Exhibition Opening: Fugitive Seeds

Wednesday 12 October, 2022

CCA Derry~Londonderry is delighted to announce our upcoming exhibition Fugitive Seeds, with artists Larry Achiampong and David Blandy, Maria Thereza Alves, Alasdair Asmussen Doyle, Minji Choi and Davinia-Ann Robinson, curated by Borbála Soós. The exhibition opens on Tuesday 18 October 2022, 6-8pm and runs until Wednesday 21 December 2022.

Fugitive Seeds considers how endemic, alien and fugitive seeds connect to colonial histories including in Northern Ireland and more specifically Derry~Londonderry and its port.

The works included help unearth layered histories around plant and human migration and border ecologies. The exhibition and related events reflect on how histories of botanical, zoological and ethno-anthropological explorations have contributed to producing the Other, and the exoticization of certain species and peoples. They consider changing ecologies and (national) identities through stories of belonging, displacement and uprootedness and investigate the feeling of loss when thinking about the connections with far-away lands that might hold clues for one's identity.

Seeds hold political, geographic and cultural histories. They are packages of genetic information, carriers of stories, and cultural archives of the relationships between plants and humans through the continual act of cultivation. Seeds are also fugitive. They have an innate feral talent for resistance, adaptation and survival. They are designed to move, escape and find their own way. Fred Moten writes about fugitivity, especially in relation to blackness as a refusal of standards imposed from elsewhere. In Stolen Life (2018), he writes, “Fugitivity, then, is a desire for and a spirit of escape and transgression of the proper and the proposed. It’s a desire for the outside, for a playing or being outside, an outlaw edge proper to the now always improper voice or instrument."[1] How do seeds and people carry this potential of fugitivity through generations?

Seeds travel, fly and float. They circulate by being sold, traded, bartered, donated and gifted. They get stuck in the cargo or the ballast of ships, in the fur and hooves of animals and shoes of people:

“They end up in any number of places and re-acclimate to any number of new environmental demands. Maybe they get renamed. Maybe they settle back to some wild, ancestral state. Maybe they evolve, through human and nonhuman forces into some new variety with some new story. They cannot be controlled as artefacts in a museum or entries in a vault. They will always slip through the cracks. They will always move. […] This material question of ecological fugitivity lies at the break between the infusion of cultural relevance and the life of the seed itself, the gap between historical archive and historical actor. Seeds compel us to rethink the lives and afterlives of plantation worlds; they give us strategies for evading, escaping, and disrupting any global-cene."[2]

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1 - Fred Moten’s Radical Critique of the Present, By David S. Wallace, The New Yorker, 30 April 2018

2-Fugitive Seeds by Christian Brooks Keeve, Edge Effects, 25 February, 2020

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