

Andrew Gilbert

“Botanical Drawings from the Royal Collection of Emperor Andrew”

Opening ceremony:

May 11th, 5-8 pm

Exhibition dates:

May 11th – June 29th 2019



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Ten Haaf Projects is pleased to announce its fifth solo show by Andrew Gilbert. As the title suggests, Gilbert has created a series of Botanical Drawings for his exhibition in Amsterdam.

“In response to the 19th century European studies of exotic botany, nature and the human species (pseudo scientific racial theory) - Gilbert presents drawings from his imagined journeys from South Africa, Namibia, India, Afghanistan and the Sudan in the age of British Empire and European conquest. Each flower was ‘witnessed’ by Gilbert and his alter ego Emperor Andrew on a specific date. For example, in India in 1857 during the Rebellion against British rule, or Namibia during the German Genocide of the Herero, Sudan at the Fall of Khartoum in 1885 and Southern Africa during the Anglo Zulu War of 1879 and the Boer War 1899-1902. Gilbert revisits these often forgotten moments in history - and shows their relevance and effect on today as well as the repetition of history.

Gilbert is also inspired by British Major-General Charles Gordon – ‘Gordon of Khartoum’, who sketched flowers in order to locate the actual Garden of Eden on earth. In several drawings Emperor Andrew appears with his easel painting the flowers and the events, sometimes accompanied by the German Expressionist Emil Nolde (a reference to Nolde’s journey to German Neu Guinea in 1913 as part of a German Colonial Expedition). Several drawings were made in response to actual flowers Gilbert saw on his recent journeys to KwaZulu-Natal South Africa, such as the Aloe and the Protea.

The series of drawings is also inspired by the Flemish painters of the 15th century, who sought religious symbolism in all aspects of their daily

surroundings. Gilbert's flowers transform into Mystic Vision and attempt to represent the annihilation of the rationalist worldview. However, Gilbert approaches this subject as ever with humour and critique - in 'Saint Andrew's Vision', Andrew is decapitated by a Drone Strike and at the moment of his martyrdom he witnesses the Moolgroot Butterfly buying a Leek Phone (tm). In the 2019 drawing 'The Flower of Brexit', London is depicted invaded, looted and occupied by the Zulu army, the BBC are shown filming the events beneath the shadow of the Grenfell Tower fire atrocity and Food Banks, referring to Austerity ridden Britain. In the foreground the Holy Brocoli rises from a teapot and transforms in to General Gordon who witnesses the Venezuelan backed coup/regime change upon the corrupt British Government (the drawing therefore becomes a parody of Western foreign policy and strategy).

The Botanical Drawings will be presented alongside installations which refer to the Colonial Exhibitions of the 19th / early 20th century, Ethnographic Museum displays and Military Museum dioramas. Emperor Andrew shall appear in sculpture form, painting Nature, making business calls on his Leek Phone (tm) and being served light refreshments."

Text by Holy Brocoli , Berlin, 2019

Born in Edinburgh, Scotland in 1980, Andrew Gilbert has exhibited at the Tate Britain in London, the National Gallery of Singapore and the Bavarian Army Museum. His work has been shown in galleries throughout Europe, South Africa and Japan. Works by Andrew Gilbert are included in important private and institutional collections.

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Fri – Sat, 12-6 pm and by appointment