



## ARTIST PROJECT/ BOUNTIFUL

TANYA MARCUSE

My series “Bountiful” depicts a collection of wax agricultural models housed at the New York State Agricultural Experiment Station Library in Geneva, New York. These models were made in the early decades of the twentieth century by a man named James Lawson. Lawson, who grew up on a farm in Guelph, Ontario, trained to be a minister but, as the result of a childhood illness that damaged his vocal cords, was unable to lead a congregation and instead joined the faculty of a university in Toronto. As a young man, Lawson had an interest in art and science and made a series of wax fruit models for the agricultural experiment station in his hometown; when the directors of the Geneva Station saw his work, they invited him to create a series for their library as well. During the summers between 1920 and 1935, Lawson came to stay and work in Geneva, producing extraordinarily meticulous models of fruit, vegetables, and other botanical specimens. (He even incorporated his own body hair in some of them, for example for the spindly roots of the carrots and radishes.) My project is partly about Americana, but also about the existential desire to make representations of things that cannot last. There’s obviously something quite straightforward about the ambitions of the models: they were designed to teach about agriculture using the most lifelike approximations possible. But the labels embossed beneath them—variety names like “Pioneer,” “100% Profit” and “Bountiful,” or pathologies like “Rosy Aphis” and “The Carrot Maggot”—also have an enigmatic poetic surplus.

Thanks to Linda McCandless, Martin Schlabach, and Michael Fordon at the New York State Agricultural Experiment Station Library in Geneva, New York, for their assistance.

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page 54: *Bountiful*, 2009.

page 55: *The Carrot Maggot*, 2009.

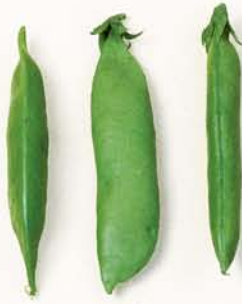
page 56: *Refugee*, 2009.

page 57: *Perfection*, 2009.

Images courtesy Julie Saul Gallery.



CANNER, DELWICHE



PIONEER



GRADUS



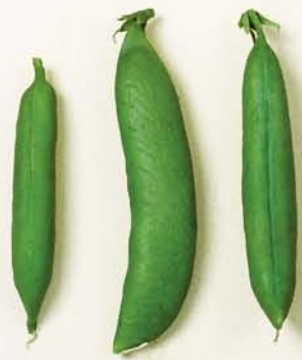
MAMMOTH EXTRA EARLY



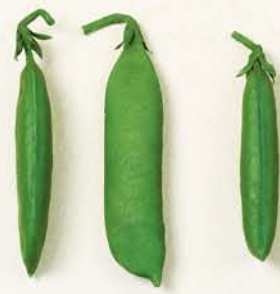
BOUNTIFUL



FRENCH SUGAR



LAXTON'S SUPERB



100 PER CENT. PROFIT



EARLY WASHINGTON



INJURED PLANTS

NORMAL PLANTS

THE CARROT MAGGOT

CARROTS SHOWING INJURIES TO ROOTS AND FLESH AND CONSEQUENT EFFECT ON GROWTH



REFUGEE



PERFECTION