

MARIA THEREZA ALVES Seeds of change (Bristol, Dunkirk, Marseilles)

Seeds of Change (1999-ongoing), 1999-2012

Seeds of Change is an ongoing investigation of ballast flora in the port cities of Euro- pe which has been realized for Marseilles, Reposaari in Finland, Dunkirk, Exeter/Topsham, Liverpool, and Bristol.

Material such as stones, earth, sand, wood, bricks and whatever else was economic- ally expedient was used as ballast to stabilize merchant sailing ships according to the weight of the cargo. Upon arrival in port, the ballast was unloaded, carrying with it seeds from the area where ballast had been collected. The source of these seeds can be any of the ports and regions (and their regional trading partners) involved in trade with Europe.

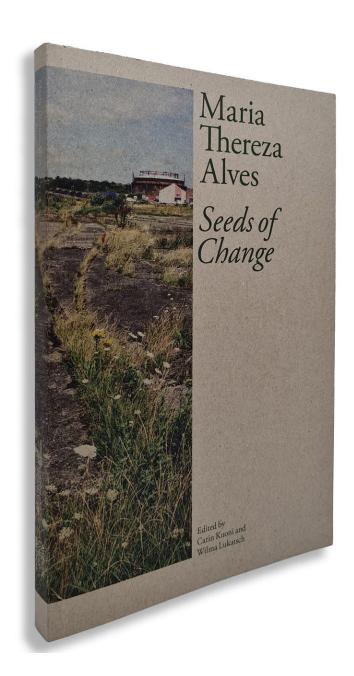
Seeds contained in ballast may germinate and grow, potentially bearing witness to a far more complex narrative of world history than is usually presented by orthodox ac- counts. Although they have the potential to alter our notions of the identity of place as belonging to a defined bioregion, the historical importance of these seeds is rarely acknowledged. Seeds of Change is, therefore, designed to question those discourses that define the geographical and 'natural' history of place: At what moment do seeds become 'native'? What are the socio-political histories of place that determine the framework of belonging?

The botanist, Dr. Heli Jutila writes, "Although seeds seem to be dead, they are in fact alive and can remain vital in soil for decades, and even hundreds of years in a state of dor- mancy." Some of these seeds have already germinated; others, given the right conditions, still retain the potential to germinate.

Seeds of Change does not duplicate scientific work within an 'art' context but rather contributes with original research by locating historical ballast sites and ballast flora. Local archives are first researched for evidence and then ballast sites are located with the aid of historical map references. From these sites, samples of earth are taken and potted and the seeds germinate.

Seeds of Change is a proposal for a garden which would be planted with hundreds of samples collected from historical ballast sites. The garden would serve as a forum at which individuals can actively participate in and develop the direction of the artwork.

Local residents, some originally from rural regions of their countries which were involved in trade, can provide expert information on the origins of the plants. The residents along with the scientific community can cooperate in identifying the ballast flora which have arrived in European ports for centuries.



Seeds of change, 2023 edited by Carin Kuoni and Wilma Lukatch published by Amherst College Press and the Vera List Center for Art and Politics, The New School, 244 pages

Seeds of change: Bristol, 2007-2012 frame: 125 x 240 cm (49,21 x 94,48in.)

photos, text, map, 2 frames

photographies, texte, plan, 2 cadres

1 ex + 1 AP; ed.1

ALVE14074

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exhibitions:

- Fragile Earth, MIMA Middlesbrough Institute of Modern Art, Middlesbrough, UK, 2019
- El largo camino a Xico (1991-2015), (cur. Pedro del Llano), CAAC, Sevilla, Spain, 2015
- Le Pont, Musée d'Art Conteporain (MAC), Marseille, France, 2013

publications:

- Seeds of change, Carin Kuoni and Wilma Lukatch, 2023, p.109-134
- Un Art Ecologique, Création Plasticienne et Anthropocène, Le Bord de l'Eau - La Muette, 2018, page 154
- El largo camino a Xico: Maria Thereza Alves 1991-2015, Sternberg Press, Berlin, 2017, pp. 108-109
- Seeds of change: A Floating Ballast See Garden, 2015





MARIA THEREZA ALVES

MICHEL REIN PARIS/BRUSSELS









Les graines du changement : Un jardin flottant de graines de lest

Le jardin flottant a été réalisé en rénovant une barge désaffectée sur laquelle ont été plantées des graines de plantes de lest documentées, qui étaient arrivées à Bristol. Il est ouvert aux visites dans le Port de Bristol.



Seeds of change: Bristol, 2007-2012

commission work: Bristol City Council in conjunction with Arnolfini Gallery 2012 - 2016 (solo project)

The history of Bristol sprouts along its port. A flora written by the botanist Cecil I. Sandwith mentions sites where plants from North America, Africa and continental Europe have been found on ballast which was unloaded in Wapping Quay, Grove Quay, and between Avonmouth and Shirehampton.

Ballast such as sand, stones, earth, bricks and whatever else was economically expedient and easily available would be especially needed with light weight cargo which could leave the ship floating dangerously above its water-line and therefore liable to capsize or as a result of uneven distribution of variously weighted cargo which might cause the ship to tilt to one side. Along with the ballast which was picked up in any port of any of the trade partners in the Americas, Asia, Africa, and other European countries, seeds accidentally came and were unloaded in port upon arrival. Some sprouted and grew and became part of the English landscape.

Through local archives Alves located ballast sites, removed samples of earth from these sites, germinated the seeds in the sample and researched historical records for mention of ballast flora.

In 2007, Alves presented Seeds of Change:Bristol at the Arnolfini Gallery with a proposal for a Ballast Garden which would exhibit historical ballast flora while serving as a public forum for active investigations and participation in the history of Bristol between its residents (some originally from the ports that trade with Bristol) and the scientific community who can collaborate in identifying the ballast flora which have arrived in Bristol from around the world and their contributions along with other non-endemic plants in the development of the English landscape.

In 2012, Alves was commissioned by Bristol City Council to make a ballast garden on a disused barge in Bristol's Harbour. A five-year program was organized with scientists, artists, musicians, preformers and writers on the Floating Ballast Seed Garden.

The Floating Ballast Seed Garden is an attempt to re-establish the histories of complexities of ballast flora and the potential of individual histories that these plants are witnesses to, previously isolated from their intimate connection to the economic and social history of Bristol.

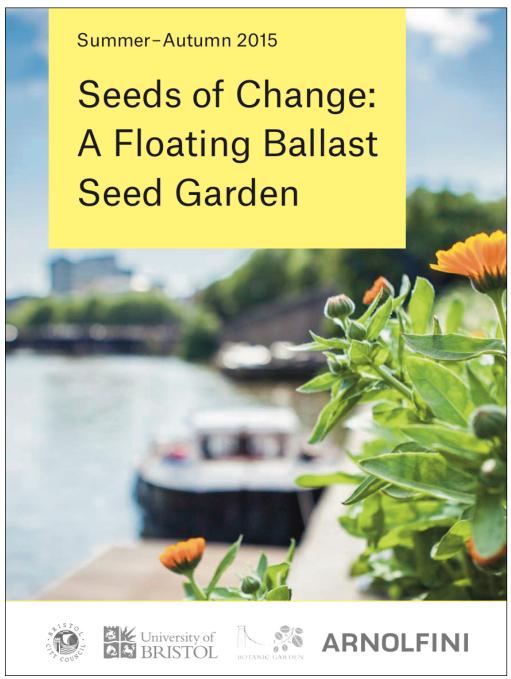


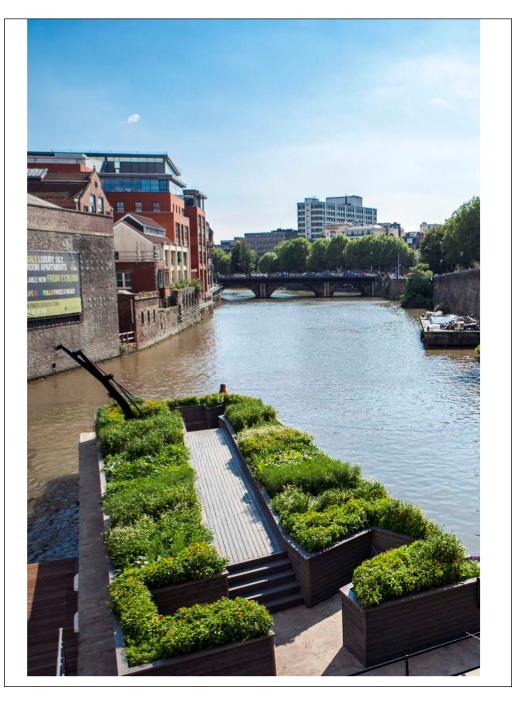






Seeds of change: Bristol, 2007-2012 MICHEL REIN PARIS/BRUSSELS





Seeds of change: A Floating Ballast See Garden, 2015

MARIA THEREZA ALVES

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Seeds of change: Dunkirk, 2005 frame: 125 x 240 cm (49,21 x 94,48in.) photos, text, map, 2 frames photographies, texte, plan, 2 cadres 1 ex + 1 AP; ed.1 ALVE08010

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- Seeds of change, Carin Kuoni and Wilma Lukatch, 2023, p.101-108
- El largo camino a Xico: Maria Thereza Alves 1991-2015, Sternberg Press, Berlin, 2017, p. 100-101





MARIA THEREZA ALVES





Une Proposition à la Ville de Dunkerque

Dunkerque, une ville construite sur des marais a, par conséquent, une relatiospatiale à son port, à l'eau et aux sables ; une relation en constante évolution. Du fai de cette ambiguité géographique particulière, son paysage est facilement façonn par les changements.

Depais Louis XIV Dunkerque a comm d'énormes constructions et développements. Elle a aussi uits de destruction consédérable permada ne sperre. De partie de port sont controlles, princées, enlevées et une nouvelle construction commence. Et out le temps, des tas de terre, de sable et et une nouvelle construction commence. Et out le temps, des tas de terre, de sable et de pierres sont déplacé d'une partie du port à une autre, pour une autre uillée ou pour laisse et la place, rebocalisant aimi les histoires des graines vers de nouvelles zonc désinnées de leur ouver histoires déviannées. Les lous dévignent ut hos condévés autre.

La contraction et la destruction du port, des routes et des autoroutes et des bâtiment forment des not ématériarse, qui outérblessé d'un enfond à un naire à Damierque En même temps d'autres matériarse sont aments été que de la terre, de la pière du sable. Quelles sont le histoires de graine sepécifiques à Dunkerque, perdiera que la cerre de Dunkerque est défigiales (* Mais unais quelle histoires intéressante

L'artise soulaire proposer un pare qui serait ouvert pour recevoir des cédantiflors de tos de matériaux qui sont en rum d'être enlevés, simis que pour des échantiflors de matériaux qui sont introduits dans la ville. Les échantiflors recueillis dans le part seraient disposibles pour de fatures études de l'histoire de Dunkerque. L'histoire de sa terre.

© Maria Thereza Alves, 20





Seeds of change: Dunkirk, 2005

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Dunkirk 2005

By the 14th century, Dunkirk was trading with Gouda, Delft and Weide in Holland, also Bremen, the Nordic countries and England.

Although a conventional history of Dunkirk does cite trade with England, Dunkirk received ships from over 50 ports in Britain, including ports in Scotland and Ireland. Further study would be necessary to determine the port of origin of the ships that arrived in these British ports and therefore their possible influence on the ballast flora in Dunkirk.

Later Dunkirk expanded its trade to include the Mediterranean, the Americas, the Caribbean, Asia, Africa, Australia, New Zealand and Oceania.

And the possibilities of the origin of ballast used in ships sailing to Dunkirk were to become even more intricate since trade with Spain would also include the 32 countries in its empire which could have also contributed to the arrival of ballast seeds in Dunkirk.

Even countries without a port, such as Austria could possibly influence ballast flora in Dunkirk when in the mid 18th century it ruled over areas with shipping trade such as Ypres, Furnes, Nieuwport, Ostend, Bruges, and Ghent. And then there are the canals that link Dunkirk to the south of France and to neighbouring regions in the west and also to Belgium in the east. These canals also serve to spread ballast, seeds and their history much further then the original point of introduction.

In the late 1800's the botanist Dr. Bouly de Lesdain documented "non-native" plants in the Dunkirk that originally come from Asia, Africa, Australia, the USA, India, tropical Africa, the tropical zone of the Mediterranean, tropical America and extra-tropical South America. Some of these plants continue grow there.





ballast sites located in the Port of Dunkirk

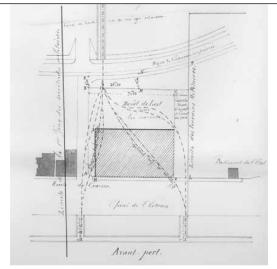
The first mention of a ballast depot in the archives is in the Bassin du Commerce a which was on the dock of the town between the Carenage pontoon and the construction yard.

Today the former ballast depot is located between Rue Faulconnier and Rue du Marechal French on the Quai des Hollandais.



Seeds of change: Dunkirk, 2005

MICHEL REIN PARIS/BRUSSELS



The Bureau du lestage et du delestage, the major ballast depot of the Port of Dunkirk, was located in the Avant Port between the Quai d'Estran and the dike, just behind the Huitriere building.



Today it is more or less in the working area of local fishermen, Quai d'Armement Nord on Port Plaissance. But most of the area was removed for the building of Port Plaissance.



On Dock I,

wine in wooden barrels were imported from North Africa while sugar was unloaded from the Antilles and Cuba.



Botanist Jean Claude Brunell pointed out two non-native plants growing across from Dock I, one from South Africa and the other from India.

How did their histories become connected with sugar and wine?



Seeds of change: Dunkirk, 2005

MICHEL REIN PARIS/BRUSSELS

Just met colc pipe por see: Soil Eng Med

Just outside the Museu Portraire, which was formerly a warehouse for tobacco imported from the colony of Virginia, a trench was opened for new pipes on the Quai de Citadelle. Guano was also imported and unloaded on this quay. Birds eat lots of seeds. Soil samples were taken in the trench. Soil and therefore seeds was imported through England from the fertile island of Androlan in the Mediterranean.



Ballast was used as landfill for the foundation of the Chantier de France, a navel shipyard, now demolished, and where a school and public housing will be constructed.

For Seeds of Change Project for Dunkirk, Maria Thereza Alves proposed that a park would be built that would be open to receive not only samples of piles of materials that are being removed from the city but also for samples of materials that are being introduced into the city. These samples gathered in the park would be available for future studies of the history of Dunkirk - the history of its earth.



MARIA THEREZA ALVES

MICHEL REIN PARIS/BRUSSELS

Seeds of change: Marseilles, 1999-2000 frame: 117 x 216 cm (46,06 x 85,03 in.) photos, text, map, frame photographies, texte, plan, cadre 1 ex + 1 AP; ed.1 ALVE14073

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- Seeds of change, Carin Kuoni and Wilma Lukatch, 2023, p.17-46
- El largo camino a Xico : Maria Thereza Alves 1991-2015, Sternberg Press, Berlin, 2017, p. 76-77



MARIA THEREZA ALVES



Seeds of change: Marseilles, 1999-2000 MICHEL REIN PARIS/BRUSSELS

Marseilles 1999-2000



Vieux Port of Marseilles

For two thousand years, seeds arriving from regions trading with Marseilles, ranging from Norway to South Africa and from Mexico to Vietnam have been accumulating along the corners of the port of Marseilles - - - without being noticed. Seeds of Change is an attempt to find these seeds.



flora in the Vieux Port of Marseilles



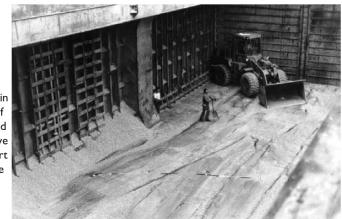
A new depot was built in 1824 between a shipyard, a construction site and the Pierre de Marbre Quay. None of these sites exist today. At the port, a likely place is a parking lot with ancient walls built high, an area large enough to build a ship in.

ballast site

Trading partners of Marseilles from 1200 to the present:

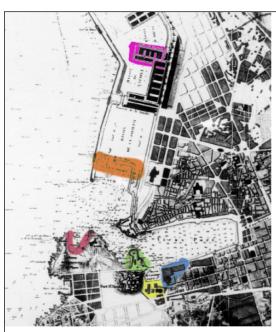
The Levant, the Barbary States, Holland, French Islands in America, Pondichery and Chandernagor, Isle of France, Terre Neuve, the Ponant, Cabotage, Saint Domingue, Cayenne, Morues, England, Belgium, Sweden, Denmark, Gibraltar, Malta, Ionian Islands, Austria, Sardinia, Two Sicilies, Tuscany, Roman States, Spain, Greece, Turkey, Russia and the Black Sea, Egypt, Algeria, Portugal, West Coast of Africa, Senegal, Haiti, Martinique, Guadeloupe, Guyana, Danish Antilles, Spanish Antilles, Peche de la Morue, USA, Mexico, Colombia, Brazil, La Plata, Uruguay, Maurice, British Indies, Dutch Indies and Reunion, Australia, Madagascar, Argentina, USA, Cuba, Colombia and Chile.

Seeds among the ballast in ships arriving from any of these places which traded with Marseilles could have been unloaded in the Port of Marseilles and become part of the flora of the region.



Seeds of change: Marseilles, 1999-2000

MICHEL REIN PARIS/BRUSSELS

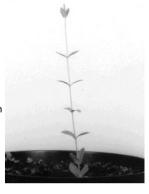


Investigations led to the discovery of the following ballast sites in the Port of Marseilles:

- * Pierre de Marbre Depot
- * Depot X at the foot of Fort St. Nicolas
- * Depot at the Bassin du Carenage
- * Deport at the Bassin de la Gare Maritime
- * Depot at Major

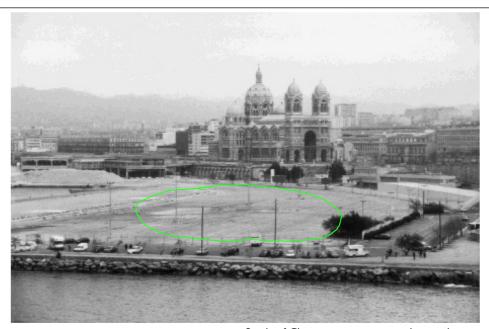
(Sometimes ballast was even carted off to the countryside of Marseilles.)

Soil samples of up to 40 cm in depth were collected with a botanical tool at the ballast sites. Samples were potted and germinated in a greenhouse.









Seeds of Change proposes a garden on the Vieux Port of Marseilles, where many of the residents there are immigrants (and their descendants) from the different regions of the world which trade with Marseilles.

MICHEL REIN PARIS MARIA THEREZA ALVES



b. in 1961 in Sao Paulo, lives and works between Naples and Née en 1961 à São Paulo, vit et travaille entre Naples et Berlin. Berlin.

Maria Thereza Alves' artistic trajectory is inseparable from her political activism, whether it be in favour of ecology, the rights of indigenous minorities or territorial and decolonising struggles.

Maria Thereza Alves does not favour any particular medium, although her work often takes the form of prolific installations mixing natural and manufactured objects, videos, texts, drawings and photographs. These installations, like real investigations, reconstruct the artist's explorations and actions on a given territory. In the same way, her field of research and commitment is free of geographical boundaries, whether she invests in the urban environment (New York, Manchester) or natural spaces. The Seeds of Change project, begun in 1999, this time articulates the issues of colonization, slavery and ecology. Seeds brought back to Europe by merchant ships are exhumed and then replanted in the heart of large western cities on floating platforms. The circulation of beings, whether human or plants, allows Alves to draw up a paradoxical history of globalization, between uprooting, abandonment and resistance. In 2017, she has been awarded by the Vera List Prize.

Maria Thereza Alves has exhibited at IAC (Villeurbanne); High Line (New York); Parsons - The New School of Design (New York) : CAAC (Seville) : Musée d'Histoire de Nantes - Château des Ducs de Bretagne ; Serpentine Gallery (London) ; CRAC Alsace (Altkirch); Jewish Museum (Berlin). She has participated in many international biennials such as (d)OCUMENTA 13/15 (Kassel), Manifesta 7 (Trento), 3rd Guangzhou Triennial, 29th Sao Paulo Biennial.

Her work is part of prestigious collections as Reina Sofia (Madrid); Migros Museum (Zurich); CNAP (Paris); National Gallery of Canada (Ottawa); Heather & Anthony Podesta (Washington D.C.); BPS22 (Charleroi); IAC (Villeurbanne); INELCOM Collection (Madrid).

La trajectoire artistique de Maria Thereza Alves est indissociable de son activisme politique, que ce soit en faveur de l'écologie, des droits des minorités indigènes ou des luttes territoriales et décolonisatrices.

Maria Thereza Alves ne privilégie aucun médium en particulier, bien que son travail se présente souvent sous la forme d'installations foisonnantes mêlant objets naturels et fabriqués, vidéos, textes, dessins et photographies. Ces installations, telles de véritables enquêtes, restituent les explorations et actions de l'artiste sur un territoire donné. De la même manière, son champ de recherches et d'engagements est affranchi des frontières géographiques, qu'elle investisse le milieu urbain (New York, Manchester) ou des espaces naturels. Le projet Seeds of Change, débuté en 1999, articule cette fois les problématiques de la colonisation, de l'esclavage et de l'écologie. La circulation des êtres, qu'ils soient humains ou végétaux, permet à Alves de dresser une histoire paradoxale de la mondialisation, entre arrachement, abandon et résistance, à la manière de ces vêtement échoués sur les rivages du Sénégal dans Time, Trade and Surplus Value (2004), qui reprennent forme humaine. En 2017, elle fut récompensée par le prix Vera List.

Le travail de Maria Thereza Alves a notamment été exposé au IAC (Villeurbanne); High Line (New York); Parsons - The New School of Design (New York); CAAC (Seville); Musée d'Histoire de Nantes - Château des Ducs de Bretagne ; Serpentine Gallery (London); Crac Alsace; Jewish Museum (Berlin); (d)OCUMENTA 13/15 (Kassel); Manifesta 7 (Trento); 3rd Guangzhou Triennial; 29th Sao Paulo Biennial.

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