

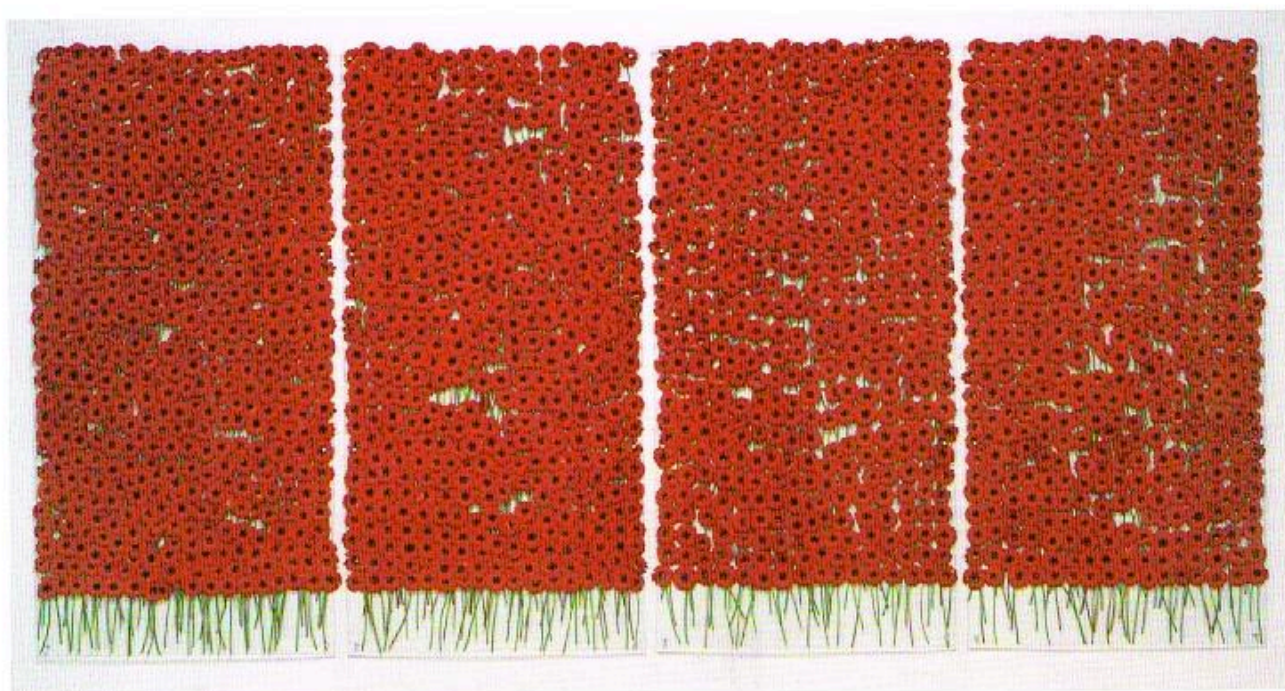
THOMAS DANE GALLERY

Otobong Nkanga, 'Otobong Nkanga on Anya Gallacio's preserve beauty (1993-2003)', *Tate Etc.*, Issue 29, Autumn 2013

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Otobong Nkanga on Anya Gallaccio's
preserve 'beauty' (1991–2003)



THOMAS DANE GALLERY

I can imagine the gradual process of deterioration and the smell of the flowers that might inhabit the room, even though I have never physically experienced this piece. The struggle to contain the inevitable decay is intensified with the use of huge panes of glass that press against the red gerberas (also known, by the way, as African daisies). I was particularly drawn to the work because of the alteration of its natural state over time, with the title making us question our perception of beauty.

I used colour print-outs of *preserve 'beauty'* among a selection of 24 images of artworks for my performance and installation piece *Contained Measures of Shifting States*, shown at Tate Modern Tanks in 2012, and they formed a starting point for various discussions I had with people during the performance. One lady asked the name of the flower, and I said: "Red African daisy." She replied jokingly: "Do you think the artist was trying to say something in relation to the African continent?" I thought about what she said, and wondered what it would mean if that were considered.

Anya Gallacio, *preserve 'beauty'* (1991–2003), 2,000 gerberas, glass, metal and rubber, 260 x 535 x 2.5cm

- *preserve 'beauty'* was presented by an anonymous donor in 2004.
- OTOBONG NKANGA (b1974) is an artist based in Antwerp.