



Galerie Gregor Staiger
Limmatstr. 268 / 8005–Zürich
www.gregorstaiger.com
+41 (0)44 491 3900

RACHAL BRADLEY

'Erotics of Infrastructure iii'
June 20–September 5, 2020



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'Erotics of Infrastructure iii'
Press Release

Galerie Gregor Staiger is pleased to present Rachal Bradley's third exhibition at the gallery. 'Erotics of Infrastructure iii' continues the artist's investigation into entanglements of institutions, work-labour conditions and social structures, which Bradley has explored in various recent projects including an exhibition at Gasworks, London (2018) and in a series of collaborative workshops, seminars, talks and readings at KW Institute, Berlin (2019). 'Erotics of Infrastructure iii' features three major sculptures, each consisting of dried medicinal plants compressed between large plexiglass sheets that are supported by a pair of filing cabinets, as well as two small wooden boxes, wrapped in embroidered French linen and mounted on the wall. Originally planned for April and in development for months before, this show addressing the body as subject to external forces including health and authority, comes at a time when these subjects have become globally relevant on an unforeseeable scale.

Material histories are always of importance in Rachal Bradley's research and bring their own narratives into her works. In this exhibition, these narratives are extensive, and quite literally posit our bodies between our natural and constructed worlds. In preparation for the show an adrenal stress profile was made of each member of the gallery staff, sending frozen saliva samples to a lab to be analysed for cortisol levels during different times of day (cortisol is a steroid hormone produced by the adrenal gland in response to stress, among other things). Each member of staff also underwent a consultation with a medical herbalist and the plants featured in the sculptural works are individual prescriptions based on these conversations and the adrenal stress profiles. Visually, they remind more of Linnaean botanical classification and the metal filing cabinets also direct our mind to ordering systems, though of a more bureaucratic kind, and perhaps to the gallery's own storage furniture. Leaving aside in this text the vastly important connection of botany not only to health but to international trade and colonialism, or British metal work with regard to industrialisation or the shift away from a manufacturing economy, the sculptures make a biological connection of the artist's work (in every sense) to the labour at the gallery, the influence of that labour on bodies, physically, economically – sculpturally.

That relationships are constituted by varying types of economy (energetic, emotional, psycho-somatic) is also addressed in the small wall mounted boxes, wrapped in French linen tea towels embroidered with different texts in different typefaces. "More or less" in a font reminiscent of a stencil on a military crate, "Und Repression..." in a cursive style. The French linen tea towel, itself a practical household status symbol (and a plant derived product), has its own connotations of labour or service. "More or less" can be read as a prosaic expression of casual or imprecise quantification, or in terms of imbalance, hierarchy, an economic reality of trade-offs, excesses and austerity. "Und Repression..." in Freud's native tongue, as an attempt at self-defence by banishing undesired thoughts (albeit often related to desire) into the unconscious, or as a state sanctioned act of subduing people, bodies, by force.

Within the framework of 'Erotics of Infrastructure,' these works posit questions about the organising principles of social relations, power structures and the production of knowledge and how a shift at an infrastructural level may re-organise these principles through an erotic approach (in a definition brought forward by Audre Lorde) related to the body and to poetry.

The exhibition is accompanied by a text written by the artist.

Rachal Bradley obtained a degree in law before studying fine art at Goldsmiths, London, the California Institute of Arts, and the Glasgow School of Art. The artist's work will be included in upcoming exhibitions at Piper Keys, London, and Kunsthaus Glarus. Recent projects include 'The Erotics of Infrastructure', as part of 'The Making of Husbands: Christina Ramberg in Dialogue', KW Institute for Contemporary Art, Berlin (programme of demonstrations, workshops and seminars), 'Fenster', cur. by Fatima Hellberg & Steven Cairns, Okey Dokey III, Jan Kaps, Cologne (both 2019); 'Interlocutor', Gasworks, London (2018); 'Self Passage', Primer, Lyngby, Denmark (2017), and others.



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Rachal Bradley
Untitled (light-grey)
2020

Acrylic sheet, metal components, conservator's adhesive tape, metal filing cabinet, keys, rubber seal, wood, magnets, adrenal stress diagnostic test, Echinacea Purpurea, Curcuma Longa, Filipendula Ulmaria, Glycyrrhiza glabra, Withania somnifera, Melissa Officinalis, Taraxacum Officinalis RADIX, Valeriana Officinalis RADIX, Equisetum Arvense, Arctostaphylos Uva-ursi, Althea Officinalis Folia, Calendula Officinalis, Mentha Piperita
275 x 63 x 219 cm
BRAD/S 42



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Rachal Bradley
Personal Space
2020

Acrylic, plants (based on individual adrenal stress profile and consultation with medical herbalist), metal components
110.1 x 2.6 x 60.3 cm
BRAD/WM 12



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Rachal Bradley
One Poor Clare (Moreorless)
2020
100% French linen, cotton, wood, screws
21 x 21 x 21 cm
BRAD/WM 10



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Rachal Bradley
One Poor Clare (Moreorless)
2020
100% French linen, cotton, wood, screws
21 x 21 x 21 cm
BRAD/WM 10



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Rachal Bradley
Untitled (black)
2020

Acrylic sheet, metal components, conservator's adhesive tape, metal filing cabinet, rubber seal, wood, magnets, adrenal stress diagnostic test, *Borago officinalis*, *Eleutherococcus senticosus*, *Glycyrrhiza glabra*, *Passiflora incarnata*, *Withania somnifera*, *Rosa Damascena*
275 x 63 x 219 cm
BRAD/S 40



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Rachal Bradley
Untitled (black)
2020

Acrylic sheet, metal components, conservator's adhesive tape, metal filing cabinet, rubber seal, wood, magnets, adrenal stress diagnostic test, *Borago officinalis*, *Eleutherococcus senticosus*, *Glycyrrhiza glabra*, *Passiflora incarnata*, *Withania somnifera*, *Rosa Damascena*
275 x 63 x 219 cm
BRAD/S 40



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Rachal Bradley
Untitled (mid-grey)
2020

Acrylic sheet, metal components, conservator's adhesive tape, metal filing cabinet, rubber seal, wood, magnets, adrenal stress diagnostic test, *Rosa Damascena*, *Withania somnifera*, *Urtica dioica*, *Eleutherococcus senticosus*, *Taraxacum officinalis* RADIX
275 x 63 x 219 cm
BRAD/S 41



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Rachal Bradley
Untitled (mid-grey)
2020

Acrylic sheet, metal components, conservator's adhesive tape, metal filing cabinet, rubber seal, wood, magnets, adrenal stress diagnostic test, Rosa Damascena, Withania somnifera, Urtica dioica, Eleutherococcus senticosus, Taraxacum officinalis RADIX
275 x 63 x 219 cm
BRAD/S 41



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Rachal Bradley
Two Poor Clares (Und Repression...)
2020
100% French linen, cotton, wood, screws
21 x 21 x 21 cm
BRAD/WM 11



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Rachal Bradley
Two Poor Clares (Und Repression...)
2020
100% French linen, cotton, wood, screws
21 x 21 x 21 cm
BRAD/WM 11



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Some notes on bodies...

Bureaucracy...

The body under stress attempts to regain balance through dynamic homeostasis. Bodies are created through the affects of social process, legislation, diagnosis, in this sense they create form and are actively sculptural.

Example,

A paper trail.

A body under stress will attempt to regain balance through homeostasis, however under continued long-term environmental stress the body will be actively formed into this trauma.

All bodies are formed through process. This process creates a space of the body.

Underscoring the knowing of bodies in certain processes such as the legislature, is a premise of patriarchy and inequity – the knowing of all bodies through the view of only one body. This historical social space concerns the material of bodies under process and forms objecthood. For example, Roman Law built on the notion of *dominium* to provide that the right to self-defence extended beyond the individual body to the bodies under the patronage of the pater familias. Those included family members, slaves (as property) and physical property. An attack on these constituted, by extension, a personal attack on the body of the male head of the household. Use of force against an attacker, even in the event of homicide, was justified, phrased as the principle of *vim vi repellere licet* (“it is permitted to repel force by force”).

The patriarchal body here is given definition by its right to legitimately harm another. In this sense the body remains under the social contract permitted to use force on its behalf against its constituent part.

The parties in this social contract resemble a snake eating its own tail.¹

The body of the gallery is known to me through three specific bodies who constitute the organisation. But the bodies I know here are primarily bureaucratic bodies. We exchange emails, text messages, images. We are known remotely to each other through these processes of communication and process. The knowledge these processes generate in turn generate our perception of the versions of each others' bodies. This version of our bodies, the roles played out through these processes creates a space which constitutes the space. An externalism creating the internals of the organisation.

The gallery has recently undergone a refurbishment. Its' walls have moved inwards, taking approximately 2 metres off the physical space on one side. The floor has also been changed from a terrazzo style material to a rubber-based flooring.

There is now a lift, a restaurant and an electronic information board in the building. Whilst the boundaries of the physical space are movable and re-knowable, how can I discern the boundaries of another body within space? More specifically a body subject to process?

The space a body produces is premised on the nature and specificity of the processes encountered by the body, both in terms of effect and counter-effect.

1. Unlike the mythical symbolic meaning of the Ouroboros, fertility and self-renewal, snakes who attempt to consume their own tale are usually doing so in response to stress.

Diagnostics

Informatics show us in graphic terms the vocabulary of a result, they visually account for the movements within a process. The graph shows an increase and decrease of a hormone called Cortisol within a body over a period of a day from 7am to midnight. The samples were provided by each of the gallery workers with a permanent employment contract or ownership rights. In this sense the samples capture the movement of this hormone across the organisation, across 1 day. Cortisol is one of the steroid hormones produced by the adrenal glands and is released during the stress response process.

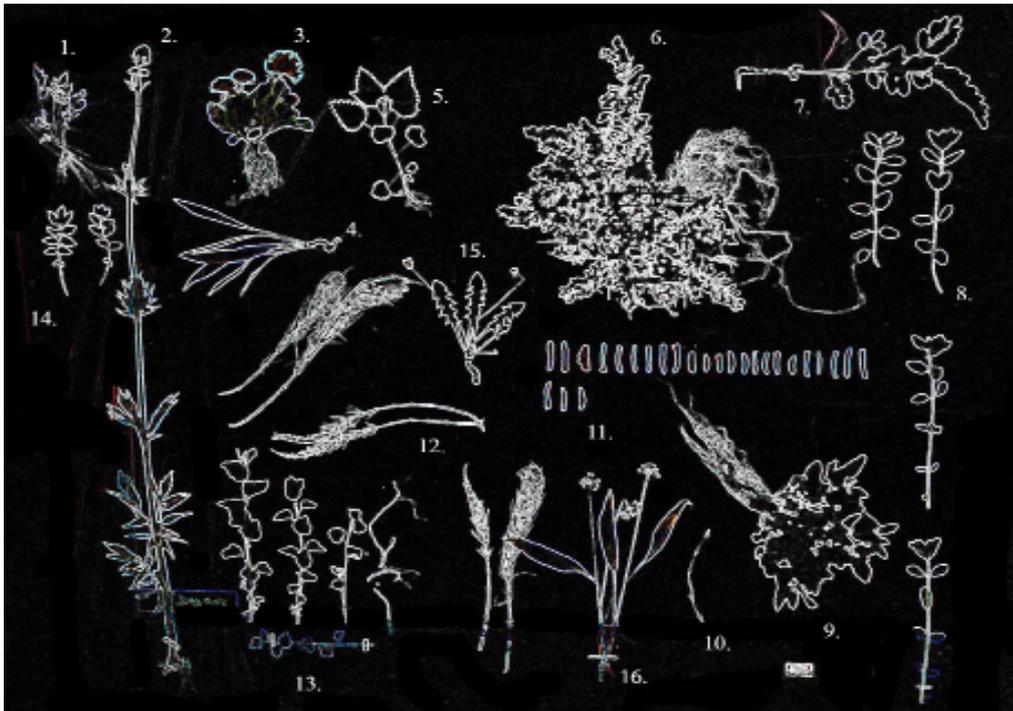
The space within a body is a space of knowledge both in its presence and absence. Whilst pregnant with my son my body grew and contracted – my internal organs made way for an additional space of some 30 x 15 cm. When my mother had a double hysterectomy what happened to the void left by these organs? Can I get to know the space of a body better if I am able to see its internal workings? The word diagnosis derives from the Greek meaning 'dia' - meaning apart from and 'gignōskein' – to come to know or recognise.

Each body of the gallery undertook a clinical consultation with a medical herbalist in which their lifestyle, medical and emotional well-being and history was investigated through a framework of open questions. This is a confidential process in line with clinical ethics and protocols. Each person consented to their information being known to me in order to make the sculptures *Light Grey*, *Mid-Grey* and *Black*. Their consent forms the basis of this intimate process to knowing each other; a process out with their bureaucratic bodies. A knowing of the space from the inside out.

The Plants

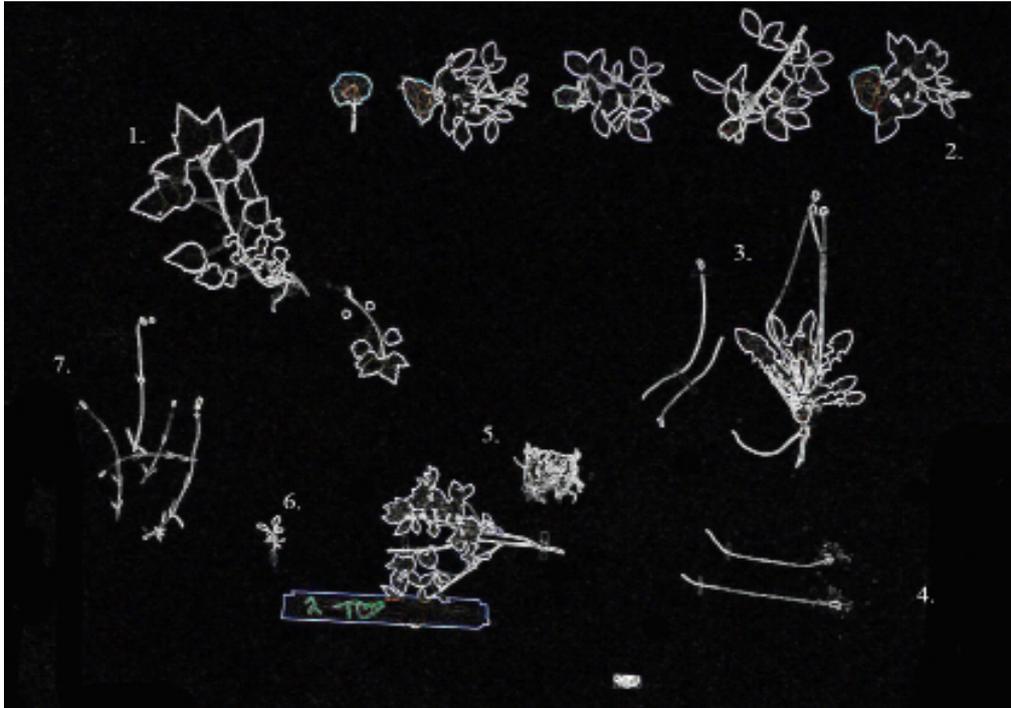
For several weeks I have sourced and grown the plants which would be used in the herbal medicine prescription for the alleviation of symptoms in these three bodies. Medicinal plants and the paradigm of herbal medicine are polyvalent, holistic and dynamic in their process and effects.

Here, they are both the model and the formal material of this particular process of knowing.



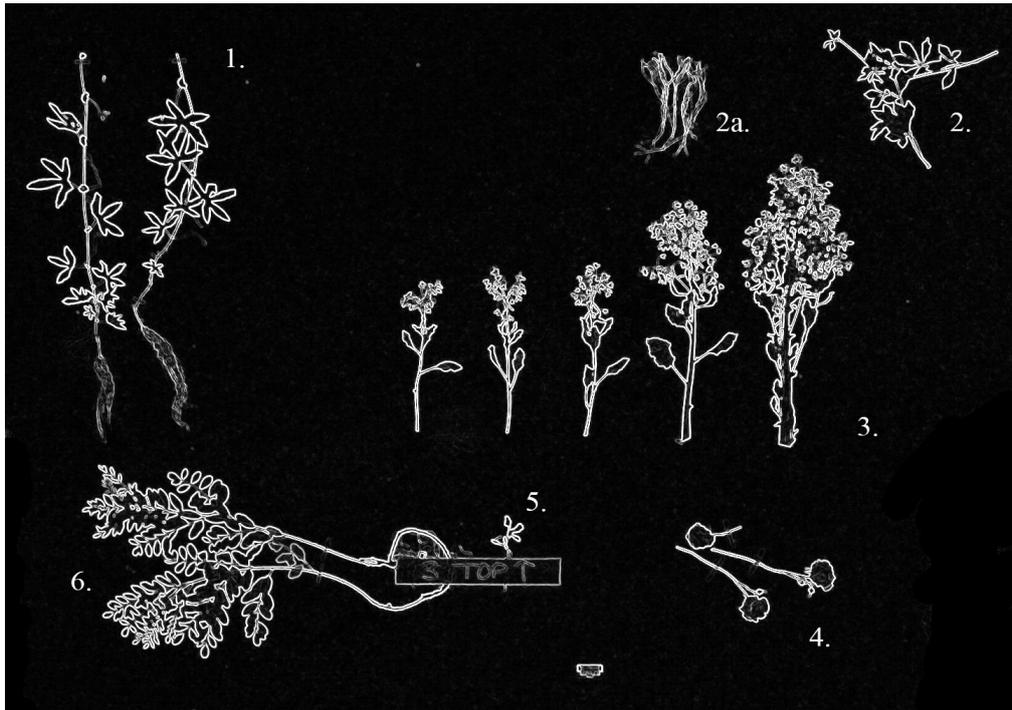
Light Grey

1. *Melissa officinalis* - Lemon Balm
2. *Valeriana officinalis* RADIX – Valerian
3. *Calendula officinalis* – Marigold
4. *Echinacea angustifolia/purpurea* - Echinacea
5. *Urtica dioica* – Nettle
6. *Arctostaphylos uva-ursi* - Vancouver Jade
7. *Gycyrrhiza glabra* - Liquorice
8. *Mentha piperita* – Peppermint
9. *Melissa officinalis* - Lemon Balm
10. *Lavandula angustifolia* - Lavender
11. *Curcuma longa* – Turmeric
12. *Equisetum arvense* – Horsetail
13. *Althea officinalis* Folia – Marshmallow
14. *Filipendula ulmaria* – Meadowsweet or Sweet Wort
15. *Taraxacum officinalis* RADIX – Common Dandelion
16. *Allium sativum* – Garlic



Mid Grey

1. *Urtica dioica* – Nettle
2. *Rosa Damascena* (Comte de Chambord) – Damascan Rose
3. *Taraxacum officinalis* RADIX – Dandelion
4. *Taraxacum officinalis* RADIX – Dandelion
Aerial parts of plant.
5. *Eleutherococcus senticosus* – Siberian Ginseng.
6. *Withania somnifera* – Ashwaganda
7. *Lavandula angustifolia* - Lavender



Black

1. *Passiflora incarnata* – Passionflower

2. *Eleutherococcus senticosus* – Siberian Ginseng.

2a *Eleutherococcus senticosus* – Siberian Ginseng.
Root of plant.

3. *Borago officinalis* – Borage

4. *Rosa Damascena* (Comte de Chambord) – Damascan Rose

5. *Withania somnifera* – Ashwaganda

6. *Glycyrrhiza glabra* – Liquorice