

Curator's notes, by Celia Stroom, July 2019.

What is an enclosed garden?

The Enclosed Garden is a metaphor that leads the artists and the visitors into an intimate exploration of our inner world. The one we usually keep for ourselves or from which we hide.

A garden\* is by definition surrounded by a demarcation (on the horizontal plan) between an "inside" and an "outside" and which opens vertically towards the dimension of the sky and the subsoil, both unlimited. Thus, the garden constitutes a "closed" space which connects with the "open" of Nature. Throughout our residency and exhibition format, we aim to get closer to this paradox and create a space adapted to the dimensions of the Self. In The Enclosed Garden, we become "gardeners".

In the creative process, we garden with the body. It is through its energy, its eminently enjoyable synchronisation, its sensations, its vulnerability, its fatigue, that it can reconnect with primordial fecundity. The source of creativity that we, artists, often lose in an oppressive world that we create or endure. Beyond our relationship with the body, the most challenging aspect of the project is to garden with each other, facing our differences. The artists among each other. And the artists with the members of the audience.

For that, we need a creative process immersed in nature, because the living calls the living and the circulations of the sap echo the agitation of desires. The concepts of reinvention, re-creation or re-enchantment of nature are frequently evoked in so-called ecological criticism. Yet the poetics we propose is concerned with the nature of nature. As an intellectual heir to Romanticism, it lends artistic creation the power to inspire the audience and shape their 'environmental imagination', confronting them with their own alienation from the natural world and suggesting the utopia of a reconciliation between nature and humans, and by mirror effect, as nature is in us, between humans and humans.

Nature reminds us of the immensity that shelters us. It reminds us of being alive, of being present, of simply being there, in a body with familiar contours but whose vital pulsations remain incomprehensible to us as our Being also belongs to the great mystery of the unpredictable and ungraspable Nature.

Who has not felt confusion in the midst of nature, overwhelmed by the accumulation of species, materials, colours, scents.

Who has not experienced, in solitude, the feeling of participating in an unfathomable presence to which believers would give the name of God?

During the exhibition, we give a shape to a metaphorical garden that opens the door of our enclosure to other human beings, in a spirit of sharing. The artworks created live highlight our relationship to the morbid and the sublime, to decay and bloom. There, we strive to give a shape to the presence of Nature, the infinity that we nevertheless wish to grasp for ourselves; to adapt to our own use in order to give birth to multiple gardens that together constitute the diversity of humanity.

Within our intimate enclosure, our unique version of garden, we finally just try to keep ourselves alive. It is a place where the untamed winds laden with seeds and lost feathers bubble and swirl to maintain desire after all the collapses, all the deceptions, after the trauma of education and language, of inadequate words. How then to share these private spaces and discover some universal elements on which we can exchange and leave aside for a while the cultural, gender, religious, political differences. I am not talking about a naive wish for equality, that is not possible, but can we envisage a brotherhood between gardeners?

In an enclosed garden, you might get lost, then you find yourself. “

\* Garden ( Germanic "Garda" = enclosed) : Garda has a magical connotation whereby a fence is seen as a protection against evil forces. This is why the different parts of the world are defined in Norse mythology as Miðgarðr (enclosure of the Middle world) and Útgarðr (the outer enclosure).

The etymology of the word "Witch" from the Germanic \*Hagatusjō meant 'the spirit of the fence', and referred to the importance of the boundary between places frequented by humans and the rest of the world where evil beings were depicted as attacking the fence. A figurative meaning of 'protection' for \*Garda- is therefore quite likely.