ALMINE RECH

Taryn Simon
Paperwork and the Will of Capital

Sep 8 — Nov 5, 2016 | Brussels

Almine Rech Gallery is pleased to announce American artist Taryn Simon's sixth solo exhibition with the gallery. Simon will present for the first time in Belgium her series *Paperwork and the Will of Capital*. The exhibition will be comprised of large-scale color photographs and sculptures—the artist's first foray into the medium, which were debuted at the 56th Venice Biennale in 2015.

In her work, Simon combines photography, text, and graphic design, in conceptual projects addressing the production and circulation of knowledge, and the politics of representation. For this latest project, Simon explores the stagecraft of power, examining agreements, contracts, treaties, and decrees drafted to influence systems of governance and economics, from nuclear armement to oil deals and diamond trading.

As the starting points of *Paperwork and the Will of Capital*, Simon drew inspiration from George Sinclair's 19th century horticultural study – a book containing dried grass specimens that inspired Darwin's theory of evolution – and historical photographs of the signings of political accords between leaders of the 44 countries present at the 1944 United Nations Monetary and Financial Conference, in Bretton Woods, New Hampshire.

In uncovering these archival photographs, the artist observed that the attending diplomats were consistently flanked by floral arrangements, arranged to symbolize the importance of the signatories and the institutions they represented. Simon subsequently worked with a botanist to identify and recreate the flowerpieces from the signings. More than 4,000 specimens were shipped to the artist's New York studio, sourced from the world's largest flower auction in Aalsmeer, the Netherlands, which receives and distributes approximately 20 million flowers per day. The recreated centerpieces were photographed and custom framed in mahogany to emulate the style of boardroom furniture. The corresponding floral specimens were subsequently dried, pressed, and sewn into sheets of archival herbarium paper, which Simon displays alongside the photographs. The photographic still lifes stand in contrast to the sculptural *natures mortes*: as time advances, so will these artifacts transform, revealing mutable versions of themselves.

Paperwork and the Will of Capital invites the viewer to reflect upon the instability of political decision making and the precarious nature of survival. Like the Dutch 17th century paintings of so-called 'impossible bouquets' – a bouquet of flowers that could never bloom naturally in the same season and geographic location – each photograph is a fantasy made tangible. By focusing on the flower arrangements, the photographs underscore how the stagecraft of political and economic power is created, performed, marketed, and maintained.

Taryn Simon (born in 1975) lives and works in New York City. She graduated from Brown University and was the recipient of a Guggenheim Fellowship. Recent exhibitions include Garage Museum of Contemporary Art, Moscow (2016); Galerie nationale du Jeu de Paume, Paris (2015); Louis Vuitton Foundation, Paris (2014); Museum Folkwang, Essen (2013); Ullens Center for Contemporary Art, Beijing (2013); Museum of Modern Art, New York (2012); Tate Modern, London (2011); Neue Nationalgalerie, Berlin (2011); and Whitney Museum of American Art, New York (2007). Her work is part of the permanent collections of the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA), Metropolitan Museum of Art (MET), Tate Modern, the Guggenheim Museum, Centre Georges Pompidou, and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art.