ALMINE RECH

Decay: An Ode to the Impermanent

May 25 — Jul 25, 2023 | Buro Stedelijk Central Space, Amsterdam, The Netherlands

Falling, crumbling, rotting and decomposing so as to grow. What are the ethics we bring to concepts of preservation and decay? We nourish and flourish through embracing the discomfort of decay. Decay as the fruitful ground upon which we stand. The ongoing process of decay, of rebuilding and blossoming. Matter changes, time changes. We embrace the discomfort of the unknown and the experiment, and observe what grows. Death not as the end but rather as the precursor of life. Through this notion of decay, we want to reimagine and reorient the institution. Decay in this respect could provoke discomfort, but it is precisely this feeling of discomfort that we wish to encourage people to become more comfortable with.

We embrace the muck of the moment we inhabit, the temporality of the space, of this possible future. We aim to embrace the decay of the ground we sit on and acknowledge that it is here to show us the possibilities without over-focussing on joy or by under-focussing on the complexities of trauma.

Can we unsettle certain European ideas of preservation and celebrate the care that goes into dying, rotting and decomposition of certain ideas, structures and beliefs? We want to bring experimentation back into the institution, by realizing the decay and building up, for new, more inspired and unbolted futures and presents to emerge. Reparative acts require tearing down structures of exclusion and denial that have sheltered the museum project from reckoning with its own complicity in problematic projects of colonialism.

The idea of repair is an impossible one, since repair inevitably keeps the hegemonic order intact. Yet again, not everything can decay, and so ‘unsettling’ can only take place if decay is a potentiality. We explore what the potentiality of decay and rebirth could mean whilst acknowledging that some things will never decay.

Together with artists we explore what is at stake when we inhabit the present as rotting. A decaying present full of opportunities. Joël Andrianomearisoa develops the scent of decay and despair through his work. Narges Mohammadi explores decay as temporality, holding a space and vanishing. Becoming and disappearing. Geo Wyex explores what stinks beneath the surface. He makes us listen to the muck of decay. These artists, thinkers, makers and breakers help us imagine the possibilities that decay offers through their provocations.