

Press release – September 1, 2019

La Becque and Elise Lammer Launch First Part of Derek Jarman-inspired *Modern Nature* project

Conceived jointly by the Basel-based curator and the new Swiss artist residency, located on the shores of Lake Geneva, the project comprises the development of a garden conceived as an homage to Derek Jarman's Prospect Garden. Within the grounds of La Becque, the garden will act as a platform for artistic interventions over several seasons. The first episode of the project gathers over a dozen international and Swiss artists for performances, lectures, installations, film screenings and concerts revolving around the work of Jarman.

In Summer 2019, La Becque | Artist Residency, located in La Tour-de-Peilz, Switzerland, started developing a garden and artistic program inspired by the work and life of filmmaker, artist and writer Derek Jarman (31 January 1942–19 February 1994). Along with numerous feature and short films, paintings, sculptures, diaries and essays, Jarman left behind an extraordinary garden that he developed around his cottage, on the southeastern English coast of Kent, until his death in 1994. Despite the adverse coastal conditions (rough shingle beaches, constant biting wind and sea mist), Jarman's garden flourished. Since its inception in 1986, the place has become an acclaimed "total" work of art, visited by many among Jarman's admirers and friends, during his lifetime and after.

Curated by Elise Lammer, *Modern Nature* includes the development of a garden composed of local and native species integrated into the pristine lakeside spaces of La Becque, the commissioning of site-specific artworks as well as thematic film screenings, performances and music events. Taking its name from Derek Jarman's second volume of diaries, which dedicates the majority of its pages to the Dungeness garden, *Modern Nature* takes on and expands upon the driving themes of La Becque, an artist residency dedicated to exploring the relationship between nature, the environment and technology through the arts.

The first part of the project opens to the public with a three-day festival and open air exhibition taking place inside the freshly blooming garden, from 13 to 16 September, 2019. This first iteration of the project features performative and sculptural interventions, talks, film screenings and musical performances from a range of international and Swiss artists, some closely associated to Derek Jarman, some newcomers to his work:

LA BECQUE

Adrien Chevalley, Karim Crippa, Chelsea Culprit, Audrey Danza, Ecar, Marie Griesmar, Julie Monot, Garrett Nelson, Florence Peake and Eve Stainton, Prem Sahib, Simon Fisher Turner, Marius Valente / Rhinoplasty, and Judith Vrancken

In partnership with several local and international art institutions, the *Modern Nature* project will develop for at least a year with a series of artistic events and contributions echoing the work of residents at La Becque, while responding to the body of research developing around Derek Jarman.

All events, both those taking place at La Becque itself and those co-produced with external partner institutions, are open to the public at large.

Full program and biographies at:
www.labecque.ch

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Modern Nature

An homage to Derek Jarman, part one

Adrien Chevalley

Karim Crippa

Chelsea Culprit

Audrey Danza

Ecar

Marie Griesmar

Jean-Yves Le Baron

Julie Monot

Garrett Nelson

Florence Peake and Eve Stainton

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The first part of the project opens to the public with a four-day event and open air exhibition taking place inside the freshly bloomed garden, from 13 to 16 September 2019. In partnership with several local and international art institutions, it will develop for at least a year with series of artistic events and contributions echoing the work of the residents at La Becque, while responding to the growing body of research developing around Derek Jarman.

All events, both those taking place at La Becque itself and those co-produced with external partner institutions, are open to the public at large.

Open Garden in 2019:

18 September – 1 December, 2019

Every week from Wednesday to Friday, 2 – 6 pm

To be continued in 2020

Opening Festival

Friday 13, 5 – 10pm

Saturday 14, 3 – 10pm

Sunday 15, 3 – 8pm

Monday 16, 2 – 6pm

La Becque

Chemin de la Becque 1

La Tour-de-Peilz

CH – 1814

Free entrance

More info and full schedule at:
www.labecque.ch



Modern Nature: An Homage to Derek Jarman at La Becque

LA BECQUE
RESIDENCE
D'ARTISTES



Derek Jarman's Cottage in Dungeness, UK

Modern Nature: An Homage to Derek Jarman at La Becque

The filmmaker, painter and writer Derek Jarman (31 January 1942 – 19 February 1994) left behind an extraordinary garden that he developed around the cottage he acquired near Dungeness, on the southeastern English coast of Kent, and where he resided in the cottage towards the end of his life. In 1986, Jarman discovered he was HIV positive and decided to buy Prospect Cottage in Dungeness. With time he started developing the garden which, despite the adverse coastal conditions (rough shingle beaches, constant biting wind and sea mist), flourished. It became an acclaimed "total" artwork, visited by many among Jarman's admirers.

Starting in 2019 and extending into 2020, La Becque | Artist Residency, located in La Tour-de-Peilz, Switzerland, will develop a garden and artistic program inspired by the work and life of Derek Jarman. Curated by Elise Lammer, developed in close collaboration with the Estate of Derek Jarman and with further input from London's Bold Tendencies, Modern Nature includes the development of a garden composed of local and native species integrated into the pristine lakeside spaces of La Becque, the commissioning of site-specific artworks as well as thematic film screenings and music events.

All events, both those taking place at La Becque itself and those co-produced with external partner institutions, are open to the public at large.

New perspectives on Nature at La Becque

Taking its name from Derek Jarman's first volume of diaries¹, which dedicates the majority of its pages to the Dungeness garden, Modern Nature takes on and expands upon the driving themes of La Becque, an artist residency dedicated to exploring the relationship between nature, the environment and technology through the arts.

La Becque was created under the auspices of the Fondation Françoise Siegfried-Meier. A violinist of renown, Françoise Siegfried-Meier showed an unswerving commitment to the artists of her time and wished for her family domain to become a haven for creative exchange. Her vision led to the development of La Becque between 2012 and 2017, and its inauguration in 2018.

La Becque thus boasts an entirely new live-and-work infrastructure purposefully developed to host and foster the creativity of artists of all backgrounds and disciplines. Its size, spaces, and its exceptional location on one of Lake Geneva's most pristine lakeside tracts of land, make it one of the most important artist residency structures in Switzerland.

Residency programs at La Becque dedicate particular attention to projects exploring the interplay of nature and of technology – two notions which are more than ever intertwined and at the core of contemporary preoccupations.

A purposefully broad playfield, this thematic nexus opens up distinct yet similarly rewarding avenues of exploration – for example: documenting what and who makes up the “Anthropocene”; using technological tools to document and transcribe natural environments into artistic contexts; exploring new junctures at which technology becomes part of our natural environments (virtual and augmented reality contexts, etc.).

The following statement is one of many interesting starting points for the explorations to be conducted at and through La Becque:

“Nature, as both subject and object, has been repeatedly rejected and reclaimed by artists over the last half century. With the dislocation of disciplinary boundaries in visual culture, art that is engaged with nature has also forged connections with a new range of scientific, historical and philosophical ideas. Developing technologies make our interventions into natural systems both increasingly refined and profound. Advances in biological and telecommunication technology continually modify the way we present ourselves. So too are artistic representations of nature (human and otherwise) being transformed.”²

¹Derek Jarman, *Modern Nature*, Century, 1991 / Vintage Classics, 2018

²Jeffrey Kastner, *Nature*, MIT Press / Whitechapel: Documents of Contemporary Art, 2012

³T.J. Demos, *Decolonizing Nature: Contemporary Art and the Politics of Ecology*, Sternberg Press, 2016

The Garden as a Platform for Artistic Exploration

Most crucially, perhaps, is the use of art in exploring modes of living and creating a bridge for the unsustainable divide between nature (domesticated, exploited) and culture (dominant, exploitative). “Decolonizing nature” entails transcending human-centered exceptionalism, and the fields proposing innovative methods of post-anthropocentric social, political and economic analysis are numerous. Art is at the forefront of shaping this “non-unified cosmopolitical concern”, and it provides a crucial platform for creative speculative practice, philosophical enquiry and conceptual experimentation within our relationship to nature.³

The notion and locus of the garden, where nature is allowed to (re-)grow within an artificially shaped environment permanently exposed to and perhaps begging for a loss of control (for overgrowth), where scientific methods of appraising and cataloguing nature encounter multisensory abundance and abandonment, and where unprecedented, alternative pairings are allowed to safely develop, is of course an adept metaphor for a majority of these driving themes and questions. It also provides a specific site for artistic debate and intervention around these questions within the surroundings of La Becque.

A gardening project could not take place in better a location than at La Becque, itself a haven for experimental artistic development. The natural backdrop of the residency (Lake Geneva and the first imposing reliefs of the Alps) is among the scenery most often transcribed, multiplied and “manufactured” by artists (starting with the imposing Grammont, often depicted by the likes of Ferdinand Holder). That scenery itself is conflictual: while seemingly of a pristine wilderness, it is inseparable from a densely networked environment, exploited for decades for its natural resources and as a touristic playground.



The Garden at La Becque, La Tour-de-Peilz, Switzerland ©Franziska Werren

Provisional project program, phase 1 (2019)

Gardening: a garden-in-progress at La Becque

May-August 2019, including public talk on May 25

Gardening is the foundational act of Modern Nature, and that act needs to be carried out with great consideration. La Becque will partner up with Lausanne-based landscaping artists L'Atelier du Paysage, led by Jean-Yves Le Baron (<http://www.latelierdupaysage.ch>), to devise an homage to Derek Jarman's Dungeness cottage in a generous plot of its own garden.

The garden will be grown around La Becque's lakeside chalet, the sole building on the site to precede the construction of the artist residency infrastructure. A slightly unusual construction for a shore of any kind, the chalet shares a sense of stubborn incongruity and delicacy with Jarman's undertakings in Dungeness. It will be fully integrated in the development process of the garden, being both the dwelling it is developed for/around, and a home base with a fully functional bar during Modern Nature events at La Becque.

L'Atelier du Paysage will work with the taxonomies of both the original garden at Prospect Cottage and of the version built in 2013 on the roof of independent art center Bold Tendencies, in London. The group will develop a careful blend of direct quotes and local translations, making the Jarman garden at La Becque a unique, locally sensible and sustainable, homage to the original endeavor. Similarly, architectural quotes from Jarman's garden (large wood structures, walling, protection and erect markers made of stone, etc.) will be produced using local materials, such as driftwood from Lake Geneva, stones and gravel extracted either from the lake or from local quarries.

While its foundations are being laid and it is allowed to grow, the garden will already be the object of public discussions and events.

On May 25, 2019, the talk series **Le Foyer – In Process** made La Becque the fifth stop of its third season of itinerant public talks, dedicated to artistic work processes and research and focusing on work in progress.

The public talk featured artist Camille Dumond (CH), Le Foyer co-founder Yasmin Afchar (Aargauer Kunstauss, CH), curator Elise Lammer and La Becque director Luc Meier.

Full Bloom: Modern Garden festival at La Becque

September 13-15, 2019

As summer nears its end, the garden will have consolidated into its first identifiable form. A full celebratory weekend will take place between September 13 and 15, exactly a year after La Becque was inaugurated, to acknowledge the full bloom of the project with a series of performative and sculptural interventions in and around the newly created garden.

Outdoor screenings will also take place at La Becque and will feature on three filmic moments of Jarman's oeuvre that bear a direct relationship to the Dungeness garden: the late-period feature-length films *The Garden* and *Blue*, and Jarman's trove of experimental super-8's, preserved by James MacKay and digitized with the support of **LUMA Foundation**.

Contributions to the project include:

- Performative interventions by **Julie Monot** (artist, CH), **Florence Peake** and **Eve Stainton** (artists, UK)
- A panel on the topic of camp in contemporary art organized by **Karim Crippa** (art historian, CH)
- A conference exploring vernacular gardening with **Jean-Yves Lebaron** (landscape artist, FR/CH)
- Readings of excerpts of Derek Jarman's diaries by **Garrett Nelson** (artist, poet, CH/US)
- An ephemeral sculpture park featuring site-specific works by **Prem Sahib** (artist, UK); **Julie Monot** (artist, CH); **Nora Berman** (artist, US-TBC); **Garrett Nelson** (artist, poet, CH/US); **Adrien Chevalley** (artist, CH)
- A waterborne platform/raft and series of underwater sculptures by **Marie Griesmar** (artist, CH) in collaboration with the architecture laboratory ALICE at EPFL
- Screening of digitally restored super-8 films of Derek Jarman, with a live set by **Simon Fisher Turner** (composer, UK)
- Live set of **Audrey Danza** (dj, CH) & more
- An open-access library and discothèque with archival and reference material and artworks, including contributions by **Camille Dumond** (artist, CH), **Ian Woolridge** (art historian, CH), among others.

Further Seeding: extended event program with external partners

October-November 2019

The Jarman Garden at La Becque will remain open throughout autumn 2019 and will be accessible to the public each week from Wednesday to Sunday, from 12pm to 6pm.

After a break from Christmas to March, it will once again be made accessible to the public in April 2020 and be at the core of a series of events in spring, summer and fall 2020.

In close collaboration with Amanda Wilkinson Gallery, the project will also collaborate on an exhibition of Derek Jarman paintings in partner institution. A 1986 Turner Prize nominee, Jarman was a prolific painter, whose practice is bound to be reappraised as major retrospective in Dublin (IMMA, 2019) and Manchester (Manchester Art Gallery, 2020) near.

Between Autumn 2019 and Winter 2020, we will present several Jarman screenings at **Cinema Astor** in Vevey, one of the oldest and grandest cinemas of the Montreux-Riviera region. We will also partner up with the renowned experimental film and music festival **LUFF** in Lausanne (taking place in mid-October 2019) to present both screenings and musical performances by artists closely linked to Jarman. Finally some performances created for the project will travel to **CREDAC Ivry** near Paris, during a collaboration with its director, Claire Le Restif.



Derek Jarman in front of his cottage

References:

La Becque | Artist Residency: <http://labecque.ch>
 Derek Jarman Estate, Amanda Wilkinson:
<https://amandawilkinsongallery.com>
 James MacKaye and Derek Jarman's Super-8 films:
<https://www.out.com/movies/2014/12/03/closer-look-derek-jarmans-super-8-films>
 Jarman Garden at Bold Tendencies, London:
<http://boldtendencies.com/site-specific-art-commissions/>

L'Atelier du Paysage:
<http://www.latelierdupaysage.ch>
 ALICE Laboratory at EPFL
 Le Foyer - In Process at La Becque:
<http://www.lefoyer-lefoyer.ch/talks/act-03-n5/>
 Cinéma Astor, Vevey:
 LUFF (Lausanne Underground Film Festival)

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