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gl Holtegaard

Press release, 3 March 2011

MATHIAS KESSLER *After Nature*

25 March – 6 November 2011



New landscape art in Gl Holtegaard's baroque garden

How does nature communicate? That is the question the Austrian artist Mathias Kessler asks with his innovatively conceived works. In a specially designed greenhouse in Gl Holtegaard's baroque garden the artist lets six plants from Danish nature make their own statements – and with the aid of advanced technology he recreates nature's original order.

Mathias Kessler works in the field of intersection between art and science. He is intensely interested in nature's own communication and tools for growth and survival – tools that are now being threatened by human interference.

After Nature takes the form of a specially designed greenhouse created for Gl Holtegaard's baroque garden. Inside, Mathias Kessler has isolated six plants from Danish nature in order to be able to measure and register their communication and general growth. With the aid of electrodes that measure even the weakest impulses, advanced technology and a robot ensure the necessary care of the plants, which will be allowed to grow completely undisturbed until autumn. The artwork functions both as an aesthetic vision and as a scientific experiment, the aim being to map the plants' communication and natural growth conditions

After Nature is an example of the new landscape art that is emerging internationally at present. In line with the integrative conception of art and science in the Renaissance, Mathias Kessler's artwork represents a modern utopia. For him, it is not simply the mastery of nature that is involved, but the possibility of harmony between humanity and nature on nature's own conditions.

By positioning the artwork at the centre of the historical axis in Thurah's baroque garden at Gl Holtegaard, Mathias Kessler is also creating a dialogue between the past and the present conception of nature. In many ways, the baroque garden represents the quintessence of the 18th century rational view of nature. As in man, the scientist of the time found an order in nature that could be evoked by the ruler-straight paths and trimmed hedgerows of the garden complex.

Apart from Mathias Kessler's artwork, there are also bronze sculptures by Richard Winther and sandstone replicas of J.F. Hännel's original sculptures in the baroque garden at Gl Holtegaard.

The director of Gl Holtegaard, Mads Damsbo, says: *Mathias Kessler's works represent a new trend in international landscape art. Today, natural beauty is not just a matter of beautiful expanses and a fine view but equally of sustainability and biodiversity. It is this modern beauty in nature which Kessler presents in the middle of Gl Holtegaard's baroque garden – and in doing so, he creates a unique dialogue between past, present and future.*

Mathias Kessler was born in Austria in 1968. He lives and works in New York.

Private viewing on Thursday 24 March 17:00-19:00

Artist talk on the same day 18:00

Press photos can be downloaded from www.glholtegaard.dk
Password for download is: presse

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