: Ruben Natal-San Miguel: *Nature Finds a Way*, Wave Hill House

Ruben Natal-San Miguel is a New York-based artist whose photography captures the resilience of cultural identity and human connection in New York City. The solo exhibition *Nature Finds a Way* brings together portraits with a focus on the Bronx that reveal how “real” and synthetic nature too — a tropical mural, artificial plants or floral prints — also find a way to be seen and challenge heteronormative aesthetic ideals.



Ruben Natal-San Miguel, *Nykki (It All Comes Out in the Wash)*, 2019 East Harlem, NYC. Saturday, September 21, 2019. 5:40 PM. 72 Degrees. Dye sublimation on aluminum matte finish photograph. Courtesy of the artist.

Public Programs

All programs are on site unless otherwise indicated.

Saturday, April 20, 1:00PM – 4:00PM

Spring Arts Opening Day. On view in Glyndor Gallery are *Perfect Trouble: Queering Natureculture* and Tao Leigh Goffe’s Sunroom Project, *Plot and Provision: Crate-Digging*. Opening in Wave Hill House is Ruben Natal-San Miguel’s solo exhibition *Nature Finds a Way*.

Saturday, May 11, 2:00PM – 3:00PM

Meet the Artist: Tao Leigh Goffe, in conversation with Kandis Williams and Maaza Mengiste.

Tuesday, May 14, 6:30PM-8:00PM

Meet the Artists: A conversation with artists Seba Calfuqueo, Young Joon Kwak and Sofia Moreno. *Online Program*

Sunday, June 1, 1:00PM – 4:00PM

Death Cafe, guided by artist Anastasia Corinne and death doula Nancy Huang.

Saturday, June 22, 3:00PM – 4:00PM

Plantwise Walk: Perfect Flowers, garden tour led by Jess Brey, Ruth Rea Howell Senior Horticultural Interpreter. *Rain date: Sun, Jun 23*

Saturday, August 3, 1:30PM – 4:30PM

Photography portrait sessions by Ruben Natal-San Miguel. Visitors are invited to have their picture taken by the artist on the grounds of Wave Hill. *Rain date: Sunday, August 4*

Saturday, August 10, 2:00PM – 3:30PM

Meet the Artists. Exhibition walk-through of *Perfect Trouble* with artists Pyaari Azaadi (formerly known as Jaishri Abichandani), Diana Sofia Lozano and Christopher Udemezue.

Thursdays & Saturdays, 2:00PM

April 20 – August 11

Public Gallery Tours

Perfect Trouble: Queering Natureculture is organized by Gabriel de Guzman, Director of Arts and Chief Curator; Rachel Raphaela Gugelberger, Curator of Visual Arts, and Afriti Bankwalla, Curatorial Administrative Assistant.

The Sunroom Project Space is organized by Rachel Raphaela Gugelberger, Curator of Visual Arts.

Ruben Natal-San Miguel: *Nature Finds a Way* is organized by Rachel Raphaela Gugelberger, Curator of Visual Arts, with Gabriel de Guzman, Director of Arts and Chief Curator, and Afriti Bankwalla, Curatorial Administrative Assistant.

Support for the Visual Arts Program is provided by the Milton and Sally Avery Arts Foundation; National Endowment for the Arts; New York City Department of Cultural Affairs; New York State Council on the Arts with the support of the Office of the Governor and the New York State Legislature; Pollock-Krasner Foundation; Ruth Foundation for the Arts; and by the Cathy and Stephen Weinroth Commissioning Fund for the Arts.

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Wave Hill Incorporated is an independent non-profit cultural institution governed by a volunteer Board of Directors. The City of New York owns the buildings and grounds of Wave Hill. With the assistance of the Bronx Borough President and Bronx representatives in the City Council and State Legislature, Wave Hill's operations are supported with public funds through the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs; the Zoos, Botanical Gardens and Aquariums Grant Program administered by the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation; the National Endowment for the Arts; and New York State Council on the Arts with the support of the Office of the Governor and the New York State Legislature.



About Wave Hill

A 28-acre public garden and cultural center overlooking the Hudson River and Palisades, Wave Hill's mission is to celebrate the artistry and legacy of its gardens and landscapes, to preserve its magnificent views, and to explore human connections to the natural world through programs in horticulture, education and the arts.

HOURS: Open all year, Tuesday–Sunday, 10AM–5:30PM. Glyndor Gallery 10AM–4:30PM. Marco Polo Stufano Conservatory 10AM–Noon; 1–4PM.

ADMISSION TO THE GROUNDS: \$10 adults, \$6 students and seniors 65+, \$4 children 6-18. Free Thursdays. Free to Wave Hill Members, children under 6.

DIRECTIONS at wavehill.org.

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