



FLATLAND GALLERY

GARDENING

Gardening was something I learned in my youth when I was unhappy.

Claude Monet¹

FLATLAND GALLERY
AMSTERDAM
May 7 - June 18, 2016

OPENING Saturday May 7 from 04.00 till 06.00 pm

Lijnbaansgracht 312-314 (VIJZELAREA)
AMSTERDAM



List of artists: Gioia de Bruijn (1986) photography / Anouk Griffioen (1979) drawing / Johan Grimonprez (1962) film / Matt Henry (1978) photography / Jocelyn Lee (1962) photography / Sanja Marušić (1991) photography / David Verbeek (1980) film and photography / Guy Yanai (1977) painting

Horticultural movements through time have inspired the world of arts in ancient and in modern civilizations, in Eastern and Western societies. Yet in GARDENING, the garden as a subject is secondary or in some cases literally non existing; what is central is the idea of GARDENING as a way it represents a serious contribution to a good life, close to Aristotle's Eudaimonia which implicates living well or happiness as an active virtuous activity instead of a static goal.

The GARDENING exhibition at FLATLAND GALLERY follows different paths of 'a good life'. The idea to live well has been supported by Professor David E. Cooper who wrote 'A Philosophy of Gardens' (Oxford University Press) in which he addresses why gardens are of such great significance to so many people. Cooper insists that it is only through the infusion of human activity in working cooperatively with nature to create gardens and then to dwell in them appreciatively that gardens reveal their true meaning.

GARDENING is about a state of rootlessness (enjoying garden parties, swimming in a garden pool, indulging in solitary reverie) and working compulsively on all the things that need our care to grow, such as planning, studying, evaluating and acting sensibly.

GARDENING is a small curated show that looks broadly and deeply at the combination of the 'jungle' and the 'lawn'.

The garden is an epiphany (moment when you feel that you understand, or become conscious of something that is very important to you) – (powerful religious experience) of man's relationship to the mystery of existence.

¹ Claude Monet, quoted in René Delange, 'Claude Monet', L'illustration, 4374, 15 January 1927, p.59, in: Catalogue published on the occasion of the exhibition 'Painting the modern garden: Monet to Matisse'. Exhibition organised by the Cleveland Museum of Art and the Royal Academy of Arts, page 17, 2015.

De tuin is eeuwenlang in de kunst een belangrijke inspiratie geweest. Van de Oudheid tot de huidige moderne tijd; in westerse en oosterse samenlevingen. Maar in de tentoonstelling GARDENING bij Flatland komt de 'tuin' als onderwerp op de tweede plaats of is ze soms zelfs geheel afwezig. Wat centraal staat is het idee van GARDENING als representant van een goede manier van leven of - 'the good life' -, zoals het Eudaimonia van Aristoteles, waarin 'the good life' als dynamische activiteit wordt gezien; een houding en niet als doelstelling.

Dit idee achter 'the good life' wordt ondersteund door Professor David E. Cooper in zijn 'A Philosophy of Gardens' (Oxford University Press). Volgens Cooper wordt de mens gelukkig van tuinieren. Hij verklaart dit omdat de mens zowel moet ploeteren als kan genieten van het zoete genot na de creatie. Op deze wijze gaat het ook in de tentoonstelling GARDENING tegelijk over de staat van ontworteling (genieten van tuinfeestjes, solitaire mijmeringen) als het echte werken aan alle dingen die onze aandacht nodig hebben om te groeien.

GARDENING is een tentoonstelling die op kleine schaal is samengesteld maar een brede en diepgaande kijk geeft op de conjunctie van 'jungle' en 'het gazon'.

De tuin als openbaring (dat moment waarop je voelt dat je het begrijpt, of je bewust wordt van iets dat erg belangrijk voor je is) – (krachtige religieuze ervaring) van de relatie van de mens met het mysterie van het bestaan.

Gioia de Bruijn (1986)

As a somewhat gritty photographer, Gioia de Bruijn makes intimate but aesthetic reports, leaving out the voyeurism. Photographs, mostly black and white on film, of passed out students during a three-days after partying are anything but constructed and show a world of either purposelessness or a cloud of love. The question is irrelevant however, for to De Bruijn, they are in their world and they do not need us to know. With her high angle compositions of New York skyscrapers or endless stretches of empty boulevards in Miami, De Bruijn immerses us also in a micro world where the passing of time is altered and the intensity of sound is different.

In GARDENING it is this sense of contemplation that is central. In the work of De Bruijn a floating experience is sewed together between 'getting high'; 'sexual realism' and 'towers that present the epitome of today's modern capitals with their seemingly endless glazing walls'.

Gioia de Bruijn (1986) graduated with honours from the Camberwell College of Arts in London. Her work was shown by Found Reality; The Fence; Van Gogh Museum; Camberwell College of Art, London; the Underground Gallery, Charing Cross station, London and Bermondsey Biscuit Factory, London.

Anouk Griffioen (1979)

Represented by Kers gallery, Amsterdam

Nearly possessed, wild and imprecise, Griffioen's mural-scale charcoal drawings are haunting. A world that recalls saga in which humanity, animals and nature merge. The life-sized and monumental formats underscore the forcefulness of her work. Her own family relationships as well as her personal mythology form her inspiration. A creature of Griffioen is her version of a reversed centaur; the body being of a man and the head of a tiger. A oneness of 'man' and 'animal' that brings brute force (alter ego perhaps?) and subtlety together. It is like she is finding in her work a solution for all conflict.

In her work for the 'GARDENING' exhibition a 200 x 220 cm large piece carries a fusion of a human figure (a young girl) and a giant plant drawn in her highly elaborate sketch technique. A feel of truthfulness of the mind is rapid to come up. Has the garden taken up the girl, swallowed her up, or is the girl coming out from the garden and stepping into the world of adults. The absence of colour in the drawing emphasises the conjoining of the two, the natural and the cultural, a quality that reminds of the impressionists, sensitive to what lies beyond the visual image so we get under the skin and can read the senses.

Anouk Griffioen studied at the Willem de Kooning Academy Rotterdam and Art History at University Leiden, The Netherlands. In 2016 she has exhibited in a solo show at Stedelijk Museum Zwolle. In October 2016 her solo show opens in Tent, Rotterdam. Her work was also exhibited in group exhibitions, such as in Hunting at Flatland Gallery, Amsterdam; SALON/BA, Argentina; Asbury Parc NYC (USA); SALON/ISTANBUL; Figuurlijk, Museum Hilversum; Het Wilde Weten, Rotterdam; TENT Rotterdam and DASCART Antwerpen, Belgium.

Johan Grimonprez (1962)

Filmmaker and multimedia artist Johan Grimonprez's video work is based on an archaeology of the contemporary media. It reveals – and disrupts – the part the moving image plays in the construction of our personal and political histories. In his films Grimonprez plays with various levels of reality, with simulations and deceptions. Using documentary material, found footage, historical items from archives, his own home videos, news pictures, advertising, video clips and excerpts from Hollywood films, Grimonprez tries in his own way to give some meaning to the havoc wreaked by History. The phenomenon of fear, in the collective sense, is one of the most important concepts in Grimonprez's work, especially the uncomfortable catastrophic future expectations.

For the exhibition GARDENING filmmaker Johan Grimonprez included his film 'Satin Island', a haunting moving collage of disaster and beauty, set to a shimmering, down-tempo instrumental track by the post-rock group Lights Out Asia. The film was created for the released of acclaimed novelist Tom McCarthy's new novel, 'Satin Island'. The book follows a "corporate anthropologist" who, while compiling a sprawling ethnographic document known as the Great Report, becomes enamored with the story of a fatal parachuting accident. The book is a "dizzying take on possible conspiracies, corporate philosophies and one man's idle thoughts." [Kirkus book reviews]

McCarthy: "Satin Island's" narrator, a "corporate anthropologist" who tries to decode our culture, squinting at the world through an ever-more-pixelated veil, becomes fascinated with a news-item about a parachutist who died when his equipment malfunctioned. Fascinated as he is by networks — of kinship, myth, language and technology — the narrator sees in the parachutist's situation a sudden and catastrophic voiding of any and all the webs that hold and cradle us the whole time." [Source: Salon.com]

Johan Grimonprez's curatorial projects have been exhibited at museums worldwide, such as at the Hammer Museum (LA), the Pinakothek der Moderne (Munich) and, the MOMA (NY). His works are part of the permanent collections of major museums, including the Centre Georges Pompidou (Paris), the Kanazawa Art Museum (Japan), Tate Modern (London), The National Gallery, Berlin and Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, The Netherlands. In 2011/2012 Grimonprez received a retrospective at S.M.A.K. (Stedelijk Museum voor Actuele Kunst), Gent, Belgium. His newest work 'Shadow World' (global arms trade) premiered at Tribeca Filmfestival in New York and shall (probably) be part of IDFA2016. Recent shows presented by Flatland are in 2011 'I may have lost forever my umbrella' in Pearls of the North, Palais d'Iéna, Paris and in 2013 'Looking for Alfred' at the first edition of Paris Photo Los Angeles.

Matt Henry (1978)

As a graduate of Political Theory, Matt Henry has developed a long-term interest in mid-century America and its portrayal in film, television, and literature. His focus on the interwoven nature of politics and culture are translated in his photographic scenes, not only in subject, but in form as well, such as his use of different saturated colour fragments and forms, that remind us of the great Stephen Shore, Matt Henry's foremost photographic influence outside of cinema. As cinematic frames, Henry's work contains ideas of rootlessness, beauty and sadness because of repression.

In GARDENING Flatland Gallery has the honour to exhibit part of his work from his newest, and partly unfinished series 'TWIN PALMS'; a 1960s-inspired satire on the evolution of gender relations: the inevitable clash of 1950s family ideals with the explosion of individual expression. In one of the works, Green #4, a young girl bends tiredly over a bar, tired of life, like a Mauve tulip that drank too much water. The border of abundance has been crossed; living like Romans, time passes by, the USA and the fall of that empire is felt. A fall that happened, despite the hard work on neatly trimmed lawns and the building of triangular architectural houses; men's material objects to copy the colourful fragments of Cézanne's Mont Sainte-Victoire.

Matt Henry (1978) grew up in North Wales and is now based in Brighton, England. He did his BA in Politics (University of Nottingham) and MA Photography (University of Brighton). Henry participated with success at the Brighton Photo Biennial, UK, 2014 and the 11th Shanghai Photography Festival. In 2014 the Faculty of Arts at University of Brighton presented work by six graduates, one of which was Matt Henry, in the show 'Mythopoesis: An exhibition by Photography graduates from Brighton University'. In 2015 his work Short Stories was published by Kehrer Verlag and presented at Paris Photo in Paris. In May 2016 Henry was among the 25 international winners in the prestigious PDN Photo Annual Awards. The gallery is very proud that quite recently Matt Henry joined Flatland.

Jocelyn Lee (1962)

Jocelyn Lee is an acclaimed photographer known for her consistent and careful approach towards her subject: people. Her honest interest in them stems from her fascination in the tenacious attempts of people to find meaning and direction in the world. She is particular interested in our vulnerable stages of life, including adolescence, pregnancy, middle age, sexuality (complete with sagging skin and scars), old age and illness and our relationship with nature. Ever so much aware, for Lee photography is about a causal relationship between light, subject and receptive material.

Manoeuvring back and forth between levels of intimacy and unease, Lee purposely looks for spaces that are not too distracting, to encourage the viewer to focus on the individual and psychological exchange. Consistent in her work is a focus on the visual and tactile qualities of the material world, emphasizing the chromatic and textural richness of flesh, fabrics, and foliage. The closeness of nature in her work fades out the dichotomy between the artificial and the real.

In GARDENING Lee shows for the first time her work 'Raising the Crabapple'. Just common blooms and a girl reaching out to caress and pick an apple. Semi staged as a gothic fairy tale, teenage dream, a secret garden, Lee celebrates the connection of youth and nature. The photographs explore the extraordinary sensuality of our material world—the texture and colour of our living constructed environment. This work is an homage to the nature of skin, hair, plant, earth, the seasonal cycles, youth.

Jocelyn Lee (1962, Naples, Italy) received a BA in philosophy and visual arts from Yale University in 1986 and an MFA in Photography from the City University of New York at Hunter College in 1992. In 2013 she received a NYFA Fellowship, and in 2001 she received a Guggenheim Fellowship. Her first monograph was published by Steidl Publishers in December 2010 entitled Nowhere but Here, with a foreword by Sharon Olds. Lee has exhibited nationally and internationally, most recently at the Portland Museum of Art, Portland, Maine (2013). Her works are in many collections such as the Maison Européenne de la Photographie, Paris, France; The Museum Folkwang, Essen, Germany; The Portland Museum of Art; Portland, Maine; The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, Texas as well as numerous private collections. She is represented by Pace/MacGill Gallery, New York, Rose Gallery in L.A. and Flatland Gallery in Amsterdam, The Netherlands.

Sanja Marušić (1991)

Marušić's beautiful retouched images engage with the relationship between photography and 'experience'. Via her own savvy regard, Marušić gives us a psychological landscape combined with youth and nature. Her approach towards the medium of photography is both energetic and experimental. For example, her technique includes digital manipulation, paint, geometric cut-outs and abstract oversaturated colour fragments.

Over the past few weeks Marušić travelled to Tenerife, aiming to find and pin point a subtle yet defining element in the natural landscapes. This resulted in her 2016 series 'Figures under the Sun', a collage of futuristic landscapes reminiscent of the avant-garde in the 1920s such as the experimental works of Sophie Taeuber-Arp or László Moholy-Nagy.

In 'Figures under the Sun' she often poses herself, nude and her face hidden, forming herself into one of many geometric elements next to the other autonomous components that she has added to her work. In GARDENING her new work from 'Figures under the Sun' (2016) as work from 'Flowers in December' (2015) and 'Way to Blue' (2015) - are exhibited for the first time. Although from different series, they reinforce each other's context, as some photographs are similar in colour and atmosphere, articulating and transmitting her own experience of nature that always is a tiny alooof.

Sanja Marušić (1991, Amsterdam) graduated from the Royal Academy of Art in The Hague. Marušić received the honourable award from the Royal Academy of Art, The Hague, in 2013, and was nominated in three categories for the Photo Academy Award 2013. In 2009 she received the 1st prize for fashion photography from Elle Magazine, and in 2010 the 2nd prize in fashion photography from Hollands Diep, a public intellectual magazine. She has worked for the likes of Elle, Vice Mag, Prestige Magazine, Pup Magazine, PS, Hollands Diep, Glamcult, Vogue online and Vrij Nederland. In 2015 she did the campaign of the Koninklijke Muntchouwborg, the opera building on the Munt square in Brussels.

David Verbeek (1980)

Over the last decade director, video artist and photographer David Verbeek has explored the idea of disconnection between people in his films. Most often these carry a highly contemplative character taking as their subject the solitude and desperation of people in crowded and impersonal cities such as Shanghai or Taipei.

Verbeek has worked recently both on art video (Immortelle and Full Contact) and feature films (Shanghai Trance, R U There, How to Describe a Cloud and his latest film Full Contact), engaging the audience in both versions, while exploring his perceived world in slow shots with narrative pushed to the background.

In the exhibition GARDENING at Flatland the film IMMORTELLE is shown describing the end of a love-story via choreography and cinema. Starting at the moment of a breakup between a boy and a girl, we separately follow how they cope. The film is about feelings so strong that, in their quest for closure, the emotions overpower reality. In the background the sound of rain in the streets, the honking of cars, the ticking of the clock could have been natural sounds such as the sound of the rustle of flapping of wings, the call of the secretive cuckoo bird, water running. Visually the delicate appearance of a few Asian plants amidst an unwelcome modern interior also echo the emptiness within. As their relationship ends, figments of character dance their minds struggle, till the breakup is definite and final.

David Verbeek (1980, The Netherlands) studied film, photography and philosophy at the New School University in New York and graduated in film directing at the Dutch Film Academy in 2005. He made a total of six international feature films that have granted him international recognition in the world of contemporary art-house cinema. His work R U THERE was also selected for the Cannes film festival and it was part of the prestigious Un Certain Regard programme. His latest film 'Full Contact' premiered in 2015 as part of the PLATFORM competition at the Toronto International Film Festival and is exhibited in its art version - in the group show 'Close Up - A New Generation of Film and Video Artists in the Netherlands' in Museum EYE. Aside his cinematic work, Verbeek photographs are equally charged with a dark feel of a supernatural realm, as seen in the work of his admired artists Gregory Crewdson and David Lynch. For his haunting photo series Ghost Month (2014) he received a solo show at the Museum of Contemporary art in Taipei, Taiwan.

Guy Yanai (1977)

The successful Israeli artist Guy Yanai lives and works in Tel Aviv. Influenced by a variety of 'Masters of Art', from Matisse to David Hockney, (yet also by photography, television, paintings, and advertisements) Yanai portrays an intimate and personal environment in his paintings that include ordinary everyday items such as houseplants in pots. Through his play with simplified forms and by using vibrant colours and shallow depth of fields, these everyday objects become visual experiences. Being on the edge between figuration and abstraction, the work is nearly timeless, between real and fake, consequence and insignificance.

Yanai's new paintings 'End of Europe End of Europe', 130 x 100 cm, (2016) and 'Strange Plant' (2016) are in the exhibition 'GARDENING' at Flatland. Both works show plants in a pot, but these potted plants negate an easy reading and exemplify Yanai's ideas of borders, geographical limitations versus artificial (man made nation and state borders), in this case the EU. (In 'End of Europe End of Europe' one leave is brown, casting a shade on the territory, in East-Europe). A highly topical subject that is enhanced by his technique of applying vibrant horizontal stripes that remind of our current digital age of screens. His oil painting technique however underlines the century old problems that have always characterized Europe or the notion of Europe.

Guy Yanai was born in 1977 Haifa, Israel and lives and works in Tel Aviv. He grew up in New York and received a BFA in 2000 from Hampshire College, Amherst, MA. Guy Yanai has exhibited internationally in a number of institutions and has received special grants. Solo shows include 'Ordinary Things', Haifa Museum of Art, Haifa, Israel (2015); 'Battle, Therapy, Living Room', The Velan Center for Contemporary Art, Turin (2013); 'Battle, Therapy, Living Room', Kunsthalle Rotschild 69, Tel Aviv (2012); 'Political Science 'Rothschild Fine Art', Tel Aviv (2009) and solo shows at Alon Segev Gallery, Tel Aviv. In 2016 Yanai participated on Frieze Art Fair, with the Breeder Gallery, NYC.