

STEPHEN BULGER GALLERY

SARA ANGELUCCI

Arboretum

Exhibition Dates: October 22 – November 19, 2016

Reception for the Artist: Saturday, October 22, 2-5pm

The Stephen Bulger Gallery is pleased to present “Arboretum” our first solo exhibition of work by Canadian artist Sara Angelucci.

“Arboretum” builds upon issues raised by her previous series “Aviary”, part of an award-winning exhibition first shown at the Art Gallery of York University, which became the subject of a publication entitled *Provenance Unknown* published by the AGYU. With “Aviary”, Angelucci sourced Victorian era portraits which she digitally combined with photographs she took of endangered and extinct birds in the Royal Ontario Museum’s ornithology collection. In “Arboretum” the artist extends this technique to examine deforestation, one of the major challenges to bird populations.

To produce the series “Arboretum” Angelucci scanned found nineteenth-century cabinet cards with painted forest backdrops and transformed them with her own photographs of trees indigenous to Ontario, allowing the trees to take over the figures. In doing so, the forest claims a position in the foreground of the picture, becoming the main subject, while the figure becomes the ground.

As the artist explains: “Taking its cue from the pictorial tradition of nineteenth-century landscape painting, studio backdrops adopted an idealized vision of nature as a romantic setting for the figure, essentially taming the wilderness to provide an elegant pictorial frame – the picturesque. Embedded in this act of representation is the problematic notion that *we* are the main subject, and that nature is a mere decorative feature subservient to us. “Arboretum” gives visual presence to the notion of the sentient tree, extending the concept of the family album beyond the frame of photographic pictorial tradition. These pictures suggest a deeper consideration of not only the figure/ground relationship in photography, but also our position in relationship to nature.”

Included within the exhibition is Angelucci’s sculpture “Sightings (Ivory-billed Woodpecker)”, stemming from her ongoing interest in the social, technological, and scientific histories that exist outside the frame of the image. This sculpture incorporates 3-D printing to create an exact replica of the extinct Ivory-billed Woodpecker (scanned at the ROM) whose story is forever linked to American industrial giant, the Singer Sewing Machine Company. As the largest wooden cabinet manufacturer in the late 19th and early 20th century, Singer purchased large tracts of forest throughout the U.S. In Northern Louisiana – the Singer Tract, 80,000 acres of virgin forest, was the last stand for the Ivory-billed Woodpecker. The company sold the logging rights, causing the loss of the bird’s habitat, and its subsequent extinction.

Sara Angelucci is a multi-disciplinary artist, who, for the past twenty years has been exhibiting her work nationally and internationally. She has received grants from the Canada Council for the Arts, Ontario Arts Council, and the Toronto Arts Council, and been awarded the Chalmers Fellowship, and the award for best exhibition design by Ontario Association of Art Galleries with Art Gallery of York University. Her work is included in public collections such as the Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto; McMaster Museum of Art, Hamilton; Art Gallery of Hamilton, Hamilton; Trinity College, Toronto; Art Gallery of Peel, Brampton; National Portrait Gallery, Ottawa; Museum of Civilization, Ottawa; Macdonald Stewart Art Centre, Guelph; University of Toronto Library; and the Seneca College Collection, Toronto.

The artist wishes to gratefully acknowledge the support of the Toronto Arts Council and the Ontario Arts Council and *Think to Thing* in the production of the 3D printed woodpecker.

