

Curator's Note + Artwork Description

CURATOR'S NOTE

FLORA FILE by Rick Silva

This exhibition borrows its name from William Gibson's first published short story, "Fragments of a Hologram Rose" (1977). As the story notes, when a hologram is cut into pieces, even the smallest section still contains the whole of the image. In a similar way, plant cuttings and an edition of digital works can both hold these mirroring elements of origin and multiplicity.

The artists featured in the exhibition were asked to imagine and create their own sci-fi plants, and to interpret this prompt however they like—whether it be by rendering an alien pollen, some photosynthetic architecture, or a flower whose weirdness is only revealed by its description. I invited these particular artists to this exhibition because their work already pointed towards these speculative notions of nature and time. They were also invited because of their experimental use, and creative misuse, of 3D modeling and animation. A 3D program's workspace is by default an infinite space, since as you navigate the viewport you are surrounded by a void on all sides—beyond which a sublime vastness awaits. In this way, the artists who choose to work in these programs are negotiating the infinite potentials of space and time whenever they start a new project.

Like botanists from a parallel future or an unknown world, these artists cultivate their fictions into existence. They sub-scatter seed pods, prune polygon cuttings, give their models plenty of volumetric lighting, and soak with fluid simulations. The 3D objects in this exhibition have secret pathways and telepathic tendrils. They bloom on neon skins and disperse nano mold spores through LCD screens. Like an ikebana of poisonous flowers in zero gravity, they hover in the expanse as a collection of fragmented flora files.

ARTWORK DESCRIPTION

The Blue Veil is best known for its geometric structure and ritualistic use in events such as the Cold Seance, Underveil Sightings, and Blind Wanderings. This flower has many stages: its birth stage, its flowering stage, and its mature or "fuse" stage.

When matured to its fuse state, the Blue Veil can create a welcome symbiotic relationship with its host. Benefits to the host include an ability to engage with the underveil (see note 1) through CLEAR VEIN™ technology, which allows the flower's roots to merge with the veins of the host (seen here). This allows the Blue Veil to release a steady drip of translucent fluid into the host, which can affect the skin of the host over time. Benefits enjoyed by the flower include a longevity of lifespan, and an ability to travel without rooting to its typically immobile substrate (often a rotting tree). This allows the flower to spread its jewel-like seeds near and far. The prominent seeds of the Blue Veil can be seen growing from the ends of stalks which resemble thread-like appendages. These stalks twist evenly into a spherical form (mimicking that of the crystallized sphere), with fleshy thin leaves that radiate up from the base of tendrils that allow the plant to soak in nutrients from the air. Negative consequences experienced by hosts are often debated, but some rituals associated with the flower-host relationship—such as the Blind Wandering—can result in hosts getting injured or killed, or simply disappearing.

1. It has been argued that the underveil has never existed, since sightings of the underveil reveal other flora only to those with CLEAR VEIN™ linkage, and it has been hypothesized that these are ecstatic hallucinations caused by linkage and not in fact sightings into other worlds.