

Sara Angelucci *Nocturnal Botanical*

Opening Reception: Saturday, May 4, 2-5pm

Guided Tour of the Exhibition with Sara Angelucci: Saturday, May 4, 3pm

Exhibition Dates: May 4 – June 15, 2024

Stephen Bulger Gallery is pleased to present *Nocturnal Botanical*, our third solo exhibition of work by Sara Angelucci. The exhibition brings together two ongoing companion bodies of work, *Nocturnal Botanical Ontario* and *Bella di Notte*, for the first time.

Angelucci began creating botanical images in 2018 working with a scanner, in situ at night. The series began accidentally, as she retreated to the solace of her small city garden to process the deep grief of losing her sister. Working in solitude, she began to notice the smallest things—the obedient plants’ movable petals, the wild bellflower, and a single columbine growing beneath the peony bush. Reveling in this micro-world, it occurred to her that even grief offered gifts. Reading about the decline, and imminent extinction of species across the planet, her need to mourn expanded beyond her personal circle. During the pandemic Angelucci began to work in fields and forests near her cottage in the Pretty River Valley, Ontario, immersing herself in the natural world. She continues this endeavour expanding her botanical explorations to ponds, and river shores and exploring plant life in the changing seasons.

In *Nocturnal Botanical* the plants break the edges of the frame in unruly compositions defying the order placed on them by taxonomical method. Here they declare a life and agency of their own, and offer much to share. Angelucci creates these images at night, a time when nocturnal creatures emerge, and the darkness heightens her perceptions. Glowing beneath the scanner’s beam, the plants reveal their wondrous forms, and insects are vividly present. Attracted by Angelucci’s presence and the scanner’s light, insects often land on or flutter around the scanner bed, actively engaging in the creation of the compositions. These detailed ecologies invite us to consider what grows on the land, how it got there, and to reflect upon the current challenges it faces.

For the series *Bella di Notte* Angelucci took her botanical studies to her familial roots in the village of Montottone, in Le Marche, Italy. To create this work, she traveled the village roads her great-grandmother walked, explored the field that housed her family’s mill, and visited local farms and forests as a daughter of Italian immigrants, she considers the connection between plant migration and immigration.

Developed over the past six years the works featured in *Nocturnal Botanical* have grown to embrace what it means to mourn that which is disappearing, but also to celebrate that which endures. Grounding her work in acts of empathy and embodiment, Angelucci seeks creative strategies of connection as a way forward. Considering the origin of the plants, one can discern the entangled colonial histories, as well as the ongoing commercial interests, embedded within the land. Using high-resolution imaging tools and looking closely raises difficult questions: To whom does the land really belong? How can we protect it? And how did these plants come to be entwined?

Sara Angelucci is a multi-disciplinary artist, who has been exhibiting her work nationally and internationally for the past twenty-five years. She also works as an Adjunct Professor in Photography at the School of Image Arts, Toronto Metropolitan University. She has received grants from the Canada Council for the Arts, Ontario Arts Council, and the Toronto Arts Council, and has been awarded the Chalmers Fellowship, and the award for best exhibition design by the Ontario Association of Art Galleries with Art Gallery of York University. Her work is included in public collections such as the McMaster Museum of Art, Hamilton; Art Gallery of Hamilton, Hamilton; National Portrait Gallery, Ottawa; Museum of History, Ottawa; and Global Affairs Canada, Ottawa.