Taraxacum Officianale:

Growth, Growth, Growth!



Division of Labour Gallery
Holy Trinity Church
London

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For the title of this exhibition, Hilary Jack subverts the political and economic slogan “Growth, Growth, Growth!”. In doing so she questions a system in which economic expansion is prioritised over the well-being of nature, community and the Earth itself.

The work in this exhibition reflects on the relationships between everyday objects and the natural world. A wooden chair reminds us it was once a tree; a Duchampian bicycle wheel has been manufactured from the roots of dandelions; a series of collages juxtapose rural landscapes with scenes of the industrial extraction of natural resources, that drive environmental degradation and social inequality – a contradiction known as The Paradox of Plenty; a set of found gardening tools point toward an alternative possibility - a future rooted in care, cultivation, and regeneration.

In this particular space, a de-consecrated church, the artworks take on new meaning. I am You is made with a chapel chair, the found scythe is embellished with a biblical quote We Reap What We Sow, bronze casts of dandelion plants remind us of Spring growth, and a vintage jar of dandelion roots entitled Harvest are a reminder of the liturgical cycle of church festivities, rituals relating to birth, life and death.





Cash Crop, Dandelion plant
cast in bronze cast, 2026



Dandelions are often seen as weeds when in fact they have many uses as essential early nectar for insects, for teas, tisanes and medicines, and now as a cash crop for the production of dandelion rubber tyres. In this artwork a dandelion is cast in bronze, the choice of material for memorial and celebratory civic statues. Using bronze in this way thereby elevates the humble dandelion to hero status with a monetary value.

Exhibition Text
by Nat Pitt, Division of Labour

On curating; The Taraxacum Officinalle Growth! Growth! Growth! A solo show by Hilary Jack Ideas of fetish within disruptive modes of capital, through the lens of the Duchampian readymade.

Hilary and I have been discussing feminism, conceptual art and the environment for some time. Her project has grown out of these intersecting concerns: environmentalism and an anger about patriarchal systems of environmental control alongside an enduring fascination with the readymade. The Taraxacum Officinalle, at one stage alternatively titled Piss-the-Bed, takes the humble dandelion as its central subject. Through her research, Jack discovered that rubber production, traditionally dependent upon latex tapped from the Para rubber tree, may be partially replaced through the mass cultivation and harvesting of dandelion roots.

The works in the exhibition consist of three readymades, a collage and two bronzes. The central piece, The Taraxagum Officinalle, adapts Marcel Duchamp's Bicycle Wheel and stool, currently on show at the Museum of Modern Art, NY. Jack's détournement lies in the inclusion of a pneumatic bicycle tyre manufactured from dandelion-root rubber by the German company Continental AG.

Jack is not alone in reproducing or reworking Duchampian "classics". In her lecture The Duchampian Phallus, Amelia Jones discusses Hannah Wilke's performance C'est la Vie Rrose, a feminist inversion of Duchamp's notorious 1963 chess game with Eve Babitz at the Pasadena Museum. Wilke inserts two women chess players; as Jones writes, Wilke presents "the female nude as both author of and sexual object of both male and potentially female desire within the piece," directly confronting the misogyny embedded within Duchamp's image-making. Jones also points to Sherrie Levine's Fountain: After Duchamp (1991), in which Duchamp's infamous urinal is reconstructed in bronze. Levine's gesture emphasises the transformation of the mass-produced object into an artwork with immense aesthetic and exchange value. The readymade becomes not simply an object of institutional critique, but also a fetish object circulating within the economies of contemporary art.

Jones continues by describing Duchamp as both seductive object and authorial subject: "the quintessential desired object," whose persona animates the discourse surrounding his work. Similarly, artist Monica Bonvicini has described Duchamp's use of unusual materials and objects as a form of fetishism expressive of masculine desire, while also recognising the humour and irreverence of his treatment of sex and erotics. There are links that emerge in Jack's exhibition

that I cannot articulate; a connection between art consumption and fetish in relation to the readymade and the logic of disruptive operations seen in advanced capitalism. The readymade demonstrates how value can be reassigned through context and circulation; contemporary capitalism performs a similar operation upon nature itself, continually relocating, substituting and reclassifying materials according to industrial demand. Here the dandelion becomes emblematic of what Mark Fisher understood as capitalism's libidinal economy: a system driven not only by production and extraction, but by the continual stimulation and capture of desire. The fetishism surrounding the tyre, black rubber, speed, movement, technological potency, reveals how deeply eroticised the material culture of industrial modernity remains. This moves the work beyond a purely Marxist critique of labour or exchange value. The tyre becomes desirable not simply because it is useful, but because capitalism invests objects with fantasy and affective charge.

Jack's adaptation of Duchamp ultimately suggests that the readymade was never simply an artistic strategy, but also a model for capitalism's own operations: the continual reassignment of value onto objects, materials and bodies. In this context, The Taraxagum Officinalle reads simultaneously as a critique of ecological extraction, patriarchal systems of control, and contemporary art's own fetishisation of disruption, innovation and... Growth! Growth! Growth!



Harvest, dandelion roots, vintage jar, plinth, 2026. A vintage jar holds a small crop of dandelion roots which can be used in the production of dandelion serum, tisanes, teas and for medicinal purposes.



I am You, found chapel chair, tree branch and leaves, 2021

A found oak chapel chair appear to have a sapling tree growing within it. Dead leaves are scattered on the ground as if fallen from its branches remind us of the passing of the seasons. The title I am You remind us that the found chair and the fused branch are one and the same. The chair was once a live oak tree, felled and fashioned into a chair for worshippers to sit in rows in a chapel.



We Reap What We Sow, found Victorian hand scythe, with hand painted text, 2026

This Victorian hand scythe would once have been used at Harvest time to manually cut fields of wheat and crops by teams of farm labourers. The scythe has been inscribed by hand by a professional sign writer with the words “we reap what we sow”. Taken from The Bible the inscription reminds us that everything we do in life has consequences. In this deconsecrated church the work references the location and the particular times in which we are living as we face a climate emergency and what scientists tell us is new era The Antropocene where all life on earth has been affected by previous human activities on our planet




NEWS







The Paradox of Plenty, collages of found archival material and found post cards, 2026

For this series of collages images from National Geographic Magazines, encyclopaedia and postcards have been collaged together juxtaposing rural landscapes with scenes of the industrial extraction of natural resources such as oil, gas, and minerals. The title The Paradox of Plenty, throws a spotlight on the fact that countries rich in natural resources and assets are often left in poverty as extraction drives environmental degradation, corruption and social inequality while International corporations and western countries benefit economically.

A Review
by Paul Carey Kent

This is triple nice: Castor Gallery's former space in Holy Trinity Church, Islington, continues to find good use; Nat Pitt's adventurous and socially-engaged Worcester-based Division of Labour gets a London outpost for May-June; and the humble dandelion takes centre stage in Hilary Jack's presentation.

Her title – 'The Taraxacum Officinale' – suggests that it's a biennale-style event in the art calendar, and her sub-title – 'Growth, Growth, Growth!' – tells us that the officinale will regularly question a system in which economic expansion is prioritised over the well-being of nature and community. Taken straight, though, Taraxacum officinale is the scientific name of the dandelion, the 'official' element in the Latin recognising its medical use.

Jack goes beyond that value to focus on the fact that the serum derived from dandelion roots can be used to make rubber – and switching from the current dominance of imported rubber tree production would greatly reduce the industry's environmental impact.

Her demonstration piece is a dandelion rubber version of Duchamp's readymade bicycle wheel. A vintage jar of roots is also presented, together with a line of dandelion seeds at the entrance – I don't think I was alone in not noticing that 'Line' was an artwork as I came in! And you can pick up a pack of seeds... That leads us back to my first images, 'Cash Crop' I and II, 2026: Jack has made bronzes which, consistent with that enhanced status, memorialise the dandelion in the manner of statues of 'the great'. Accordingly, they're not hyper-realist, as we don't confuse statues with people (go to @tonymatelli for the bronze plant as exhibition deception).

The gallery texts also point out the positioning of Jack's works in the traditions of conceptual art, and – given the dominance of men in the tyre industry as well as in memorial representations – the inbuilt critique of patriarchy. All that I missed was a nice cup of dandelion tea...



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Hilary Jack is an interdisciplinary British artist with a conceptually driven research-based practice. Her work has an activist element and spans sculptural installations, large scale public artworks and collage. Hilary Jack has built a reputation for presenting critically engaged challenging artworks which draw out the politics of place and comment on socio-political and environmental issues. She works with a small team, consisting of art technicians, architects, ceramicists, a structural engineer, fabricators, a bronze caster, gardeners and arbore-culturalists.

Hilary Jack has worked across the UK and Internationally. Her work has been acquired by private and public collections and has featured in many publications. Hilary Jack is founding director of Paradise Works where between 2016-2023 she held the role of Creative Director. She works with Extinction Rebellion and environmental movements on creative actions.

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