

Gardened 2002-2004

Gardened explored particular facets of human organisation of nature and environment. This series of works were shown within the exhibition Pleasure Garden curated by Jim Waters and was funded by the Nottingham Castle Art Gallery and Museum. It included work from fifteen artists including the internationally renowned Dan Harvey and Heather Ackroyd partnership. The show attracted over thirty thousand visitors. The research was presented as a series of bespoke one metre, circular white gloss panels with constructed images in the centre of each. Individual collages included reassembled garden features e.g. pond, sun dial, greenhouse, hedge and seat. The work aimed to present a cool, diagrammatic and detached experience of 'garden' which questioned the persistency of photographic pictorialism within western European garden representation. It questioned the holistic optical view of garden vistas and in turn favoured subversion through overtly constructed, topographical and diagrammatic forms bringing imagery and synthetic material together. Photographic images were taken through wide ranging visual experiments which increasingly reassembled image segments into systematised constructions. Over time the work emerged as small scale digital sketches which were increased in size to be sympathetic to the venue. The work was informed by reading from disciplines such as perception, geography, science and art, biogenetics and philosophy.

In addition to the work shown in Pleasure Garden, a second body of work grew out of this research and was invited to be shown at Beyond Dolly (ICA 2002) and the Generative Art International Conference (Milan School of Architecture). This parallel work used a database of one hundred and fifty cropped photographic details of Friesian cow backs (each unique to the animal). The images were randomly printed onto continuous dot matrix paper to form a collection (or herd) of beasts in graphic form. The stacks of continuous paper were placed onto highly detailed photographic panels of English meadows on the floor and each stack pulled upwards to be suspended from the ceiling of the ICA. The image collection and its division into groups attempted to make associations with the endless permutations of variety within animal types and the moral complexities of future standardization through genetics and cloning.