Mythical Anthology

an outlook

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Landesgartenschau 2020
Art... Is My Burning Passion
Simon Denny. Mine
Is Marie Therese Good or Bad?
With Great Thanks
Imprint

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We are utterly delighted for you to be in possession of this piece. Most certainly, you have already heard of the Mythical Institution — an art school and legendary project space responsible for setting many an art precedent of the recent years. Since the emergence of our gallery realm in 2019 AD, we have been exuberating curatorial fantasticisms, ushering in a new dawn of art — again and again. Throughout this Volume it shall be, thus, our quest to impart knowledge unto you and we will do so with great pleasure. Allow us to briefly instruct you on the practicalities of that which lies ahead:

This Volume will chronologically guide you through the iconic events hosted by the Mythical Institution’s gallery space. Comprehensive insights about curatorial concepts and avatarian production shall be gained and the institution’s grandeur may reveal itself via a broad array of visual stimuli — i.e. beautiful imagery.

We now bid you to progress and receive a fundamental understanding about the Mythical Institution and its glorious endeavours. Your acceptance of our immensely generous offerings shall be obliged.

With great thanks,
the faculty of the Mythical Institution
by proxy: Jan Berger
Museums of natural history and botanical gardens cover the assemblage nature offers, specifically of the dead and the primitive. Precisely situated in space, yet somewhere displaced in time the *Mythical Institution* embodies the enigma of contemporary art and its gallery *an outlook* is the perfect recollection of such controversy. Five artresses and three artists are on site to diligently stand in its current show *Le Grand Trampolage*.

*Le Grand Trampolage*, as the name already suggests, invites you to a sanctuary of past and post-mythological sentiments. Its elusive yet sublime elaboration by eight temporalities closely intertwines a communal commitment to a virtual space. The virility of flora and fauna colligated with the political agency of queer-feminist practices situated in an institution carries a futurity that is morphed into a complex argument. The psychology of Minecraft is conspicuous; endless resources become an embrace to disregard the surreality of itself. *Le Grand Trampolage* is an abstraction of the avatarian era of art production in which endlessness and amenability become a whimsical-utopian project.

by Arootin Mirzakhani
Le Grand Trampolage was brought to life following an extensive open call phase in August 2019 AD. The application form specifically demanded for artists to set a pseudonym so the highest level of anonymity was ensured. The application did not ask for work portfolios, since they are, of course, of ever so little importance. Instead, eligible artists were asked to describe their work in general and to discuss their motivation for attending the programme. The former aspect was, however, merely a red herring, since the Mythical Institution has little interest in such utterly mundane matters as descriptive documents. It was revealed that the real indicator of a successful application was the acknowledgement of the Mythical Institution’s all encompassing reputation. It also helped if the applicant’s three most recent show titles were to our liking.

For the residency phase from October to December 2019 AD, eight artists were invited to the Mythical Institution’s gallery to develop their work unhindered by mortal concerns. To adequately accommodate the participants, multiple amenities were made accessible within the legendary estate, such as the in-house library, a holistic canteen and a greenhouse. On the day of le grand opening, a pop-up bar was permanently installed. During the opening, chorus fruit was served, which artists were encouraged to collectively consume during the festive celebrations. Upon consumption, artists and visitors were teleported a short distance, which ensured an unforgettable art experience.

Towards the end of the curatorial tour, JanBerger revealed a secret passage that led to the ancient catacombs underneath the estate. Deep within the tunnels, powerful artifacts were found. Questions of conservational nature arose, after artists had decided to wear them for an impromptu catwalk session.
Melanie Bonajo’s work perceives the gallery space as a network of interdependence and care. By introducing nearly extinct animals as residents of the exhibition halls, she creates the possibility for interspecies rendezvous: In a desperate attempt to avoid their near extinction and surpass their destiny, they all try to have sex with each other, procreating the ultimate hybrid. The humanoid visitor is forced to share their physical space with these mythical beasts, knowing all too well that their existence might soon only amount to a fleeting dream. Animals may look at the art exhibited and are to be respected for doing so.

Theresa Büchner’s installation takes the displacement of a peculiar tree as point of departure: the Chorus Tree, naturally generated in a faraway dimension, is introduced to the White Cube within a specific set of parameters that allow it to thrive. The work poses questions about institutional displacement of cultural goods — so often forcefully extracted — and their repatriation. The viewer is confronted with the facilitation of an outlandish species as it spreads within the boundaries of its potential — not in its native territory, but inside the strict confinement of the exhibition space.

Stefan Cantante’s work evokes the notion of consumerist vertigo in an ever-changing interplay of expectations and reality. Like an It-bag, his mosaic wall carries itself into a pattern of oblivion, yet still persuades you to buy it.

The practice of artist Lola Mae (born 2007) discusses the complicity of art and extraction. Her work, a giant heart made of stained glass, points towards a production cycle necessary for its own inception. The bottom of the structure reveals bare soil and ore veins, the latter specifically being the very same material required to craft the glass object. This massive yet seemingly fragile apparatus not only references the mining of raw materials, but also the extraction of cultural resources. The work is thus revealed to be a comment on contemporary art itself.

Mila Slominsky’s monumental work traverses the interplay of culture and nature and concepts of masculinity and femininity. Her practice is deeply concerned with the socio-political impact of the enigma of creation and the inherent violence that is attached to the idea of redemption. Reflecting the irony of a monument to nature’s cornucopia built inside a voxel simulation, her land-artwork denies the visitor from partaking in creation’s splendor. Being led through a system of wooden tunnels, the visitor is confronted with ominous instructions and faux birch trees. Upon leaving the tunnel, one may gaze upon a sprawling paradise which is, however, completely inaccessible. Although salvation is at hand, it shall not be granted unto you.

Her second work consists of a phallic monument erected within the institution’s yard green. It is a stoic metaphor for Minecraft’s deeply concerning political framework. Slominsky claims: „Of the innards of mother earth, mined by children, we build a machine that can simulate all possible things, only to let it simulate a world to mine (!), a nature that awaits being turned into a system, a machine, a civilized space. It shall be a large phallus made of white concrete blocks, that, like a fountain spouts water, spouts pickaxes, which are Minecraft’s signifier of privilege. He who swings the pickaxe shall reshape the earth.“

In his work Philip Ullman calls forth the beam of light that Christianity imposes on all things deemed fertile. Alas, it is not a steady stream of divinity but a flickering exchange of light and dark, an oscillating force referencing the complicity of both faith and mortality.

Sonja Yakovleva’s work consists of large-scale lingerie cutouts and a painting titled „How to Treat Jellyfish Stings Right“. In the fictional scenario displayed in her painting, one can observe Pamela Anderson urinating on an unconscious figure’s body. Yakovleva resists the tendency to sexualise Pamela Anderson by emphasising the act of treatment: Pamela is fully clothed, her lycra swimsuit allows fluids to penetrate, yet our gaze cannot.

Robert Yang’s work The Tearoom is „a (free) historical public bathroom simulator about anxiety, police surveillance, and sucking off another dude’s gun. “ The Mythical Institution commissioned a video still of the game to adorn the walls of its novel, gender-neutral toilet pavilion, which has previously been erected for the sole purpose of adequately displaying Yang’s work.

Robert Yang about his work: „[...] police still target men who have sex with men — and in video game land, I still have to deal with Twitch banning my gay games by secret trial as if they’re the fucking game police. So to appease this oppressive conservative gamer-surveillance complex, I have swapped out any pesky penises in my game for the only thing that the game industry will never moderate nor ban — guns. Now, there’s nothing wrong with guys appreciating other guys’ guns, right?“
The gesture of a tease must have originated from celestial bodies first toying with terrestrials who willingly acquiesced by way of retaliation. Thus, an age-old dynamic of endless play unfolds within the genre of cruelty. Where better to situate such activity, than in a garden? In its second presentation Landesgartenschau 2020 (Translation: State Garden Show), The Mythical Institution has only grown bolder and more accustomed to its methods in articulating a utopian malady of contemporary art. What began as an invitation to embrace the inherently dissociative, unlimited environment of Minecraft has all but deepened into a swaggering half-glance — just barely a tease.

With this headspace, seven artists have embellished the current mise en scène of an outlook, reinforcing the gallery's upscaled move into a transcendent state of Romantic era fanaticism. The curator claims that none of the works in this show are direct approximations of their makers' pre-existing research outside of Minecraft; everything was initiated within the psychic and material conditions set by the garden. Further poignance is generated from the show's claims of paying tribute to the most recent inhabitants of Minecraft: bees. Introduced with update 1.15 in September 2019, the bees of this gallery have been prescribed a demi-god status — the arbiters of all things land art. Such an element practically begs for some form of competition to follow. By agreeing to participate, the artists of Landesgartenschau 2020 have unwittingly signed up for the task of having to gain the approval of the bees, who will proceed to rate their works throughout the show. It is still unknown as to what sort of matrix they will be using for their ratings.

Inside Landesgartenschau 2020, the Mythical Institution's selected ensemble renders a graceful yet hammer-like choreography that only the undead can wield; its Babylonian airs inevitably collapse the very polemic it seems to attract. When a site demarcates itself with intimations of the 19th century, echoes of the rampant exploits and pedestrian mechanics that drove the upper classes into NaTuRE are called to surface. The swirling, medicated aesthetic of Minecraft ultimately presents an indifferent chamber of indifferent horrors — a ghoulish reminder that critique is merely one more space to frolic within. Tread lightly on the primordial terrain.

by Chong Lii
The Mythical Institution prides itself on the preservation of native wildlife to ensure an unscathed environment for generations of artists to come. Hence, its curatorial endeavours seek to provide a fitting habitat for contemporary art as well as local vegetation. Located on the fringes of a beautiful zero-emission zone, the Marie Therese Memorial Lake, seven artists submitted themselves to nature’s splendour amidst an ancient garden monument, the Magnum Opus of Hellenic culture, so often referenced in renaissance architecture.

The exhibition Landesgartenschau 2020 that was hosted therein served as a liturgic offering to a kingdom of bees, who, as the demi-god arbiters of all things land-art, have observed the artistic process from afar. Having resided in the former main-gallery space, the bees may have intervened at any point with little to no warning and it was at their discretion to rate the finished artworks following their very own matrix of criteria. In order to adequately accommodate the bees, the former main-site exhibition halls had been equipped with beautiful post-modern paintings of wild flower fields, because biodiversity.

It has recently been reported that various historical sites have been discovered within the Mythical Institution’s realm. During the curatorial tour, Jan Berger revealed that the legendary Amber Room has apparently been reassembled in the institution’s ancient metro tunnels after it had been seized and brought to Germany by the Nazis. In a shocking revelation, it became apparent that the Amber Room is actually made out of semi-solid honey.

Upon further exploration, artists have also reported the discovery of King Ludwig II’s frivolous Venus Grotto deep within the catacombs of the Hallowed Garden Monument. The painting “Tannhäuser bei Frau Venus”, which depicts a scene from a Wagner Opera, is found herein. In addition, the erotic two-tier grotto features King Ludwig II’s fabled rainbow generator which consolidates his reputation as a flamboyant gay man.
Nicola Arthen
‘Chemex Coffeemaker’
Made from borosilicate glass and fastened with a wood collar and tie, the Chemex Coffeemaker brews without imparting any flavors of its own. Coffee beans are directly supplied from an artisanal coffee plantation that pierces the heavens. Surrounded by whimsical backdrops of late-capitalist brick wall aesthetics, you may have a cup of freshly brewed coffee up in the clouds or you may stay on the ground and douse your mortal, earthbound body in a fresh stream of boiling water.

Offering 3 different kinds of coffee beans as well as a wild mix of flowers, the plantation is a biodiverse paradise for bees. Alas, the bees heavily disliked the free WiFi signal in the café, which they described as ‘somewhat disturbing’.

Fattini Brambel
‘Dummvolk, wach auf!’
Amidst the ruins of what seemed to be an indoor-camping site for petite bourgeois nudist Germans, evidence of crude conspiracy theories can be found. A manifest inside the camping sanctum suggests that it was former US president Barack Obama who appointed pope Francis, and that Jesus Christ has finally returned to his place of birth: the German city of Bielefeld. After the nudists abandoned the space, it was reclaimed by communities of boars and parrots.

The exodus of the nudist-camping community led to great delight for the bees. They are pleased that numerous native species reclaimed the garden space and that fauna and flora may once again thrive.

Johannes Büttner
Nicholas Warburg
‘Spiral Jetty’
In their satanic rendition of Robert Smithson’s earth sculpture Spiral Jetty, Johannes Büttner and Nicholas Warburg emphasise the sinful pleasures of late capitalist society. Resembling the number of the beast, the three spirals allude to satanic practices: amidst opulent diamond ore and artificial beaches you shall submit yourselves to unholy pleasures. Eternal sunshine in the pits of hell!

The bees could not grasp the nature of Büttner’s and Warburg’s work and felt vastly indifferent about it.

Nina Kettiger
‘Score for Promenade, Loop nr.1’
Nina Kettiger takes the visitor on a choreographed path of sound and repetition. Alluding to dance and notation conventions, Kettiger’s multi-sensory pathway leads to a monumental tower, where liturgical gatherings are employed to worship the gallery’s demi-god bees, who dwell in plain sight. The path concludes in a full circle.

The bees are utterly pleased having received a monument that honours their influence and power. They also appreciated that the tower encouraged human beings to end their lives by jumping from great heights during the opening of the exhibition. Alas, they complained about the frequency of the sounds generated by the choreographic pathway, which seemed to interfere with their orientation senses.

Jeffrey Alan Scudder
‘The Jeffrey Alan Scudder Memorial’
The Jeffrey Alan Scudder Memorial was specifically erected to collectively engage in silent reminiscence. During the opening, a mysterious traveller named Whistlegraph appeared and held a performative commemoration ceremony. Remembering the disappearance of Jeffrey Alan Scudder’s avatar, participants were asked to put up signposts depicting their favourite sideways smiley in proximity to the memorial.

The bees themselves are great connoisseurs of the arcane arts of participatory performances. They appreciated the gesture, although they feel a paramount indifference to the destiny of Jeffrey Alan Scudder’s avatar.
The Mythical Institution sits here, serenely, while we look on with fascination and awe. Is this place imaginary? If it is then it is only by someone else's definition; our own sense of reality is blurrier. We have the fond memories of artistic endeavours that were once housed here, to be stumbled upon and treasured, and our joy is intact.

But, so the story goes, things are built up and up and there can be no certain future. Can we resist the reflex to languish in the glow of this beautiful institution and instead let it crash down before us? Yes we shall, and we will not fear it. The afterburn will reside in our memory, the brightest of all that went beforehand.

This is the instruction: a detonation of the venue.

Those speckled dots of light are the burning embers of an institution that shall remain revolutionary in its rebirth. Look out, look out and remember that the past is only the pathway towards this present moment. Perhaps this is the revolution we have all been waiting for.

by Rose Goddard
After two exceedingly successful group shows hosted in the Mythical Institution's gallery realm, an outlook, the academic board intensively pondered about ways to honour its ethos of advancing contemporary art while sustaining a sense of curatorial flux. No solution has been found but the faculty is massively bored. And thus the Mythical Institution declares: the gallery shall be detonated.

A highly advanced circuitry powered the curatorial intervention on its opening night. It featured an arcane contraption that, upon activation, pushed a boat-shaped object upwards. This would activate a tripwire hook which relayed the signal all the way to the institution, where upon arrival, the dramatic events of this exhibition were set in motion. JanBerger, the curator’s avatar, observed the events from a safe distance in the recently erected pop-up control center.

Disclaimer: prior to the commencement of the event, of course, all living creatures have been evacuated from the precinct. However, the post-modern formalist paintings of wild flower fields (#biodiversity) were deliberately kept in place for the grand opening. JanBerger has also stated his demand for the accursed pop-up bar to be blown to pieces.
This show is post-participatory (i.e. does not involve exhibiting artists).
The Mythical Institution was summoned to contribute a Minecraft component to Simon Denny’s exhibition Mine at K21, Düsseldorf. The construction was carried out by Jan Berger.
Following the artist’s vision, the digital component includes a replica of the world-heritage-site Zeche Zollverein in North Rhine-Westphalia, the largest coal-mining facility of its time. At the bottom of the iconic Shaft XII, one can find the replicated K21 exhibition halls containing Minecraft equivalents of Simon Denny's exhibited works.

The opening ceremony was accompanied by a display of fireworks and a livestreamed tour by Simon Denny, re-streamed and commented on by the artist Joshua Citarella.
The serenity of the Mythical Institution has overcome us somewhat, and now we feel that we are nearing the conclusion. The embers sit as stars above us and as we bathe in their warm hue, the creatures we have slain murmur on the wind, a hollow sound that we ingest with every breath.

We do not know how long we will sleep here, in joy and serenity. If you exhale a cry, let it be not painful and sharp but warm and joyful. Who will walk here in our absence? We know only that the events that took place here are impressed upon the land and will be ushered with every stumbled step and pulling of tide. We are also reminded that the journey into the future is only partly by chance, and that its pathway is as soft or as twisted as we desire.

So, we challenge this retrograde desire for completion. Instead we open up the venue to be inhabited as others see fit, the start of a rigorous new programme. Come closer, inspect our halls, bring forth your desire and wit. Goodbye it is not, instead: hello world.

by Rose Goddard

series of member-only events

PRESS
Is Marie Therese Good or Bad?

After the dramatic detonation of the gallery building in Art... is My Burning Passion the faculty of the Mythical Institution was plagued with visions of resurrection. The ghostly apparition began to manifest: on distant shore it dreams, yearning to be called into existence.

The event series Is Marie Therese Good or Bad? consisted of communal events, workshops and social gatherings. As we together cherished nature's offerings, the realm organically grew and all sorts of things magically curated themselves onto its welcoming surface. Although the realm and its amenities were gradually summoned, the nature of its forme, at the time, remained unknown. Upon the accomplishment of a symbiotic unity with its collaborators, the saga of an outlook reached its completion — and the realm's telos has revealed itself unto us.

Though accessible for members of the Mythical Institution's Board of Trustees (MiBoT), the realm's whereabouts were utterly incomprehensible to the public.
1) ORIENTATION

Bookbinding Workshop 26.02.2021

The inaugural event of *Is Marie Therese Good or Bad?* aimed to successfully align members with the unique features of the Mythical Institution’s new realm. Members were challenged to make for the Marie Therese Memorial Estate, which is located on the island’s mid plateau. In order to do so, one must traverse a complex labyrinthian garden. Once adequately oriented, JanBerger hosted a sustainable bookbinding workshop. At the core of the workshop, we learnt how to responsibly source material which we then used to construct vegan books. The resulting products were subsequently used as journals for the following workshops.

Having finished crafting the books, the group of avatars made for a nearby flower meadow. Inspired by the overwhelming aura of the natural landscape — and the deadly berry bushes — the participants wrote haikus in their journals and recited them before the group. A very wholesome moment.

*the bushes we cross for now they do not poke yes they poke tomorrow but*

*by MD*

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2) IMAGE

Photography Workshop 26.03.2021

The awakening of nature was imminent. As a token of gratitude the Mythical Institution sought to comfortably accommodate the vast menagerie of living beings which emerge from mother earth’s embrace. As such, a monument to pollination had been called into existence at the realm’s southeastern peninsula. The group of avatars wanted to cherish the miracle of creation by taking beautiful pictures of the myriad of biological processes unraveling there. Before the group approached the intricate ecosystem, JanBerger gave a short introduction at the Marie Therese Memorial Estate. The group then used the newly erected (free) public transportation system to reach the destination.

Having taken the (free) public transport to the workshop venue, the group of avatars gazed upon the natural beauty laid out before them. Within a timeframe of 20 minutes they honed their photographic skills and took beautiful pictures of mother nature’s spawns. To everyone’s surprise, the mythical tower revealed itself as an ancient insect hotel. The bees that have curated themselves into it were, however, utterly unphased by the group’s photographic aspirations.
3) CONFLICT  30.04.2021

Mediation Workshop

High up in the mountains, there lies an ancient place of worship. Populated by a group of pagans who, according to rumours, engage in holistic liturgies and arcane rituals, the temple has historically served as an accumulator of ethereal energy. It was reported that an idol of immeasurable worth had been stolen by a primordial evil that infested the temple’s catacombs. The objective of the workshop was to retrieve the idol by means of mediation. By the end of the workshop we learnt how to reach a satisfactory resolution to a conflict. Key elements of the workshop entailed equipping oneself with protective gear, learning to engage in impactful discussion and how to effectively vanquish evil.

Participating members were greeted with a cake buffet before the group made for the ancient place of worship via the (free) public transport. Upon entering the workshop venue, the once so peaceful pagans suddenly turned hostile, and thus, they had to be eradicated. The group got into uniform and dancingly descended into the catacombs. After eliminating the evil infestation, they found a hidden passage that led to the stolen idol. It turned out that the pagans were worshippers of Floor Jansen, Dutch vocalist and lead singer of the Finnish symphonic metal band Nightwish. The valuable artwork was repatriated and peace has been restored ever since.

4) LEGACY  28.05.2021

History Workshop

In the penultimate event of Is Marie Therese Good or Bad?, the group wanted to reminisce about the Mythical Institution’s exuberant legacy. Guided by JanBerger, the group travelled to the northeastern outskirts of the island. A serene archipelago, they found ruins of old and insights of new. Having descended into the depths of the earth, knowledge was didactically imparted, and the squalls of history were felt—thoroughly.

Disclaimer:

The final act of the guided tour contained explosives. Participants may have chosen not to engage in this optional segment.

Due to several casualties involving the (free) public transport system, the group, led by JanBerger, set out by foot. They reached a still archipelago, where traces of an ancient civilisation were found in peaceful decay. Venturing into mother earth’s depths, a temporality was invoked dating back to the day of the Mythical Institution’s curatorial destruction in September 2020 AD. Accompanied by a musical performance, they explored the ruins and learnt of the events through ephemeral whispers. At the end of the workshop, the group entered the experience chamber, where, equipped with blast-protection gear, history was felt.
A historic invitation: The solemn finale of *Is Marie Therese Good or Bad?* is upon us! To celebrate the completion of the Institutional Genesis, we would like to invite our dear members to partake in a ceremonial tour through the most recently summoned venue: a sanctum of intemperance and revelry. By the end of the tour the space will reveal unto us its collaborative purpose and the group will understand its nascent significance.

The group met after darkness had fallen across the land. JanBerger bestowed torches upon members, so that they would always find each other and return. They arrived at the event building and realised the full extent of its nature: an elusive project space and club concept for members of the *Mythical Institution* — splendid! JanBerger explained that curated community events of all sorts may be held here. The group then proceeded to partake in the venue’s holistic offerings. After they had consumed reality-altering potions on the dance floor the group was led to the rooftop, where they encountered their dear friends, the bees.

Thank you for everything, thank you.
Opening and Tour
WITH GREAT THANKS TO

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OUR MOST GENEROUS PATRONS
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