

# Kirstenbosch Garden to host an AR exhibition showcasing works by El Anatsui, Ai Weiwei and more

The Kirstenbosch National Botanical Garden in Cape Town is one of 12 participating gardens across six countries to showcase the *Seeing the Invisible* augmented reality (AR) exhibition in September 2021.

*Seeing the Invisible* features works by 13 international artists such as Ai Weiwei, Refik Anadol, Isaac Julien CBE, Mohammed Kazem, Sigalit Landau, Sarah Meyohas, Pamela Rosenkranz and Timur Si-Qin – including several artists' first work in AR. Among the artists is El Anatsui, a Ghanaian sculptor who is one of the most highly acclaimed artists in African history and foremost contemporary artists in the world.



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.

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.



Mohammed Kazem, 2010, *Directions (Zero)* - Source: Supplied

*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 the historical tree lane of the Kirstenbosch Camphor Avenue; 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.



El Anatsui, 2014 - Source: Supplied

### ***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)
- 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)

Werner Voigt, Kirstenbosch curator, said: "It's an honour for Kirstenbosch to be included in the *Seeing the Invisible* global exhibition, it will be a first of its kind in a Sanbi National Botanical Garden. We're also pleased that it is an environmentally friendly exhibition, it will require no artworks to be shipped; no electronic hardware or structures to be set up in the garden – resulting in no disruption to the garden and no wastage of materials.



Sigalit Landau, Salt Stalagmite #1 [Three Bridges], (detail), 2021 - Source: Supplied

“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.”



Sarah Meyohas, 2020, Dawn Chorus - Source: Supplied

“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.”

*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.

For additional information about the exhibition at Kirstenbosch, please visit [www.sanbi.org/news](http://www.sanbi.org/news) or [www.seeingtheinvisible.art](http://www.seeingtheinvisible.art)

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