



The Horticultural Society of New York

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For Immediate Release:

RICCI ALBENDA

26 DEVOE

March 21 – May 23, 2008

Opening reception for the artist to mark the vernal equinox: Friday, March 21, 6 to 8:30pm

The Horticultural Society of New York is pleased to present a two part conceptual gesture by artist **Ricci Albenda** as part of its continuing exhibition program featuring art that investigates horticulture. In addition to the exhibition in the gallery, the artist will open his backyard garden to the public for viewing, hanging-out and conversation.

The works on view in the gallery come together to create varying perceptions of the artist's garden. An ingeniously constructed word painting features the Latin names of the plants in Albenda's garden (with the exception of one common name: periwinkle) made in a font of his creation employing the COLOR-I-ME-TRY alphabetic colorization system seen in his previous work. Adjacent to the painting will be a readymade consisting of the potted plants gathered from the outdoor garden to winter on his kitchen table. Set before a wall painted the color of the kitchen from which they came, on the table made of reclaimed wood from the renovation of his apartment, these plants – taken in from the cold – are just now waking into spring. In the spirit of Ikebana, the ancient art of Japanese flower arranging, Albenda will periodically select leaves and blossoms from his garden to create minimal diminutive displays in the gallery. Finally, a miniature work employs both the act of painting and an actual plant – a hand-painted pressed daisy.

For *26 Devoe*, Albenda brings a part of his daily life into the gallery – creating a perceptual dialogue that is simultaneously private and public. The gallery will act as a neutral territory open for interpretation – a spatial alias for the artist's garden – revealing that there are other ways to have gardens than in the ground. The literal representations of the artist's garden, created with a predilection for invention and taxonomy, are growing beyond their roots, so to speak.

Further conceptualizing the artist's relationship to the contents of the gallery, Albenda will open his backyard garden to the public on specific afternoons during the exhibition. When asked what would be on view in his garden for the public this is what the artist recited:

“...there really will be so many things and I'm not exactly sure really 'cause I don't keep track exactly but...

Both *Daphnes* should be in bloom – *odora* any day now - *genkwa* some weeks later - the hellebores should all still be in bloom, mostly *orientalis* but also 'Christmas Rose' and 'Sunmarble' - many daffodils - including some pink varieties.

There should still be some crocuses out - possibly a snowdrop or two - many early tulips - *turkestanica* - some other rock species - nearly all of my tulips are species tulips - another fine one is *Cerulea oculata* (blue eye) - if they come back.

Also *Scilla - siberica* and possibly *scilloides* - after the *siberica* come the Greek windflowers - or *Anemone* - I think that is in the window. Also around this time the *Chionodoxa*. They won't bloom yet but the voodoo lillies have amazing stalks.

The salt and pepper plant - also called harbinger of spring is a tiny plant that is hard to find but well worth the search. *Hacquetia epipactis* is the first exotic hard to find plant I ever planted and should bloom at some point.

Ginger blossoms are subtle but amazing they're coming soon - maybe finally the *Ypsilandra thibetica* may bloom. Forgot about the irises - don't remember when they bloom - might not be till May - mine are black and green.

I have a few *Hepatica* - very sweet - also wood anemones which have similar blooms. The tree peony has the most beautiful early leafing out stage - the blooms I think are too late for the open garden.

When do jack in the pulpit bloom? I've recently started trying these difficult plants - no promises.

There may be a few forget-me-nots left in the garden.

If the *Anemone thalictroides* comes back - it is a delicate woodlander similar to the *Hepatica* and wood anemone.

How on earth I could have forgotten the blood root - charming woodlanders - I have two or three small groupings of these - and as well the rarer form of *Sanguinaria canadensis* "Multiplex".

The phlox may bloom near the end - lovely with the pale blue grape hyacinth which open earlier and also look nice with the *Ajuga* 'Chocolate Chip' blooms - all of which set nicely off the orange and burgundy *Heuchera* - whose leaves are like blooms.

I have a few terrestrial orchids whose leaves are a sight unto themselves. *Aplectum hyemale* is one - the other's name escapes me and I'm not sure it has survived the winter anyway.

Fothergilla has beautiful white bottlebrush blooms. I have about 8 different kinds of *Epimedium* which have the most elegant delicate flowers - most are quite small and new but I think they should all bloom some little bit.

A few early *Clematis* may be in bloom - at least one small blue alpine. The *Ipheion* are beautiful little flowers.

The edible and the purple leaf sand cherries should both bloom at some point - as well as the peach - perhaps a few apple blossoms on some small trees - and some probably fairly meager blueberry blooms.

Well that probably covers a good bit of it - I have just a few of so many different things - some I've left off 'cause I forget the name - like *Fritillaria* - there are many *Fritillaria* which will bloom at this time.

One of my favorite plants is the dog toothed violet (trout lily) - I have a variety of these - but they are mostly new and tiny and only stay open for a few days..."

Born and currently working in New York, Ricci Albenda exhibits widely in the United States and Europe. His work has been on view in many museums including the Museum of Modern Art, the Guggenheim, the New Museum and the Centre Pompidou, Paris. His exhibitions have been the subject of numerous catalogues and have been reviewed in such publications as The New York Times, ARTFORUM, Flash Art and Frieze amongst many others. Ricci Albenda is represented by Andrew Kreps Gallery, New York, who HSNY gratefully acknowledges for their support of this exhibition. This will be the artist's first solo exhibition at The Horticultural Society of New York.

Ricci Albenda's backyard garden is open to the public Sunday afternoons, March 30th, April 13th, May 4th and 11th from 12 – 4pm.

Directions: Take the L train to the second stop in Brooklyn, Lorimer Street. Exit the train on Union Street and walk south one block. Turn left on Devoe Street, number 26 is on the right.

The mission of The Horticultural Society of New York is to enhance our City's environmental and cultural life by providing unique educational, vocational, and therapeutic outreach programs, library resources and art exhibitions.

For further information, please contact Curator Jodie Vicenta Jacobson at 212.757.0915 x113 or jjacobson@hsny.org.



Garden at 26 Devoe with peach blossom