

## Fundación Miró, Barcelona // Beehave exhibition

15.2.-17.5.2018

### Homage to Pomona\*

by Melliferopolis (Christina Stadlbauer & Ulla Taipale)

Now!

The vanishing pollinators force us, humans, to hand-pollinate the last remaining flowering crops. Almonds are blossoming and must be pollinated – they are priceless!

Wearing gloves and using brushes we follow the age-old rituals of insects, while remembering the delicious taste of fresh cherries...

*\*In ancient Roman mythology, Pomona is the goddess of flourishing fruit trees and abundant orchards. Pomonas españolas are precise copies of local fruits, modeled for scientific research during XVIII and XIX centuries.*



*Pomonas españolas / Collection of Botanic Institut of Barcelona, foto: Ulla Taipale*

Background information:

**It is estimated that around 3/4 of the production of the edible fruits and vegetables of the world are in danger of extinction, because of the loss of the pollinating insects. In some parts of China, the use of human labor to guarantee the pollinating of the fruit trees is already a common practice. *Homage to Pomona* is a still-life installation that comments on the imminent situation caused by the decline of pollinators.**

**The installation is composed by a selection of *pomonas*\* from Instituto Botánico de Barcelona, as samples of insect pollinated fruits and vegetables from the past, and by a composition of objects symbolising hand-pollination of almonds. The composition consists of three real almonds under a vitrine, a branch of a flowering almond tree, and a pair of gloves with embroidered dead bees together with a special brush for hand-pollinating to continue the pollination ritual by hand.**

\*Pomology is a field of horticulture, dedicated in the study of edible fruits. In the 18th century fruits were modelled for scientific end. This was a practice that has its origin in the antique oriental and occidental cultures as religious offerings. The European aristocracy reproduced continental and exotic fruits of beeswax, terracotta, porcelain, paper maché, and marble, among others, to decorate their banquets. Later on, in the middle of the century, the increase of the population and famine, the interest for ornamental horticulture changed to a commercial one.

*Pomonas* are lent for the Beehive exhibition from the Gabinet Salvador, founded in 1626 and displayed for general public until 1855 at Raval district of Barcelona, at a pharmacy shop of the Salvador family. This collection was also the first public museum of Barcelona. *The idea was to get a complete collection reproductions of all the cultivated fruits of Spain, this is why denomination as Pomona Española. In 1856 when Josep Salvador i Soler died, there was more than 400 samples in the collection.*<sup>1</sup> Today, the collection of Gabinete Salvador is taken care by Instituto Botánico de Barcelona. Six species of pomonas are exhibited in vitrine table. The selected fruits are an apple, a pear, five cherries, a peach, an olive and a pumpkin. The pomonas lay on the hand woven linen cloth from early 19th century, together with dry poppies symbolising the eternal sleep of these species.



Opening of Beehive Exhibition and Homage to Pomona, Fundación Miró 15.2.2018 foto: Ulla Taipale

<sup>1</sup>Marta Pérez Azcárate, Olga Muñoz Blasco, Eulàlia Garcia Franquesa, 2016. Conservación-restauración de modelos botánicos de frutas del Gabinete Salvador.