

## **Carbon-12**

**Carbon-12** was realised as part of the collaborative exhibition *Drive Thru* that took place within the Cavendish Square Car Park in West London during Frieze Week, 2016.

Taking into account the urban context of this initial car centred site, the installation consisted of a set of twelve manufactured car number plates detailing the UN's twelve most threatened global tree species. These were mounted on the concrete walls like signs designating personalised parking spaces. The fonts and design templates used for the show plates are unique and specific to this side of the automobile show plate industry often used on customised cars.

In terms of resistance, here we have two extremes pitted against each other; species bordering on extinction through man made, often commercial / environmental interactions with a potent visual symbol of one of the worlds indices of freedom and emancipation and yet the most pervasive and environmentally damaging of instruments – the automobile. Taking into account the text fonts and visual templates these also cue the British side of this industry in the beginning of a post Brexit European context.

The world's most endangered species is the aptly named Bastard Gum Tree. There are only two survivors in existence – both on opposite sides of the same island, St Helena, in the middle of the Atlantic and still a remote outpost of a dwindled one-time British empire. Kew Garden's seed bank located at Wakehurst Place collected seeds to germinate. St Helena is an essay in environmental degradation. The island has now in some eastern slopes been largely overrun with Jute, an imported species used in rope production (the last factories here closed in the 1970's) and many more rare species specific to this habitat are clinging on to ever shrinking bits of available ground. One such is a species of daisy that grows into a tree – a tree daisy, a most unlikely species imaginable.

The plates are manufactured to the standard UK size in laminated plastic. The piece is flexible enough to be configured in a range of different ways from a single cluster to a linear installation, clustered in groups and scattered like seeds or germinating weeds around an exhibition. The work is to be reconfigured as part of an exhibition in Athens, *Gestures of Resistance*, curated by Jean Wainwright and showing alongside *Documenta* during April 2017.