



PRESS RELEASE

## WEED PARTY III Zheng Bo

curated by Marco Scotini

4 November 2018 – 24 February 2019

**PAV Parco Arte Vivente** proudly presents the first Italian solo exhibition of the Chinese artist **Zheng Bo** (Beijing 1974) that will open on **Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> of November 2018**, within the framework of **Artissima**. The exhibition, curated by **Marco Scotini** will inaugurate the new exhibition season dedicated, in particular, to the relationship between ecology and art from the Asian continent. The exhibition entitled *Weed Party III* has been conceived specifically for the PAV and deals with the plant species in the Piedmont area.

A careful investigator of the relationship between plants, society and politics, Zheng Bo is one of the most interesting Chinese artists of the younger generation. He was among the participating artists at Manifesta 12 in Palermo and, has recently exhibited at the second Yinchuan Biennale; he is also involved in the 11<sup>th</sup> Taipei Biennial. In his series of works "*Propaganda Botanica*", Zheng Bo makes use of historic Marxist slogans recreating them by using plants in order to expand notions such as "equality", "workers" or "socialism" beyond the human sphere. His last slogan, "Earth Workers Unite", created for the Yinchuan Biennale and consisting of 370 planted poplar trees, leaves open the possibility of a two-fold interpretation: not so much that it is the workers of Planet Earth who are uniting (according to the orthodox version) but more that an association against common exploitation should become possible between the Earth and its workers.

Since 2003, Zheng Bo's socially involved, artistic practice has been concerned with ecology, participatory projects, marginalized communities and gender themes. The frequent use of the wild plants typical of urban environments – and conventionally considered as weeds – connects his work to political metaphors where that which is disliked, abandoned, forgotten or "out of place" becomes a significant ecological force for spreading the culture of resistance and resilience. Extended to a number of cities over the past decade, his project with weeds has taken on different titles, such as *Weed Plot* (on the roof of the Sifang Art Museum in Nanjing), *Weed Commons* (for the Times Museum in Guangzhou) and *Weed Party* (a currently running series begun in Shanghai in 2015 and now arrived at the PAV). In this latest project, the artist tries to imagine a post-human political party where human beings and extra-humans are no longer separated the one from another.

The *Weed Party* created for the PAV becomes its third reincarnation after the weed and land garden made for the interior spaces of the Shanghai Leo Xu Projects of 2015 and the work on ferns for TheCube Project Space in Taipei of 2016. In these series of exhibition episodes, Zheng Bo investigates the relationship (way beyond being just a metaphor) between the uncontrollable nature of spontaneous, political movements and the infesting and ineradicable power of so-called parasitic plants. Their possibilities for spreading and continually reproducing, their capacity to resist at length and in unfavorable circumstances, the fact of their representing a threat to cultivated fields, are all attributes that denote the forms of life of both activist insurgencies and of plant species with respect to the ecosystem in which we live.

A large scale installation/garden, *After Science Garden*, lies as a physical and conceptual center of the PAV exhibition, created ad hoc for the area of the contemporary art center's greenhouse and developed in a dialogue with the territory, both from a botanical point of view and through the interaction with local activists and researchers, with whom the artist imagines the possible configurations of future social and ecological movements. The itinerary continues with the graphic herbariums, *Survival Manual I and II*, the result of research into the relationship between the natural world and survival from a historicized perspective, the same perspective from which the unprecedented reading of Chinese communist internationalism in Paris, providing substance to the maquette, *A Chinese Communist Garden in Paris*, begins. The exhibition concludes with two films from the *Pteridophilia* cycle (the last part of the trilogy will be presented at Taipei) that explores the potential of eco-queer theories, showing us seven, young men in intimate relationships with various kinds of ferns in a Taiwan forest.

#### PAV / AEF

Within the initiatives planned for the exhibition, PAV Educational and Training Activities proposes *Le Jardin Trouvé* laboratory which gathers the inspiration of Zheng Bo on the subject of the observation of spontaneous plants present within the urban territory. The cataloging and formal re-elaboration of plants, in a relational perspective, focuses on the interstitial and resilient green areas of the city, to be used in daily life for the purposes of rest, play, encounter, contemplation and pleasure.

To participate in the activity, reservations are required: 011 3182235 - [lab@parcoartevivente.it](mailto:lab@parcoartevivente.it)

The exhibition has been staged with the support of the Compagnia di San Paolo, the Fondazione CRT, the Regione Piemonte and the City of Turin.

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