

Milena Bonilla

Notes on Soils, Light and Gravity

05.09.—17.10.2026

We are delighted to present the first exhibition by Milena Bonilla (b. Bogotá, lives and works in Amsterdam) in the gallery. **Notes on Soils, Light and Gravity** gathers a constellation of recent and new works which entwine different historical temporalities departing from plant life. Bonilla traces the social, political, ecological, and economic sediments of historical sites and events by foregrounding the vegetal both as a mnemonic companion and as an epistemic subject in itself.

A new drawing installation from the *Sketching for Gardening* series marks an incarnation of long-standing plant root work in historically relevant sites across the world. Following root work in cities like Bogotá, Berlin, and Warsaw, Bonilla is currently focusing on Amsterdam, where she is researching several places of human and non-human seclusion in connection to histories of confinement, colonialism, and capitalism.

Letter to a Roosting Tree conjures the revolutionary Rosa Luxemburg, a figure that has become a recurrent subject in Bonilla's practice. The work consists of a hand painted text on cotton banner which was displayed on a horse-chestnut tree at the park in front of the former hospital, CCA Ujazdowski Castle, Warsaw, a photograph of the intervention, and a printed letter addressed to Sophie Liebknecht by Rosa Luxemburg from prison in Wrocław in 1917. The letter makes an account of a flock of crows passing and chatting among themselves up in the sky, above the prison yard where Rosa was among other prisoners; she used the onomatopoeia "Kau-Kau" for depicting the sound of the crows.

Lullabies (2026), a series of prints from the *Epistemic Barricades* series—sculptural works consisting of stone and rock fragments that the artist has grabbed from historically charged sites and wrapped in leaves and flowers of Master Plants*—further reinforce their power as their alkaloids are invoked in close association to the historical event. The fragments are mineral testimonies of Capitalism's exertion of violence across the world. The Monumento a los Héroes in Bogotá, the Palácio de Cristal in Porto, or Wall Street in New York City are a few examples. In this new iteration of the series, Bonilla has made photographic inkjet prints of a selection of sculptures and written an indication of the fragments' origin and a newly coined term that features selected minerals and alkaloids present in both the rocks and the plants respectively, invoking the presence of a symbiont between vegetal and mineral realms.

* Master Plants are sacred teacher plants used by Indigenous peoples in Abya Yala (Americas), as well as by hybrid peasant/urban communities for medicine, counselling, and the incorporation of situated knowledge.

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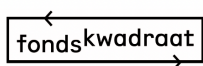
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In the backspace, the three chapters of the video project *I Am Life and Life is Beautiful* (2022 - 2023) are presented together in one channel. Bonilla visited three memorials to Rosa Luxemburg in Berlin with the aim of finding some of the plants depicted in the notebooks that compose her botanical collection. Bonilla converses with herbalist and dancer Shelley Etkin about the plants' characteristics, rubrics, healing capacities, and symbolic powers as understood from different cultures. The years during which the plants in Rosa Luxemburg's herbarium were collected mark historical events via a set of texts in the video that highlight aspects of Luxemburg's life, context, and her positioning as a political dissenter.

Milena Bonilla (b. Bogotá) is a visual artist, educator and independent researcher, living and working in Amsterdam. She is interested in practices and knowledge that propose and place particular questions about language and agency as ontological properties exclusive to humans, and how this precept is embedded in the way in which economic policies under capitalism operate. This perspective is informed by research on epistemic diversity and its colonial conditioning, as well as by notions on art as medicine.

Her work has been shown, screened and performed in the last years among others at *If I Can't Dance I Don't Want To Be Part of Your Revolution*, Amsterdam; BGSW Ustka and Slupsk; *After the Butcher*, Berlin, CCA Ujazdowski Castle, Warsaw; Galeria Municipal do Porto; Nest, The Hague; *Framer Framed*, Amsterdam; Museo del Oro Quimbaya, Armenia, Quindío (CO); Temporary Gallery, Cologne, and *Manifesta Biennial*, Les Parallèles du Sud, Marseille.

Milena Bonilla's recent research has been made in collaboration with *If I Can't Dance, I Don't Want To Be Part Of Your Revolution* and has been supported by Amsterdams Fonds voor de Kunst and Mondriaan Fonds. This exhibition has been further supported by Fonds Kwadraat.



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