

I will Not Give Names to Trees – A Personal Mythology

Diana Lui

16 February – 14 March 2020

Wei-Ling Gallery



Diana Lui's solo exhibition *'I Will Not Give Names to Trees – A Personal Mythology'* slowly unpacks and reveals her relationship to her own being through the metaphor of nature, tying her historical origin to her metaphysical one. *What is the source of the self?* It is this titular question which has occupied her mind as she continues her introspective interrogation into her identity, examining her life one memory at a time through a combination of photographs, sculptures and drawings.

Trees are where the crux of her self-rediscovery lies. In her photographic archives as well as in boxes around her studio, there are thousands upon thousands of images and organic remnants of plants, forming the source which she has built this collection on. This is particularly salient in relation to her black and white photographic prints which hold such an ethereal yet figurative quality to them. Lui sees herself and her body as a tree; a concept that connects her earlier portraiture to her current subject matter. The idea of the tree as a body is one that has deep ties to her own personal and spiritual relationship to trees – seeing them as guardians who have accompanied her through her transient life. It is a symbol that is both steadfast in its strength, yet ever changing and growing, a body which extends its roots into the nether world and reaches its branches towards the sky.

In conjunction with her photographs, Lui also showcases a series of delicate mini sculptures, made from the remnants of plants which she has been collecting over the past 30 years. Lui remembers almost every story that comes with each specimen collected, each fragment crystallises a memento to the emotion and memory of a certain point in Lui's nomadic life. The sculptures themselves are delicate constructions from these found parts – seeds, flowers, leaves and trees painstakingly combined to produce a new plant, a hybrid that is quite literally a combination of past experiences and decisions given shape and allowed to take root.

More generally, this idea of nature and how it ties into one's being inevitably brings to mind the relationship between man and the world, something which Lui also pays much focus to. Ecology and the environment, she explains, plays a big part in her creative process when considering her identity. Particularly, it is the pillaging of the Earth's natural resources to feed an ever expanding well of human desire, fuelled by the oil of late stage capitalism which Lui finds so abhorrent. From illegal logging to the destruction of indigenous habitats, it betrays a

blatant disregard for the Earth that is the origin of all of humanity. This is especially true when considering her involvement and collaboration with the Orang Asli, who are facing increasing displacement as they lose their lands to activities such as this. It is a culmination of factors, from her upbringing around Orang Asli lands and later her own concerns about nature and the marginalized that have inspired her passion and formed this partnership.

For Lui, it is not simply that the plants and trees in her work are a metaphor for Mother Nature, but rather that it is a reminder that the arrogance of mankind will be its downfall, and that disregard for a planet which has provided us with all that we need is a path that only leads towards self- destruction.

The vines that connect and guide Lui in her journey of the self, betrays a raw and persistent curiosity; a personal journey told through the symbolism of nature. The culmination of this introspection is given root in *'I Will Not Give Names to Trees – A Personal Mythology'*, embracing us in the depth of its mythology and inexorably reminding us of our connection to our first mother: Earth.



As They Approach

Chinese ink on paper

72cm x 102cm

2019



Lying Feet Up Against Him, August 11th 2017

Chinese ink on handmade mulberry paper

215cm x 150cm

2020



Promenade During An Eclipse

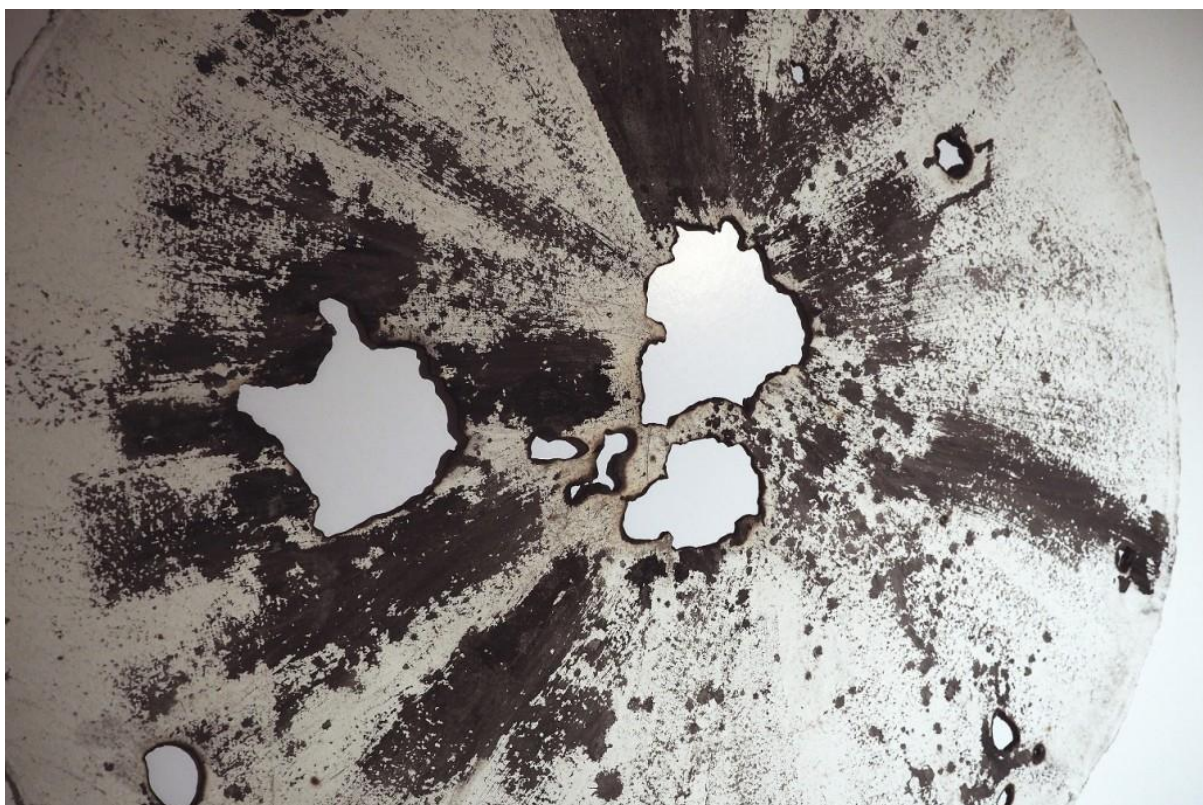
Chinese ink on handmade mulberry paper

215cm x 150cm

2020



Lying Feet Up Against Him, August 11th 2017 and Promenade During An Eclipse
(Installation view)



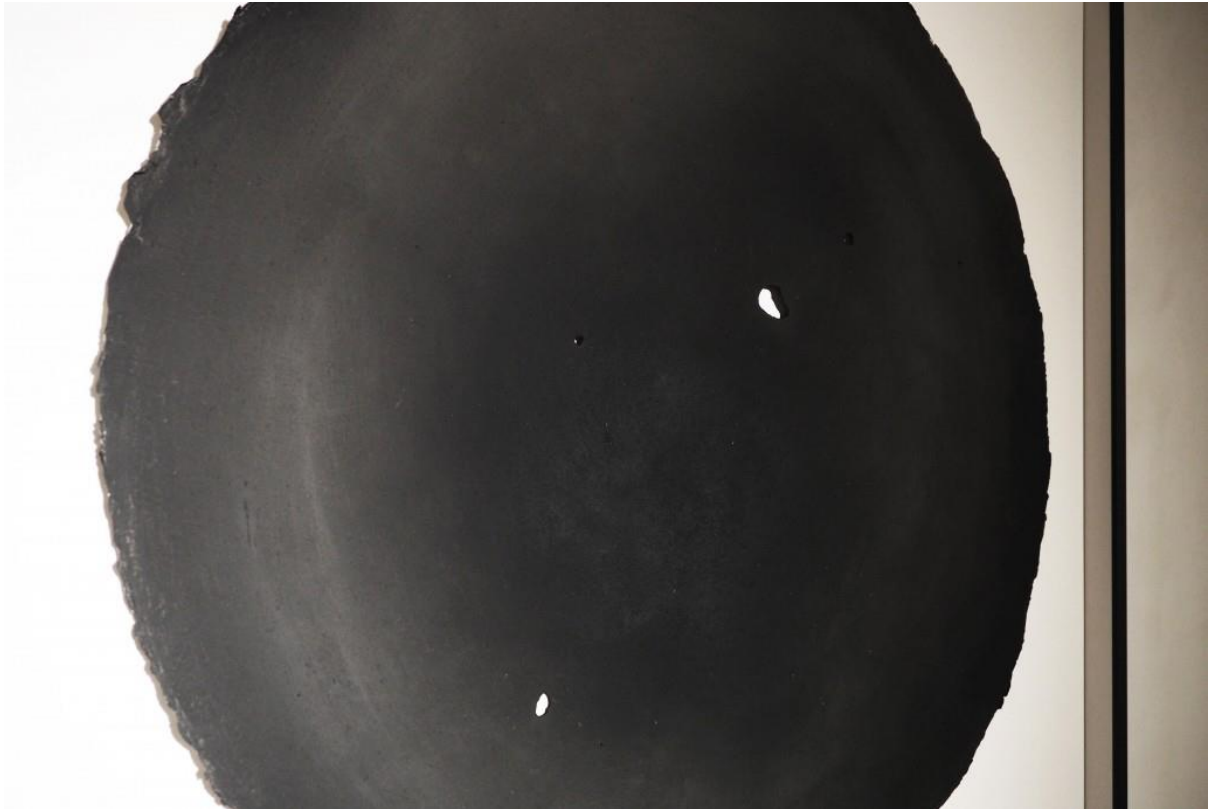
Embers and Ash #01

Wood ash, Chinese ink on handmade recycled cotton rag paper

110cm diameter

2019

(Close up)



Embers and Ash #02

Wood ash, Chinese ink on handmade recycled cotton rag paper

110cm diameter

2019

(Close up)



Embers and Ash #01, #02

Wood ash, Chinese ink on handmade recycled cotton rag paper

110cm diameter

2019



Tree of Young Love, Djurgarden Park, Stockholm, Sweden

Original handprinted silver bromide print, signed and dated on back

Paper size: 99.5cm x 112.5cm; Image size: 91.5cm x 73.3cm

Edition 5/10

2004



Tree of Immortality, in front of a Hindu temple, Kotagede, Yogyakarta, Indonesia

Original handprinted silver bromide print, signed and dated on back

Paper size: 98.9cm x 111.5cm; Image size: 74.2cm x 92.1cm

Edition 2/10

2004



Tree Bent Over, Djurgarden Park, Stockholm, Sweden

Original handprinted silver bromide print, signed and dated on back

Paper size: 112cm x 90cm

Edition 3/10

2004



The Five Sisters, Sisco, Cap Corse, Corsica

Original handprinted silver bromide print, signed and dated on back

Paper size: 98.9cm x 111.7cm; Image size: 74.1cm x 92cm

Edition 1/10

2004



Shanghai Tree, Garden of Hotel Xin Guo, Shanghai, China, 2008

Original handprinted silver bromide print, signed and dated on back

Paper size: 40.5cm x 50.5cm; Image size: 35cm x 45cm

Edition 1/10

2008



Lizard Pond, Rimbun Dahan, Malaysia, 2009

Original handprinted silver bromide print, signed and dated on back

Paper size: 50.6cm x 61.8cm; Image size: 39.9cm x 50.9cm

Edition 1/10

2009



Night Tree, Vondelpark, Amsterdam, Holland, 2007

Original handprinted silver bromide print, signed and dated on back

Paper size: 103.5cm x 120cm; Image size: 96cm x 118cm

Edition 1/10

2008



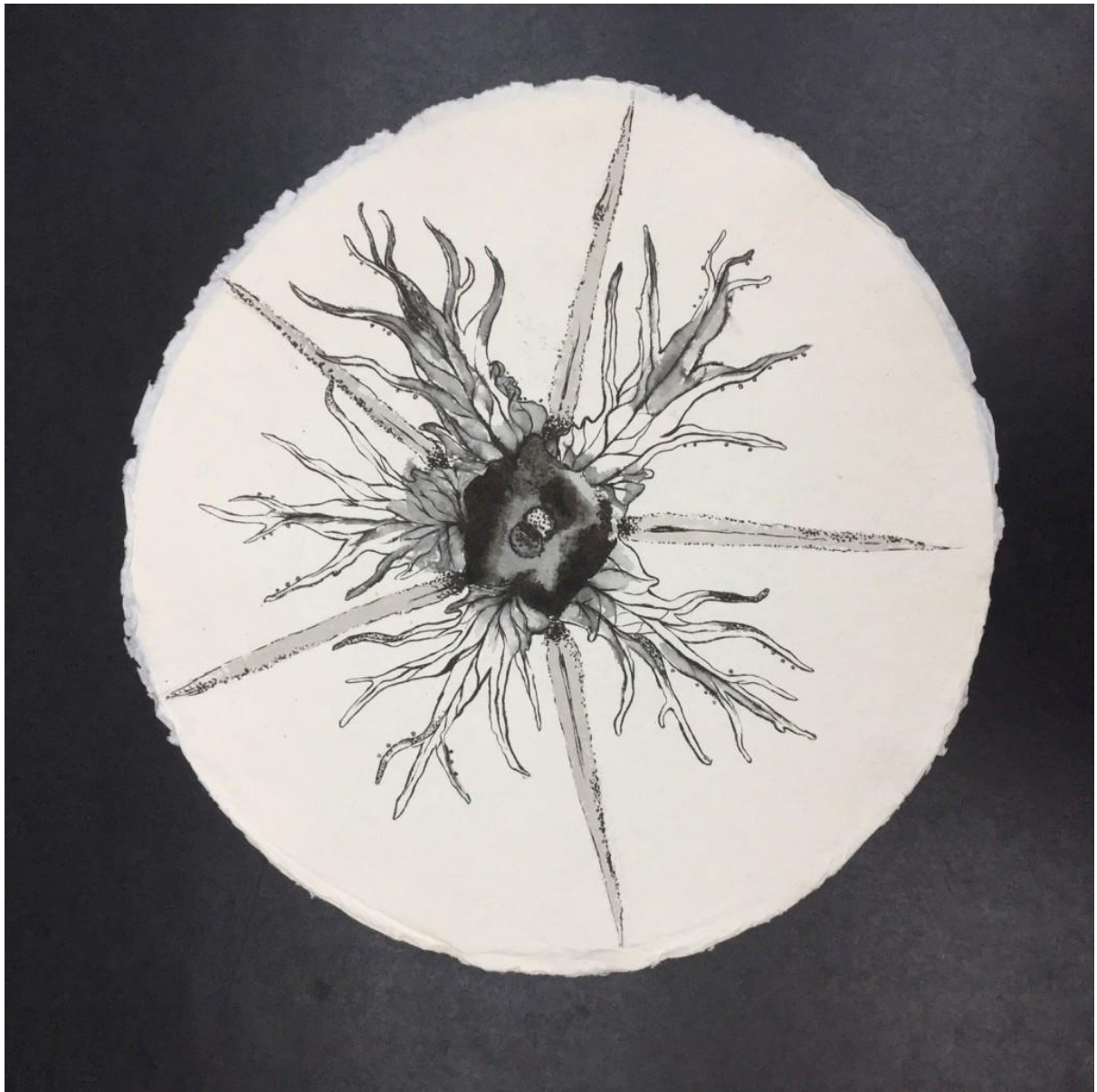
Old Durian Tree, Rimbun Dahan, Malaysia, 2009

Original handprinted silver bromide print, signed and dated on back

Paper size: 61.8cm x 50.6cm; Image size: 50.75cm x 40cm

Edition 1/10

2009



Seeds and Flowers #1

Chinese ink on handmade recycled cotton rag paper

30cm diameter

2019

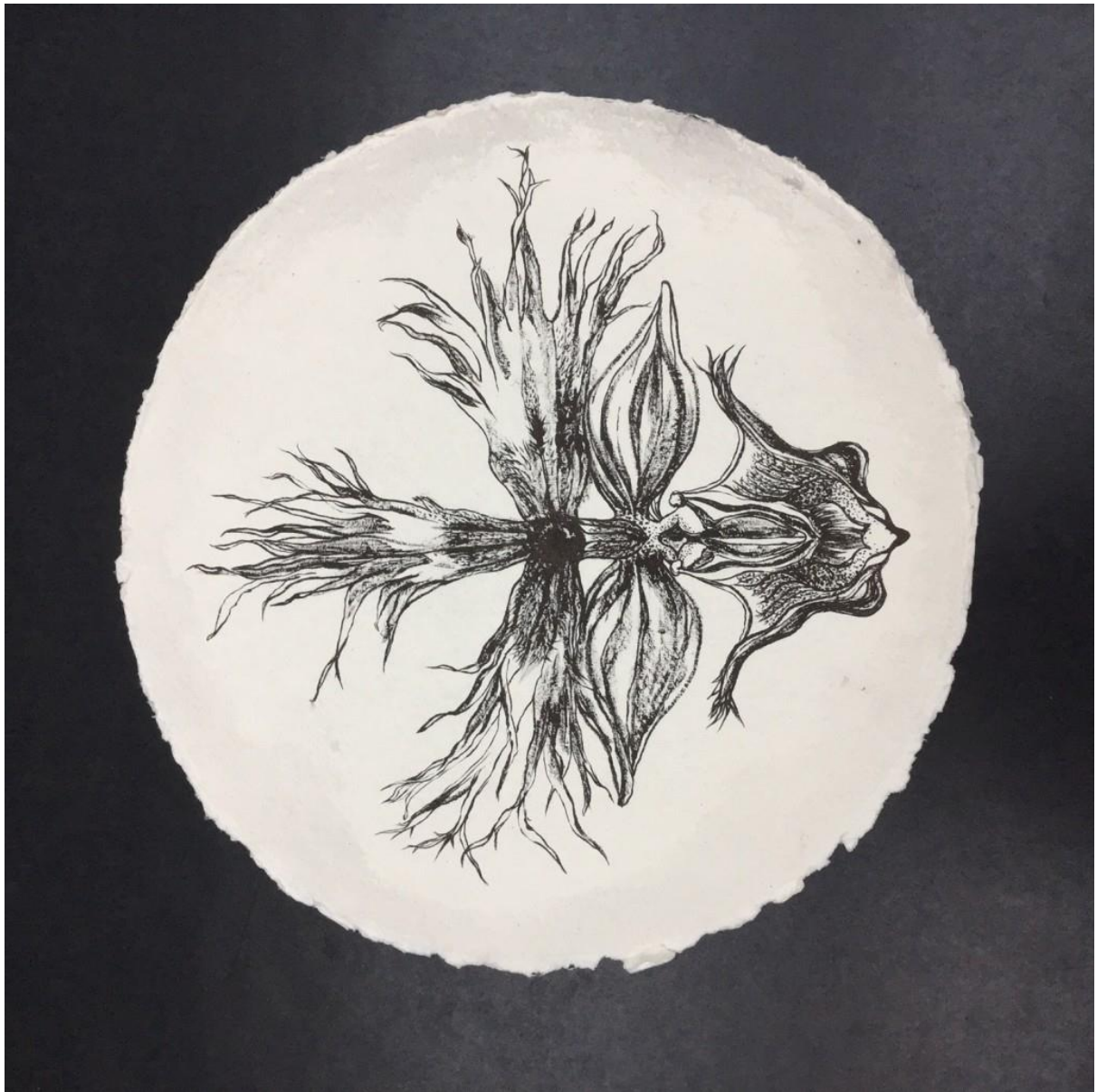


Seeds and Flowers #2

Chinese ink on handmade recycled cotton rag paper

30cm diameter

2019



Seeds and Flowers #3

Chinese ink on handmade recycled cotton rag paper

30cm diameter

2019



Seeds and Flowers #4

Chinese ink on handmade recycled cotton rag paper

30cm diameter

2019



Seeds and Flowers #5

Chinese ink on handmade recycled cotton rag paper

30cm diameter

2019



Seeds and Flowers #6

Chinese ink on handmade recycled cotton rag paper

30cm diameter

2019



Seeds and Flowers #1a

Flowers, tree bark, roots, etc on handmade recycled cotton rag paper

30cm diameter

2019



Seeds and Flowers #2a

Flowers, tree bark, roots, etc on handmade recycled cotton rag paper

30cm diameter

2019



Seeds and Flowers #4a

Flowers, tree bark, roots, etc on handmade recycled cotton rag paper

30cm diameter

2019



Seeds and Flowers #4a

Flowers, tree bark, roots, etc on handmade recycled cotton rag paper

30cm diameter

2019

(Close up)

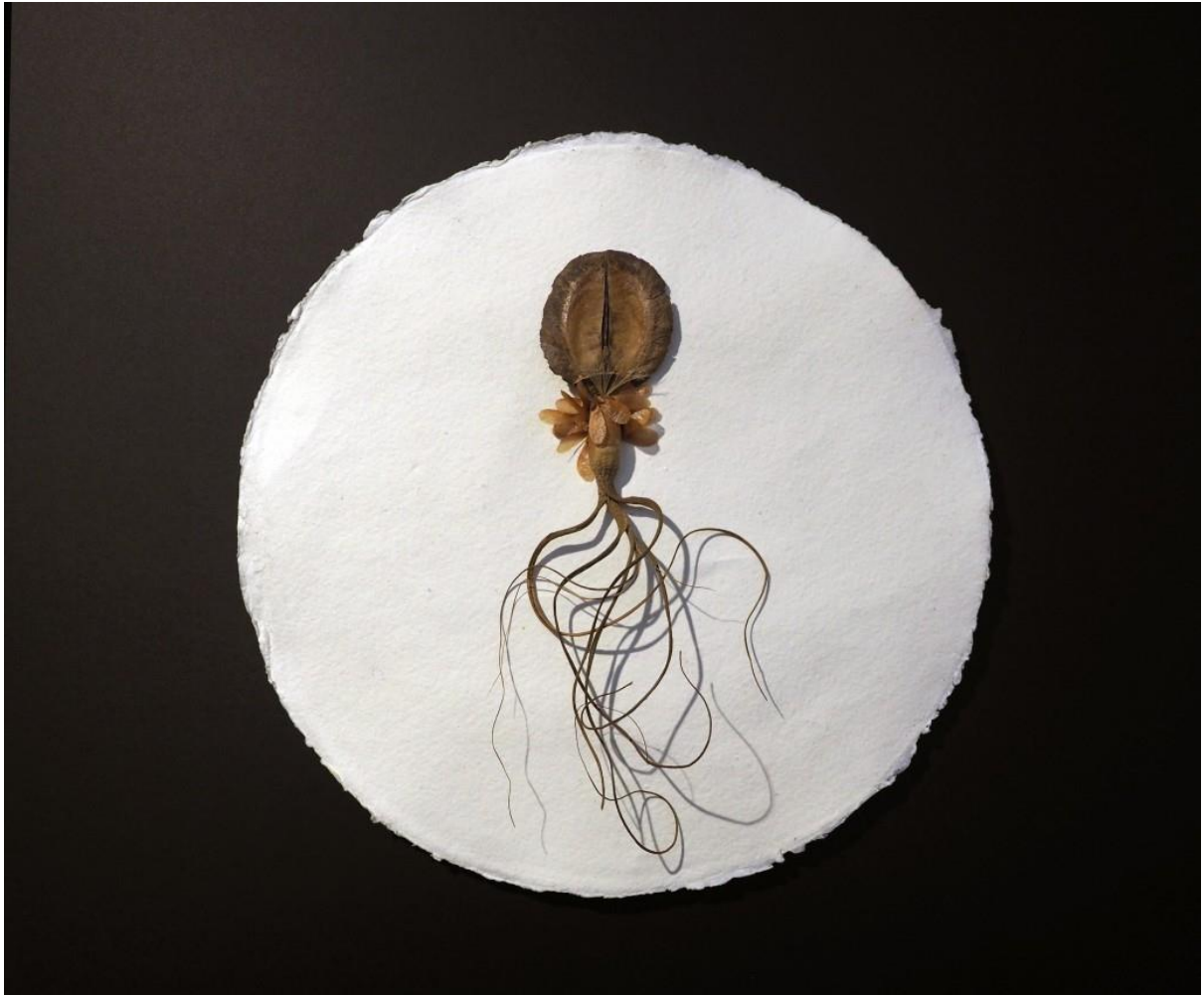


Seeds and Flowers #5a

Flowers, tree bark, roots, etc on handmade recycled cotton rag paper

30cm diameter

2019



Seeds and Flowers #6a

Flowers, tree bark, roots, etc on handmade recycled cotton rag paper

30cm diameter

2019



Seeds and Flowers

(Installation view)

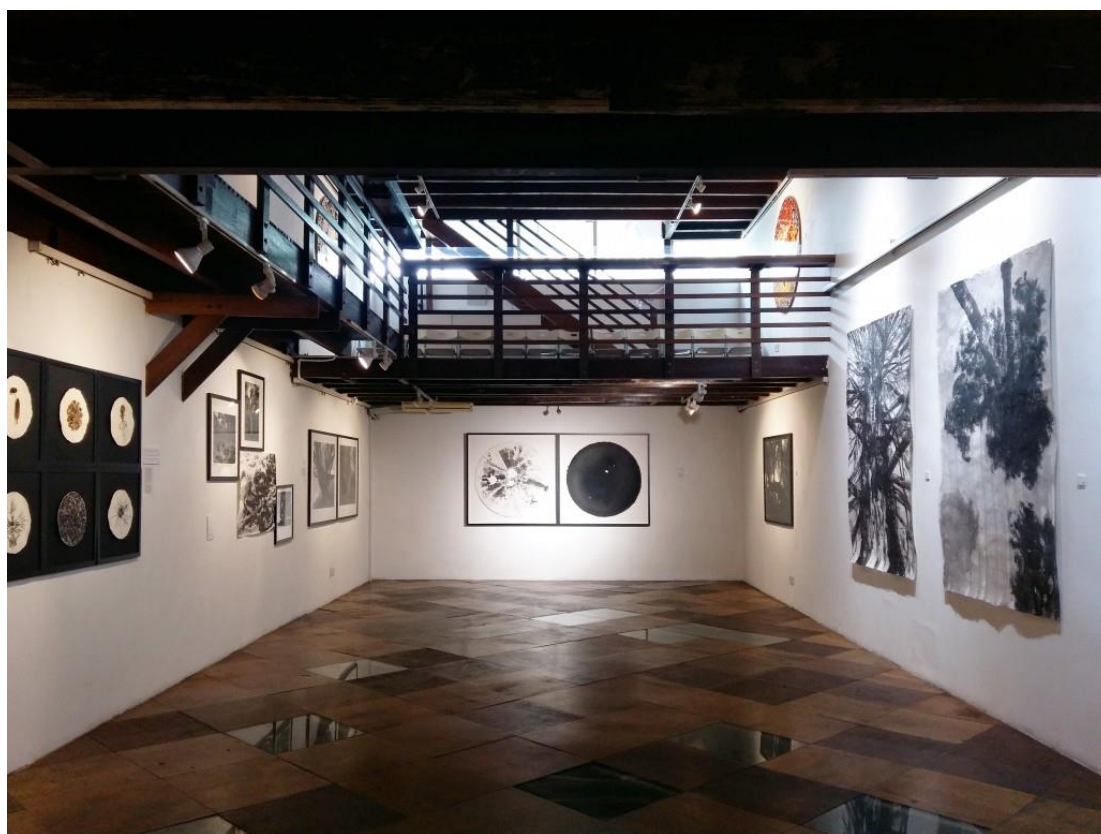


Seeds and Flowers #3a, #6

(Installation view)



Installation view at Wei-Ling Gallery, 2020



Installation view at Wei-Ling Gallery, 2020



Installation view at Wei-Ling Gallery, 2020



Installation view at Wei-Ling Gallery, 2020