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“Tree of Heaven” by Rafael Sánchez at Marlborough Contemporary, New York

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Through the Flower, 2009-2018, Rafael Sánchez, Copper leaf and ink on Judy Chicago book, hibiscus flower, 4 x 8 1-2 x 5 1-2 in., 10.2 x 21.6 x 14 cm. (Courtesy of the artist and Marlborough Contemporary, New York and London)

Marlborough Contemporary presents “Tree of Heaven” by Cuban-born, New York-based artist Rafael Sanchez that runs through December 22.

On view are the artist’s drawings and paintings along with his poem sculptures. These sculptures are a combination of “performative objects with a panoply of used household items,” the gallery informs. Combining a variety of materials such as Balloons, honey, shavers, batteries, dust, light bulbs, books, fruit peelings, bread ends, street shards, branches, splinters,

and objects are flattened and fused with a matrix of universal symbols, structures, and spirits – that are hand in hand with the room itself.

The artist's practice oscillated between the studio and the stage. A multitude of approaches spring forth from the artist's hand and this is due to his plasticity and his activation of material "as potential and means of transit between the worlds of the real, the imagination, and the narrative of one's own life," the gallery adds.

This is Sanchez's first solo exhibition since his show at Participant Inc in 2004. The year marked the beginning of a decade-long partnership with artist Kathleen White. Sanchez and White collaborated continuously until her death in 2014. "Since then, the nature of drawing and its connection to loss, and the nature of dust in itself as essential element became the artist's existential obsession."

Since the beginning much of Sanchez's work deals with the themes of loss and dust. In the artist's hand dust becomes an agent of liberation – highlighting the philosophical area that lies between existence and non-existence.

According to the gallery, "while the show's title refers to Francie Nolan's ailanthus tree in Betty Smith's novel *A Tree Grows in Brooklyn*, Sanchez sees the ailanthus as a 'tree of life' or anima mundi—the soul of the earth as a symbolic connector between all living things."

"Tree of Heaven" runs through December 22, 2018 at Marlborough Contemporary, 545 W 25th St, New York, NY 10001, USA.

For details, visit: <https://www.blouinartinfo.com/galleryguide/marlborough-contemporary/overview>

Click on the slideshow for a sneak peek at the exhibition.

<https://www.blouinartinfo.com/>

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