



Veratrum Bulbosum, 2008
Glossy C-print
39 x 49 in (101,5 x 125,5 cm)
Courtesy galerie Tjebbe, Paris

Janaina Tschäpe's artistic approach is hard to pin down. Painting, video and photography simultaneously compose a dense environment which delves into an everyday life imbued with dreams, myths and Nature peopled with fairy-tale chimeras. Although Tschäpe was born in Munich in 1973, she grew up in Brazil, discovering its dozens of religions and hundreds of legends, some telling how Nature

remains the home of all kinds of magic, where certain gods are still sleeping yet reveal themselves to those who can forget their human condition and listen to the murmurings of the invisible.

It was not until 1992, during her studies at the very serious Hochschule für Bildende Künste in Hamburg, that Tschäpe became aware of this heritage. The exuberance of this exotic folklore became even stronger when she discovered Joseph Beuys' historic performances. By turning himself into a shaman to reveal the possibilities of ground-breaking experiments, Beuys showed that a return to origins was still possible in our world.

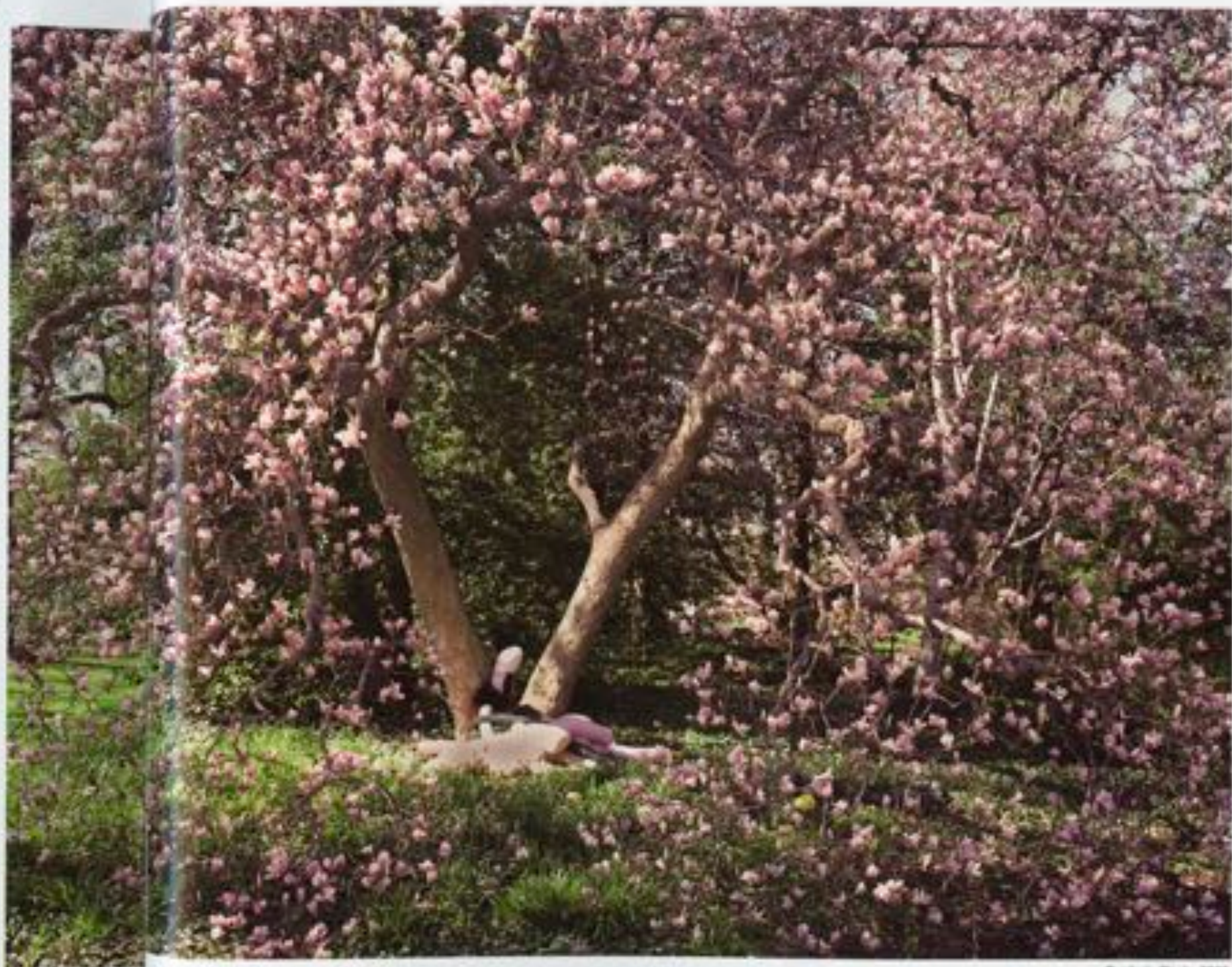
To this first major influence we should add the impact of Imi Knoebel's pictorial installations and the Neo-Expressionism of Georg Baselitz. But Tschäpe turned, above all, to artists interested in mutations of the body. With Cindy Sherman's photographs and Orlan's body modifications in mind, she began investigating the limits of bodily territory. Her first performances had a narrative feel to them. In *He Drowned in Her*

Eyes (2000), *After the Rain* (2003) and *Blood Sea* (2004), she added various extensions to her body (balls, fabric) to compose a hybrid being with no attachment to the world beyond being able to move about. In *The Most and the Moon* (2003) the mutation was even more violent: she presented herself like an unattached body, as if giving birth to a featureless being.

To a certain extent the goal of her performances – which she carefully records (either photographically or on video) – is to reactivate the magical powers of Afro culture in a rational world. The aim of this culture is not just the re-enchantment of our world, but to open gaps in everyday life and indicate potential other worlds just as plausible as the one we live in. Tschäpe's monstrous bodies evoke both the fantasies of the "virtual" bodies which pollute our culture (bodies that are forever younger, healthier or more beautiful), and the ghosts of the goddesses who liaise between Man and Nature. Ultimately, Janaina Tschäpe's art concerns our relationship with Nature and the insuperable divide that has grown up between us and Reality (magnificently symbolized by Nature). Her violently coloured paintings, where Nature seems freed of codes of representation, should therefore be seen as monumental counterpoints to her performances. Line and colour merge; both are precise yet strangely loose. The patterns dissolve in an exuberant all-over, reaching into every corner of the canvas. Man is a stranger here: a mere observer of a process that suddenly escapes him. Tschäpe brilliantly opposes culture with the idea that the world is still organized according to laws so old that one needs merely close one's eyes to discover their echo.



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Ovalaria Florida, 2006,
Glossy C-print, 50 x 62 in (127 x 158.5 cm)
Courtesy: galerie Knappe, Paris



Lindertow, 2008.
Oil on canvas, 78 x 118 in (200,5 x 300 cm).
Private Collection
Courtesy galerie Hippolyte, Paris



Soft Landscape, 2008.
Watercolor and pencil on paper, 44 x 67 in (114,3 x 172,7 cm).
Courtesy galerie Hippolyte, Paris



Desert Dew, 2008.
Glossy C-print, 40 x 60 in (104,1 x 152,4 cm).
Courtesy galerie Hippolyte, Paris



Xikoleylarenda Pluralla, 2000, Glossy C-print, 62 x 50 in. (158 x 127 cm)
Courtesy Pierre Hugon, Paris