



Twisted Biota
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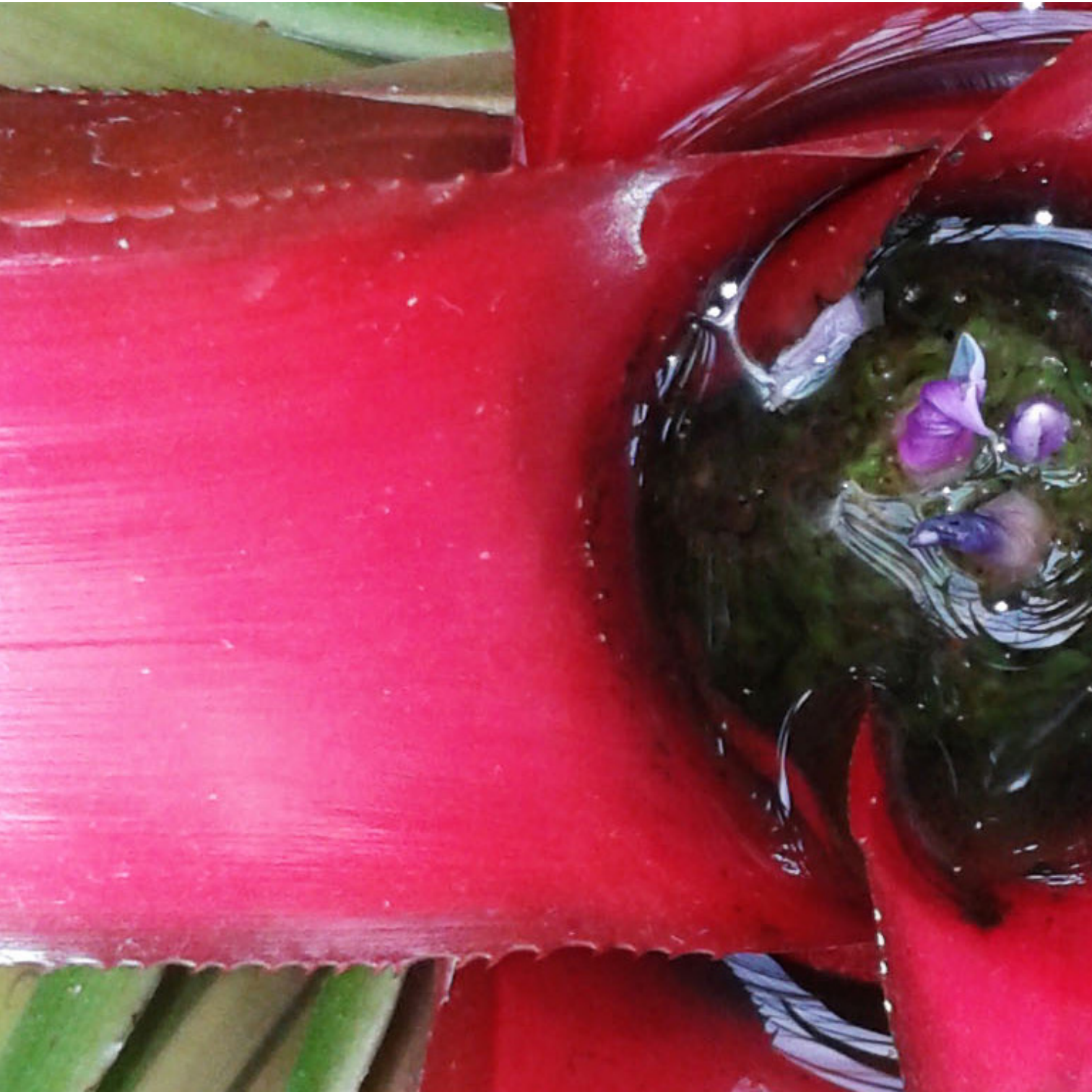
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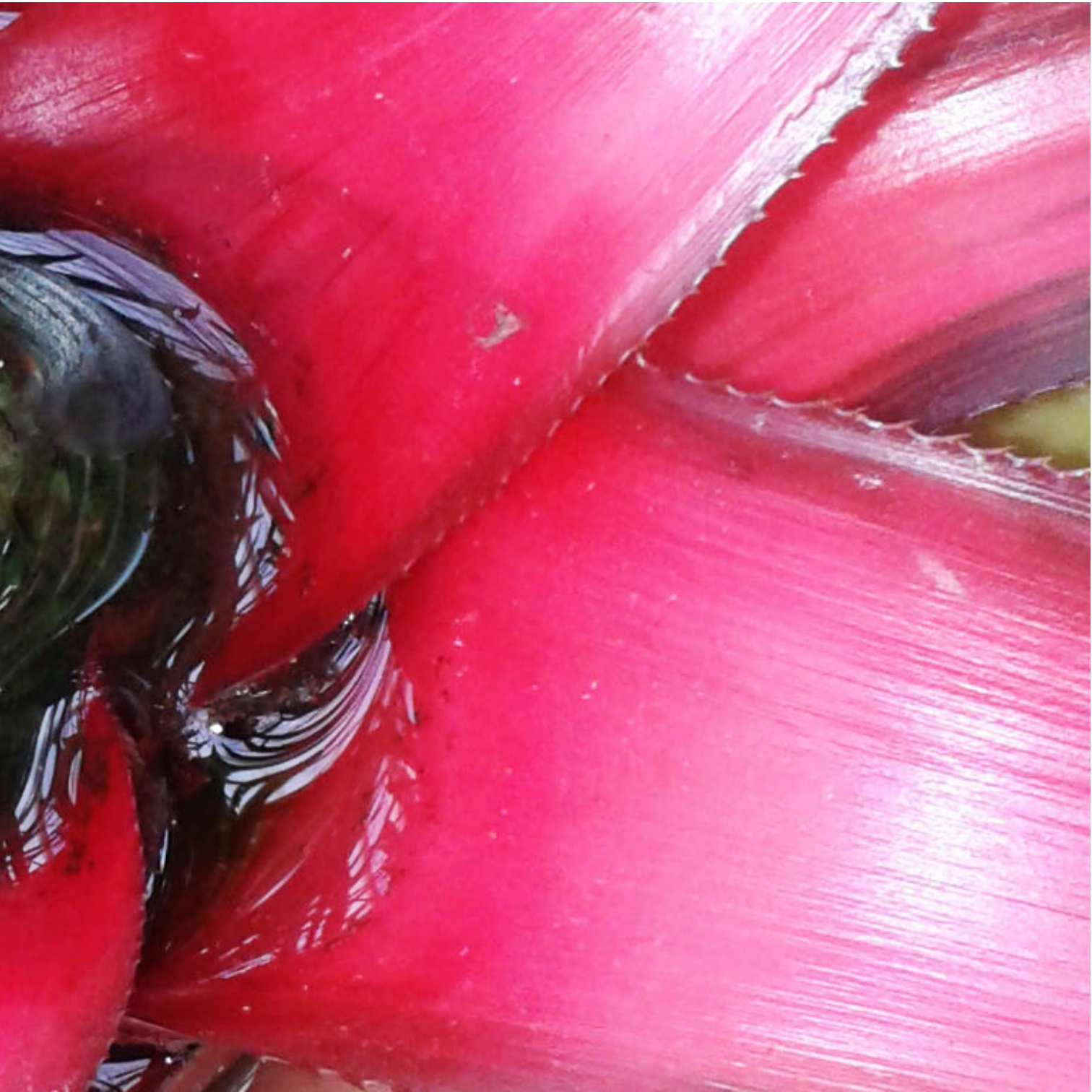
Introduction

I became interested in collage while cutting and making stencils while studying for my bachelor in printmaking. The first cut outs I made were silhouettes made on the back of old screen prints of blended colour. I would trace different kinds of shapes taken from nature such as shells, leaves, insects. I would look forward to turning the new cut out piece to see the old print transformed into something new, this is something I still get excited by. I guess similar to the excitement of turning a print over after its gone through the printing press. I was interested in how all of these images of nature all looked very similar in silhouette form and it was hard to tell which was plant or which was animal. This topic became of interest to me, the similarities within nature. The micro macro scheme of seeing the same patterns reproduced in all levels of nature.

Transformation has been a recurring theme in my practice. Working with paper collage is the perfect medium as it enables constant transformation. Frail, ephemeral nature or nature that perhaps does not mean to harm but has the intention of manifesting itself to take over and take control. My research includes reading and looking at images about 19th century collectors, explorers and illustrations.. The arts and crafts movement with the floral and bird patterns, visiting the Palm House and the Natural History museum here in Gothenburg. Cabinet of curiosities and how hobbyists who collected and displayed objects. This was their way of making sense of the world, here I see similarities within my work, of how I use collage to make sense of the world around me. I seem to have this kind of interest or nostalgia for this period in history, for the collector or hobbyist, this romantic idea of being surrounded by interesting things detached from everyday life doing what you love.







Stories with anthropomorphic themes, such as Angela Carters ‘The Bloody Chamber’ and John Berger’s essay ‘why look at animals’ taken from the book ‘About Seeing’ is an essay I seem to come back to again and again. He writes about animals as the first symbols and metaphors and the decline of the animal after the industrial revolution, ‘animals go from caves to carts to cages. The ancient relationship between man and nature has been broken in the modern consumer age’.¹

‘To suppose that animals first entered the human imagination as meat or leather or horn is to project a 19th century attitude backwards across the millennia. Animals first entered the imagination as messengers and promises. For example, the domestication of cattle did not begin as a simple prospect of milk and meat. Cattle had magical functions, sometimes oracular, sometimes sacrificial. And the choice of a given species as magical, tameable and alimentary was originally determined by the habits, proximity and “invitation” of the animal in question.’²

¹ Berger, John, Selected Essays. edited by Geoff Dyer, Pantheon Books New York. 2003, 260

²Berger, John, Selected Essays. edited by Geoff Dyer, Pantheon Books New York. 2003, 261







Images&Fragments: Collecting, shredding, sorting and altering.





I find the majority of my imagery from books and the internet, I will go to the library and rummage through the books, when I've taken them out I will go through them again and start deciding what images will be photocopied. There are certain images that appeal to me. Mostly images of the natural world, faraway places animals and plants. Man-made images are rarely picked. Sweet sickly colours, butterflies, flowers, fruit, food, plants, teeth, mouths. Images although beautiful also have something unsettling about them, the idea that something is wrong. Looking for abnormalities in nature.

'I think it's all the strange shades of colour in the mouth that I find really appealing'³

The bloom of the flower and seeing similarities within the images, such as the texture of a flower having the same as the mouth. I do this as I find something interesting and I get excited about working with this image I want to enhance or amplify it and show it to the viewer. After I have photocopied my images, I will cut every single one out, examining them even further as I carefully cut around the edge, I take great care in this act. I can sometimes become attached to certain images and almost don't want to work into them again, in fear of ruining them. The images represent different things for me. The flower is feminine, sexual, ornamental decadent and frivolous. The Bird is a kind of messenger, the deer is sensitive, sacred, a trophy. I pin my images onto the wall so I can look at them again, there is pleasure in having all these images around me, randomly placed on the wall. A steady stream of images, teeth, beaks, eyes, legs, fruit, foliage, flowers, wings, they swoop around me from floor to ceiling, taking over all available space.

³ London Weekend Television, South Bank show, The Life of Francis Bacon 1985



Collage: Transformation, Control and Chance

‘Collage is the noble conquest of the irrational, the coupling of two realities, irreconcilable in appearance, upon a plane which apparently does not suit them.’⁴

⁴ Ian Rodgers ‘Max Ernst Europe after the rain ii Grey not grey blog



I'm using collage to show a fragile and fragmented world. We are bombarded by images every day, I also feel it is the perfect medium to show how our culture is saturated in images both printed and online. Many artists today are using collage to confront this image culture in the modern world with its barrage of pixel images that seep into our consciousness hundreds of times a day. Artists that I have been looking at, all work with large scale collage installations such as Laura Provoust, Wangechi Mutu and Fred Tomeselli. Their large scale works combine different types of materials such as vinyl tape, TV monitors and fabric appeal to me, showing that collage doesn't have to be a small 2D piece of work.

Collage has been at the core of my art practice. It is the starting point for work that ultimately takes form in other mediums such as screen printing and now textiles. Collage has this inherent nature to reinvent the familiar into something new. Melding together traditional collage techniques with abstraction to try and give an otherworldly quality to the work. Showing a fragmented world. I document everything on my desk all the time, all the time taking photographs, my space has to be in some way messy, images have to be scattered, working with this mess leaves room for chance to happen. The challenge of collage is working with what you have on hand, the size of the images, the colour and texture of the paper. Making something out of nothing really. The pinned images on my studio wall, I'm thinking all the time whether I can use them or how I can use them. I put up rules for myself. For example making my collages on A3 paper, we only have A3 scanner at college and only working with handmade collages without Photoshop, I feel there are too many possibilities working digitally, and I believe working without creates better work. Working within this framework I've discovered has helped me. The process of collecting and saving gets done over a period of time. I play around with the images until something starts to happen. A single image can trigger a whole piece. Often I make one big piece and if not happy with it I'll break it down to rework parts of it into a new collage. In my process I am constantly cutting, taking apart reconstructing and breaking it down again. New pieces are always evolving. Some images get enlarged others stay as they are. I have to be careful when putting images together, sometimes it's hard to know when enough is enough in fear of overkill. However there is great satisfaction when two images come together and work.



‘The very nature of collage, demands fragmented materials or at least materials yanked out of context. Collage is, in a way only an accentuated act of editing: picking through options and presenting a new arrangement (albeit one that due to its variegated source material, can’t be edited into the smooth, traditional whole that a work of complete fiction could be) the act of editing may be the key postmodern artistic instrument’⁵

⁵ Berry.L, Jacobson, Zuckerman.H, Fred Tomeselli, Prestal 2009, 164















Photocopying/blowing up/pixels/errors/glitch effect

At the beginning photocopying was just a side part of my work. I have experimented a lot more with it and it's become a really important medium for me now. It appeals to me as it can generate masses of identical images but can also generate an endless series of unique, original prints. I have been blowing up tiny images so the pixels and blurred colours and spots are more vivid and exaggerated. I select areas within my collages and zoom in, to find errors. These errors when blown up give a more painterly feel which adds to the effect when eventually printed onto fabric. This process is all about chance and error. Most of the ways you move the page on the photocopier you will create something unique each time, new colours start to emerge, that were unknown to you before. Hours can be spent experimenting and discovering new images. It's interesting finding forms within the original image and then playing around with this form further.

Through this process I rediscovered Sigmar Polke and his photocopy series. He was fascinated with decomposing photographic images, trying to unearth their complex nature. 'The act of photocopying becomes an artistic statement, a continuation of drawing and print. Polke manipulates the photocopies by means of rotating, pulling and pushing the template during the copying process, distorting the image motifs beyond recognition. Through these interventions mere documentation becomes art.'⁶

⁶Belting, Hans, *The three lies of Painting, Sigmar Polke*, Verlag Cantz 1997, 56,57







Textiles: Printing, cutting, layering.

My interest in large scale work has led me to think about textiles. I have for the past while felt limited within my practice. Felt a strong need to introduce a new material. See a strong link between collage and textiles, bringing materials together, printing, layering, cutting. At this moment I feel the textiles will bring a more finished feel to the work. Its rich, lush, seductive qualities.

The fabric can be thick, heavy, draped and dramatic or can be light and ghostly giving a feeling of loss or death. The Fabric goes through a few processes, I first pick out my fabric, depending on which one suits for an image. So far I have been using viscose silk, habotai silk and silk organza, all of these materials have different qualities. The viscose is heavy and shiny and has a feeling of richness and wealth to it, this fabric works well for draping. The habotai is thin and light, but enough to show a lot of the printed image, the silk organza is similar to the habotai, except its more transparent and has a stiffer quality to it. All of these qualities are taken into consideration before I print an image onto them.

The fabric must be prepared first for it to take the digital ink, once this is dry the fabric is rolled up and ready to go through the printer. Sometimes the printed image is shiny and rich, and others its light and delicate. The pixel images melt across the fabric. Hard edged images collide with distorted ones.















Display/Strange and Twisted Landscapes

Combining all these disciplines such as collage, print, and now textiles, my aim since the beginning of last year was to make an installation, taking inspiration from theatrical sets and dioramas. 19th century public parks movement which started out for preserving scenic nature, Romantic landscape painting 'wildness' 'beautiful' 'sublime' 'picturesque' pastoral nature

To somehow make the paper collage and textiles communicate and work in a space. The installation is also a collage of sorts. I am interested in the viewer being surrounded by the work. Giving the viewers the opportunity to inspect details found all around us.

I believe showing the paper work is important, showing my working method is very hands on in a time when a lot of image making on printed textiles is done by photoshop. I want to expose the way I make things.

I have been looking at artists who in their installations have this Garden of Eden fantasized depiction of nature and a theatrical quality to their work. Such as Heather Philipsson and Pipilotti Rist. I will enlarge some of the collaged pieces so that some are life size cut outs of animal and plant like creatures, with my printed fabric I will hang and drape and pile in the space, layering the textiles and paper together. I hope this will achieve a sense of madness to the work a feeling of endless cutting and making. That more is not enough.













List of sources and literature

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