



WAVE HILL SUNROOMPROJECTSPACE

July 16–August 28, 2022

KRYSTAL DiFRONZO

Transatlantic Tarantism



KRYSTAL DiFRONZO

Born 1989, Chicago, IL
Lives in Queens, NY

Transatlantic Tarantism, 2022

Madder root and resist on silk, rope, dead
dough, peppercorns, eggshell, and vinyl
Dimensions variable
Courtesy of the artist

Krystal DiFronzo's exhibition in the Sunroom examines intergenerational trauma, healing practices, and gendered and stereotypical notions of health, care and emotional labor. Also, addressed is the concept of *pharmakon*, an ancient Greek term that describes a medicinal substance as both remedy and poison. Installed in a spiral formation, large silk hangings feature imagery of figures in states of contortion and dance, and fragmented bodies along with flora and fauna. Painted with natural dyes created from madder root, the pieces tie in medicinal and spiritual histories of the plant's symbology and herbal uses. On the Sunroom windows are detailed silhouettes of the toxic angel's trumpet (*Brugmansia*), a flower associated with hallucinogenic properties.

DiFronzo's work is inspired by ancestral culture, histories and mythologies as well as lived experiences grappling with gender, familial strife, illness, and belief. In this installation, they explore different practices of release and comfort. A particular focus is on the Tarantella, a folk dance in southern Italy (where their paternal grandfather is from) derived from stories about women bitten by a poisonous spider for which the only relief would be an ecstatic dance accompanied by music. On one of the silk panels is a painting of the book *La Terra del Remorso (The Land of Remorse)* by mid-twentieth century Italian anthropologist Ernesto de Martino, which discusses tarantism, a manic condition characterized by an uncontrollable impulse to dance. De Martino sees this as largely affecting women on the margins of a patriarchal society and that knowledge of this behavior can also be lost through cultural erasure. Low to the ground, at the center of the spiral of translucent silks is a bread sculpture of a spider with a human face that is lying on its back with legs sprawled. DiFronzo further connects these rituals in folk magic and Roman Catholicism to stories of outcast women and patron saints who comfort the poisoned.

The *Brugmansia* depicted on the windows shows DiFronzo's response to the manipulative control their bodybuilding father places on these flowering plants, which he propagates as a hobby, tending to them with uncharacteristic delicacy and care. Responding to these repressive actions, DiFronzo seeks solace within the natural world in their work while examining the complex associations of beauty, gender, and labor.

This is Krystal DiFronzo's first solo exhibition in New York. They have had solo exhibitions at Bunker Projects, Pittsburgh, PA; Hume and Ballroom Projects, both Chicago, IL; and Dirt Palace, Providence, RI. Their work has been shown in two-person and group exhibitions at Kingfish Gallery, Buffalo, NY; Western Exhibitions, Chicago, IL; Field Projects, New York, NY; and digitally through The Drawing Center's Viewing Program and Perrotin Gallery. DiFronzo earned a BFA from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago and an MFA in Painting and Printmaking from Yale School of Art.

PUBLIC PROGRAM: SUN, JUL 24, 2 PM, *Meet the Artist*

Organized by Senior Curator of Visual Arts Eileen Jeng Lynch, the Sunroom Project Space provides an opportunity for New York-area emerging artists to develop and exhibit a site-specific project as a solo show. The 2022 season features, consecutively, Kevin Quiles Bonilla, Anina Major, Krystal DiFronzo, Heidi Norton, Deep Pool and Amina Ross.

THE SUNROOM PROJECT SPACE IS SUPPORTED BY THE MILTON AND SALLY AVERY ARTS FOUNDATION; NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE ARTS; AND NEW YORK COMMUNITY TRUST EDWARD AND SALLY VAN LIER FUND. ADDITIONAL SUPPORT FOR THE ARTS PROGRAM IS PROVIDED BY THE LILY AUCHINCLOSS FOUNDATION; MICHAEL J. SHANNON; 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; AND BY THE CATHY AND STEPHEN WEINROTH COMMISSIONING FUND FOR THE ARTS.



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Senior Curator of Visual Arts:
Eileen Jeng Lynch
Design: Melanie Roberts
Printing on recycled paper:
Prestone Printing