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## ***The Birdwatchers***

Gabriela Albergaria, Jeffrey Blondes, Adriana Salazar, Marina Zurkow

Curated by Laura Bardier

**Dec 8, 2011 – Jan 21, 2012**  
**bitforms gallery nyc**

**Opening Reception:** Thursday, Dec 8, 6:00 – 8:30 PM  
**Gallery Hours:** Tue – Sat, 11:00 AM – 6:00 PM

bitforms gallery is pleased to announce *The Birdwatchers*, a group exhibition featuring work of four contemporary artists that observe nature and repurpose it within altered landscapes, as part of their interdisciplinary practice. The exhibited works include physically animated plants and animals, video, animation, letterpress prints, and drawing on paper.

What is it about bird watching? Is it related to the urgency to comprehend, forecast and, later, control our immediate environment? The definition of nature always was, and still is, in flux. And yet, the notions of nature, and its representation, that we still embrace today originated at the end of the nineteenth century. During the Victorian era, there was a major shift in our understanding of the natural world and emphasis was placed on close observation of organisms. As humankind's relationship with nature transformed, enthusiasm for walks in the woods, bird watching and collecting shells, grew. Currently, our apprehensive care of the environment goes along with our decreasing contact with nature. Many of us are unable to name our local trees or birds, many have no clue about how plants and animals interact with our surroundings. And yes, while we may be losing connection with the natural world, we certainly have increased our interactions with 'technological nature'.

Artists have always used nature, as subjects of inspiration or objects of manipulation. Art that engages nature can establish connections to a wide range of scientific, historical and philosophical concepts. Advances in biological and telecommunication technology make our interference with natural systems both sophisticated and substantial, modifying the way we look at and represent nature. It is human nature to compare, describe, and sort in order to form our own explanations of the world. We strive to acquire better understanding, prognostication, and control of our surroundings. But is there a purpose to observation if action is not taken?

Gabriela Albergaria's projects are concerned with the relationships between the subtle and minute components of life and the large-scale appearance of the world. In her work "Fictional Landscape", Albergaria considers the notion of a space where any two points can be joined by a path, and creates an artificial garden, drawing an impossible connection and unreal perspective between two trees distant from each other.

In a forest clearing, Jeffrey Blondes' "La Taille des Antes" uses a mounted camera on a motorized turntable, recording one fluid 360-degree rotation over the course of a year in weekly segments of 27 minutes, 41 seconds and 13 frames each. The completed 24 hour loop reveals a slow evolution in real time, over four seasons, beginning and ending on the Winter Solstice, a romantic quote on the traditional schemes of landscape painting.

Adriana Salazar engineers "Moving Plants" and "Birds" constrained to follow the artist's will. Instructional mechanical movements, using custom electronics, are imposed onto Bamboo branches and taxidermy feathered, winged, bipedal vertebrate animals. Adriana's work, undertakes extreme path through the woods of bio art and wildlife management.

Marina Zurkow's artistic practice leans towards environmental engagement, looking into novel multifaceted forms of stewardship. "Mesocosm" is part of a series of animated landscapes that develop and change over time in response to software-driven data inputs. The artist designs narrative spaces that bring together environment elements, under controlled conditions, into a complex dynamic composition.

*The Birdwatchers* is curated by Laura Bardier, an independent curator and currently Collection Administrator at the Estrellita B. Brodsky Collection. She holds an MFA in New Media from the Donau University and has written for Domus Magazine and Arte al Dia International. Her recent exhibitions include "Richard Garet - Espacios No-Euclídeos" at the Espacio Arte Contemporáneo, Montevideo, Uruguay. Forthcoming projects include the touring exhibition "Los impolíticos" previously shown at Palazzo delle Arti Napoli, Italia.

## ARTIST BIOGRAPHIES

**Gabriela Albergaria** (Portuguese, b.1965) uses gardens as the main material of her work. She uses them as a tool that is simultaneously narrative, aesthetic, anthropological and mnemonic to produce photography, drawings, installations, and sculptures. These social and collective references intercross with personal and subjective memoirs of her intimate experiences. Albergaria has exhibited at Museu de Arte Moderna de São Paulo, Brazil; Galeria Vera Cortês, Lisbon, Portugal; Galeria Vermelho, Sao Paulo, Brazil; Kunsthalle Emden, Emden, Germany; and Vancouver Art Gallery, Vancouver, Canada; among others. She studied at the Fine Arts University of Porto in Portugal and held artist residences at the University of Oxford Botanic Garden in collaboration with the Ruskin School of Drawing and Fine Art and at Kunstlerhaus Bethanien in Berlin, Germany. She lives and works in Lisbon, Berlin and New York.

**Jeffrey Blondes** (American, b.1956) creates long format, high-definition videos that examine landscape and time. Over the course of a day, or up to a year, Blondes records the subtlety of nature - presenting viewers with isolated rural environments, where time slows to a pace rarely felt in a frenetic urban-centric world. Past exhibitions of his work include the Musée de la Chasse et de la Nature, Paris, France; Metivier Gallery, Toronto, Canada; Ingleby Gallery, Edinburgh, Scotland; Hackett-Freedman Gallery, San Francisco, CA; The Fine Art Society, London, UK; Reeves Contemporary, New York, NY; Alan Cristea, London, UK; Gallerie Kita, Lille, France; and Sala Perez, Barcelona, Spain; among others.

**Adriana Salazar** (Colombian, b.1980) works as a visual artist, fashion designer and philosophy researcher. Her work explores gestures and human behavior. She has exhibited at Mexico City Museum, Mexico; PAN Palazzo delle Arti, Naples, Italy; Korea Cultural Center, Seoul, Korea; Palacio Linares, Casa de America, Madrid, Spain; El Museo Gallery, Bogotá, Colombia; Cermodern, Ankara, Turkey; among others. She held artist residencies at Akiyoshidai International Art Village, Yamaguchi, Japan; Nordic Artist's Center, Dale, Norway; and Galeria Vermelho, Sao Paulo, Brazil. In 2006, she founded *La Roperia*, a fashion design store that features creations of 30 local designers. She also designs clothes for her own brand. Salazar holds an MFA, with Honors, from the Jorge Tadeo Lozano University of Bogotá, Colombia and a magna cum laude post-graduate degree in Philosophy, from the Javeriana University of Bogotá, Colombia. She lives and works in Bogotá, Colombia.

**Marina Zurkow** (American, b.1962) makes psychological, animated works about humans and their relationship to animals, plants and the weather. These have taken the form of multi-channel videos, customized multi-screen computer pieces, cartoons, and participatory temporary public art works. Since 2000, Zurkow has exhibited at The Sundance Film Festival, The Rotterdam Film Festival, The Seoul Media City Biennial, Ars Electronica, Creative Time, The Kitchen, The Walker Art Center, The National Museum for Women in the Arts, and Eyebeam, and other venues. She is a 2011 Guggenheim Fellow, and has been a NYFA Fellow, a Rockefeller New Media Fellow, and a Creative Capital grantee. Zurkow is on faculty at NYU's Interactive Technology Program (ITP), and lives in Brooklyn, New York.

**For images and more information on the exhibition, please visit:**

[www.bitforms.com](http://www.bitforms.com)

### **Directions to bitforms gallery**

Nearest subway is the C/E to 23rd St in Chelsea

**bitforms gallery** is devoted to emerging and established artists who embrace new media and contemporary art practice.