

Halle Nord

OPENING

Tuesday 9 September, 6 pm

OPENING HOURS

Tuesday–Saturday, 2 pm–6 pm

The glass-fronted spaces are visible 24/7 from
Passage des Halles de l'Île

GUIDED TOURS

Thursday 18 September, 12 pm
(In collaboration with Geneva Art Week)

Saturday 4 October, 5 pm



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Halle Nord

EXHIBITION

10.09–25.10.25

Defiant Gardens

Jacopo Belloni

Sara Sejin Chang

(Sara van der Heide)

Zahra Hakim

Camille Henrot

Astrit Ismaili

Derek Jarman

Hanne Lippard

Mai-Thu Perret

A co-production with Centre d'Art Contemporain Genève
Curated by Elise Lammer

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This exhibition is the outcome of an extended research project on artist, filmmaker, author, and gay rights activist Derek Jarman (UK, 1942–1994) who, a year after being diagnosed HIV-positive in 1986, acquired a fisherman's cottage in Dungeness, on the south-east coast of Kent. There he created Prospect Cottage, the house and garden that became a vital site of artistic and horticultural experimentation, where he spent significant time during the last seven years of his life. For Jarman, as for many artists before and after him, the garden, with its powerful metaphorical charge, became a way to approach the concept of nature through critical inquiry, particularly by tracing its entanglement with colonial and anthropological histories.

Defiant Gardens brings together artists whose engagement with the notion of the garden belongs to a utopian, decolonial, and feminist tradition, and who share a vision of nature as a space of emancipation.

This project is supported by

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OCA – Office for Contemporary Art Norway

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Halle Nord is supported by Ville de Genève, République et Canton de Genève

Mai-Thu Perret, *In Darkness Let Me Dwell*, 2010
16mm transferred to video
8', looped

In Darkness Let Me Dwell follows the wandering of a young woman, from Tufnell Park Underground station in London to Hampstead. The heroine crosses the park, an uncanny oasis of greenery at the heart of the city, while singing a melancholic Elizabethan song by John Dowland, the sixteenth-century English composer, whose title *In Darkness Let Me Dwell* also gives the film its name. The artist originally intended to end the journey with a swim in the wooded ponds of Hampstead Heath, but lacking permission, the final scene was shot in Dungeness, Kent, near Derek Jarman's legendary garden. The film unfolds as a passage between underground and overground, haunted by the prospect of a descent into hell.

Mai-Thu Perret develops a multidisciplinary practice that interweaves speculative narrative, craft, and feminist engagement. Since the late 1990s, she has been building a fictional universe entitled *The Crystal Frontier*, centered on a utopian community of women living self-sufficiently in the New Mexican desert. This fiction provides the framework for sculptures, weavings, ceramics, embroideries, and installations, conceived as artifacts from the collective workshop of these imagined women. Created using artisanal techniques, these works bring into tension narratives of resistance to consumer society, modernist ideals, and forms of women's emancipation. Perret's approach is nourished by the history of artistic avant-gardes, which she reactivates through the prism of fiction, language, and the body.

Mai-Thu Perret was born in Geneva, where she lives and works. She holds a degree in English literature from the University of Cambridge and attended the Whitney Independent Study Program in New York. She has participated in numerous international exhibitions and has received several awards, including the Zurich Art Prize and the Prix Culturel Manor.

Starring Tamara Barnett-Herrin
Cinematographer: Bevis Bowden
Camera assistant: Brada Barassi
Dress fabrication: Naoyuki Yoneto
Make-up: Joanna Banach
Hair: Teiji Utsumi
Production assistant: Portia Barnett-Herrin

Soundtrack: Ikue Mori
Vocals: Tamara Barnett-Herrin after John Dowland
Sound engineering: Marc Uselly
Post production: Laetitia Lanvin Bech
Artistic production: Mathieu Copeland
Supported by IDEHAP, Lausanne

Jacopo Belloni, *Hypnos*, 2025
Essential oil extraction devices in borosilicate glass, metal, silicone tubes, electric heating system, chamomile, water, water pump, refractory ceramic
130 × 85 × 100 cm

Hypnos explores the cultural, chemical, and psychophysical relations between plants and human beings. Belloni's sculpture consists of a series of distillation and essential oil extraction devices which, with their tubes, vials, and spirals, evoke the human lacrimal system. The distillation process releases an abundant flow, as if tears, to extract the essential oils of chamomile. This plant, known for promoting sleep and relaxation, has traditionally been used to treat eye pathologies and infections, and when distilled may release an essential oil of an intense blue color. At Halle Nord, from the opening night and throughout the exhibition, chamomile scents permeate the space, affecting the audience, guiding them towards a state of calm and relaxation. Symbolically and psychically, tears maintain a close affinity with sleep. They can be perceived as a passage, a purification, a bridge connecting wakefulness and dreaming, the living and the spirits, consciousness and the unconscious.

Jacopo Belloni is interested in the belief systems of European vernacular cultures. His research draws on anthropological materials and borrows from the history of religions, superstitions, and popular fictions. The occult practices and symbolism of Italian folklore feed his artistic practice, as do magical thinking, the supernatural, and omens. In his works and performances, the transformation of beings and materials, the use of signs, votive objects, and incantations allow the irrational to disrupt what we perceive as "reality." His contemporary tales and legends reveal the shadowy zones of our present, as well as the anxiety we may feel in the face of a complex and nebulous reality. Yet he also reminds us that customs and traditions are meaning-making practices that allow us to connect to one another.

Jacopo Belloni holds degrees from the Accademia di Belle Arti di Brera in Milan (2014), the University of Milan (2018), and a Master's in Visual Arts from HEAD – Genève (2021). In 2021, Jacopo Belloni was selected for the Biennale College Arte and was a fellow at Istituto Svizzero in Rome in 2023-2024. Recently, his work has been shown at frac île-de-france; ADA Gallery, Milan; Istituto Svizzero, Rome; and Centre d'art contemporain de la Ferme du Buisson, Noisiel, among others.

Sara Sejin Chang (Sara van der Heide), *The Garden*, 2014
DCP (Digital Cinema Package)
56'

A year long filming
From April 2013 to April 2014
In an allotment garden of 330 m2
Tuinwijk, Amsterdam

The Garden takes the form of a travelogue, retracing a year spent in an allotment garden near Amsterdam. Through her camera, Sara Sejin Chang (Sara van der Heide) observes nature in its metamorphoses, shifts in colour and form, the emergence, death and decay of plants, as well as the daily life of the garden's other inhabitants and passers-by. The garden's cycle reveals an experience of time grounded in biological rhythms, standing in contrast to the dominant logic of capitalist societies, which privileges the spectacular and linear growth.

Sara Sejin Chang (Sara van der Heide) develops a profoundly engaged body of work that interweaves archives, spirituality, intimate memory, and postcolonial critique. Through video, performance, immersive installation, text, and painting, she interrogates colonial structures, imposed identity narratives, and forms of historical violence that are rendered invisible. Her work explores the possibility of repair, reconciliation, and healing by invoking shamanic practices, ritual gestures, and an attentiveness to interrupted lineages. She creates sensitive environments where poetry, pain, and transformation coexist. A significant part of her practice is devoted to issues related to transnational adoption, migration, and diasporic memory.

Born in Busan, Sara Sejin Chang (Sara van der Heide) lives and works between Amsterdam, Brussels, and Berlin. Her work has been widely exhibited, including at Moderna Museet, Stockholm; the Busan Biennale; and the Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam, among others. In 2025–2026, her work will be featured in the 36th Biennale de São Paulo.

Camera and editing: Sara van der Heide
Color correction: Sara van der Heide and Guy Molin
Technical guidance: Guy Molin
Camera stand-in: Kyle Tryhorn
Commissioned by *If I Can't Dance, I Don't Want To Be Part Of Your Revolution*

This work is on view from Passage des Halles de l'Île, in the window space adjacent to the main exhibition hall.

Hanne Lippard, *Arouses*, 2025
4-channel sound installation
Looped audio

Hanne Lippard, *Loveliness Extreme*, 2025
Vinyl
Variable dimensions

The sound installation *Arouses* and the wall piece *Loveliness Extreme* explore how words can conjure experiences of colour and scent, with the rose as both a linguistic and sensory phenomenon. The word "rose" carries a long lineage of social and cultural associations, such as romance, gardening, tradition, nationalism, and the colour itself, most often linked to femininity. Its grammatical conjugation is among the basic principles of Latin, and its repetition recurs in the writings of Gertrude Stein as well as in Jacques Brel's songs. Through repetition, the word begins to function as a sonic pattern or rhythm, a vocal vortex similar to the visual appearance of the rose's spiral layering of petals, gradually dissolving both its meaning and its role as signifier.

Hanne Lippard explores language as a sculptural material, focusing on the voice, rhythm, and the physicality of words. For over a decade, she has developed a body of work in which performance, sound, and installation revolve around texts she writes and performs herself. By deconstructing the automatisms of everyday communication, like emails, notifications, slogans, professional speeches, she reveals the tension between the efficiency of language and its emotional charge. Her voice, often amplified or detached from the body, becomes an instrument of modulation, irony, and distance. Whether live performances, audio recordings, or immersive installations, she composes minimalist sound environments where language acts as a mirror of contemporary logics of productivity, gender, or alienation.

Born in England, Hanne Lippard grew up in Norway and now lives between Berlin and Rome. She has presented her work in institutions such as Kunsthalle Basel; KW Institute for Contemporary Art, Berlin; Fondation Lafayette Anticipations, Paris; Centre d'Art Contemporain Genève, among others. She was awarded the Preis der Nationalgalerie 2024.

Derek Jarman, *Household God III (Wagner)*, 1989
Mixed media
19 x 12.5 x 9 cm

Household Gods is a series of small sculptural works created by Derek Jarman in 1989. Each piece is a mixed-media assemblage, usually no more than a few dozen centimeters high, combining figurines of well-known composers with objects gleaned by the artist. Jarman gathered driftwood, stones, shards of glass, dried plants, during his (almost) daily walks along the shingle beach near his cottage in Dungeness, (Kent, UK) where he lived from 1986 until his death in 1994. In *Household God III (Wagner)*, a small bust of the composer supports a stone, a piece of driftwood, and a scrap of metal placed on top of his head. Jarman referred to these works as "domestic gods," miniature portraits that merge literary, historical, and cultural references. The series reflects his broader practice of assembling personal relics and found materials into compact, syncretic forms.

A major figure on the British art scene from the 1970s to the 1990s, Derek Jarman explored the margins—sexual, political, and aesthetic—through a resolutely experimental practice. His films combine fragmentary narrative, literary references, personal archives, and punk aesthetics to question norms, desire, and memory. Autobiographical elements, the use of Super 8, classical quotations, and militant stances coexist in a singular visual language that is both lyrical and raw. Committed to the fight against homophobia and HIV-related stigma, Jarman made his work a space of poetic resistance. His garden at Dungeness, created around his *Prospect Cottage*, became a living sculpture, a silent manifesto, and a gesture of resilience in the face of illness.

Derek Jarman was born in London in 1942 and died in 1994. Trained at the Slade School of Fine Art, he created cult films such as *Sebastiane* (1976), *Jubilee* (1978), *Caravaggio* (1986), *The Last of England* (1987), and *Blue* (1993). His oeuvre has influenced generations of artists and filmmakers and continues to be widely exhibited and rediscovered today.

This work is on view from Passage des Halles de l'Île, in the window space adjacent to the main exhibition hall.

Zahra Hakim, *Un Éclat d'une Lumière Perdue I (Arbre, Balançoire)*, 2025
Arol pine wood
38 x 35 x 3 cm

Zahra Hakim, *Un Éclat d'une Lumière Perdue II (Pomme, Lierre)*, 2025
Arol pine wood
45 x 33 x 3 cm

Zahra Hakim, *Un Éclat d'une Lumière Perdue III*, 2025
Pear wood
24.5 x 23 x 4 cm

*A breath returns, each time, from a place I
do not know,
carrying with it blurred memories,
filled with the impulse of childhood,
with the desire to live,
and with a new, yet distant breath.
It settles gently upon my heart.
My hands open, full of the desire to
embrace it.*

*Like a light dream that, in the morning,
dances in memory,
before vanishing, leaving a smile in the
heart.
But the breeze drifts away, soft and calm,
leaving nothing of itself in my palms.
Its freshness glides across my cheeks.
And life flows on:
water, the apple, the ivy in the glass.*

Un Éclat d'une Lumière Perdue (A Glimmer of Lost Light) is a series of three reliefs carved into different types of wood, such as Arol pine, chosen for its texture and distinctive fragrance. Sculpted with chisels, these works evoke fragments of childhood memories: a swing, a bed, a lost garden. Some motifs appear as though buried, concealed within the material, echoing what is lost or inaccessible, between intimate memory, cultural heritage, and the daily observation of nature.

Zahra Hakim develops an artistic practice centered on the notions of belonging, care, and resistance, in close connection with memory, displacement, and the domestic sphere. Born in 1983 in Iran to Iraqi parents, she spent the first years of her life in the context of the Iran–Iraq war—an experience that profoundly shaped her worldview. Successive exiles, whether voluntary or forced, as well as the many places she has traversed, nourish a body of work infused with fragments that she assembles into sensitive installations. She works with a variety of materials such as wood, paint, weaving, and ceramics, often approaching them as a self-taught practitioner.

Zahra Hakim holds a Master's in Visual Arts from HEAD – Genève (2022). Her work has been presented in various contexts in Switzerland and abroad, including at the Musée de la Croix Rouge, as part of the Prix Art et Humanité 2025 residency. In 2025, she was a laureate of the Swiss Art Awards.

Visitors are invited to touch the surface of this work.

Camille Henrot, *Is it Possible to be Revolutionary and still like Flowers?*, 2011-ongoing
Ceramics, various plant essences, plexiglas
Variable dimensions

This series, inspired by the Sogetsu school of ikebana, takes its title from a biography of Lenin by Marcel Liebman, while each work adopts the title of one of the artist's books. The artist's library, spanning literature, philosophy, and anthropology, is here translated into floral arrangements. Reflecting Henrot's wide-ranging interests and the complex constellation of references that inform her practice, each piece establishes a precise link between the content of a book and the botanical or symbolic qualities of the flowers selected. At Halle Nord, the installation, —initially created for La Triennale curated by Okwui Enwezor in 2012 at Palais de Tokyo, Paris—is presented through a selection of arrangements chosen in collaboration with the artist. Although the logic of their associations is not disclosed, viewers can trace its contours through the labels that accompany each work, which list the book's title and author alongside its botanical equivalents.

Camille Henrot develops a multidisciplinary practice that explores the complexity of contemporary life through drawing, painting, sculpture, installation, and film. Her works, nourished by literature, poetry, cartoons, second-hand objects, social media, and wellness cultures, examine the tension between the intimate sphere and collective experience in a hyperconnected world. By confronting heterogeneous sources, she creates dense visual narratives marked by emotional ambiguity, information overload, and human attempts to classify reality.

Her film *Grosse Fatigue* (2013), produced as part of a Smithsonian Institute fellowship, won the Silver Lion at the 55th Venice Biennale. This work inaugurated a series of landmark installations, including *The Pale Fox* (2014), presented at Chisenhale Gallery, London; Kunsthall Charlottenborg, Copenhagen, and Tokyo Opera City Art Gallery. In 2017, she was given carte blanche at the Palais de Tokyo with the exhibition *Days Are Dogs*. A recipient of the Nam June Paik Award (2014) and the Edvard Munch Award (2015), Camille Henrot has participated in the Venice, Lyon, Berlin, Sydney, and Liverpool Biennales.

Astrit Ismaili, *Through and in and out of the Hole*, 2023-ongoing
Pencil and ink on paper
4 drawings, 297 x 420 mm each

Through and in and out of the Hole is part of cycle *The First Flower*, Astrit Ismaili's largest body of work to date, unfolding across music, film, sculpture, and performance. At Halle Nord, a selection of four drawings from this ongoing series is presented. Drawing on botanical themes, the works depict bodies that transform against the odds, reshaping their patterns and influencing the environment around them. Through radical fiction, the series offers a critique of the binary structures that continue to shape contemporary society, structures which, according to the artist, leave little room for the complexity of human existence: always in flux, always in transition. Just as plants evolved into flowering species to overcome the constraints of early elemental reproduction and ensure their diversification, the artist turned to the plant world as a way to embrace and understand their constantly evolving possibilities for becoming. These drawings imagine a utopian space where bodies, like plants breaking through concrete, can flourish freely, beyond imposed boundaries.

Astrit Ismaili develops a performative practice that interrogates notions of transformation through the body and the voice. Their works stage alter-egos, bodily extensions, and wearable instruments that open the way to new modes of existence and expression. By creating fictional and sensitive environments, they explore how the imagination can transcend physical, social, or political constraints.

Astrit Ismaili holds a degree in performance from DasArts in Amsterdam and is a lecturer at the Institute Art, Gender and Nature in Basel. Based in Amsterdam, they have presented work in numerous international institutions, including in Berlin, New York, Basel, Pristina, and Amsterdam. They are currently an artist-in-residence at the Rijksakademie in Amsterdam.