

# The Secret Life of Plants

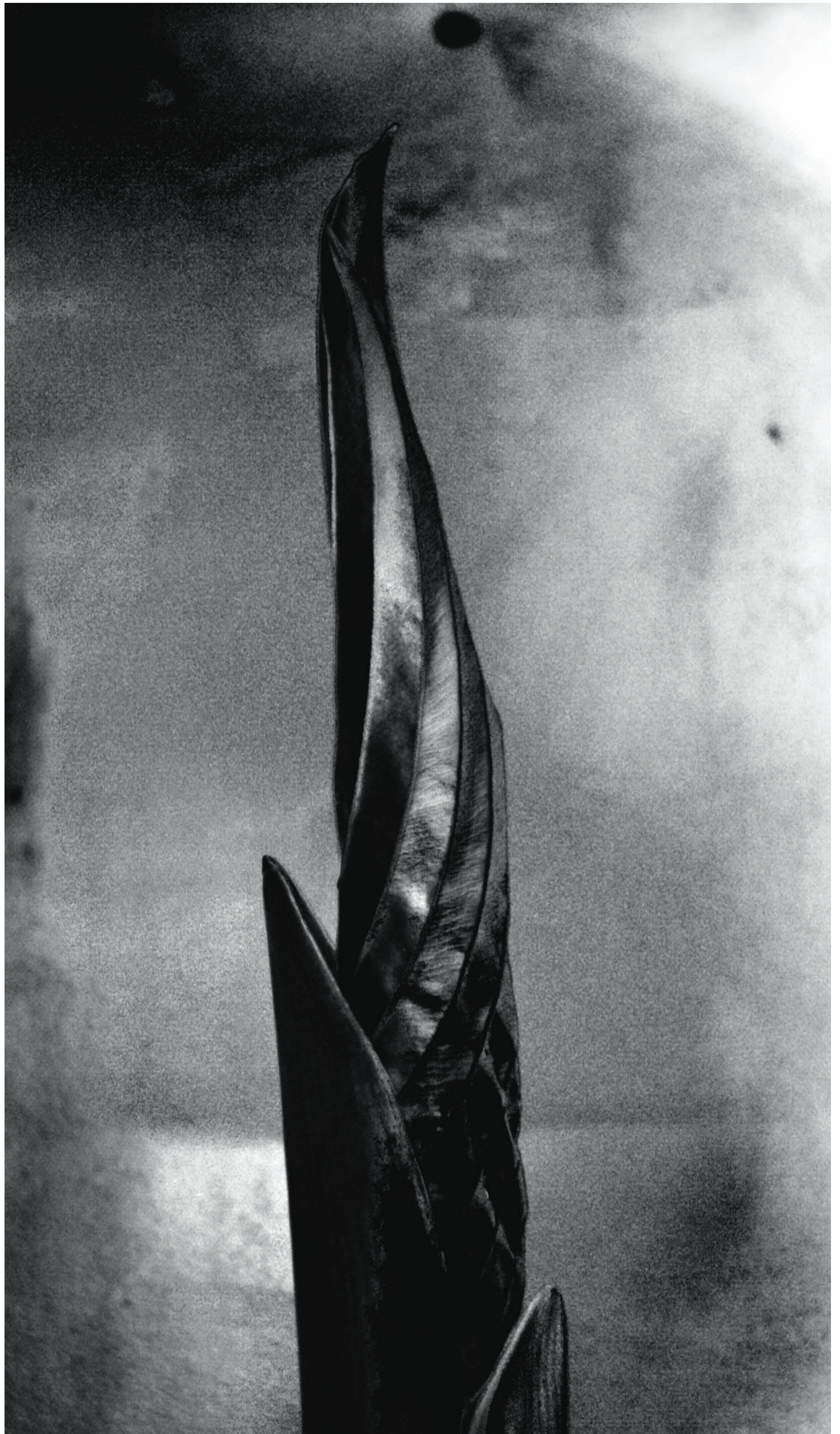
William Vinegrad

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William Vinegrad's diverse practice is ruled by a number of exciting disciplines. These include drawing, sculpture, photography, print-making, performance, installation and also writing. He allows his ideas to influence the medium of his work, and using this ethos, his work can often push him into unfamiliar territory.

In his work, William aims to question what it is to be alive, with a heightened sense of awareness for the elements within the world and in his own environment. It is through illuminating spectacle that he attempts to create experiences that he hopes will aid the viewer in being able to have a more profound understanding of the unassuming within the natural world. He endeavours to raise his subjects against the sky for astonished admiration, and uses himself to create hybrid anthropomorphic characters that attempt to simultaneously bring together human and plant. This characters presence can be seen to stand proud like a statue covered in gold paint or perhaps singing at the top of its voice. On occasion it is represented through the use of illusive silhouettes, which draw upon the hidden microscopic aspect of his subjects. Through the use of factual illusion, William reveals a hidden world of hybrid anonymity; a fraction of the whole as both 'anything and everything'. By making use of symmetry, William attempts to bring a sublime kaleidoscopic notion of community to his work. Through extensive documentation via the photographic lens, William reveals a cross section of personalities within his subject similar to that of the human. His collected and photographed specimens have eyes, ears, mouths and feelings. The world he unearths fuels the imagination and intrigues the mind; encouraging freedom of the mind and its boundaries.







My photographic collages bring together three different sets of photographic subjects, to create a viewing experience that I hope will aid the viewer in being able to see the beautiful and unappreciated in the both the natural and industrial worlds. These three subject matters include industry, nature and the human being.

Two photographers that have influenced this project include Karl Blossfeldt and photographic partners Bernd and Hilla Becher. Blossfeldt would spend months on end searching for archetypal flora and fauna specimens. Like Blossfeldt, I have repeatedly visited locations in a bid to capture something before it is gone, at a precise moment. Blossfeldt sought to reveal the perfect example, whereas in my endeavors I attempt to capture the surreal. It is from here and with an element of photographic illusion that I search for human characteristics within my photographs. I have chosen to merge the industrial forms that exist beside the found and collected plant specimens, opting to search for appropriate subject matter and empowering them with human charac-

teristics.

The industrial forms within my collages pay homage to the photographic work of Bernd and Hilla Becher. Bringing together these man-made forms and presenting them against phallic plant specimens bring together two subjects that might not ordinarily be compared. These make for the first two elements and feature heavily with my collages.

The 'character' represented within these photographs, is a combination of three elements, plant, industry and human. The characters are often translucent in appearance, and represent the emergence of the human within my non-human subjects.

Ultimately, my work aims to raise my subject against the sky for astonished admiration, a platform for all to appreciate the unappreciated, within the vast world surrounding my chosen subjects.

Enjoy!









*Walter Benjamin.*

“Photography reveals the forms of ancient columns in the horse willow a bishop’s crozier in the ostrich fern, totem poles in tenfold enlargements of chestnut and maple shoots and gothic Tracey in the fuller’s thistle.”











A Teacher of beauty and inwardness and  
a source of the noblest delight.





## The Secret Life of Plants pt.2

### Project Abstract

#### Performance piece.

A character enters the space adorned in collaged foliage and dripping from head to toe in gold paint. A symmetrical star shaped collage of black and white flora gloriously covers this Characters modesty.

This symmetrical star details through still life representation anatomical body parts, manifested through plant form. It is through delicate, careful and lengthy editing that i have composed a series of botanical imagery, that i feel best represent this notion in a number of different ways.

An elaborate bulbous headdress precariously sits atop the head of this statuesque character. This headdress is made up of a bank of still life imagery. The central bulb is embellished with repetitive images of a 'The Tongue' an image taken from my 2012 'Still Life' series. This im-

age through photographic documentation resembles what looks like a deep veined, fury tongue. The tip of this plant sits upon this tongue resembling a head, drawing comparison between plant and man. Ferns resemble antenna, thistles are armored with fury tops and horse-tails resemble industrial skyscrapers, architectural delights that spin us around. Through echoing the Thistle the dominating aged within this world has been captured, and the succulent youth via a Dewey leaf bud. Up until this point i have only ever displayed specimens standing alone, but when displayed together as one typology during a performance they make for a thrilling spectacle.

This characters gold representation, stems from my want to raise my subject against the sky for astonished admiration, so i decided to adorn this character in microscopic foliage, and then stand its intricacies proud, tall and exposed for all to see atop a rotating platform from here I would blast smoke onto the character setting it higher than the clouds and as big as the skyscrapers

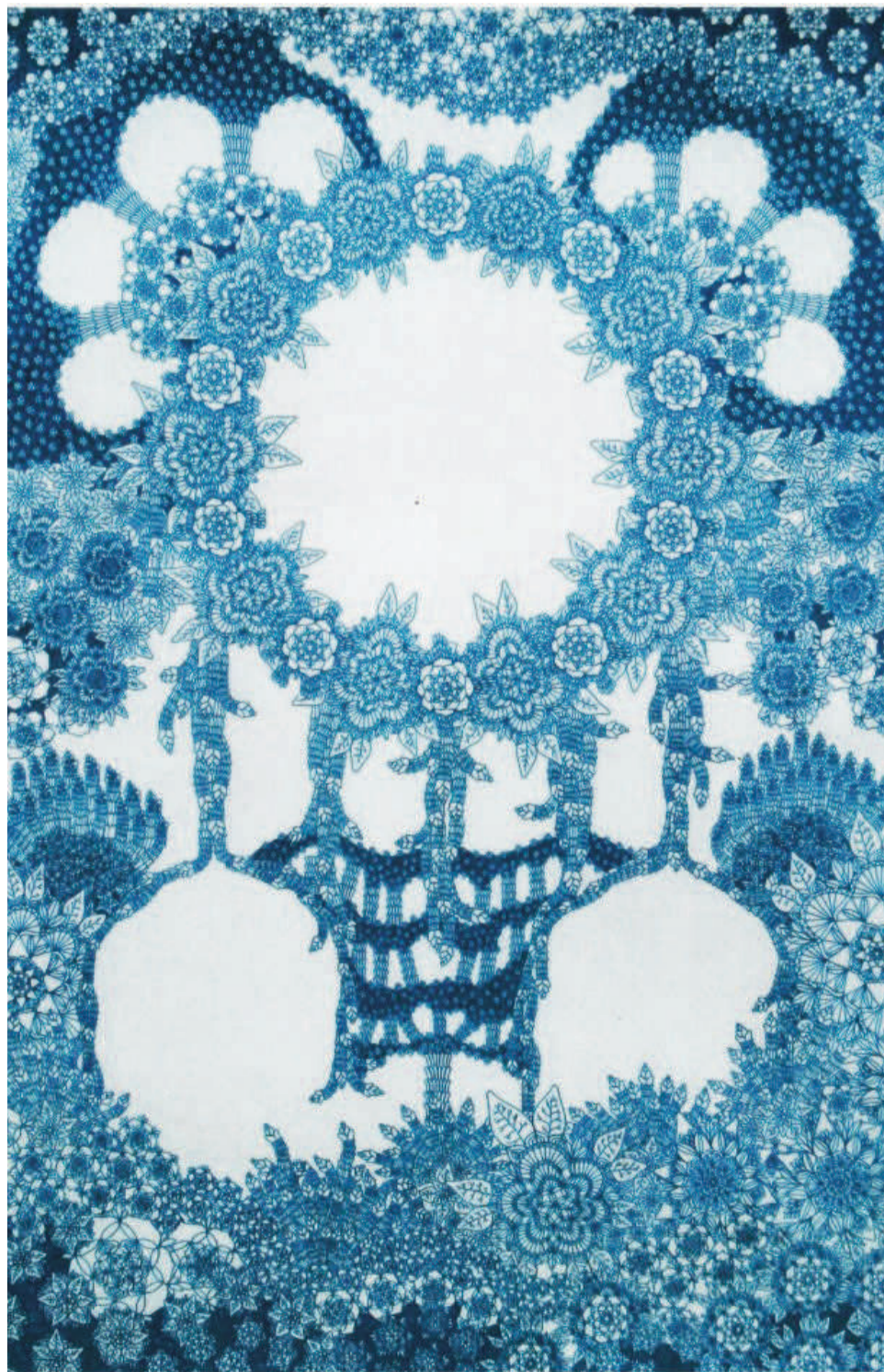
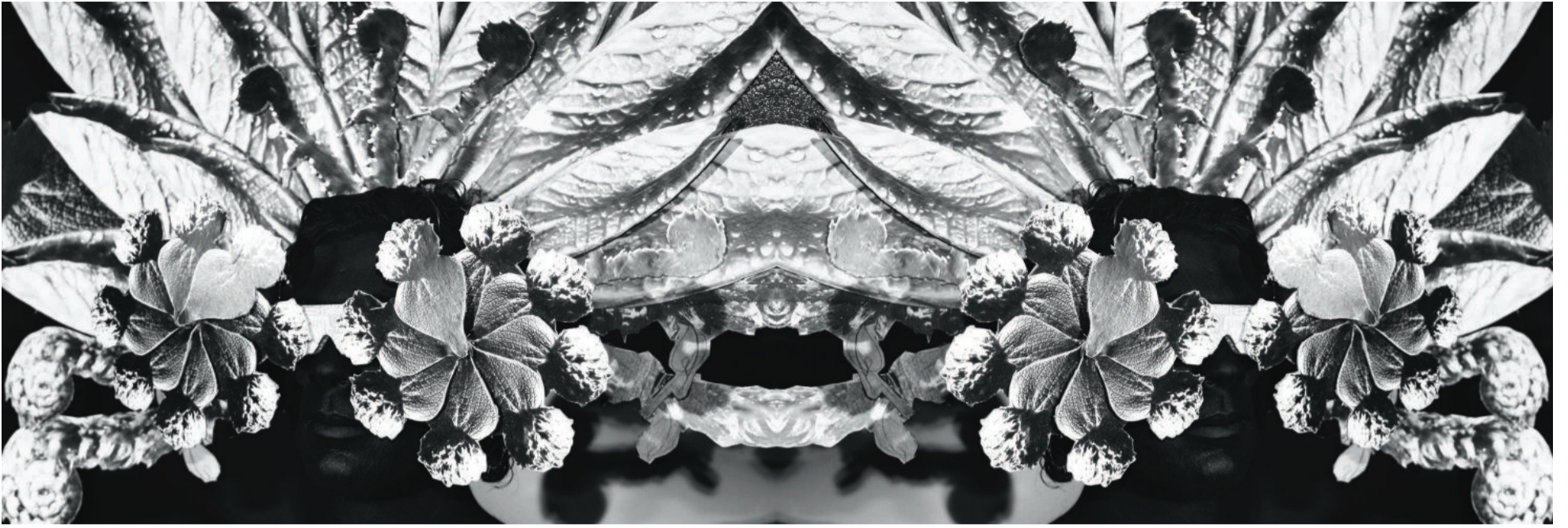
it's details grow around. It is in this environment the character sings about the plants projecting at the top of its voice preaching their intimacies and projecting their vulnerabilities. creating spectacle and wonderment in the factual, and unbelievable.

A projector, projects silhouettes of carefully collaged specimens onto the back of a piece of hung material. This collage allows the character space to perform within the silhouette to an audience standing on the other side. It is during the performance that i use my body to shadow and mimic the outlines of these specimens, or their actions as they grow. For example, like a fern and unfurling, growing, developing and eventually arching stretching my fingertips out as far as i can.

The idea to create shadows plays on the secretive aspect surrounding the intricate lives of these plants. And my exposed presence within the performance creates an interesting play between the secret and the seen.

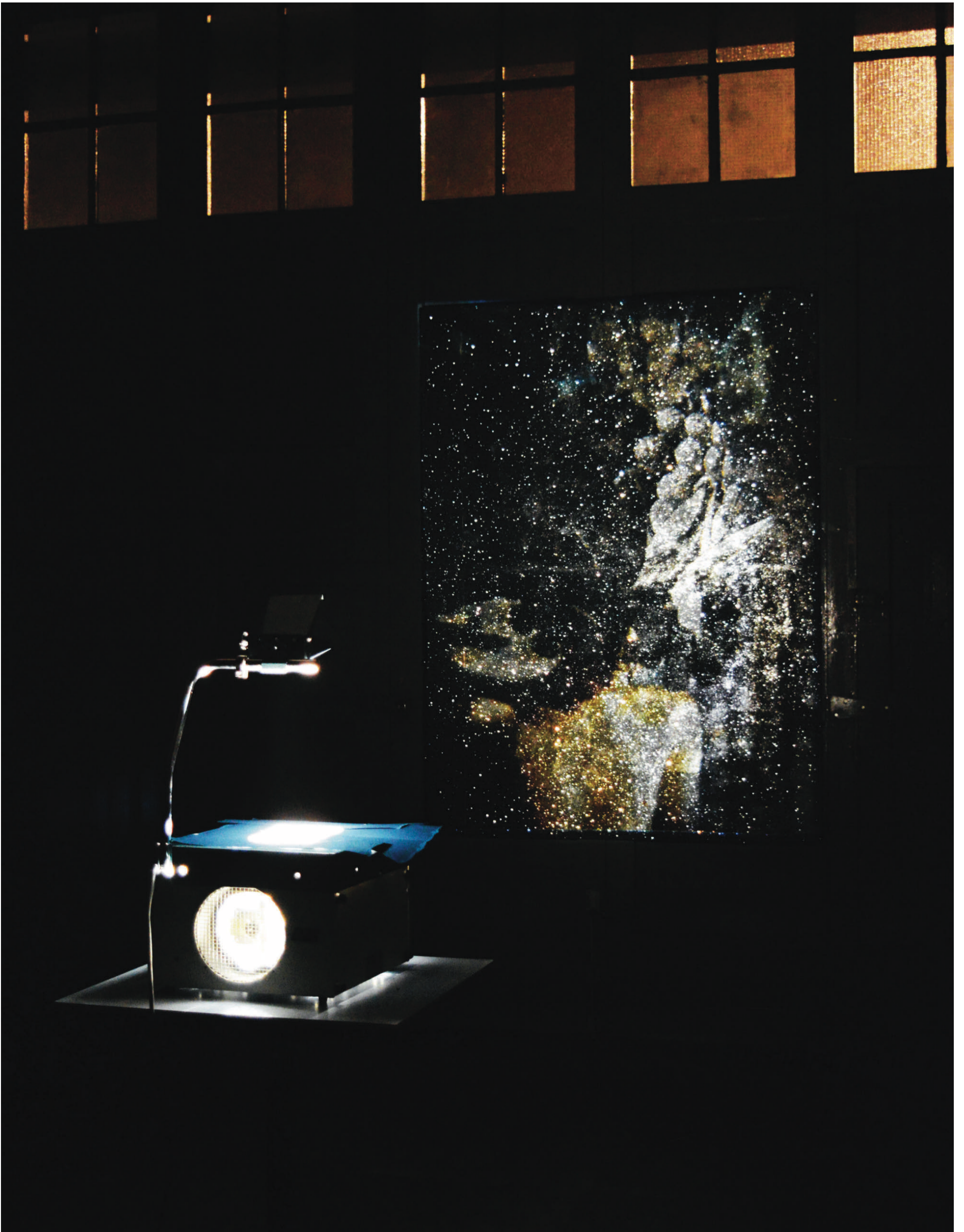
The performance ends as it started still and spinning like a Greek heroine, toned strong and important, but still and motionless, like the specimen are within their natural environments swaying in the wind.

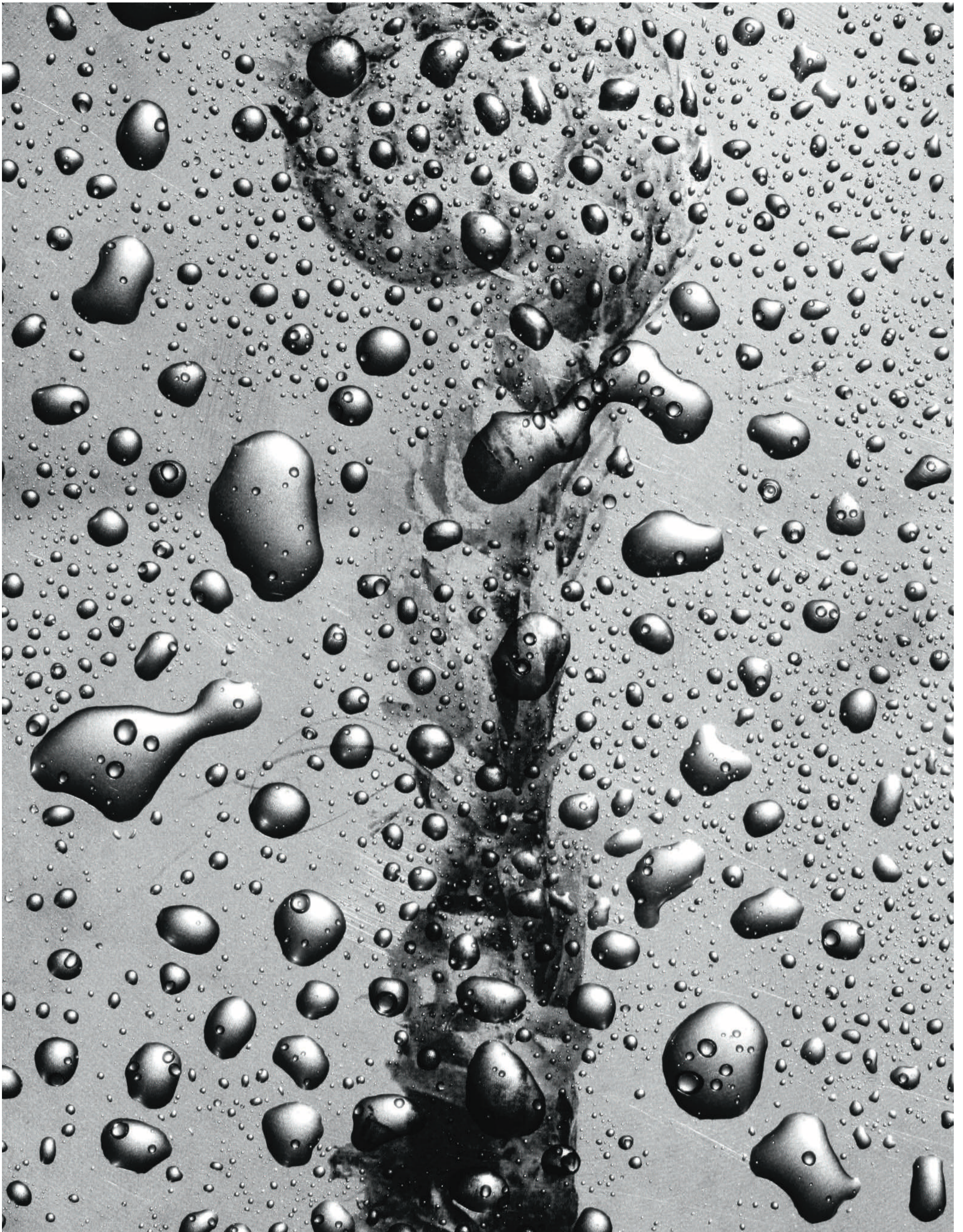




*August Endell*

“Spoke enthusiastically about the delight occasioned by the exquisite curves of blades of grass, the miraculous pitifulness of the thistles leaves and the callow youthfulness of shooting leaf buds.”







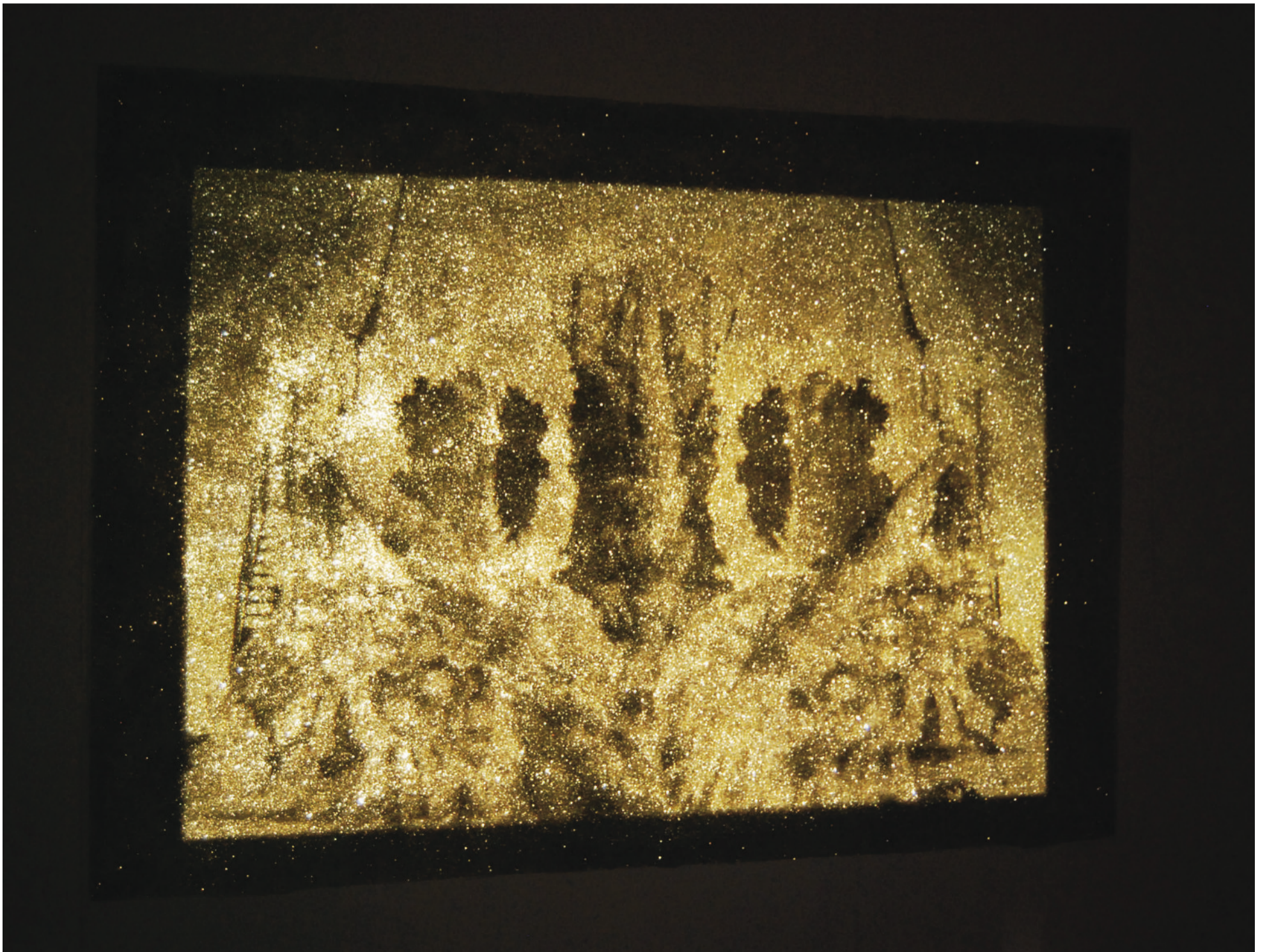
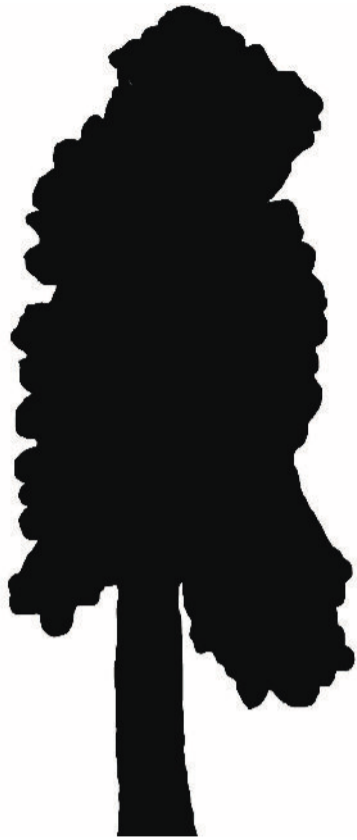


For Blossfeldt it was the plants generally and unjustly denigrated as weeds that hold the most intriguing forms.















I work with a varying number of individuals from varying backgrounds in a number of very different ways, some I have been educated with at Newcastle University and others I have encountered through a common interest in the intricate possibilities applying material to surface can offer. But all no matter what the background have an overriding interest in the otherworldly the strange and the unexplained, not just through subject matter, but through what they can create with the talent they have been blessed with, this notion pushes them and myself to want to do that 'next thing.' To build on the success of that piece, on the new discovery we did or did not make through doing it. This publication is my first foray as a recent graduate into the contemporary art stratosphere, so I thought it would be appropriate to introduce myself and what I do first. When I gain my grounding some more I would love to roll this paper out as a series, featuring the works of these other Artists and their fantastical disciplines. These will follow on from the themes presented to you within the publication, and I will call each 'The Secret Life of...

THE STRANGE BREW (T.S.B) FOLLOW ON THE TRADITION OF AMAZING graffiti FROM HULL, ORIGINAL ARTISTS, BRINGING DISTINCTIVE STYLES, and jelling together into one of the most psychedelic crews yet. T.S.B HAVE traditionally USED walls AND AEROSOLS, BUT also EXTEND their tentacles thoroughly into canvas, sculpture, and twisted side projects. They have produced a couple of zines together; low-fi production, high quality ball-point dazzlement. The crew finds its potent and humorous power in collaboration - whether laying out burners in the rain or shine, hunching in rooms freestyling furiously to maniacal records, or entertaining the masses alongside live music - they bounce off eachother's minds full of inspiration, from nature, science and dreams to a million art and music genres, from beers to mandalas, from altered states to philosophy, from flowers and trees to comics and films. Even their black and white drawings burst with colour. FREE honorary membership to all RAW ORIGINAL art and/or dusty photocopies!

Fred Cord 2014

