

LIST OF WORKS

The Gift (2021)

three channel UHD video, 5.1 sound.

Courtesy of the artist.

Co-commissioned and co-produced by macLYON, FLAMIN - Film London Artists' Moving Image Network (with funding from Arts Council England) and steirischer herbst '19 and co-produced with Waddington Studios London.

Supported by Muzeum Sztuki in Łódź, Cooper Gallery DJCAD, University of Dundee; Northern Film School; UGM Maribor Art Gallery; Museum of Yugoslavia; United Nations Geneva; Espace Niemeyer and Palace of Youth, Warsaw.

Charm Offensive (2022)

Mixed media on paper, each 297 x 420mm, and curtain.

In collaboration with botanical illustrators.

Courtesy of the artist.

Commissioned by Dunedin Public Art Gallery.

The artist wishes to thank Marion Wassenaar, Print Studio, Dunedin School of Art.

ARCHITECTURAL ILLUSTRATIONS: [from left to right, from the top row]

Charm Offensive (Dormant Diversion)

Charm Offensive (Paths of Coercion)

Charm Offensive (Scents of Persuasion)

Charm Offensive (Natural Intervention)

Charm Offensive (The Gardens of Alternative Histories)

Charm Offensive (Ornamental Rashes of Ideology)

Charm Offensive (The Fields of Coercion / Diffuse)

Charm Offensive (Social Amplifiers / Bloom)

Charm Offensive (Symbiotic Patterns)

Charm Offensive (Rose Garden Strategies)

Charm Offensive (Flower Power)

Charm Offensive (Domesticated Revolution)

All 2022, etchings on Pescia paper. Courtesy of the artist.

BOTANICAL ILLUSTRATIONS: [from left to right, from the top row]

Charm Offensive (*Gallirallus dieffenbachia*, Sara Menon)

Watercolour and coloured pencils on paper.

Charm Offensive (*Mastichodendron sloaneum*, Bobbi Angell)

Pen and ink on paper.

Charm Offensive (*Araucaria cookii*, Sarah McNaboe)

Pen and ink on paper.

Charm Offensive (*Anisotome haastii*, Robert Niklasson)

Watercolour on paper.

Charm Offensive (*Carex solandri*, Deborah Lambkin)

Ink on paper.

Charm Offensive (*Aciphylla disffebachii*, Sandra Doyle)

Watercolour, acrylic ink and coloured pencil on paper.

Charm Offensive (*Saccoloma sloanei*, Marcelo Moreno)

Digital drawing printed on paper.

Charm Offensive (*Sloanea massonii*, Telma Cavalieri Victoria)

Coloured pencil on paper.

Charm Offensive (*Cordyline banksia*, Mafalda Paiva)

Watercolour on paper.

Charm Offensive (*Geranium solanderi*, John Pastoriza Pinol)

Pigment ink pens on 300gsm paper.

Charm Offensive (*Pharmium cookianum*, Iñaki Diez Cortaberría)

Watercolour and pencil on paper.

Charm Offensive (*Hibbertia orientalis*, Silvana Montecchiesi)

Graphite on paper.

All 2022, courtesy of the artist.

Photography: Justin Spiers

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29.10.22 – 12.02.23

Exhibition Partner



Charm Offensive JASMINA CIBIC

EXHIBITION GUIDE

[JASMINA CIBIC *The Gift* 2021, three channel UHD video, 5.1 sound (film still). Courtesy of the artist. Co-commissioned and co-produced by macLYON, FLAMIN - Film London Artists' Moving Image Network (with funding from Arts Council England) and steirischer herbst '19 and co-produced with Waddington Studios London. Supported by Muzeum Sztuki in Łódź, Cooper Gallery DJCAD, University of Dundee; Northern Film School; UGM Maribor Art Gallery; Museum of Yugoslavia; United Nations Geneva; Espace Niemeyer and Palace of Youth, Warsaw.]

[JASMINA CIBIC *The Gift* 2021, three channel UHD video, 5.1 sound (film still). Courtesy of the artist. Co-commissioned and co-produced by macLYON, FLAMIN - Film London Artists' Moving Image Network (with funding from Arts Council England) and steirischer herbst '19 and co-produced with Waddington Studios London. Supported by Muzeum Sztuki in Łódź, Cooper Gallery DJCAD, University of Dundee; Northern Film School; UGM Maribor Art Gallery; Museum of Yugoslavia; United Nations Geneva; Espace Niemeyer and Palace of Youth, Warsaw.]

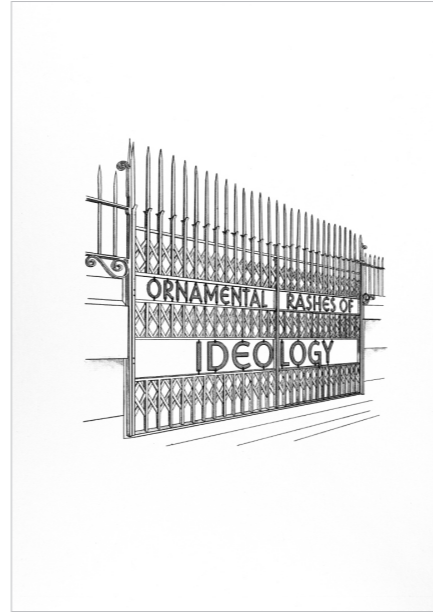
INTRODUCTION

Charm Offensive is the first solo exhibition by London-based artist Jasmina Cibic (b. 1979 Ljubljana, Slovenia) to be held in Aotearoa New Zealand. Working across film, performance and installation, Cibic's practice explores the relationships between culture and political power within both historical and contemporary frames. Art and architecture become tools to highlight and reconsider notions of soft power, nation building and the deployment of political agendas and ideologies. Bringing Cibic's major three-channel film *The Gift* (2021) together with a new site-specific installation, *Charm Offensive* (2022), this exhibition is shaped around the concept of gifting – raising questions about cultural gifting as a tool for power and political dominance.

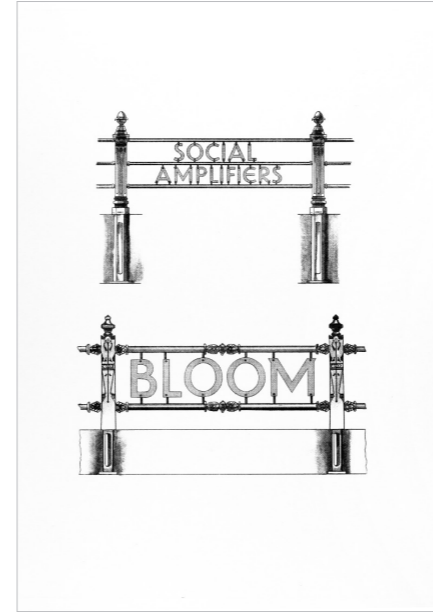
The Gift is a dystopian drama and consolidates decades of Cibic's research into soft power, with all the film's dialogue drawn directly from archival letters, transcripts and records from key moments of European crises in the 20th century. The work follows an artist, a diplomat and an engineer as they compete to determine a gift, a symbol, that will realign society and heal a fractured nation in a time of crisis. With the expectation that the gift will be 'politically adequate and aesthetically impressive', the three men present their ideas to four judges who are based on Franklin D. Roosevelt's concept of the Four Freedoms: The Freedom from Fear, from Want, of Speech and of Worship. The film's locations, including the French Communist Headquarters, Paris; the Palace of Nations, Geneva; and the Palace of Culture and Science in Warsaw, are all political gifts themselves.

Charm Offensive delves into the politics and gifting of names, as an act of colonisation and political coding. Plants play an important role in the forming of a national landscape. Many of the Latin taxonomic names of plant species reflect the botanists and imperial explorers who are credited with their discovery in Western science, such as Hans Sloane, Joseph Banks, James Cook, George Hibbert and Carl Linnaeus. Acting as agents of empire, these namesakes become tools of colonisation and political authority. In *Charm Offensive*, Cibic has subverted this process, collaborating with a group of botanical illustrators from around the world to create images using only the Latin plant name as the reference point. Alongside these are etchings of fences and barriers that are drawn from architectural plans for botanical gardens – sites that were traditionally created for the collection, research and display of exotic plant species. They also incorporate excerpts from texts that have been extracted from the botanical context and redeployed within political and diplomatic language.

JASMINA CIBIC works in film, performance, and installation, exploring the intertwinements of state power, culture, and gender constructs. She represented Slovenia at the 55th Venice Biennial with her project *For Our Economy and Culture*. Recent solo exhibitions include *Most Favoured Nation*, Museum der Moderne Salzburg (2022); *Stagecraft*, maCLYON (2021/22); *The Palace*, Museum Sztuki Łódź (2021); and *The Foundation of Endeavour*, Museum of Contemporary Art Ljubljana (2021). Cibic's films have been screened at London Film Festival, Whitechapel Gallery, CCA Montreal, Pula Film Festival, and HKW Berlin, among others. Cibic was the winner of the MAC International Ulster Bank and Charlottenborg Fonden awards (2016), the B3 Biennial of the Moving Image Award (2020) and the Jarman Award (2021).



Charm Offensive
(*Ornamental Rashes of Ideology*) 2022
Etching on Pescia paper.



Charm Offensive
(*Social Amplifiers / Bloom*) 2022
Etching on Pescia paper.



Charm Offensive (*Geranium solanderi*,
John Pastoriza Pinol) 2022
Pigment ink pens on 300gsm paper.



Charm Offensive (*Cordyline banksii*,
Mafalda Paiva) 2022
Watercolour on paper.

ARTIST STATEMENT

Charm Offensive aims to address the colonial violence imposed by national and political powers both on nature and culture. The project is comprised from a series of illustrations of plants that bear the names of the first European colonisers and botanists that became agents of empire and as such facilitated a global information exchange that often contested territories and their resources. Through this process, along with a newly invented Linnaean taxonomy, local knowledge was erased and local names annulled. As such, botany became complicit in the destruction of worlds taking place within the colonial project.

In *Charm Offensive*, the historical strategies of European 're-discovery' of species is reversed. Working with namesakes of Hans Sloane, Joseph Banks, James Cook, Carl Linnaeus and George Hibbert, each of the collaborating botanical illustrators were only given the Latin plant name to use as the reference for its proposed appearance, altering the standard workflow of their practice. These illustrations sit alongside a series of engravings of iron fences and barriers from botanical gardens, whose networks served as laboratories for the acclimation and exchange of economically valuable plants. Instead of names of the gardens themselves, the iron bars bear phrases drawn from botany that have been directly borrowed by the political and diplomatic context.

The spaces of political and national power continue to thrive on botanical depictions and floral arrangements as 'unobtrusive' politically – either as floral attributes to conference rooms or 'benign' still lives decorating the spaces of political power. But it is the darker side of political servitude of plants that these very spaces should be debating, a side that is exponentially relevant for our society today.

JOHN PASTORIZA PINOL: *Geranium solanderi*

The proposed illustration of a geranium species, named after Daniel Solander, derives from the complicated histories of Indigenous Australians and how the landscape was documented and altered to accommodate colonial ideals. Solander was a university educated scientist and this plate conveys the strictness of scientific observation and documentation which he embodied. The stippling effects on the geranium flowers reflect Aboriginal painting and the layout of the plate is a nod to the solander box. This book-form case was invented by Solander whilst working at the British Museum and is used for storing natural history objects and manuscripts.

John Pastoriza Pinol is a contemporary artist based in Melbourne, Australia. His work is included in the 'Highgrove Florilegium' and 'Transylvania Florilegium', projects created under the aegis of the H.R.H Prince of Wales' Charitable Foundation and numerous public collections including National Gallery of Victoria; Art Gallery of Ballarat; Hunt Institute, USA; Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, UK; Royal Botanic Gardens, Melbourne; RMIT University and the Collection of Alisa and Isaac M. Sutton.

MAFALDA PAIVA: *Cordyline banksii*

This Cordyline is a namesake of Joseph Banks, who combined a passion for botanical knowledge with a vast inherited fortune. Becoming an agent of the British Empire, he collected thousands of specimens previously unknown in Europe on his voyage through the Pacific with James Cook. The illustrator imagined this Cordyline as a mixture of the two plants known to her from the family: *Cordyline australis* and the *Cordyline fruticosa*, creating an imaginary hybrid between the two, native to the territories explored and catalogued by Banks.

Mafalda Paiva (MA "Scientific Illustration", ISEC and University of Évora) is the resident Illustrator at the Lisbon Archaeology Center, the Museum of the Lisbon Sappers Firemen Regiment and the scientific illustrator of the zoology research team at the University of Antofagasta, Chile. She has published dozens of works in scientific publications worldwide and was awarded the 2nd Prize Casa das Ciências 2013, Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation.