

VERTICAL GARDENS

08.04 – 30.05.2017

The vertical garden, or ‘green wall,’ was developed in order to maximize the use of available surfaces in congested urban spaces. Although it is a mutant practice, it takes its cue from various ancient farming traditions, ranging from Babylon to Pompeii, with the first modern iteration introduced in Paris around 1985. While not popularized until the early 2000s, it is now a mainstay of corporate and commercial architecture, with its touted benefits ranging from the recycling of water and the filtering of air to the amelioration of ‘sick building syndrome’ – a mysterious ailment suffered by some who spend prolonged periods in high-rises. The medical roots of this malady remain nebulous; they may be physiological, psycho-somatic or a combination of both, perhaps an evolutionary hiccup in our adjustment to this stratified organization for living.

The artists featured in the exhibition also take urban architectural space as their point of departure. Through their varied practices, they map its utopic aspirations, while mining its fissures and failures. They trace ideological histories as embedded in experimental models and unrealized proposals; repurpose its material remnants, envision formal mutations or conjure alternate futures and endgames. There is an uneasy mediation that underscores the ephemerality of the enterprise, imagining what will remain after the mega-structures are overtaken by oceans of melted polar ice and the vertical gardens are reclaimed by greenery far more savage in nature. Who’s to say what might actually persist, other than ghostly pathways and the outline of objects whose function will by then be lost in a primordial fog.

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Kelly Akashi (b. 1983) lives and works in Los Angeles, CA and received her MFA from the University of Southern California in 2014. Akashi’s biomorphic sculptural works often turn on notions of duration and impermanence, using molds and imprints of the body in order to demarcate the passing of time. Recent solo and duo exhibitions include *Being As Thing*, Francois Ghebaly, Los Angeles, CA; *SSOfilly*, Michael Jon & Alan Gallery, Miami, FL and *Kelly & Sean Raspet*, Chateau Shatto, Los Angeles, CA. Group exhibitions include *Streams of Warm Impermanence*, David Roberts Arts Foundation and the *Made In L.A. 2016* at the Hammer Museum of Art.

Dora Budor (b. 1984) lives and works in New York. Her sculptural practice draws from the idioms of Hollywood cinema, repurposing screen-used props to create hybrid forms and advance new narratives. Recent solo exhibitions include *Ephemerol* at Ramiken Crucible, New York; *Spring* at the Swiss Institute, New York. Select institutional exhibitions include *Dreamlands*, curated by Chrissie Iles at the Whitney Museum of American Art; *Streams of Warm Impermanence* at David Roberts Arts Foundation and *Inhuman* at Fridericianum, Kassel. Her work is currently on view in *After Us* at K11 Art Foundation, Shanghai and she has a forthcoming public sculpture at the Highline, New York and new commission for Frieze New York 2017.

CUI Jie (b. 1983) graduated from the China Academy of Art in Hangzhou. She is best known for her ambitious architectural paintings, characterized by a distinctly fractured, multi-perspectival and non-linear aesthetic. The various layers are based on real as well as imaginary images, which equally represent the surreal transformation of China's urban landscape over the last thirty years. Her works have been included in many international exhibitions, such as *My Generation: Young Chinese Artists*, Tampa Museum of Arts/ Museum of Fine Arts, St. Petersburg, Russia and Oklahoma City Museum of Art, USA (2014); *Sub-Phenomena: Report on the State of Chinese Young Art*, China Central Academy of Fine Arts Museum, Beijing, China (2012); *Face*, Minsheng Art Museum, Shanghai, China (2012) and *The 4th Prague Biennale*, Prague, Czech Republic (2009).

Lena Henke (b. 1982) received her MFA from the Academy of Fine Arts, Städelschule in Frankfurt am Main in 2010. Working in photography, sculpture, and installation, Henke mines the history of architecture and urban planning through its detritus and remnant objects, which she recuperates into affect-laden forms. Recent solo exhibitions include *Heartbreak Highway*, Real Fine Arts, New York (2016); *Untitled*, Kunstverein Braunschweig, Germany (2016) and *Hellweg* at Kunstverein Dortmund, Germany. Upcoming projects include a solo at Schrin Kunsthalle, Rotunde Frankfurt, Germany.

Los Angeles-based **Julian Hoerber** (b.1974) received his MFA from the Art Center College of Design in Pasadena, California. His practice spans painting, drawing, video, sculpture, installation and large-scale architectural interventions. Through these varied modes, he advances various conversations, from undermining the legacy of California's Light and Space movement to unearthing the libidinal undercurrents of Modernist architecture. Recent solo exhibitions include an eponymous exhibition at Blum & Poe, Los Angeles; *The Inward Turn*, Jessica Silverman Gallery, San Francisco. Group exhibitions include *Madames Electrics* at The Pit, Glendale, CA, *Gold Rush* at de Saisset Museum, Santa Clara, CA and *Expanded Fields* at Nymphius Projekte, Berlin, Germany.

Ajay Kurian (b. 1984) received his BA in Visual Arts and Art History from Columbia University in 2006. His installations and assemblage objects explore the ideological narratives embedded into inanimate things, particularly as they speak to social norms and dominant visual regimes. Recent solo exhibitions include *Incubator* at CAPRI, Dusseldorf, Germany, *The Dreamers* at 47 Canal (New York, USA), *The Childhood of Jesus*, White Flag Projects, and *Unilateral Educational Disarmament* at JOAN, Los Angeles, USA. His work is currently on view in the 2017 Whitney Biennial. Kurian lives and works in New York, New York.

Lili Reynaud-Dewar (b. 1975) currently lives and works in Grenoble, France. Her practice stems from environments and situations created through the use of her own body, as well as those of others, in order to test the pliability of institutional limits. Her solo exhibitions and projects have been presented at Index, Stockholm (2014); Le Consortium, Dijon, France (2013); Le Magasin, Grenoble (2012); and Kunsthalle Basel (2010). Her work has also been included in a number of international group exhibitions, including the 12th Lyon Biennial (2013), the Paris Triennial (2012), and the 5th Berlin Biennial (2008), and has been exhibited at venues such as Witte de With, Rotterdam, Netherlands (2014); the Studio Museum in Harlem, New York (2013); and Generali Foundation, Vienna (2012). She cofounded the feminist journal *Pétunia* with Dorothee Dupuis and Valerie Chartrain in 2011. In 2013, she was the recipient of the Prix Fondation d'Entreprise Ricard.

Los Angeles-based **Max Hooper Schneider** (b. 1982) received his MA in biology and architectural landscape from Harvard University in 2011. His sculptural work unfolds as self-contained systems that merge organic matter with the inorganic, exploring questions of evolution and structural entropy. Recent solo exhibitions include *Nature Theatre of Violent Succession*, High Art, Paris and *Accidental Menagerie*, Kayne Griffin Corcoran, Los Angeles. Forthcoming projects include *Mutations* curated by Cecilia Alemani at the Highline, New York. His work is currently on view in *The New Normal: Art and China in 2017* at UCCA Beijing.