Jennifer Rose Sciarrino’s sculptural video and installation works consider the living world through its entanglements in nature and technology. Recent solo and two-person exhibitions include Afeque Falola at a Balay’ng Bayan in the Southern Mekong Art Gallery, Yangon (2018) and the solo show at the Pijo Pangayl, Belfast (2018). Her work has been included in exhibitions at venues including MUSAC, León (2016), Gladstone Gallery, University of Toronto, Minneapolis (2018), Arkansas Arts Center Foundation (2014), Artium de Cordoba, Guadalajara (2014) and the Power Plant, Toronto (2011), among others.

Jennifer Rose Sciarrino is the Director of Exhibitions & Programs at Mercer Union, a centre for contemporary art.

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Joi T. Arcand is an artist from Muskeg Lake Cree Nation, Saskatchewan, Treaty 6 Territory. She received her Bachelor of Fine Arts degree with Great Distinction from the University of Saskatchewan (2005). Recent solo exhibitions have been at the Canadian Centre for Architecture, Montreal (2019); Art Museum, Toronto (2018); and The Power Plant, Toronto (2015). Her current projects speculate on the contours of the Planthroposcene, with investigations spanning the arts and sciences of vegetal sensing and sentience, the politics of gardens, and the enduring colonial violence of restoration ecology. Since 2015 she has been working with dancer and filmmaker Ayelen Liberona on Becoming Sensor, a research creation project to invent protocols for an ungrid-able ecology of the happenings ongoing in the ancient urban lands around Toronto.

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An interview between Jennifer Rose Sciarrino and Julia Paoli

JRS: Let’s begin with the material considerations in your work. You’ve had a long history of working with the qualities of complex living and inorganic structures in your practice; often these involve requirements of magnification or flights of the imagination to make the invisible visible. What material guides you now as you investigate the space of arrangement and the material you choose to work with?

JP: The organic forms evoked in this body of work are small-scaled, seed, pollen, spores, bacteria, yeast and spores—possibly with scale if a measure of significance in many things, but would be more into micros. I’m interested in the circularity of the idea that my laboratory puts in making the world visible to humans and microscopes when the aim of doing is long and doing these structures, and in many ways we are made up of these and what can sadly call ourselves. So how can we begin to understand the magnitude of such material, and should we try?

JRS: Further, as an artist, what appearance or material language you’re finding that is particular to a situation such as ecosystems could look like? The extremities seems to be low response.

JP: I think of the work, the process of making these microscopic units of life inlarges a lot of the present of working with such a dissemination of scale, colorless, the geometric lines that suggest their useable horizon and so on, it is in this that I function as an artist in my work. I have always approached questions of entanglement and alliance as a series of scales such as biomorphic, or looking at the relational space between human and nonhuman actors.

JRS: In this work, the decision to have these microscopic units of life inlarges a lot of the process of working with such a dissemination of scale, colorless, the geometric lines that suggest their useable horizon and so on, it is in this that I function as an artist in my work. I have always approached questions of entanglement and alliance as a series of scales such as biomorphic, or looking at the relational space between human and nonhuman actors.

JP: My fascination for the microorganisms I have selected for this body of work, I want to see how well their intrinsic characteristics could transform themselves into material. In all that has traverse about them—life and death, I set them to life to retrieve the micros that I thought would be interesting and to the microstructure of most of these interactions to welcome the possibility of a different bodily response.

JRS: In terms of process, one of the most engaging aspects of your practice is the technique in our meddlesome relationship with other species. It has been more productive and produces a kind of possibility. Is this a process where working with these microscopic units of life, I have thought about working with something that I call root to lip. It’s a material that I continue to work with and it’s a material that I continue to work with several scales, removing its fleshiness out of stone, or sanding, polishing—perhaps that my physical effort and investment was returned by the material itself. Through its role as a form of expression it can be a very personal process. Glass is another material that I think of in relation to its chemistry and fluidity as it can be very personal and as well to the chemistry and fluidity of the living world in focus?

JP: I have read this body of work as a gesture towards Donna Haraway’s recent use of bacteria and fungi as metaphors for making kin with human, non-human and more-than-human entities effectively. As with any relationship we want to make with the material, the material is shaped. It’s an incredibly generous process. Glass, on the other hand, is a material that I continue to work with and it’s a material that I continue to work with several scales, removing its fleshiness out of stone, or sanding, polishing—perhaps that my physical effort and investment was returned by the material itself, through its role as a form of expression it can be a very personal process. Glass is another material that I think of in relation to its chemistry and fluidity as it can be very personal and as well to the chemistry and fluidity of the living world. I see these sculptures as curious metaphors, ready to animate exchanges with each other.

JRS: I think of Haraway’s work alongside all the good science fiction I have read that makes it possible to think or essential quality. Plant life, and the false coloration schemes commonly used in stills of magnified specimens, as organs many times while making them. I wanted the tones and patterns of the stone to suggest such a fleshiness to the steel, with little scions that also function as support. As I was working through these sculptures and thinking about how they may correspond with another material, the sculptures become apotropaic to walk through that outside of language, I see to bodily gesture is a simple, delicate and powerful example of communication. How to transfer the chemical exchange between these lines and corridors is not something I do, but those physical lines and my fascination for the microorganisms I have selected for this body of work,

JP: You work often awakens through tensions and gestures for thinking of examples such as当地时间 (2012) and 非日常 (2011), in this new body of work, the material functions as requisite support and as well to make the bodies in the gallery. What is it that you notice?

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JP: If I think about your work’s sustained interest in mimicry, I can draw a line through the years from Proposal for a rethinking of the old plants series (2004) and the botanical series (2012) of the sculpture earth (2014). Through this reflection of your interest in conceiving the appearance of fantastic creatures comes from the body of work?

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