

Eyes of Plants

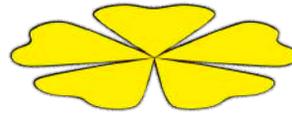
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& Marco Godoy

for Studio
Vegetalista



design Futuro.Studio

The day I began to write this text was the day my altar burned down. Of all of my objects, the only one that burned was the foldable altar my grandmother had given me, one of the first yoga teachers in Chile. This old cardboard altar had represented my most intimate feeling of home during the last five years. The gift of this altar coincided with the time when a plant spoke to me. And this re-structured my life.



Since then, I call myself *Eyes of Plants*. I was initiated in a forest in Amatlan. Two vibrating electric green plant eyes came to me and settled on my own eyes while I was sitting between the roots of an Amate. They remained forever permeated in my digital form. A plant told me: *love your husband*. This plant also told me I was called *Eyes of Plants*.

I am an ambassador to plants in this world, which is why I have green eyes. Now I understand this. These eyes which have opened new paths and have obtained many things for me throughout my life. I vibrate and exude green, I perspire green and smell of plant. Each day, a different one.

**MY DIGITAL FORM.
MY HOLOGRAM.
YOUR HOLOGRAM.
YOUR PLANT EXPANDED
IN MY DIGITAL FORM.**

Plants see through me. They run through me and shape me. They compose my body and my digital hologram. They have a double beauty: for what they show and for what they hide. They have a gesture, a signature. They guide me. They're my cardinal points. They bring me my sustenance, mutating into money, as the ancestral forests of Chile have mutated into industrial plantations. Paper money made from trees planted in straight lines. I want to be a plant amplifier, where they can establish their language, speaking through me.



To have plants as a symbolic language implies a paradigm change, it alters the idiosyncrasy and radically reviews all hierarchies. It's a vision from which one can establish a perspective, a vanishing point in collaboration with other species. It has to do with our own specific input channels. My portal are roses. Your portal are rose thorns transformed into metal fences.



Coca-Cola opens my channel; after all, it's an ancient potion of medicinal herbs. With gas. Cold. It enters my body and turns me on, like you. Channels have to do with information and the understanding of this information, as my friend Jorge explained to me.

Shamans are marked by an extraordinary event, many times symbolized by a thunderbolt that strikes near or around them. But times have changed and, with them, symbols as well. Jorge was robbed last month while he was taking a stroll with his wife, and a bullet grazed his head. This bullet has identified him as a shaman.

Touched by a thunderbolt, grazed by a bullet. He wrote to me from the hospital to tell me how this extraordinary event had marked him.



He was excited and shaken. His symbolic language is the wind, flight, breath. Mine is

plants and animals and celestial bodies and stones. In all of their versions. Holographic, in code, physical, botanical. They signify a connection with what is invisible, with new ways of coexisting, of understanding. Just like the thunderbolt delivers information to the shaman from the celestial bodies, one can download information from the cloud. The next connection system. Post usb. Post normal person.

LAST NIGHT YOU TALKED IN YOUR SLEEP AGAIN, THOSE WORDS THAT COME FORTH HALF ASLEEP AND SENSELESS. BUT THIS TIME YOU TOLD ME YOU ADMIRE ME BECAUSE I CAN COMMUNICATE WITH ELEMENTS THAT CAN'T EVEN SPEAK.

WITH HORSES AND PLANTS

There are still no words to define the work potential that is available in collaboration with the plant elementals. We are building this language.

Plants have access to a knowledge which is not accessible through science, because our rational eyes cannot see it yet. Their language is non-verbal.

It's the path which is opened by intuition, by persons who have been able to access a part of this information, establishing specific practices with some



plants; healers, guides, herbal doctors, machis, shamans, medicine men.

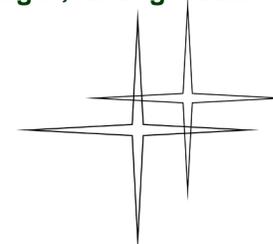
There's another knowledge one can arrive to through plants, through their morphology, through their energy. And I want to see it.

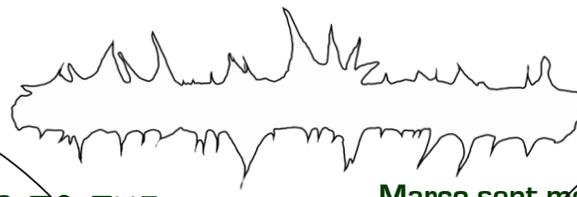
I WOULD LIKE TO ROLL ON THE GROUND WITH YOU LIKE A HELIX. ASCENSION RITUAL. RISING CONNECTED TO THE SAME STEM.

How can one learn to command this knowledge? The guides say that we are generally passive, that we have to learn how to request, how to order, to command the energy so that we receive the messages. All the information is available. We have to learn how to hack what is invisible, to bring it down to the material dimension.

The messages are diluted and we must learn how to command this energy with authority. I assisted a workshop on how to structure altars and prayers from the Andean cosmic worldview. I learned to structure altars and I learned that one must decorate the gods.

The more the decorations, the more the care, the more the flowers, the fruits, the greater is the altar's strength, the greater the planetary prayer.





THIS STRENGTH IS SIMILAR TO THE PLANTS' PHOTOSYNTHESIS PROCESS.

THE PLANT NEEDS LIGHT TO PRODUCE O2. ITS QUALITY DEPENDS ON THE QUALITY OF THE LIGHT IT RECEIVES DURING THIS TRANSFORMATION.

THE STRENGTH WITH WHICH ONE PRAYS AT AN ALTAR IS ANALOGOUS TO THE STRENGTH OF THE LIGHT WHICH FALLS ON A PLANT.

THE OUTPUT DEPENDS ON THIS STRENGTH. THE PRAYER OR THE LIGHT MIGHT NOT ALWAYS BE STRONG

Maybe the word altar is overcharged and therefore worn out. But the altar itself condenses and generates new organizations. Our images are a part of these altars. Perhaps it is easier if we talk about constructions, spaces where we can establish bridges between different kinds of knowledge which have different formats. The altar works as an intermediate platform. It's a portal. A vortex. It's the point of contact. Talking about what is invisible,



Marco sent me this mail the other day. He can see through the fences that separate skins, houses, streets.
01/27/2018

'It's early morning, I have just had breakfast and am now wide awake, taking advantage of that cozy silence which working at nighttime bestows upon us.

I am trying to understand what kind of knowledge is present when one works in materializing objects, some of the intuitions which would not be the same if we try to express them in words.

From the artistic sphere, we attempt to approach things that are around us but that remain semi-invisible. There is something in the need of seeing, materializing in order to see in a better light, working towards clarity.

This exercise turns into the worship of an imprecise knowledge, still undefined, and constantly fighting in order to become tangible. Searching for words that don't exist, pending images and life forms which allow us to be here, present. So this unveiling has to do with learning how to live.

To do it through things that must still be given meaning, words without language. In the artistic sphere, there are more possibilities than words. To do this has a certain magical something, shamanic even.

Whether they be your altars or my sculptures, all these constructions condense a lot more than what they show. It's a knowledge that comes from emotional nature, from closeness, a knowledge of contact which must be materialized in





something that we wouldn't see in any other way. And among so many social expectations, we find ourselves pointing to symbolic remains which we believe we must pay attention to. It's funny, because the greater the pressure to face reality from the logical viewpoint, the greater is our need to seek the 'present' with all the intuitions which we must claim as real.'

I find myself sitting in a conference about the idea of 'Future'. In her presentation, Chus Martinez asks a good question which could be resumed in something like: 'What exactly is the knowledge of the mystic women of the '70 and of shamanism which we haven't been able to put into non-cheesy words, in the context of a contemporary conversation?'

I also spend sleepless nights thinking about how to create a vocabulary, an understandable cosmology for Western Cultures, which comes from the herbal doctors' wisdom and all of their genealogy, attempting to transcend clichés and actually finding new concepts. But there still is no occidental language to speak about this without white turban stereotypes appearing out of nowhere, polished pink stones or beautiful women doing #yoga on the social media. The images of neoshamanism repeat themselves.

My botanical viewpoint educated in the occidental fashion always stumbled upon the same limitations, intellectual walls when observing a plant. To speak three-dimensionally with an Amazonian plant helped me to remove these convictions about conventional botany, just in a few hours. An inter-species communication which has opened infinite possibilities of disruption. Since then, my ideas no longer have the same order.

As I learned to illustrate plants in the traditional occidental viewpoint of botany, I ignored other narratives, also botanical, which now have turned into knowledge-producing micro-centers and not just peripheries of formal information. Centers full of meaning and generators of cosmologies, of new ways of coexistence. After looking so hard, my gaze has defocussed, not in an attempt to access invented exoticisms but to pursue a real understanding of what a plant is and what are its possibilities. I could consider my position as *Eyes of Plants* a certainly advantageous position because I can exist between different narratives.





I am a unit that can withstand confrontations, ambiguities and certainly oppositions. How do these different narratives converse with each other about a living entity who is autonomous and who does not exist neither for nor because of us?

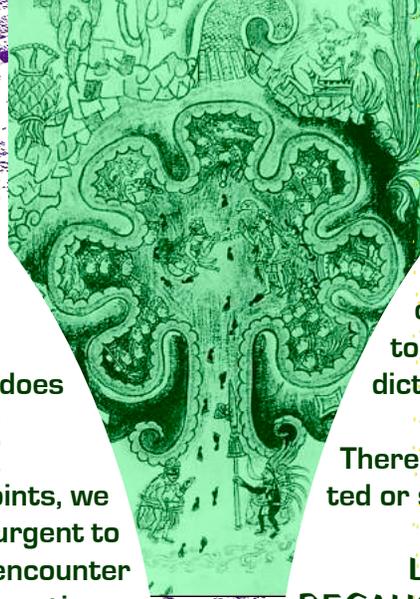
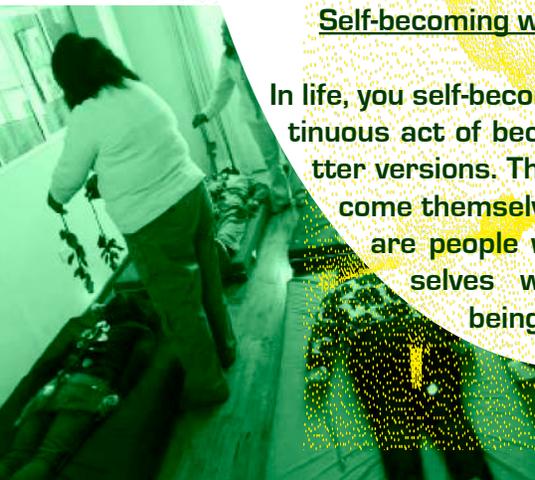
From almost all of the world's geographic points, we look at them through our words. It becomes urgent to generate the necessary platforms for us to encounter each other in the fields of non-language, of perception.

I WANT YOU TO DECORATE ME WITH PLANTS.

I was born in the south, I lived in the other north, I travel to the other south. I went to live once again in my south. The language of plants is superior to the language of the nation-states. Plants are joined by the root, with hidden bonds. History is a sediment of discourses, words which already were conditioned. In this process, my links with the vegetal realm have become more sophisticated, starting from a relationship of blind-love to one of respect-vertigo, in which I no longer know what or who is looking back or perceiving me.

Self-becoming with what is non-human.

In life, you self-become yourself. We are a continuous act of becoming our, hopefully, better versions. There are people who become themselves with plants, there are people who become themselves with non-human beings.



Others become themselves through symbols, through gods. But: What is the act of self-becoming? To become through something, to become in alliance with something. The dictionary says to come about.

There is something special about being represented or self-becoming with natural beings.

LET'S GO BACK TO THE CELLS, BECAUSE 'SYMBIOSIS' IS THE ABILITY OF DIFFERENT ORGANISMS TO LIVE TOGETHER AND SHARE ROLES. ITS ETYMOLOGY LITERALLY COMES FROM 'LIVING' AND 'TOGETHER'.

WHILE WE COMMUNICATE, INSIDE OF US THERE ARE ORGANISMS ELABORATING WAYS OF SELF-BECOMING TOGETHER.

There are people who have been able to experience closely the knowledge regarding what is living, like Maria Sabina, magic mushroom priestess and interpreter of the infinite, 'Our lady of the Iguanas', Luis de la Fuente who heals grazing roses on the patients' bodies lying on the floor.

These types of knowledge coexist and are all around us. They're other structures of time and of the value of things. I want to draw near.

I have traversed the underground caves of the earth, the heart of the stars, the crystalline center of the earth and the remote places of South America searching for images of the ethno-botanical relationship of humans,





people self-becoming with plants. I exist as I search for images of the guardians of the messages of plants. Where are the traditions in which a plant can be the activating helix of the world for an individual? I want to see, to be able to 'see', the energetic exchange of both of these living beings. If we could only 'view' these energies that are around us but cannot see.



I COULD SEE THEM,
 THAT DAY IN WHICH THE MOTHER PLANT SPOKE TO ME FOR THE FIRST TIME, DURING THAT EXPERIENCE IN WHICH I WAS ALLOWED TO SEE AS A PLANT. HOW COULD I FORGET? I LEFT THE PERUVIAN CEREMONY AT 5 AM AND GOT ON THE SUBWAY TO GO BACK HOME. AND I SAW THE PEOPLE SHINING. EACH ONE SHINED IN A DIFFERENT COLOR. YOUR LIGHT IS ORANGE AND YELLOW. I SHINE GREEN.

YOU SHINE IN THE 7 RAYS OF THE RAINBOW. THESE VISIONS LASTED FOR A STRETCH OF TIME WHICH SOMEHOW BECAME ELASTIC, AND THEN THEY DISAPPEARED. THE CHALLENGE LIES IN BEING ABLE TO BREAK THROUGH THIS PORTAL OF PERCEPTION, IN FACILITATING THESE PLATFORMS WHERE WHAT IS INVISIBLE, THE KNOWLEDGE, THE INTUITIONS, ARRIVE. THEY ARRIVE IN ORDER TO SEE IN DIFFERENT WAYS, WITH AN AMPLIFIED PERCEPTION.

A PERCEPTION THAT ACTIVATES ALL THE PARTS OF MY BRAIN.

ACTIVATION,
 NOW!

YOUR LEGS ARE MY HOROSCOPE

I think how the figure of an herbal doctor and a CEO are united by the Coca leaf, *Erythroxylum coca*. The herbal doctor knows the medicinal plants, respects the forest, activates the plants and blows his prayer with three Coca leaves. Meanwhile, the CEO applies a different logic and manages the earth, the water, and the forests which are altered at a large scale in order to exploit their resources. Sitting at his global office, he consumes cocaine to continue working without getting tired. Pulling all-nighters. From his global office, he commands the natural resources.

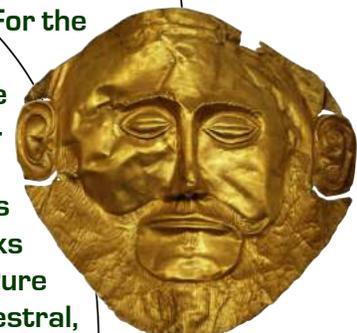
Both figures revolve around the same leaf, collaborate with the same plant. What changes is the intention behind that revolving movement. After all, the Coca leaf moves the world, physically and emotionally, from the sacred realm of the herbal doctor to the opposite pole, transformed into the drug of choice of the occidental northern hemisphere. Its original use is to create a connection with the earth, while the consumption of cocaine shifts empathy and make individuals more individualistic. Less connected, efficient as machines. Zeros and ones, moving the earth and its resources here and there.

And close to these financial temples, there are Spas and healing places for the working bodies that do the extra hours. In the Spa, the office workers are kings. They ask for fresh plants, smoothies and wheatgrass drinks for their dry bodies. For their digital forms. Their avatars. To moisten their eyes, irritated by the computer screens. They have 'crazy eyes'. What kind of ancestral knowledge is coming out of all of this? Is it a shamanism with a new depth? Images come to mind of new masks for plastic shamans with leaf eyes. Alienated eyes. Do we have to corporatize its language to make it understandable to Occident? User-friendly? For the client?

In these spaces of corporate relaxation, the warrior masks are transformed into cosmetic ones.

These cosmetic masks have colonized rituals to substitute them for different ones. Masks without myths, without cosmic worldviews. Pure decorative surfaces. Their shapes are ancestral, they remind me of the mask of Agamemnon or the plant mask of Pakal, who presented himself to the underworld with a green jade mask, to come out transformed into a Plant God. He also must have been an *Eyes of Plants*.

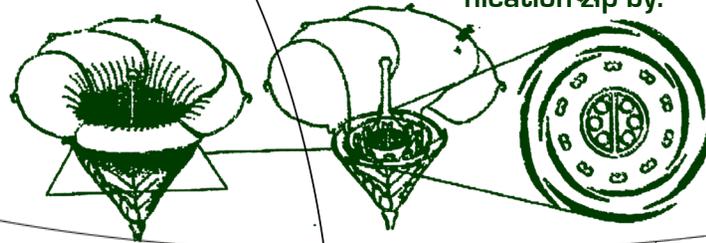
YOUR SOUTH AMERICAN MEDICINAL PLANTS ARE MY GREEK MYTHS.





I dream of Korean masks, green eyes and dry laurel leaves. A new myth, a myth of mass-produced masks. A myth of irritated eyes. Masks that touch and hydrate my skin by their contact. My Excels begin to hurt.

nels where sap flows through, where blood is being pumped and now where communication silently swims under the sea. Their locations are a secret, and they must be protected because, through these channels, millions of stock exchange transactions, virtual money and communication zip by.



THE OSMOSIS IS ACTIVATED WITH THE FIRE OF YOUR HAND ON MY PLANT SKIN. IT RUNS THROUGH THE SKIN BY ITS CONTACT. IT RUNS THROUGH THE TISSUE OF ALL OUR SACRED RELATIONSHIPS

If these cables are cut, the whole economy might collapse. And in the cross section of a cable, which has unconsciously copied the stem's efficiency, many images are united. The herbal doctor and the CEO, the stem and the stock market. They are all connected by the same plants, teaching them, guiding them.

There are certain analogies hidden in the shapes of plants. Shapes communicate with each other: a cross section of a stem is very similar to a dissection of a human vein. The images of these shapes have replicated themselves, echoing each other. Internet also moves around confined in a stem. Communication between continents is done with great optical fiber cables. Between Europe and North America, there's one. Between the southern and northern hemisphere there's another.

THERE ARE MESSAGES LITERALLY RUNNING THROUGH THE EARTH. PLANTS ARE CAPABLE OF COMMUNICATING WITH EACH OTHER THROUGH THEIR INTERTWINING ROOTS, TRANSFERRING NUTRIENTS AND WARNING ONE ANOTHER IF THERE'S A FIRE ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE FOREST.



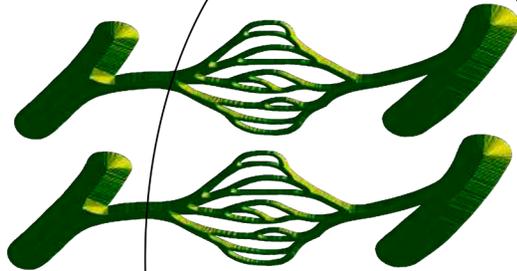
Its cross section replicates the chan-

I would like to have stereoscopic vision to be able to 'see' the stems which contain all of this communication. The meta-stems. Observe all the things that are connected. See several images at once in one complete and focused picture.



I CONNECT MY ENERGY WITH THE CENTER OF THE EARTH. I GREET ITS GUARDIANS. I AM EYES OF PLANTS. I ALSO GREET THE GUARDIANS OF THE TERRITORIES WHERE YOU FIND YOURSELF, READING THIS TEXT.

I HEAR THE VEINS UNDER THIS TERRITORY, VIBRATING, CARRYING THE SAP THAT SHAPES US. THE INFORMATION FLOWS HIDDEN, UNSEEN, BETWEEN UNREGULATED WISDOM AND LANGUAGES STILL DEPRIVED OF WORDS.



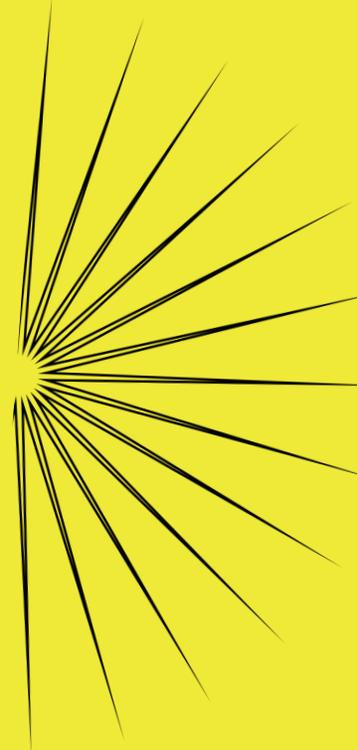
WE SHALL ALWAYS BE YOU, ME AND THE PLANTS

This text was written in collaboration by the artists Patricia Dominguez and Marco Godoy for Studio Vegetalista.

Studio Vegetalista is a platform for producing experimental ethno-botanical knowledge and research through interdisciplinary practice combining art, ethno-botany, and non-academic shamanistic cosmologies.

Over the years, Studio Vegetalista has developed a School, as well as publications and experimental essays on the current relationship between humans and plants.

Translated by Nahual Lhorente and designed by Futuro. Studio (Madrid).





GLOSSARY EYES OF PLANTS

Leaf 2

Eyes of Plant initiation under an Amate Tree, Amatlán de Quetzalcóatl. Photo credit: Guadalupe Maravilla. México, 2017.

Leaf 4

The Isle of Dogs (detail of installation). Materials: pink shirt, pineapple leaves, cotorra argentina feather and painted led screen. Patricia Domínguez, 2018.

Leaf 7

Detail of rose's spines.

Leaf 8

Shrine arrangement based on the Andean Cosmology. Patricia Domínguez, 2018.

Leaf 9

Eye shield motif at a vase from the Greek's Early Classical period. National Archaeological Museum. Athens.

Leaf 10

Votive offering - ex voto. México.

Leaf 11

Top: Painting that illustrates a cave in the shape of a flower. Historia Tolteca Chichimeca Manuscript, 16th-Century.
Bottom: Luis de la Fuente students healing with roses. Arequipa, 2017.

Leaf 12

Nuestra señora de las Iguanas. Graciela Iturbide, 1979.

Leaf 13

Top: Graphics of a magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) of a brain under the effect of LSD in which diverse areas of the brain are connected simultaneously.
Bottom: María Sabina. Mazatec curandera, 1894 -1985.

Leaf 14

Left: Traditional coca leaves prayer, coca leaves with processed cocaine, 3D render of coca leaves with prescribed pills.
Bottom: Still from The color of Pomegranates. Sergei Parajanov, 1969.



Leaf 15

K'inich Janaab Pakal, jade funeral mask. Palenque, México, 603 - 683 A.D.
Agamemnon mask, gold funeral mask, Mycenae, Greece. National Archaeological Museum of Athens, 1550-1500 B.C.
Faith in Face, Cosmetic mask with fake gold dust, 2018.

Leaf 16

'Yerbateros - CEOS' by Patricia Domínguez. Shirts on painted terracotta vases made in Pomaire, Chile. 80 cm each, 2018.

Leaf 18

Infographic of the connection of veins.
Hands holding a section of the mega internet cable that crosses underneath the sea between UK and the US.