

RECUPERATING A HERBALL FOR A MIDWIFE

A Certain Herb is one investigation within *Nothing of Importance Occurred. Recuperating a Herball for a 17th century Enslaved Angolan Midwife at the Cape.*

- 2024 *Bitter Walk Wind Sing* / Performative procession of Bitter Plants, Forgotten Midwives and Unlicensed Female Practitioners / with the Company of Forty / Muzee and KAAP, Ostend Belgium / June 29.
Procession, a Manuscript for a Library / for Middelheim Museum
- 2023 *Return Retrace Replant. Procession of Contraceptive Plants and Missing Midwives* / with the Company of Sixty / Middelheim Museum, Antwerp Belgium.
Radio Hush Hush / Middelheim Museum, Antwerp Belgium
- 2023 *Dear Savin, Rough Herb* / Tape letter / Belly Full of Blind Highways / KAAP and Dear,...
- 2022 *Gatherings for Fieldguides* / Cape Town Medical Museum + Paulshoek Namaqualand + Middelheim Museum
- 2022 *Fieldguides for a Preternaturalist* / Issues 1-3 / chapbooks / publisher K.Verlag, Berlin
- 2021 *A Hysterie of Guiné Weed and Sorrow Seed. A Duet across the Atlantic* / in the exhibition Ninguom Teria Acreditado / No One Would Have Believed / Pinacoteca Sao Paolo
- 2020 *Like a Thread Winding Backwards. An Audio-Eerie* / in the exhibition No One Would Have Believed / Netwerk Aalst Belgium
- 2019 *A Tale of Eleven Births and One Invocation* / VI Biennial Lubumbashi / DRC.
Travelogue of the Wandering Womb. Her Fantastic Encounters and Curious Utterings. With the Matriarchal Ginkgo Tree / in the exhibition Alias / Netwerk Aalst Belgium

COLLABORATORS

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A CERTAIN HERB



A Certain Herb

What shall I do
if I am made pregnant by you?
I shall be dishonoured and lost.

He answered that he had a certain herb
which if a man wears it when with a woman
he can not engender and she can not conceive.

He carried with him
a herb wrapped in linen cloth
about one inch wide and long
about the size of the first joint of my little finger
with a long string
and when he wished to join with me he put
the string around my neck and it
descended between my breasts and if
during the night this priest
wanted to know me carnally
two or more times
then he asked me where was this herb
and I would find it by the string
around my neck and he would place it
with his hand in my opening
and in this way he would unite with me
and when he wanted to leave
he removed it from around my neck
and he would not say which herb it was.

What Trixie told the Inquisitor.

From the testimony of Béatrice de Planissoles to
Inquisitor Jacques Fournier, Pamiers, 1320.



Dialogues

An Ear to Ethnobiologists

Dialogues with ethnobiologists to air three questions motivating the investigation:

- × Which plant, or plants, was in the pessary that Béatrice's lover brought to their bed?
- × Who might have prepared the pessary and held this contraceptive knowledge?
- × Was this knowledge to be shared?

Teas with Trixie

Gatherings hosted by Trixie herself, at which the story-so-far is both told and made, at which guides are invoked, researchers are welcomed, roles are assigned, costumes are worn, and quantities of tea-cake are consumed. Between a salon and a séance, *Teas with Trixie* performs and informs—and quite possibly reforms—the questions motivating the investigation.

Works

PUBLIC PERFORMANCES
DIALOGUES lead to the creation of two WORKS:

A Parade of Pessaries for Pyrene

An ambulation of embroidered banners along a mountain footpath from Prades to Montailou. Accompanied by Trixie and her Guides: Shepherdess, Midwife, Ausi, the Jewish-healer-since-baptised, Itinerant Hawker of Foreign Cures, Company of Sex Workers, Rootcutter, Unlicensed Female Practitioner as well as Rixatrix, Garulatrix, Litigatrix and Objurgatrix, the Scolds. The parade is led by Pyrene.

Song Cycle for Trixie

A cycle of songs performed at the ruined keep on the hill at Montailou in which Trixie casts the question of what was in the contraceptive pessary to the accompanying Guides. In a polyvocal work of sung and spoken parts, the Guides and Plants-of-the-Mountain respond to Trixie's questions.

PLAN

An Ear to Ethnobiologists and *Teas with Trixie* will run from May 2024 (the Congress of Ethnobiology Marrakech) until June 2025. Following that will be a period of composition, production and recording leading to the *Parade of Pessaries* and the *Song Cycle for Trixie* in the Pyrenees in the summer of 2026, and an audiobook going to print in the Fall of 2026.