



EXHIBITIONS

Taryn Simon "Paperwork and the Will of Capital" at Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal

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The Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal is proud to present, as part of MOMENTA I Biennale de l'image (formerly Le Mois de la Photo à Montréal), Taryn Simon – *Paperwork and the Will of Capital*, the first solo presentation of the artist in Canada. The opening will take place at the MAC, on September 7, at 7:30 p.m., in the presence of the artist.

This exhibition is a continuation of the collaboration between Taryn Simon and the MAC. The Museum has previously acquired in 2015 a work by the artist, of the series *Paperwork and the Will of Capital*, which is among the works selected for this exhibition at the MAC. In addition, the Museum welcomed the artist for a conference in 2016, as part of the Canadian Art Foundation International Speaker Series. Taryn Simon is also featured as an invited artist for the upcoming exhibition *Leonard Cohen – Une brèche en toute chose / A Crack in Everything*.

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In signings of political accords, contracts, treaties, and decrees, powerful men flank floral centerpieces curated to convey the importance of the signatories and the institutions they represent. In *Paperwork and the Will of Capital*, Turi Simon recreated these centerpieces, photographing each against background and foreground colors keyed by the original decor of the historic ceremonies.



(<https://youtu.be/MI6yFcaWA3A/>)

Using as a point of departure the historic United Nations Monetary and Financial Conference in Bretton Woods, New Hampshire in 1944, *Paperwork and the Will of Capital* reexamines subsequent accords drafted to influence aspects of governance and economics, from nuclear armament to oil deals and diamond trading. By pairing her own photographs of the reconstructed floral arrangements with texts describing the individual accords, Simon's work examines how the stagecraft of power is created, performed, marketed, and maintained.



(<https://youtu.be/MI6yFcaWA3A/>)

Each of the recreated floral arrangements represents an “impossible bouquet”— a concept that emerged in Dutch still-life painting parallel to the country's seventeenth-century economic boom, which ushered the development of modern capitalism. The impossible bouquet, a collection of flowers that could never bloom naturally in the same season and geographic location, is an artificial fantasy made real in Simon's photographs thanks to the globalization of the modern flower industry.

Simon worked with archival records and a botanist to identify all the flowers present at the signing of each accord. She imported more than 4000 floral and plant specimens from Aalsmeer Flower Auction, the world's largest flower auction, to her studio where she remade, as far as possible, the floral arrangements from each signing. After each arrangement was assembled and photographed twelve times afresh, the specimens were dried, pressed, and sewn to archival herbarium paper. A set of these botanical collages were then placed in concrete presses, juxtaposed with archival inkjet prints of their photographic likenesses and text references in a race against time.

Guided by an interest in taxonomic systems, *Paperwork and the Will of Capital*, involves extensive research into the power and structure of secrecy and the precarious nature of survival, as well as the reliability and endurance of records: the accords and their far-reaching effects, Simon's photographs, and the preserved botanical specimens. As time advances, so do these artifacts transform, revealing mutable and unstable versions of themselves.

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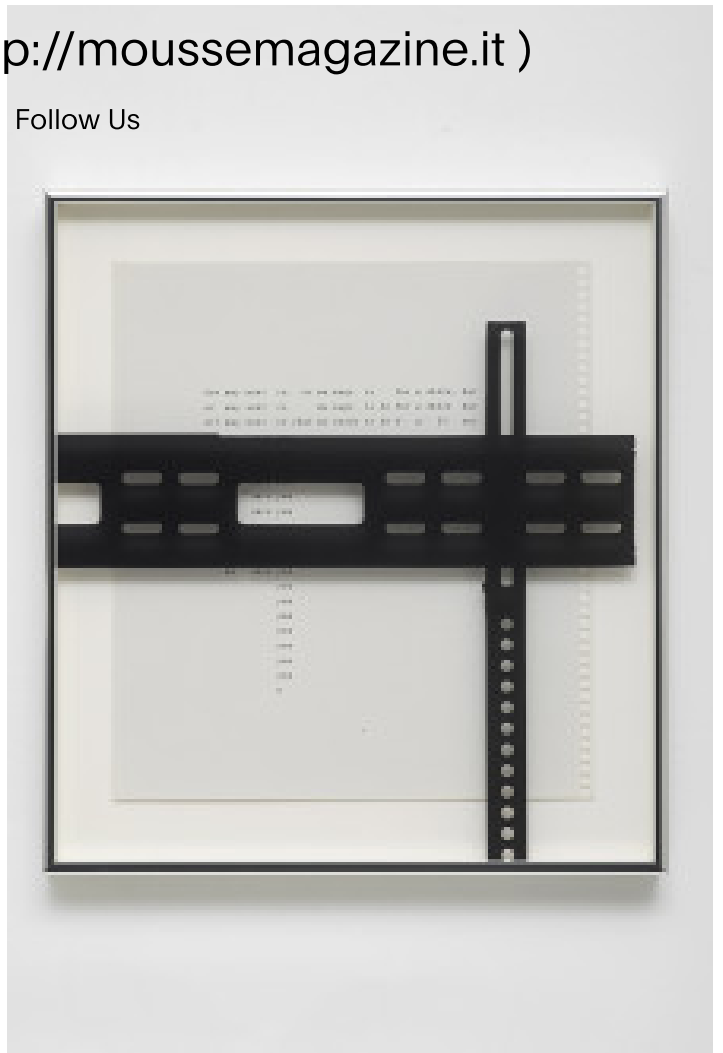
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