Lime Flower Heterodoxy

Medicinal Linden Jelly Ingredients:
- 4 cups water
- 3 tbsp gelatin powder
- 2 tbsp Lime-Flower (silver linden) dried flowers and leaves
- 1 tbsp wildflower honey

Instructions:

Put on some music and open a window just slightly, light a beeswax candle if you like. Place the 3 cups of water in a pot to high boil. While that is boiling, Put the gelatin powder in a large bowl, and pour cold tap water onto it stirring until the gelatin is the consistency of applesauce. Mix in the tablespoon (or more if you like sweetness :) of honey. Next, use 1 cup of the boiling water to steep the 2 tbsp lime/linden/lime flower tea. Let that steep and strain flowers and stems out. Next, pour the 1 cup hot tea and remaining 3 boiling cups of water onto the bloomed gelatin, stir slowly until clear. Pour into a bowl, cool and serve sliced.
"Each dissolving form alludes to the body, dismantling of disability stigmas, and the reality of undermined reproductive rights intrinsic to the use of living cells in the treatment of genetic disease aiming to expand interpretations of ecological symbiosis and disabilities."

Limeflower Heterodoxy is a new video work by artist Sharona Franklin featuring the slow decomposition of one of the artist's signature gelatin sculptures. With this work, Franklin takes the viewer into an exploration of healing methodologies, contrasting the different approaches of psychedelic and plant based medicine intertwined within the pharmaco-industrial complex. The work centers the experiences of childhood rural illness, contrasted with the alien and often dehumanizing experiences of cytotoxic and pharmaceutical systems. Characteristic of her practice, her molded gelatin works contain organic matter—flowers, leaves, fruit—and other elements representing nature. In many of Franklin's works, the pieces of plant matter coexist in a bionic nature beside remnants of biopharmaceutical treatments such as glass syringes and metal hardware. Referred to by the artist as bioshrines, Franklin's sculptures embody tensions and contradictions held for those whose treatments include both natural medicine and—sometimes—ethically controversial biopharmaceutical care. The name of the sculpture, Limeflower Heterodoxy, is a reference to the medicinal benefits of the flower. A well-known natural antidepressant, the lime flower has sedative and relaxing qualities and is also commonly used against the flu. Below the jellies, tendrils hang from the armature of the metal, paper mache sculpture, memorializing the lab mice used to test pharmaceutical treatments. The gelatin sculpture will bring together these disparate modes of treatment and medical care by literally embodying both natural lime flowers and elements of the artist's own medicine, creating its own heterodox position.

The decomposition of the gelatin sculptures is an integral part of Franklin's process, as she invites visitors to come back and revisit her sculptures over the course of an exhibition, see their transformation in space, as time and organic matter collide. This livestream video will grant the viewer a real-time access to the transformation at any moment of the day or night. Thought of as a slowly transforming still life, the livestream may function as a window into another world, a digital painting, an escape or a moment of calm in a period of general unrest.

For the first time, the artist will also record the decomposition of her work, creating two time lapse videos over the period of 30 days. The videos function as a unique immortalization of the transitory, as these decompositions have until now always been ephemeral, bound to time and space.

Transgenic Test Subjects is a textile work by Sharona Franklin produced as a sculptural element for her installation Limeflower Heterodoxy. Franklin uses images of mice as an entry point through which the viewer steps into a world of discourse surrounding the vulnerability of children and animals, medical consent, and the ethics of biopharmaceuticals. The text on the border reads: "The rats and mice bloom very rich internal lives, not unlike our human cells." In likening the consciousnesses of humans and animals, Franklin and the pictured mice introduce several corollaries. Along with the rats and mice rich internal worlds come capacities to feel, experience pain, and develop desires that surpass base survival instincts. Franklin approaches the ethical consequences of this from a place of nonjudgement—some of her own treatments are chimeric medication rely on stem cells from mice. Rather, Franklin's work operates both as a tribute to lab mice and a site where the viewer may bear witness to their multiplicity of experiences, including degeneration—this mirrors the decay of the gelatin bioshrine above the work laid flat, laden with paper mache tendrils that resemble rodent tails.

In Transgenic Test Subjects, the mice also call forth the experiences of children given medical treatments and procedures over which they hold no control. Children and young adolescents do not have the legal power to offer or revoke consent to their healthcare, and the information they do receive often lacks full transparency between pharmaceutical companies, doctor, and patient. Within this environment of defenselessness, youth experience their inner worlds and cultivate modes of coping that medical language cannot always name and culturally is not often represented. Within the paradigm of the initial quotation, it follows that rats and mice, too, are coping without an emotional blueprint. The children and the mice exist in positions that echo each other; they create resonances across different points in the timeline of biomedical and pharmaceutical production and consumption. The tableau blueprint, a family photo album, a collection of images united in subject matter and differentiated by their aesthetic registers. In this textile work, Franklin traces a variety of subjectivities—both quantifiable and inarticulable—within structures of medicalization.