30 % Dandelion
Blooming Relationships in the Vegetal Turn: Art, Science & Politics

30% dandelion – this is how Suzanne Anker described the genetic relationship between humans and the dandelion, a plant known for its health-promoting properties, over a meal in her studio. Suzanne Anker is considered a pioneer of an artistic practice that uses various media - in her case photography, collage, video and sculpture – to explore biological, genetic, cultural and related political processes. Her work explicitly refers to the so-called 'Vegetal Turn': a growing theoretical and practical interest in the complexities and particularities of plant life and the diverse relationships between plants and humans. The focus is particularly on the ethical, economic, cultural and political dimensions of plant-human interactions and practices.

Humans and flowering plants are intertwined in many ways - a connection that has become even more visible in the course of current ecological crises and is manifested in the research of the Vegetal Turn. In the Vegetal Turn, flowers and plants become important actors whose significance goes far beyond their use by humans. This Vegetal Turn is the focus of our conference and examines the complex, diverse and reciprocal interdependencies between humans and flowering plants. The growing interest in the relations and interactions between humans, plants, flowers and other life forms today extends far beyond scientific disciplines and leads to increasingly challenging, inter/transdisciplinary and transcultural explorations of the diverse systems and networks between humans and plants.

Through the theoretical decentering of the human being, flowers are no longer understood exclusively as objects of human practices such as breeding, cultivation, consumption,

collection or exhibition, but also as independently powerful actors that shape - and have shaped - human everyday life and cultural meanings.
The natural history, cultural history and botanical collections, like the art collections, not only reflect current and historical human-flower relationships, but also reveal colonial, scientific and aesthetic systems of order. As exhibition objects and collection units, they refer to practices of classification, conservation and curation - and at the same time enable a critical examination of the meanings attributed to flowers in various cultural and historical contexts. Museums thus become central places where floral knowledge and meaning production become visible, questionable and can be experienced anew.

On the one hand, our conference will focus on the ecological, economic and biological issues associated with this change. On the other hand, we will shed light on transcontinental and transcultural processes of exchange and entanglement with a special focus on de- and postcolonial aspects. For the epistemic violence of colonialism has produced specific cultural practices and knowledge systems. Coloniality is still an omnipresent force that shapes socio-political, socio-cultural and economic landscapes. Plant ecosystems have been and continue to be damaged by the exploitation of botanical resources for colonial economic interests.