

**For Fairytale/Vierš (alias Marco Fiedler + Achim Reichert) 04/09, Paris:**



„Jardins d’Amis - Max Ernst“  
(Credits: Europe after the Rain I, painted  
plaster-relief by Max Ernst, 1933),  
2009, 30 x 21 cm, gouache on paper



„Jardins d’Amis - Barack H. Obama“  
(Reference: Grassroots to the White House  
Kegolo, Kenia, Washington/Hawaii, USA),  
15.10 - 3.11.2008, 30 x 21 cm, gouache on paper

## **The World after the Rain**

### **Venues of Desire**

*Everything urges towards landscape.*  
Philipp Otto Runge

In the imagination of every human exists at least one special venue that talks to him or her, that is loaded with a „genius loci“, meaningful only to that very person. These ideal worlds – internal and external – which are represented on a pictorial level since ages, as visions of the Garden of Eden, as artificial paradises or dreamt of „loci amoeni“, as ideal cities or utopian societies, and often also as real places of desire, situated in a landscape-like environment - are longed and searched for still today, but can never really be reached. However, what has changed is the motive of desire that had been secularized and individualized ever more through the centuries. We find it in the touristy manipulated wanderlust of the vacationer, as well as in the homesickness of the ones condemned to migration by political, religious or economic reasons.

Artists have been constructing such sites for a long time - although their representations have been obligated to mythological and Christian iconographies over centuries or have been ideologically coloured or manipulated later in the 20. Century. Recently fictitious places are often digitally designed as subjective artistic Utopias. Other places really exist and are soberly documented - which raises again the question about the aesthetic meaning of medially staged truthfulness by (investigative) journalism and its close relationships to conceptual art. In addition, places can be understood as action terrains and can serve as fields for direct actions loaded with a variety of meanings.



„Jardins d’Amis Achim Reichert“  
(Room/Office, Vier5, Paris 2007),  
2007, 21 x 30 cm, gouache on paper



„Jardins d’Amis Marco Fiedler“  
(With Torwart, Vier5, Paris 2007),  
2007, 21 x 30 cm, gouache on paper

The „ideal place“ of many humans, even if they come from completely different origins, in descriptions usually contains landscape-related connotations or in the broadest sense connections to Nature - although with very different motives. One could think, that this circumstance is owed to the longing for closeness to Nature, which is winning all the more of explosiveness, the larger the distance to Nature is getting. The indissoluble contradiction between technological progress and the duly stopping of the climate change, arousing an apocalyptic atmosphere - either way both anthropocentric ventures - produces in many heads an increased concentration on the topic "Alienation from Nature".

This alienation from Nature is the price to be paid for a thoughtless continuing of the Enlightenment's project, which has not accomplished itself to this day. As a result, the consequences of the submission of Nature under the human spirit - as an object degraded to immaturity by chaos and arbitrariness - have now assumed a global extent by applying methods of the modern Western natural sciences everywhere. In spite of repeatedly returning currents of critical questioning, the linear development of this project has proven itself tenaciously and inexorably. Now it is time to introduce an epoch of a real counter-movement resulting out of this critical questioning - with the force of a full braking which tolerates no more dialectic skipping around.



„Jardins d'Amis Pierre Bal-Blanc“  
 (Credits: Transportable Garden, Cac Brétigny,  
 by Lois and Franziska Weinberger, 2005),  
 2007, 30 x 21 cm, gouache on paper



„Jardins d'Amis Lois Weinberger“  
 (Credits: Ruderale, The wrong Place,  
 by Lois Weinberger, 1993),  
 2009, 30 x 21 cm, gouache on paper

Artistically to focus on filling up this counter-movement with cultural potential, is also revealed as necessary. Therefore, following the question how the variety of longings for a renewed connection with Nature could be represented turns out to be a task which is as old as cave-painting, and as current as the newest combination of "Research through the Arts" and technically sophisticated New-Media-installations that lead to ecological expertise. Yet, it is also possible to remind such an old medium as „Painting“ of its duty to rephrase the questions of the state of this relationship towards Nature, with the help of the newest knowledge on sociology, philosophy, and natural sciences.

A reconciliation is needed between self-contained programs, with independently developed content, and an aesthetically mature form. Thus, the energy-wasting competition between content and form, between conceptualism and formalism could be curbed. This very energy could then be set free for an “archipelagic thinking“. It would shift global contexts and form new cultural islands by crossing national and linguistic borders. And now could blossom visions of the poetic and the imaginary, spring-fed from „the unexpected of the universe“ (freely after Eduard Glissant). Precisely, that is to say: to connect the useful with the beautiful and above all, to provide in all conceivable ways a central appearance for the word „and“.



„Jardins d’Amis Matthias Einhoff“  
 (Credits: Parcella, Sculpture-Park, Berlin-Center  
 Initiators: Matthias Einhoff and Philipp Horst, 2007),  
 2008/09, 30 x 21 cm, gouache on paper



„Jardins d’Amis Hans Haacke“  
 (Credits: Für die Bevölkerung, Reichstag  
 Berlin, planting-project by Hans Haacke, since 2000),  
 2009, 30 x 21 cm, gouache on paper

## Integration Models

Many of the approaches for a change of our behaviour in relation to Nature discussed worldwide at present, and also the decisions already made, serve to really develop this counter-movement mentioned above, and give it its necessary direction. Often they are based on thoughts, which were formulated so concretely for the first time in the historical epoch of the German Romantic Movement. Of course, these thoughts have been developed genealogically since the Presocratics. However, what began at that time in Germany - after the outbreak of the French revolution - as a cultural and scientific development, is still relevant today and useful in the core for the enhancement of ecological research far beyond the national border.



„Jardins d'Amis – Charles Darwin“  
 (Credits: The forgotten saurian, Rosada, Galapagos  
 Islands, discovered and studied since 2001),  
 2009, 30 x 21 cm, gouache on paper



„Jardins d'Amis – Christian Zuber“  
 (Credits: Galapagos Islands, by documentarian  
 Christian Zuber, co-founder of WWF, 1970ies),  
 2009, 30 x 21 cm, gouache on paper

Thus, in the course of rebelling against the one-sided demands of the Enlightenment the model „Analogy with Nature“ was placed opposite to the model „Dominance over Nature“. Therein rationalism and Nature are to interpenetrate, to symbolize and represent themselves mutually. Here however, it is not a question of an irrational counter-concept to the sciences, but an attempt of an integration of the scientific methods into romantic natural philosophy. The perceptions of forms of the natural sciences appear as consolidated symbolizations and thus as analogical structures to the organic forms, which they describe. Being „completed“ in Nature, and not the scientific method of analysis and separation (which leads away from Nature, because it faces her in a completely unconnected subject-object-constellation) is the real aim of this cognition-theory. The poet Novalis, most important representative of the early Romantic Movement in Germany, summarizes this model of the „romanticizing of the world“ in an exemplary sentence: "Speculation completed leads back to Nature". (General Brouillon, 1798)

In this „Back to Nature“ lies hidden an Utopia, which can never be achieved per se, which becomes effective however, on the way towards itself. Not a nostalgic return to Nature is meant here - in the sense of Rousseaus' term of Nature, as an original state, where innocence had gone lost through the process of civilization and one is necessitated to achieve it again - but a constitutive fusion of variously interpretable pairs of opposites. Novalis' way out of the dilemma of thinking in opposites like reason

and faith, subject and spirit, reflection and feeling, analysis and synthesis - to name a few - is thinking in conceptual and pictorial correspondences. Bringing back art, language and science into the context of the analogue natural philosophy, as an act of reconciliation with Nature, is expressed in this integrative model.



„Jardins d’Amis – Marie Antoinette“  
 (Credits: Le Hameau de Mique, Claude L. Châtelet, 1779, and: The Widow Capet, Jaques L. David, 1793),  
 2009, 30 x 21 cm, gouache on paper



„Jardins d’Amis – Ulrike Meinhof“  
 (Credits: Apollon Terroriste, Little Sparta, Scotland, by Ian Hamilton Finlay, since 1970),  
 2009, 30 x 21 cm, gouache on paper

Today we are in search for models, which fulfil this very function of integration, which also meet however, the advanced stage of our alienation from Nature. Our advantage is that current technological achievements are not only destroying and/or displacing Nature, but that they are also able to save her in modified forms. Thus we learn in a much more differentiated way from Nature today than we did still 200 years ago. However, we should acquire her ideas way more intensively instead of only consuming negligently her resources, because they are the branches on which we are sitting ourselves. That way the romantic ideal of „analogy“ would fulfil itself concretely, and the seizing and shifting of these ideas hidden in Nature, by carefully treating these resources, would dissolve the separation from humans and Nature gradually.

We should learn from her ability to permanent purposeful change and from her experimental development processes. Decentralized units, which work on independent solutions for the various supply problems, that will meet us in the future, would be cribbed from these natural processes. In addition, self-sufficiency principles with exchange resources fell into this range. That means our surviving can become secured

only by a worldwide co-operation with Nature. If we do not adhere to this rule and go on pursuing the linear, comfortable way of the technological progress, with a few reformist pirouettes in-between, then this ponderous, human-made construct, which we call civilization, will collapse back upon itself in a near future – at least if we listen to various ecologists and other scientists prognoses.



„Jardins d’Amis – Ludger Gerdes“  
 (Credits: A Ship for Münster, by Ludger Gerdes,  
 SkulpturenProjekte Münster, 1997),  
 2009, 30 x 21 cm, gouache on paper



„Jardins d’Amis – Per Kirkeby“  
 (Reference: First Greenland-Expedition  
 by Per Kirkeby as a student of geology, 1958),  
 2009, 30 x 21 cm, Gouache auf Papier

Everybody therefore is asked to build on this integrative model with his or her own means and gifts and to use hereby the global reality of a recently possible connection of all with all, in order to perceive and protect one’s own Nature by comparing it to the others worldwide. Apart from a fundamental readiness to take ecological responsibility it is important, to react curiously and independently about this situation and not only separate garbage and exchange a few bulbs. To expose oneself regularly to the mutual experiencing and thinking of Nature, could contribute in addition, both to attain a higher insight into Nature, and to perceive oneself - reflected in her - always more clearly as a part of her.



„Jardins d’Amis – Patrick Blanc“  
(Credits: Close-up of a planted wall, Quai Branly,  
Paris, developed by Patrick Blanc, 2005),  
2009, 30 x 21 cm, gouache on paper



„Jardins d’Amis – Gordon Tian Hatfield“  
(Credits: Cost of Opononi, New Zealand,  
Cradle of the Maori-Culture in Aotearoa, 2009),  
2009, 30 x 21 cm, gouache on paper

Caroline Bittermann, April 2009, Paris