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Imaginative Flowers, Designed by Artists — and Available to Order

By HETTIE JUDAH



For the next three days in Berlin, residents and visitors can order decidedly unconventional floral posies — variously inspired by pigeons' nests, deep-sea creatures and the petroleum industry — for delivery. The five ephemeral flower sculptures on offer, each designed by an artist exhibiting in the city's Biennale and priced between \$70 and \$80, function as a sort of Interflora for the conceptual set. "Flora Powers is not meant to be anything more lofty than a flower delivery service," explains Andrea Hill of Paloma Powers, the irreverent creative agency that has produced the project. "Flowers are a very personal gift, and their delivery is a great moment to celebrate alongside the artists exhibiting in the Berlin Biennale."

Contemporary artists from Jeff Koons to Taryn Simon have worked with flowers in exhibition contexts, but Hill believes this is the first attempt at an experimental artist-led flower delivery service. "It's a bit more utilitarian," she notes. "While the care that goes into them is every bit as much as a floral sculpture would have, their circulation is much more that of an arrangement or a bouquet. Once they've been delivered to someone, it's up to them what they do."

The arrangements boast a variety of unusual elements: both Asger Carlsen and Rachel de Joode created their own vessels, he out of expanding polymer foam and she of hand-squished ceramic; while Sara Ludy's "TNJ Bouquet" combines tentacles of *Amaranthus* with pungent garlic scapes. Amalia Ulman's composition evokes a pigeon's scrappy nest, and in Monira Al Qadiri's "Cosa Nostra," flowers protrude from a giant artificial pearl with a gasoline-like luster that recalls the artist's work on petroleum industries in the Gulf.

The artists' designs have been realized by the Vilnius-based florists Buketai, run by the sisters Aurime and Igne Aleksandraviciutes, who use flowers as a "vehicle to deliver a message or an idea" in their arrangements. "And look," Aurime adds, excitedly: "Now we are in Berlin, making arrangements with cigarette butts tucked in with baby's breath, and creating vases from expanding foam."

Beyond the challenging aesthetic of the projects, Hill says she sees the delivery itself as an "element of performance" that suggests one of many fields for further exploration in the Flora Powers project. "We're very open to doing this again, in other cities and with other artists," she notes. See all five projects in the slide show above.