

Simone Nieweg, *Gardens*

June 25 – September 10 2022

Gallery Luisotti is pleased to announce *Gardens*, an exhibition of new photographs by Simone Nieweg, opening June 25th, 2022. Emerging from the artist's lifelong practice of closely observing subsistence gardens, this new selection of images focuses on three motifs: single vegetables, compost piles, and garden patches – both lush and fallow. Nieweg steers the landscape genre away from the pastoral, those auburn haystacks of yesteryear, taking a decisive turn towards the dispossessed and creaturely.

Simone Nieweg (*1962 in Bielefeld, Germany) studied photography from 1984 to 1989 at the Kunstakademie Düsseldorf, completing her education with Bernd Becher's master class. Uncompromising patience and enormous care for lighting characterize her technique. She uses a large format camera and places it in close contact with the earth, preferring flatness to deeply receding space. Her stable compositions lend small and seasonal motifs a sense of permanence: a bush of peas stretching across the entire frame resembles a sculpted frieze. Reminiscent of Bernd and Hilla Becher's famous typologies of dilapidated industrial structures, a monotonous grey tone dominates the sky. Nonetheless, Nieweg still captures shadows – casted, for example, by a makeshift fence or tree stump – and a variety of unexpected colors. Fog weighs down with the heavy turquoise of copper, dried grass and straw take on the rust of nearby aging steel.

The imperfect gardens photographed by Nieweg – what she dubs, “immigrant gardens” – differ markedly from the communities of established public gardens – so-called *Kleingärten* – distributed throughout German metropolitan areas. The latter are permanent, individually divided, and are often used for inflatable swimming pools or Sunday barbecues rather than growing vegetables. These are places for apartment dwellers to try out owning their own plot of land and building their fantasy home (of course, in miniature). Immigrant gardens, by contrast, are not fully legal, spring up before construction or after demolition projects, and their sheds share more architectural features with shanty towns than prairie homes.

These provisional and uncertain conditions make for overgrown and mangy vegetables – mostly belonging to the hearty *Brassica* genus – rather than perfectly pruned and evenly spaced plants. Elephantine rhubarb or kohlrabi the size of a baby unabashedly refuse consumer desires for perfectly round, unbroken surfaces or consistency in size and color. This is a case for urban subsistence agriculture to be opportunistic, messy, and a bit unhinged. In the face of environmental collapse, Nieweg helps invent a form of nourishment that doesn't look back to the preindustrial era but embraces the contaminated landscape.

Simone Nieweg has been exhibited widely across the United States and Europe. Her work has been published by Schirmer-Mosel, and her photographs collected by the Museum of Modern Art, New York, K21 Contemporary Museum of Art, Dusseldorf, The Victorian and Albert Museum, London, amongst other notable institutions.

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Please join us at our new project space located at 431 Seaton Street, Los Angeles, CA, 90013. To make an appointment email the gallery at info@galleryluisotti.com. We will be open this summer Thurs – Sat, 11am – 5pm.

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