

Art at the Botanics is a world first

A new augmented reality exhibition will open at the Botanics in September at exactly the same time as it will be displayed at 11 other gardens all over the world.

The contemporary artworks in *Seeing the Invisible* will be created with augmented reality (AR) and will be shown at Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh (RBGE) and 12 other gardens in six countries.

The works will be created by more than a dozen international artists – including Ai Weiwei – and for some it will be their first venture into the world of AR. Visitors will download an app to smartphone or tablet and will engage with the exhibition through it.

The hope is that the exhibitions will show the power of art in connecting people around the world. *Seeing the Invisible* was initiated by the Jerusalem Botanical Gardens and Outset Contemporary Art Fund, and is co-curated by Hadas Maor and Tal Michael Haring.

Artists providing work for the exhibition include Ai Weiwei, Refik Anadol, El Anatsui, Isaac Julien CBE, Mohammed Kazem, Sigalit Landau, Sarah Meyohas, Pamela Rosenkranz, and Timur Si-Qin.



The dozen outdoor gardens are located in different biomes which will highlight the contrasts and similarities between them, when visitors see the same work in different locations. these will be expansive, immersive works engaging with the landscape.

Head of Creative Programming at Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh, Emma Nicolson said: "*Seeing the Invisible* has found a way to transform the experience of visiting the Gardens and how we engage with public artworks by bringing together the real world and the virtual world. The opportunity to host such ambitious works of art whilst minimising the environmental impact closely aligns with our vision for the Climate House programme which explores the potential of art and science working hand in hand to further our appreciation and understanding of the natural world. I'm excited to see how this groundbreaking exhibition will encourage new visitors to the Gardens and showcase this beautiful setting in a new light."

"This exhibition allows artists who have not previously worked in AR to expand on ideas that are central to their practice in entirely new ways," said *Seeing the Invisible* Co-Curator Hadas Maor. "In doing so, the exhibition engages a wide range of visitors with contemporary artworks, including a number that

address critical issues around the environment, through this exciting new medium.

“Coming out of the pandemic when outdoor experiences and nature have taken on a new meaning and gravity in our lives, this exhibition represents a fresh way for people to engage with art and nature simultaneously,” added *Seeing the Invisible* Co-Curator Tal Michael Haring. “The interplay of these augmented reality works in vibrant natural settings breaks down the binary between what is often considered ‘natural’ versus ‘digital’, and in this way provides an exhibition experience that is much more connected to the way we live today.

“*Seeing the Invisible* was born out of a collaboration during the pandemic with the Jerusalem Botanical Gardens that opened our eyes to the incredible opportunities for creating an entirely new kind of contemporary art experience within the setting of a botanical garden,” said Outset Contemporary Art Fund Co-Founder Candida Gertler OBE and Outset Contemporary Art Fund Israel Director Mirav Katri. “We are thrilled to be partnering with exceptional gardens from all across the world on this exhibition bridging the physical and digital worlds to create a new phygital model, bringing their expert knowledge of their field together with the most cutting-edge technology in contemporary art to develop a new exhibition format beyond the typical museum or gallery space.

“There is exceptional potential for botanical gardens, with their deep expertise in engaging diverse audiences in their complex work, to lead the way in creating new models for visitor experiences of contemporary art,” added Jerusalem Botanical Gardens Executive Director Hannah Rendell. “We are deeply gratified for the opportunity to forge new connections with partner gardens all across the globe, paving the way for what we hope will be many future collaborations.”



El Anatsui



Water Organ by Jacob Kudsk Steensen

Seeing the Invisible will simultaneously premiere at:

- Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh (Edinburgh, Scotland)
- Eden Project (Cornwall, England)
- Denver Botanic Gardens (Denver, Colorado, USA)
- Kirstenbosch National Botanical Garden (Cape Town, South Africa)
- Marie Selby Botanical Gardens (Sarasota, Florida, USA)
- Massachusetts Horticultural Society (Wellesley, Massachusetts, USA)
- Royal Botanical Gardens (Ontario, Canada)
- Jerusalem Botanical Gardens (Jerusalem, Israel)
- Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria, Cranbourne Gardens (Cranbourne, Australia)
- Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria, Melbourne Gardens (Melbourne, Australia)
- San Diego Botanic Garden (San Diego, California, USA)
- Tucson Botanical Gardens (Tucson, Arizona, USA)

This project has been made possible in partnership with The Jerusalem Foundation. *Seeing the Invisible* is co-curated by Hadas Maor and Tal Michael Haring, and organised by Jerusalem Botanical Gardens and Outset Contemporary Art Fund.



Ori Gersht

For additional information and to book entry for the exhibition at Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh, click on these links www.rbge.org.uk or seeingtheinvisible.art