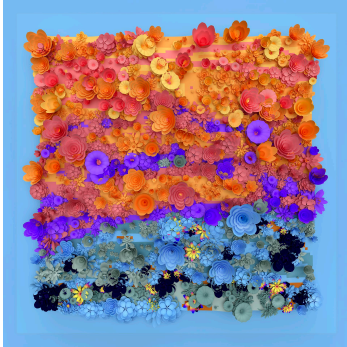


ALEX McLEOD: NECROFLORA

April 9 — May 8, 2021



"Sunset Garden II",
digitally rendered archival inkjet print,
30 x 30 inches,
edition of 3.

Alex McLeod's exhibition of new work, *Necroflora*, at Gallery Jones, shows us what it means to be concerned with simulation and the transition of matter. Those two things themselves, an approximation of experience and inevitable change, are almost opposed. "Almost" because instinctively it's tempting to think about simulated experience as "unreal" and change or transition as a foundation of our temporal world, the one real and reliable thing, but as McLeod shows us, there are new meanings to be built.

Necroflora dips into our collective subconscious to reshuffle how we relate to the natural world through art. There is a long history of humankind using representations of the landscape, flora and fauna to understand, organize and process the experience of what it means to place ourselves in the physical world. In an essential way, McLeod's work continues the satisfaction of this impulse: it serves as a portal to a place we don't have access to and is grounded in imagery of the physical world and the idiom of landscape and still-life art. "Sunset Garden II" is an example of this. The flowers have a familiar shape, the colour flows along understood divisions of light above dark, and shadows are speckled across the ground where the sunlight is no longer reaching.

How "Sunset Garden II", and the rest of the work in *Necroflora*, is redefining our relationship with the natural world makes room for new experiences. Through a combination of familiar organic elements (flower petals, tree branches) and the blurring of the distinction between those elements and their virtual avatars, McLeod is interacting with the history of representation through a thoroughly contemporary lens. Our slow embrace of simulated experience as its own reality is not without precedent in history. McLeod is nudging us along in much the same way story-tellers and visual explorers have done before, by giving us comforting way-finders. Picking up these familiar breadcrumbs, we find ourselves led into a place we did not previously have access to. McLeod has done something both traditional and revolutionary to get us there: his works are not a simulacrum of still-lives or landscapes, but instead a new means of expression, and therefore a new way of relating to the world.

Alex McLeod graduated from the Ontario College of Art and the Yeates School of Graduate Studies at Ryerson University with a Master's of Digital Media. His work has been exhibited internationally and collected by The Whitney Museum of American Art (New York), Museum of Contemporary Art (Toronto), Global Affairs Canada, the Royal Bank of Canada, TD Bank, among others.