

**SEEING**  
*The* **INVISIBLE**



Royal  
Botanical  
Gardens

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## **Unprecedented Augmented Reality Exhibition to Premiere at Royal Botanical Gardens in September 2021 as One of 12 Participating Gardens Across Six Countries**

Featuring AR Works by Artists Including Ai Weiwei, Refik Anadol, El Anatsui, Isaac Julien CBE, Mohammed Kazem, Sigalit Landau, Sarah Meyohas, Pamela Rosenkranz, and Timur Si-Qin

Opening Simultaneously in Australia, Canada, Israel, South Africa, the United Kingdom, and the United States



Detail image of Sigalit Landau, *Salt Stalagmite #1 [Three Bridges]*, 2021

The most ambitious and expansive exhibition to date of contemporary artworks created with augmented reality (AR) technology will premiere at Royal Botanical Gardens (RBG) in September 2021 as one of 12 participating gardens across six countries. *Seeing the Invisible* features works by more than a dozen international artists such as Ai Weiwei, Refik Anadol, El Anatsui, Isaac Julien CBE, Mohammed Kazem, Sigalit Landau, Sarah Meyohas, Pamela Rosenkranz, and Timur Si-Qin—including several artists' first work in AR. Visitors will engage with *Seeing the Invisible* via an app designed for the exhibition downloadable to smartphones and tablets. Forging new links between botanical gardens located in diverse biomes around the globe, the exhibition fosters collaboration between institutions, artists, and audiences, highlighting the power of art to connect people around the world.

# SEEING The INVISIBLE



Royal  
Botanical  
Gardens

The first exhibition of its kind to be developed as a collaboration among botanical gardens 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. As part of *Seeing the Invisible*, the Eden Project is also developing accompanying educational programming for children, educators, and families at RBG, every other partner institution, and online for viewers around the world.

*Seeing the Invisible* will simultaneously premiere at:

- Denver Botanic Gardens (Denver, Colorado, USA)
- Eden Project (Cornwall, England)
- Jerusalem Botanical Gardens (Jerusalem, Israel)
- 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)
- Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh (Edinburgh, Scotland)
- 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)

*Seeing the Invisible* will place the same exhibition of commissioned artworks in analogous sites in 12 outdoor garden settings located in different biomes all around the world, creating parallels and contrasts between them. For example, the same work might be set within a group of tall Saguaro cacti in Tucson and among a lush forest of giant redwoods in Edinburgh. The AR nature of the exhibition allows for the creation of expansive, immersive works that engage with existing features of the natural landscape beyond the limitations of what is possible with physical artworks. Many of the works created for the exhibition will address related themes around nature, environment, sustainability, and explore the interplay of the physical world with the digital one.

*Seeing the Invisible* will feature AR works by the following artists:

- Ai Weiwei (b. 1957, Beijing, China; lives and works in Berlin Tempelhof Airport, Germany)
- Refik Anadol (b. 1985, Istanbul, Turkey; lives and works in Los Angeles, USA)
- El Anatsui (b. 1944, Anyako, Ghana; lives and works in Nigeria)
- Ori Gersht (b. 1967, Tel Aviv, Israel; lives and works in London, UK)
- Isaac Julien CBE (b. 1960, London, UK; lives and works in London, UK)
- Mohammed Kazem (b. 1969, Dubai, UAE; lives and works in Dubai, UAE)
- Sigalit Landau (b. 1969, Jerusalem, Israel; lives and works in Tel Aviv, Israel)
- Daito Manabe (b. 1976, Tokyo, Japan; lives and works in Tokyo, Japan)
- Sarah Meyohas (b. 1991, New York City, USA; lives and works in New York City, USA)

# SEEING The INVISIBLE



Royal  
Botanical  
Gardens

- Mel O’Callaghan (b. 1975, Sydney, Australia; lives and works in Paris, France)
- Pamela Rosenkranz (b. 1979, Switzerland; lives and works in Zurich, Switzerland)
- Timur Si-Qin (b. 1984; lives and works in New York City, USA)
- Jakob Kudsk Steensen (b. 1987, Denmark; lives and works in Berlin, Germany)

“We are thrilled to premiere this event that allows us to present art in a new medium to our gardens,” said Royal Botanical Gardens CEO, Nancy Rowland. “For centuries, public gardens have provided spaces that showcase and complement the creativity of traditional art. With *Seeing the invisible* we are able to immerse the art into our natural setting in a new and different way.”

“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 will be accessible via smartphone and tablet through the *Seeing the Invisible* app, which will be available for iPhone and Android in the App Store and Google Play. Further details will be announced in the coming weeks.

This project has been made possible in partnership with The Jerusalem Foundation. Additional support for Royal Botanical Gardens presentation of the exhibition has been provided by Incite Foundation for the Arts. *Seeing the Invisible* is co-curated by Hadas Maor and Tal Michael Haring, and organized by Jerusalem Botanical Gardens and Outset Contemporary Art Fund.

*Seeing the Invisible* will be complemented by Royal Botanical Gardens’ Dan Lawrie International Sculpture Collection which features several unique artwork pieces from around the world. Further information regarding dates, times and tickets for *Seeing the Invisible* will be announced in the coming weeks. For additional information about the exhibition at Royal Botanical Gardens, please visit:

[<https://www.rbg.ca/things-to-do/art-in-the-gardens/seeing-the-invisible/> OR [www.seeingtheinvisible.art.com](http://www.seeingtheinvisible.art.com)]



## **Media Contacts**

### Local:

Nick Kondrat / +1 905-577-3398

[nkondrat@rbg.ca](mailto:nkondrat@rbg.ca)

### International/US:

#### **Resnicow and Associates**

[seeingtheinvisible@resnicow.com](mailto:seeingtheinvisible@resnicow.com)

Sarah Morris / +1 212-671-5165

Julia Exelbert / +1 212-671-5155

## **Royal Botanical Gardens (ON, Canada)**

Located at the head of Lake Ontario and within the municipalities of Burlington and Hamilton, Royal Botanical Gardens (RBG) is the largest botanical garden in Canada and one of the nation's earliest nature sanctuaries. Comprising of 2,700 acres of protected wetlands, botanical collections, parkland and display gardens, and within easy access of millions of nature-starved urban citizens, RBG dedicates its expertise in horticulture, conservation, science and education to connect people, plants and place for the purpose of nurturing and preserving healthy growing life on our planet. RBG directs its efforts, and seeks the support of individuals and organizations, to realize its vision of a world in which everyone is awake to the beauty, diversity and necessity of plants, and from that consciousness more actively works together to protect and preserve plant species and habitats and, by extension, our planet.

## **Founding Partners**

### **Jerusalem Botanical Gardens**

The 30-acre Jerusalem Botanical Gardens (JBG) is the largest in Israel and the only one of its kind in the Middle East. JBG boasts Israel's broadest collection of live plants (over 6,600 species), as well as varieties of plants from around the world. The flora is displayed throughout 6 Phyto-geographical sections – Southern Africa, Europe, North America, Australia, South-East and Central Asia and the Mediterranean. An oasis in the middle of a dynamic city, JBG provides guided tours, gardening workshops, lectures, and volunteer opportunities for all ages that aim to foster interest in environmental awareness, sustainability and biodiversity.

### **Outset Contemporary Art Fund**

Established in 2003, Outset Contemporary Art Fund is the leading international, independent charity supporting innovative art projects that engage the widest possible audiences. With a presence in nine countries, including Israel. The charity has raised over £13 million worldwide in support of the creative ecosystem. Outset Contemporary Art Fund is recognised for creating influential models of responsive arts philanthropy with its innovative public-private schemes and initiatives. Practicing catalytic philanthropy means not only offering crucial funding support but also activating networks and initiating new relationships and partnerships. The charity was the first to introduce a pioneering paradigm of

# SEEING The INVISIBLE



Royal  
Botanical  
Gardens

cross-institution collective patronage to fund challenging artistic projects, and is now proud to operate on a global scale. Outset Contemporary Art Fund is powered by inspiration, driven by expertise, renowned for its engagement, and focused on effective energy and ideas, with a commitment to being there at the outset of impactful change. The Israeli chapter of Outset Contemporary Art Fund was founded in 2008 to strengthen contemporary visual art production in Israel and abroad by supporting new commissions from established and emerging Israeli artists. Outset Contemporary Art Fund Israel seeks to engage international art professionals with the growing talent pool of local artists and encourage international artistic dialogue.

## **Collaborating Partners**

### **Denver Botanic Gardens**

Green inside and out, Denver Botanic Gardens was founded in 1951 and is considered one of the top botanical gardens in the United States and a pioneer in water conservation. Accredited by the American Alliance of Museums, the Gardens has a robust living plant collection, natural history collection and art collection along with temporary art exhibitions. The Gardens is a dynamic, 24-acre urban oasis in the heart of the city, offering unforgettable opportunities to flourish with unique garden experiences for the whole family – as well as world-class exhibitions, education and plant conservation research programs. Additional sites extend this experience throughout the Front Range: Denver Botanic Gardens Chatfield Farms is a 700-acre native plant refuge with an active farm in Jefferson County; Mount Goliath is a high-altitude trail and interpretive site on the Mount Evans Scenic Byway. The Gardens also manages programming at Plains Conservation Center in Aurora. For more information, visit us online at [www.botanicgardens.org](http://www.botanicgardens.org).

### **Eden Project**

The Eden Project, an educational charity, connects us with each other and the living world, exploring how we can work towards a better future. Our visitor destination in Cornwall, UK, is nestled in a huge crater. Here, massive Biomes housing the largest rainforest in captivity, stunning plants, exhibitions and stories serve as a backdrop to our striking contemporary gardens, summer concerts and exciting year-round family events. Registered charity number 1093070 (The Eden Trust). Money raised supports our transformational projects and learning programmes.

### **Kirstenbosch National Botanical Garden**

Renowned as the most beautiful garden in Africa – [Kirstenbosch National Botanical Garden](#) in Cape Town, South Africa is situated against the eastern slopes of the iconic Table Mountain. Kirstenbosch is the largest of a network of nine National Botanical Gardens administered by the South African National Biodiversity Institute (SANBI). Kirstenbosch was established in 1913 to promote, conserve and display the rich and diverse flora of southern Africa, and was the first botanic garden in the world to be devoted to a country's indigenous flora. The Kirstenbosch estate, covering 528 hectares, includes a cultivated Garden and nature reserve. The developed Garden (36 ha) displays collections of southern African plants including many rare and endangered species. Kirstenbosch lies in the heart of the Cape Floristic Region, also known as the Cape Floral Kingdom. In 2004 the Cape Floristic Region, including



Kirstenbosch, was declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site – another first for Kirstenbosch, it is the first botanic garden in the world to be included within a natural World Heritage Site.

### **Marie Selby Botanical Gardens**

Marie Selby Botanical Gardens provides 45 acres of bayfront sanctuaries connecting people with air plants of the world, native nature, and our regional history. Established by forward thinking women of their time, Selby Gardens is composed of the 15-acre Downtown Sarasota campus and the 30-acre Historic Spanish Point campus in the Osprey area of Sarasota County, Florida. The Downtown Campus on Sarasota Bay is the only botanical garden in the world dedicated to the display and study of epiphytic orchids, bromeliads, gesneriads and ferns, and other tropical plants. There is a significant focus on botany, horticulture, education, historical preservation, and the environment. The Historic Spanish Point (HSP) Campus is located less than 10 miles south along Little Sarasota Bay. The HSP Campus, one of the largest preserves showcasing native Florida plants that is interpreted for and open to the public, celebrates an archaeological record that encompasses approximately 5,000 years of Florida history. Marie Selby Botanical Gardens is a Smithsonian Affiliate and is also accredited by the American Alliance of Museums. For more information visit [www.selby.org](http://www.selby.org).

### **Massachusetts Horticultural Society**

Massachusetts Horticultural Society's Garden at Elm Bank is a horticultural jewel of Greater Boston. A place of beauty, contemplation and exploration, the garden welcomes all. A blend of historic and contemporary, like all gardens, Elm Bank is a work in progress. Through it, we seek to engage guests with the importance of plants, gardens and natural landscapes in their lives and help them to become active growers and gardeners themselves. As America's first established horticultural society, we have been practicing horticulture 'for the public good' since 1829.

### **Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh**

The Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh is a national treasure of Scotland, the spectacular Living Collection is over 350 years old. The 'Botanics' in Edinburgh and our three Regional Gardens – Benmore in Argyllshire, Dawyck in the Scottish Borders and Logan in Dumfries and Galloway – constitute one of the richest plant collections on Earth. Faced with climate change, RBGE's work plays an increasingly crucial role nationally and internationally, delivering vital plant science, conservation, education and engagement programmes, guided by a mission to explore, conserve and explain the world of plants for a better future.

### **Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria**

Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria is a centre of excellence for horticulture, science and nature-based learning programs in Melbourne, Australia. The organisation extends over two locations; the heritage Melbourne Gardens and award-winning Cranbourne Gardens, and is also home to the Melbourne Observatory and the National Herbarium of Victoria. The organisation is dedicated to the conservation, study and enjoyment of nature and both sites are an important resource for education, science and horticulture. The Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne site has been a significant meeting place for the

## *The* **SEEING INVISIBLE**



Royal  
Botanical  
Gardens

peoples of the Eastern Kulin Nation for time immemorial. It has been a treasured part of Melbourne's cultural life for more than 175 years – much loved by generations of Victorians, as well as by many international visitors. It is a picturesque haven for recreation and well-being and its 38 hectares is home to a collection of more than 8,500 species of plants from around the world, including many amazing and diverse plant collections.

### **San Diego Botanic Garden**

Founded in 1970, San Diego Botanic Garden (SDBG) is a 37-acre garden that inspires people of all ages to connect with plants and nature. The Garden's four miles of trails showcase 5,000 plant species and varieties, including 300 plants for which SDBG is the only garden maintaining a population. SDBG has 15 gardens representing different regions of the world, 12 demonstration gardens — including two edible gardens — and the largest public bamboo collection in North America. SDBG's flagship, one-acre Hamilton Children's Garden is the largest children's garden on the west coast.

### **Tucson Botanical Gardens**

Located on the site of the historic Porter property, and celebrating over 40 years of living beauty, Tucson Botanical Gardens was recently named one of the top 10 North American Gardens worth traveling for by the Canadian Garden Council and the American Public Gardens Association. Among mature trees and expertly cultivated foliage, specialty gardens such as the Cactus & Succulent Garden, Barrio Garden and Herb Garden highlight the diversity of native plants while offering a lush oasis in the heart of Tucson, Arizona. Tropical butterflies from around the world are featured in the Cox Butterfly & Orchid Pavilion from October to May each year. The Gardens offers year-round tours, community events, classes, art displays, and international exhibits, as well as the creative, seasonal menu of Edna's Eatery café.