

suggest the buoyancy and ascendance of hope, the mind and imagination. Kay plays with the tension of being pulled up and hanging down, being controlled and controlling, being animated in life or facing death.

With music from Knxwledge, Kay's mechanical movements also become hip hop, one of the most globally celebrated contributions of African-American dance, music and style. In response to Kay's work, photographer and poet Sean D. Henry-Smith writes about the joy he felt when, as a teenager, he and his sisters cleared the couch and coffee table out of the way to crank the stereo and dance. Henry-Smith's writing celebrates the music and dance of black culture and assigns it a fond place, associated with home and his youth. Movement and music become freeing and healing elements, as remembered by Henry-Smith and enacted by Kay.

With its history of supporting HIV/AIDS patients, sex workers, victims of substance abuse, youth, immigrants and women's reproductive rights, Judson Memorial Church has a long commitment to political activism and community support. Additionally, the church has hosted multi-disciplinary arts programming, most famously with the Judson Dance Theater (1960–64), which featured collaborations with Merce Cunningham, Yvonne Rainer, Robert Rauschenberg and Robert Morris—all of whom are white. As a trans black body dancing, Kay continues Judson's history and carves a new future that celebrates the hybridity of gender, race and the arts.

As the curators poignantly explain, "these pieces don't let us forget what came before us, what exists without us, and what will come after us. What these works show us is not an alternative to time. We're not waiting. Something else is at work. *Deep-Time Construction* grapples with what situates us in time, how we come to embody its cadence, and yet transforms this experience into one that is felt out of synch and at another register."¹

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Lorna Bauer:
The Hand of Mee
Franz Kaka, Toronto
May 4 – May 26, 2018
by *Barbora Racevičiūtė*

Coming out of the unseasonably stark heat of a May afternoon, and into the basement space that is Franz Kaka, the languid warmth of Lorna Bauer's work is pleasant. It instantly brings to mind Deborah Levy's *Hot Milk* (2016), a novel set in coastal Spain: namely, the dense sweet air, lazy sea breeze and deep late-afternoon light that make up the atmosphere of the novel. The reference in *The Hand of Mee* is not Spain, however, but Brazil. The exhibition comes out of the time Bauer spent at Sítio Roberto Burle Marx, the 40.7-acre estate of renowned Modernist landscape architect Roberto Burle Marx, during an artist residency in Rio de Janeiro. Burle Marx's expansive garden designs can broadly be characterized by bold geometries, striking colour combinations and a commitment to local flora. Taking multiple trips, Bauer photographed his home and garden, chapel, library, studios and shade houses; the resulting works weave multiple narratives of observation, documentation and labour.

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Prefiguring the main gallery, the viewer is greeted by *Cadmium Abode* (2018), two sizeable, overlapping, mandarin red glass panels delicately poised on a walnut shelf. Textured like a tiled terracotta roof and resting at eye level, they evoke a window or awning, and act as a threshold for the exhibition. In the main gallery, two black-and-white photographs tower above and frame the central installation. These sparse, semi-abstract close-ups of various houses depict leaves, twigs and plant shadows, producing a grounded and contemplative atmosphere. Three semi-opaque watering-can-shaped vases—in a blurring of pear, soft plum and lime—activate the space distinctly as a garden, while their lustrous surfaces provide a visual link to the sculptures in the centre of the room. On a square pedestal less than a foot off the ground, and amongst a number of small glass and crystal pieces and pebbles, lie five azure glass hands encased in shining chain-mail gloves.

These swollen, armoured glass hands are compelling. One needs to crouch, settle and then shuffle around in order to take in the intricacy of each one. It takes time to grasp their shifting shades of azure; their simultaneously soft and stiff appearance; the interplay between the smooth and knitted textures of the glass and stainless steel; and to understand their density in relation to the works peppered between them. Then, it is necessary to rise again, to apprehend the entirety of *The Hand of Mee and the Moonflower* (2018). Despite their clear weight, the hands appear to be almost hovering off the uneven surface on which they rest. Like blooming flowers, they unfold slowly as one watches them. Their complexity is a testament to the feat of their making; it is extremely difficult to successfully blow glass into metal. In speaking to me about the production process, Bauer emphasized the role of Pavel Cajthaml, a master glassblower whose technical skill and attention to the artist's conceptual intention were critical in the execution of the sculptures. Their making was characterized by experimentation, failure, repetition and, above all, perseverance; it is the latter that concretizes the relationship of these hands to their namesake, Margaret Mee.

A British Modernist visual artist known for her intricate botanical drawings of plant species found

in the Amazon forest, Mee was a close friend of Burle Marx's; both cared deeply for vegetation and its preservation. The vivacity of Mee's works is inextricable from her process; she conducted a series of expeditions into the forest, holding that depicting plants in their natural habitat was central to capturing them successfully. Hearing Bauer tell the story of Mee's work—of her dedication, resilience and perseverance in tracking down elusive plant species and drawing them in situ—asserts the value of documentary and material labour for artistic production. Mee, Burle Marx and Bauer are all connected in that processes of making and tending-to are central to their craft. Many hands are necessary to take on the laboriousness of in situ botanical drawing, of planting and caring for vegetation, of creating glass works.

It is no small achievement to be able to convey the concreteness of labour with such beautiful objects. At a time when art can very much be complicit in obscuring the material conditions of labour, and when viewership is too often driven to stop right at the surface of things, I uneasily yield to works whose surfaces are slick and enticing, the placement of which is tidy and spacious, the experience of which is immediately pleasant. However, in mimetically manifesting a garden, *The Hand of Mee* circumvents passive, hollow ways of looking. The exhibition demands a physically present viewership and, in doing so, insists that we think about the hands required to make and preserve the things with which we are engaging.

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Lorna Bauer, *The Hand of Mee and the Moonflower*, 2018, handblown sea green glass in stainless-steel mesh butcher gloves, cast glass, quartz crystal balls on plaster base, 25.4 cm x 121.9 cm x 137.2 cm
PHOTO: LAURA FINDLAY; IMAGE COURTESY OF THE ARTIST AND FRANZ KAKA, TORONTO

