

Visions of Paradise

Garden of Earthly Delights

Maria Thereza Alves | Korakrit Arunanondchai | Hicham Berrada | John Cage | Tacita Dean | Nathalie Djurberg & Hans Berg | Futurefarmers | Lungiswa Gqunta | Libby Harward | Rashid Johnson | Yayoi Kusama | Louise Lawler | Renato Leotta | Isabel Lewis and LABOUR | Jumana Manna | Uriel Orlow | Heather Phillipson | Pipilotti Rist | Maaïke Schoorel | Taro Shinoda | Zheng Bo

[Gropius Bau](#), Berlin

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Taking Hieronymus Bosch's surrealist Eden as a starting point, "*Garden of Earthly Delights*" uses the metaphor of the garden to probe our delusions and fantasies of paradise. More than 20 international artists dissect a range of themes - utopia and dystopia, inclusion and segregation, structure and liberation - which unfold in the Gropius Bau through a succession of immersive and sensory zones.

Many pieces are inextricable from the political and environmental uncertainties that define our border-building, anthropocentric age. In *Mesk-Ellil* (2015), Hicham Berrada simulates the circadian and climatic conditions that trigger night-blooming jasmine to release its precious fragrance. Uncanny and profoundly beautiful, his laboratory of terrariums raises questions about human interference with the natural order. Zheng Bo's video installation *Pteridophilia* (2016–19) features six men rapturously consumed in erotic encounters with ferns. Bo uses the lens of queer ecology to champion a return to tenderness and vulnerability in society's relationship to nature. Two caressing women plunge through a jungle-like vortex of saturated colors and ambient sounds in Pipilotti Rist's film *Sapiens Sapiens* (2005), immersing the viewer in an intoxicating vision of boundless, prelapsarian abundance.

Several artists frame the garden within the legacies of colonialism. Libby Harward's *Ngali Ngariba (We Talk)* (2019) gives voice to plant specimens uprooted from Australia to be classified within European botanical gardens; isolated in glass vitrines, they ask in their indigenous language: 'Why am I here?' In *Antoine's Organ* (2016), Rashid Johnson intersperses his living garden with signifiers of African-American cultural output, whilst Uriel Orlow's *Theatrum Botanicum* (2015-2018) imagines the plant world - such as the garden Mandela planted during his incarceration - as a witness and agent within apartheid-era South Africa. The exhibition calls into question the structures we apply to make sense of our chaotic and volatile world, exploring the garden as a space of psychic and philosophical potential.

Text by Verity Seward

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