



Press Information

21.06.2025 – 05.10.2025

NOAH BARKER & PAUL LEVACK, TOM BURR, SAM COTTINGTON, DANAE IO

Four Outdoor Scenes

Press tour: Thu, June 19, 2025, 12 pm

Opening and summer party: Fri, June 20, 2025, 7 pm

Braunschweig, June 10, 2025. The group exhibition *Four Outdoor Scenes* brings together new works and others being shown in Germany for the first time, ranging from video and 3D films to collages and performances. The works revolve around concepts of the garden, of landscapes and their architectures—understood as spaces of control, demarcation, but also of occupation and appropriation in the broadest sense. What unites the works is their structure: through layering, they respond to pre-existing artistic or otherwise designed forms. These juxtapositions, played out across various media, highlight the dialectical, processual nature of landscape—not as an isolated figure, but as something embedded within a web of relations and competing interests, and subject to time and change.

At the same time, the exhibitions SINE HANSEN *Sine Hansen* and B. INGRID OLSON *A Feminine Thought Scenes* are opening.

Exhibition text

The Remise opens up onto the garden at ground level, and from spring onward the entrance is so oversaturated with greenery that even after having entered the building it can seem as if you are still outside. The group exhibition *Four Outdoor Scenes* brings together new works and others that have not previously been exhibited in Germany, all of which produce connections to the outdoors on a visual, imaginary, or physical level. They revolve around concepts of the garden, and of landscapes and their architectures – understood as sites of control and state inscription, but also of occupation and appropriation in the broadest sense. What unites these works, which range from videos and 3D films to assemblages and performance, is their formal structure: using the method of superimposition, they respond to existing artistic or otherwise designed forms, which they enter into dialogue with or contradict. This principle might make it possible to adopt multiple perspectives simultaneously, and to draw a connection from the present to the past.

The English-style park around the Kunstverein, which it now shares with the open-air swimming pool behind it, was originally open to “every respectable person”¹ in the early years of the Villa Salve Hospes. The stately garden thus also served as a display of discerning taste, wealth, and urbanity. Filmed in 3D in the Baroque gardens of Schwetzingen Palace, **Noah Barker and Paul Levack’s** collaborative work *Schlossgarten Passacaglia* (2022) sees the background step into the foreground, with architectural figures usually used for scale turned into central protagonists. As with the invention of perspective in painting, the illusion of depth produced by the 3D effect here serves as a point of entry for exploring the world “within the frame,” in this case, the screen. The stereoscopic camera moves through the almost empty park, where two opposing notions of how nature should be designed clash with one another: the French style, which prides itself on imposing order upon nature, and the English, which prides itself on acting as if this were the very thing it does not do. While the harpsichord music that dominates the film’s soundtrack accentuates the now slightly quirky seeming opulence of the surrounding landscape, it is mixed with a sonic backdrop of generically humming bees and playing children that underlines the absolute artificiality that exists within this staged version of nature. If Robert Smithson, in 1972, wrote that “parks are finished landscapes for finished art. A park carries the values of the final, the absolute, and the sacred,” then the hallucinatory images of *Schlossgarten Passacaglia* succeed in imagining the deterioration of the landscapes they depict, and of the hegemonic ideas and concepts connected with them.

In **Tom Burr’s** works, we repeatedly encounter public space as a contested site where systems of control meet loopholes for appropriation and self-empowerment. Twenty-five years after Burr’s solo exhibition *Low Slung* at the Kunstverein Braunschweig, his works return to Lessingplatz in the form of *Nine (Jewel Box)* and *Ten (Soleil Privé)* (both 2024). They stem from his ongoing series of *Journals*, which take Ellsworth Kelly’s *Sculpture for a Large Wall* (1957) as their starting point. Like pinboards connecting temporal and spatial

¹ Reinhard Dorn, *Die Villa Salve Hospes in Braunschweig*, Munich 2000, p. 16.



coordinates used for orientation, the works bring various materials and points of reference from Burr's personal archive into relation with one another. *Nine (Jewel Box)*, for example, includes book pages featuring close-up views of the garden of the British artist and filmmaker Derek Jarman, which he created following his HIV diagnosis at the southernmost tip of Great Britain, in sight of a nuclear power station. Here, the paradise of Jarman's garden, resilient against all odds, is contrasted with a page taken from a police report documenting the attack on Pulse Nightclub in Orlando on June 12, 2016. Both panels also contain photographs of Burr's artworks, some of which were exhibited in 2000 at the Kunstverein Braunschweig. In their simultaneity on the image plane, these materials washed up and sedimented on its surface produce a complex and fragmentary picture of life, made up of various different people, memories, periods, conflicts, and traumas.

In *Recording Angel* (2025) by **Danae Io**, we observe the urban landscape of Thebes – city of Oedipus and Antigone – from a moving car, while the radio plays a program discussing how the Greek landscape was depicted by the British explorer and draftsman James H. Skene. Skene's 19th-century drawings, which were shaped by Romanticism and the idealization of Ancient Greece, still hang in the country's national museums today, as illustrations depicting the formation of the modern Greek state following the end of Ottoman rule. In the course of the radio program, Skene's reveries unfold to an idealized and composed vision of nature, which betrays more about the Western fantasy of dominating and constructing landscapes, cities, and urban environments than it does about the actual landscapes he encountered. In overlaying and contrasting the passing images of present-day Thebes—seen mostly through the rearview mirror—with the voiced account of Skene's cloying imperialist visions, *Recording Angel* might point to the need to understand landscape in its dialectical character: not as a figure isolated from external influences, but as one embedded in a constantly changing network of relationships and competing interests, in the field of tension between history and present, representation and reality.

For **Sam Cottington**, reality is a product of historically and socially formed economies, whose forms and rules he dismantles and questions in his sculptures, texts, videos, and performances. The central conceptual figure in his work is collage – not only in its function as a juxtaposition of different materials, but also as a model for synergy between people, such as in the division of labor in theater production. Cottington intervenes in rule-based structures like those of the theater in order to explore formal possibilities and thematize the expectations of the audience. With the staging of *Plague* from the series of *Phone Plays* (2024-), the artist expands from the Remise into the garden of the Kunstverein, directly reflecting the surroundings and structures in which the exhibition is embedded. The work consists of a script written by Cottington, which is performed live over the phone by actors. In contrast to conventional theater – with audience here and stage there –, the performance unfolds within the context of an exhibition and is carried out almost as if in passing for those standing outside. It is conveyed entirely through a form of communication technology all too familiar to us: the telephone – in this case, the Kunstverein's own iPhone SE. After answering, listeners are invited to enter into a series of unclear and possibly intimate scenarios, which blur the boundaries between what is still being acted out and what is already reality. Derek McCormack writes that "*Phone Plays* has inspired me to make my phone calls more theatrical," and it is similarly down to us to decide what and how much of ourselves we want to give back to others.

The works in *Four Scenes* have an illusory, unreal quality to them. Here, things are not shown to us as they are, or how we have learned to see them. We encounter off-screen voices that describe things that are absent, narrative elements that steer our attention away from what is shown, and images that disorient us or come uncomfortably close. And yet, all the works are based on places and landscapes that do exist, and on materials and surfaces that are actually familiar. "Expression in space is the only real expression, according to Artaud," writes Sam Cottington in his book *Phone Plays*. At the edges, rehearsed and often restrictive realities begin to dissolve – opening up space for forms of expression that resonate.

Junia Thiede, Curator



Biographies

NOAH BARKER is an artist based in New York. His recent exhibitions include Barker Gillick & Jones, Air de Paris, Paris (2024); Midnight Climax, Jacqueline, Athens (2024); a vast machine, Weiss Falk, Basel (2024); A New Concept in Sailing, Lodos, Cologne (2023); Refrigerator Dilemma, Fanta, Milan (2023). As a writer, Barker contributes to Texte Zur Kunst, May Revue, and Mousse Magazine.

The collaborative work *Schlossgarten Passacaglia* (2022) by Noah Barker and Paul Levack has been shown at Nottingham Contemporary, Nottingham (2024); John Giorno Poetry Systems, New York (2023); and Plymouth Rock, Zurich (2022).

TOM BURR (b. 1963 in New Haven, Connecticut, lives and works in Connecticut and New York) creates sculpture, collage, photography, and writing rooted in Minimalism, Conceptual art, feminist art, and institutional critique. He studied at the School of Visual Arts and the Whitney Independent Study Program. Recent solo exhibitions include Bortolami Gallery, New York (2023); Galerie Neu, Berlin (2023); Maureen Paley, London (2022); auroras, São Paulo (2019); and Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford (2019). In September 2025, he will present a solo show at Grazer Kunstverein. *Torrington Project*, a major monograph dedicated to the artist's 2021-24 landmark installation-studio-exhibition space of the same name, will be published by Primary Information this fall.

SAM COTTINGTON is an artist, writer and theater / performance maker from London, living in Frankfurt. A collection of his plays written to be performed over the phone were published by Montez press in 2024, and he has presented painting, performance, video, sculpture and installation works internationally at High Art, Paris (2025); Sculpture Centre, New York (2025); Louche Ops, Berlin (2025); Ginny on Frederick, London (2024, 2022); and Nir Altman, Munich (2024). He's an associate artist at London Performance Studios where he will present a new stage work next year. He is currently a student of Monica Baer at the Städelschule (Frankfurt) and an intern at the Wooster group (New York).

DANAE IO is an artist based in Athens and Rotterdam. She works in moving image, sculpture and text. Recent solo exhibitions include Akwa Ibom, Athens (2025) and State of Concept, Athens (2023). She has participated in exhibitions and screenings at e-flux Screening Room, New York (2025), New Museum / DESTE, Athens (2025), Doclisboa (2024), the Institute of Contemporary Art London (2023), the International Film Festival Rotterdam (2023) and UKS, Oslo (2023), among others.

PAUL LEVACK (*1992) lives and works in Mannheim. He studied at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago and the Städelschule in Frankfurt. In addition to numerous group shows in Germany and abroad, Levack has had solo exhibitions at Neuer Essener Kunstverein (2024); Gaylord Apartments, Los Angeles (2023); Neue Alte Brücke, Frankfurt (2022) and Guzzler, Rosanna (2022), among others.

The collaborative work *Schlossgarten Passacaglia* (2022) by Noah Barker and Paul Levack has been shown at Nottingham Contemporary, Nottingham (2024); John Giorno Poetry Systems, New York (2023); and Plymouth Rock, Zurich (2022).

Kunstverein BRAUNSCHWEIG



Selected Program

Curator's Tour with JUNIA THIEDE

Thu, July 31, 2025, 6 pm
Free of charge, plus admission
In German

Screening: Derek Jarman –The Garden (1990)

Thu, September 25, 2025, 7:30 pm
Cinema in the Remise
Free of charge, plus admission

Further information and the complete program at: kunstvereinbraunschweig.de/program

NOAH BARKER & PAUL LEVACK, TOM BURR, SAM COTTINGTON, DANAE IO *Four Outdoor Scenes*

Exhibition duration: 21.06. – 05.10.2025

Curator: Junia Thiede

Venue: Kunstverein Braunschweig e. V., Lessingplatz 12, 38100 Braunschweig

Opening hours: Tue – Fri 12 pm–6 pm, Thu 12 pm– 8 pm, Sat, Sun 11 am–6 pm

Admission: Regular € 5, Discount € 3

Visitor service: T 49 (0)531 49 556, Mail: info@kunstvereinbraunschweig.de

Supported by: Niedersächsisches Ministerium für Wissenschaft und Kultur, Öffentliche Versicherung Braunschweig, Stadt Braunschweig – Fachbereich Kultur und Wissenschaft

We would like to thank: Galerie Neu

@[kunstvereinbraunschweig](#) on Instagram and Facebook // #KunstvereinBraunschweig //

#FourOutdoorScenes #NoahBarker #PaulLevack #TomBurr #SamCottingham #DanaeIo

Further information about the exhibition: <https://kunstvereinbraunschweig.de/exhibitions/four-outdoor-scenes/>



Image Preview



Noah Barker & Paul Levack, *Schlossgarten Passacaglia*, 2022, filmstill, Courtesy the artists.



Tom Burr, *Nine (Jewel Box)*, 2024. Courtesy the artist and Galerie Neu.



Tom Burr, *Ten (Soleil Privé)*, 2024. Courtesy the artist and Galerie Neu.



Sam Cottingham, *Plague (Phone Play)*, 2024. Courtesy the artist.



Danae Io, *Recording Angel*, 2025, video still, Courtesy the artist.

Exhibition views will be available from June 23, 2025, in the press section of our website:
<https://kunstvereinbraunschweig.de/en/information/press/>

Contact

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